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DEVELOPING AN "OSLO MODEL" OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY
DISTANCE LEARNING FOR THE CONTEMPORARY BRITISH
CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

by

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Volume 1 of 2

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ABSTRACT

This thesis brings together areas of research in the common theme of theological education for the ordained ministry. Its goal, through original critical analysis and original research, is to develop an "Oslo model" of theological education by distance learning for the ordained ministry of the Church of the Nazarene in the United Kingdom.

This is done by drawing on the emerging competencies from the recent ecumenical Oslo debate on theological education together with the contemporary principles of distance learning. Its application is in the context of the Church of the Nazarene where theological education for the ordained ministry is a live issue. To develop the model, the argument moves through several stages in which original critical analysis and original research is done.

Chapter one summarises the three year ecumenical Oslo debate in ministerial formation and theological education. Chapter two, describes the emerging "Oslo model" through the six competencies agreed at its final consultation held in 1996. The formation of the minister is seen as central to the theological education endeavour, therefore the competencies are primarily formative in being educative. Chapter three critically reflects on the context of the Oslo consultation in the knowledge that similar arguments for a new vision had already been rehearsed in the debate which led up to the formation of TEE a generation earlier. A critique of TEE is done through an examination of its philosophy and historical development. Chapter four analyses and critiques, through original documentation, a working model of TEE in its historical and philosophical context within the Church of the Nazarene. This throws more light on the reasons why Oslo may have been so reticent in its promotion of TEE. It also raises significant questions for the Church of the Nazarene of its use of the method. Chapter five considers the set of core competencies drawn up by the Church of the Nazarene for its theological education programme. Are these compatible with those from the Oslo consultation? If so, should they take precedence over the Nazarene competencies?

Chapter six assesses the methodology of distance learning. What are its theoretical principles? What does it offer that TEE does not? What is best practice distance learning and how might it work in a contemporary British setting? Chapter seven asks if Oslo's philosophy of ministerial formation and theological education is compatible with the philosophy of distance learning. Is this a suitable method for Oslo's new vision?

Research methods are set out in chapter eight in view of the imminent case study. Prior to this, the historical and educational setting of the Church of the Nazarene in the UK is examined with the help of archival research in order that the context can be best understood. Chapter nine proposes the new "Oslo model" of theological education by distance learning for the Church of the Nazarene in the UK and the implications of this model for the church are discussed. Suggestions for further research are then made.

Through this original critical analysis and original research, done as reflective writing by a participant observer, the thesis undertakes to be an example of constructive practical theology in a contemporary setting.

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- 4. *The Revised Diploma in Pastoral Studies***

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PREFACE

Developing an “Oslo model” of theological education by distance learning for the contemporary British Church of the Nazarene

This thesis brings together areas of research in the common theme of theological education for the ordained ministry. Its goal, through original critical analysis and original research, is to develop an “Oslo model” of theological education by distance learning for the ordained ministry of the Church of the Nazarene in the United Kingdom.

This will be done by drawing on the emerging competencies from the recent ecumenical Oslo debate on theological education together with the contemporary principles of distance learning. Its application is in the context of the Church of the Nazarene where theological education for the ordained ministry is a live issue. Furthermore, it is generally recognised within the denomination that the church needs to develop new principals and methods of distance learning to assist this goal. To develop the model therefore, the argument will move through several stages in which original critical analysis and original research will be done.

The first stage is the three year global consultation which led to the Oslo conference of the World Council of Churches (WCC) held in 1996. Oslo called for a new vision which would make the essence and delivery of theological education more viable for the ministry needs of the twenty first-century. The essence of theological education was summed up in certain competencies which emerged from the consultation.

The methodology proposed to deliver these competencies moved away from the more traditional forms of residential theological education. Indicative of this was the following statement made in the final plenary session of the conference:

We wish to acknowledge that some patterns of theological education have not assisted the church to move forward, to respond to hurting people, to relate holistically to the earth, or to be people-focused or Christ-centred. We grieve that we have sometimes ignored crucial insights about life and God in our work as theological educators. As we move into the twenty-first century we have a renewed commitment to remain open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit by listening more carefully to the multiple

voices of God's people and responding with life-giving forms of theological education and ministerial formation.¹

This was followed by the question: "...how can the processes of theological education and ministerial formation be reshaped to achieve such goals?"² A conference workshop proposal summed up what was to be an important element of Oslo's agenda:

We urge educators to become familiar with new methodologies of education and encourage the development of programmes for 'long distance learning' for those people in ministries who are unable to attend theological academies.³

This leads the research to the second stage which is to bring critical original analysis to bear on one methodology being proposed, namely distance learning. The WCC has been instrumental in promoting educational methods for the delivery of theological education in the past. One of these was Theological Education by Extension (TEE) which continues to have wide usage. However, it is argued that this has been overtaken by distance learning which has become an established educational method in the UK, the country in which the new model will be set. The methodological arguments for presenting the Oslo competencies by either TEE or contemporary best practice distance learning are then analysed to determine which is more compatible with the Oslo vision of viable theological education.

The third stage is the recently introduced competencies of the Church of the Nazarene in its own theological education debate. This debate has been promoted through various conferences and commission reports and is now at a crucial point in its journey. The writer is involved in the discussion and is a reflective practitioner in the use of the competencies which have emerged from it. These and the Oslo competencies lie at the heart of what each organisation thinks that theological

¹ "Message to Churches, Theological Institutes and the World Council of Churches", in *Towards Viable Theological Education: Ecumenical, Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal*, John Pobee (ed), Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1997, 4.

² Dr Barbara Brown Zikmund and Dr George Kondothra, (Workshop V, Oslo) "Towards a Common Core in Theological Education and Ministerial Formation", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.75, October, 1996, 31.

³ John de Gruchy and Kyariaki Fitzgerald "Workshop II: The Role of the Academy in Ministerial Formation and Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 75, October 1996, 14.

education is intended to achieve, so the compatibility of these competencies is a central part of any search of a new model. However, a new Oslo model for the Church of the Nazarene will also need to demonstrate compatibility of educational method as well as educational philosophy if it is to succeed.

The fourth stage therefore, is to consider the recipient of the new model, the international Church of the Nazarene. This is a denomination which is approaching its centenary. It is using models of both TEE and distance learning methods to educate its ministers in different parts of the world. The church has a well-developed strategy of theological education for the ordained ministry, but little research has been done on the effectiveness of its TEE and distance learning approach. Therefore, each method will be critiqued in turn, firstly through a TEE working model, adapted for use abroad, and secondly through original fieldwork research in a case study of its distance learning model, presently in use in the UK.

How the argument will be moved through the chapters.

Chapter one of the thesis will summarise the ecumenical Oslo debate in ministerial formation and theological education. The discussion is wide ranging as might be expected of a debate of a global nature. Many familiar themes in theological education are revisited, but that which emerges is the dominant theme of ministerial formation through theological education and the way in which this may be affirmed through programmes of theological education.

Chapter two, describes the emerging “Oslo model” through the six competencies agreed at its final consultation held in 1996. The formation of the minister is seen as central to the theological education endeavour, therefore the competencies are primarily formative in being educative. Theological education is now to be driven from this formative centre outwards.

Ecumenicity forms a significant part in the final competencies. Truth is to be found in dialogue with others therefore the formation process is assisted through the community both secular and confessing, as well as individually through mentoring.

The argument is then conveyed to the providers of theological education. A common search for good models of theological education with ministerial formation at its centre must now be undertaken by all concerned. At this point the challenge to the Church of the Nazarene now becomes specific. By inference it too is asked to consider the fulfilment of the ecumenical and missionary vocation of the church by adopting this new vision.

Before carrying this challenge to its next stage, chapter three critically reflects on the context of the Oslo consultation in the knowledge that similar arguments for a new vision had already been rehearsed in the debate which led up to the formation of TEE a generation earlier. Why was Oslo appearing to reject TEE as a method which would convey its new vision for theological education and how was it that distance learning was now being viewed as a possible successor? A critique of TEE is done through an examination of its philosophy and historical development. The conclusion drawn is that, for several reasons, Oslo did not consider TEE entirely suited to its new vision.

In order to take this debate further and ground it in contemporary practice, chapter four analyses and critiques, through original documentation, a working model of TEE in its historical and philosophical context within the Church of the Nazarene. This throws more light on the reasons why Oslo may have been so reticent in its promotion of TEE. However the critique also raises significant questions for the Church of the Nazarene. Can it now persist with TEE in light of Oslo's seeming rejection of it and the critique of the working model?

Into the debate in chapter five comes a set of core competencies drawn up by the Church of the Nazarene for its theological education programme. It too is involved in discussions concerning its global Course of Study for the ordained ministry. Are the competencies compatible with those from the Oslo consultation? If so, should they take precedence over the Nazarene competencies? If this case can be made there may be a stronger argument to use not only an Oslo model in terms of the competencies, but also to incorporate the Oslo vision in terms of the methodology.

The methodology now in question, that of distance learning, is assessed in chapter six. What are its theoretical principles? What does it offer that TEE does not? What is best practice distance learning and how might it work in a contemporary British setting?

The next step in the argument (elaborated in chapter seven) is to ask if Oslo's philosophy of ministerial formation and theological education is compatible with the philosophy of distance learning. Are there distance learning criteria which would promote and deliver the competencies? Is this a suitable method for Oslo's new vision?

Research methods are set out in chapter eight in view of the imminent case study which is planned. Once again, in order to test out theoretical findings, research is done in a contemporary setting, that of the distance learning method presently used by the Church of the Nazarene in the UK. Prior to this case study, the historical and educational setting of the Church of the Nazarene in the UK is examined with the help of archival research in order that the context can be best understood. Furthermore, the specifics in its development of the ordination Course of Study are examined through seminal conferences and reports. Following this, the case study method is carefully set out and the questions and respondents identified.

Chapter nine responds to the completed case study (the interviews are in the appendices) with extensive use of direct quotations from the interviewees. A picture begins to emerge which demonstrates how the programme of distance learning and the competencies are perceived by the ministers who have been educated by this method. Furthermore, it discovers to what extent the Oslo model and best practice distance learning are being applied within this programme.

Following an account and analysis of the case study interviews, an Oslo model of theological education through distance learning for the ordained ministry of the Church of the Nazarene is proposed. Conclusions are then drawn which include the implications of the research for the Church of the Nazarene. Suggestions for further research are then made.

Through this original critical analysis and original research, done as reflective writing by a participant observer, the thesis undertakes to be an example of constructive practical theology in a contemporary setting.

Chapter 1

A Renewed Vision of Theological Education: Oslo 1994-1996.

The search for 'viable ecumenical theological education' was the focus of a global Consultation organised by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Oslo, Norway, between 4-11 August, 1996 entitled "Ecumenical Theological Education: Its Viability Today." It brought together some 120 theologians, educators and ecumenical leaders from 40 countries and many church traditions and was the culmination of an intensive three-year consultation programme.

The process, begun in 1994, included several regional consultations. These were held in Honduras (for Latin America); Tennessee (for the USA and Canada); Ghana (for West Africa); Kuruman, Republic of South Africa (for all of Africa); Egypt (for the Middle East); Barbados (for the Caribbean); India; Seoul, Korea (for North East Asia); Australia (for the Pacific) and Germany (for Europe). The regional consultations did not occur in a vacuum. The documents show that local meetings, workshops and case studies had taken place prior to these and continued through the consultation process.

This process, which is well documented in over eighty journal articles, generated literature published by the WCC and others. The articles, which included reports of the regional consultations, were printed in the journal *Ministerial Formation*, published quarterly by the WCC. The literature (published mainly in English) included two Spanish publications *Viabilidad en la Formación Ministerial en el Mundo de Hoy*¹ and *Por una Sociedad Donde Todos Quepan*²

Three other books, *Viability of Ministerial Formation in the Asian Context*,³ *Bringing Theology to Life-Challenge for Theological Education Geared to the*

¹ (Viability in Ministerial Formation in Today's World), San José, Costa Rica: SBL and Geneva: ETE, 1994.

² (For a Society Where There Will be Room for Everybody), San José, Costa Rica: DEI and Geneva: ETE, 1996.

³ Proceedings of Theological Symposium, November, 1995, Joon Surh Park (ed), Seoul: NEEATS, 1996.

*Future*⁴ and *Caribbean Theology, Preparing for the Challenges Ahead*⁵ restated and reflected on the observations of the regional gatherings.⁶ The presentation and responses of the Consultation were published under the title *Towards Viable Theological Education: Ecumenical, Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal*.⁷ A separate publication of the Consultation's bible studies, already included in the articles printed within the journal *Ministerial Formation*, were issued as: *Six Bible Studies: Theology, Ministry and Renewal of God's People*.⁸

As the Oslo Consultation and its preceding debate was a process rather than a single event, a literature trail followed its chronological progress over the three years. In its journey, Oslo drew upon and reflected explicitly and tacitly on previous debates which had led to attempts to bring global viability to theological education. Theological Education by Extension (TEE)⁹ featured strongly in these exchanges as the WCC had invested in this programme over thirty years previously, and acknowledged that it still had a place in the ongoing debate. Moreover, it was still functioning in many parts of the world.¹⁰

In coming to the original documents, an attempt will be made through critical analysis to summarise the main arguments and identify the issues. The debate is rather like an intricate, and sometimes frustrating, plot which needs to be explicated as clearly as possible. This is due not only to the diversity of opinion expressed, but also to the introduction of other issues, sometimes peripheral, which the consultation period inspired.

⁴ Dietrich Werner (ed), Hamburg: EMW-Info, 1995.

⁵ Howard Gregory (ed), Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, University of the West Indies, 1995.

⁶ The Oslo Consultation was also mentioned at the WCC Harare (1998) Assembly. See *Assembly Handbook*, Geneva: WCC, 1998, 36.

⁷ John S. Pabee, (ed), Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997.

⁸ John S. Pabee, (ed), Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996.

⁹ TEE is decentralised theological education. It operates on a field-based approach which attempts to educate the student *in situ* thus mineralising the disruption of the learner's relationships and commitments. This method of education will be explained more fully later in the thesis.

¹⁰ A survey of TEE was included as part of the Oslo debate: Carol Mouat, "Theological Education by Extension: A Survey of TEE Philosophy", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 73, April 1996, 28-34. In order to understand the historical progression of the Oslo debate it will be necessary to examine the TEE debate also.

The 'Oslo story' also needs to be told as succinctly as possible so as to ascertain key issues for the emerging Oslo model. The chronology of the debate seems to lend the most helpful pattern, so this will be pursued. Having identified the key issues, it will be seen how they were addressed in the various ministerial 'competencies' which emerged in the final documents as an expression of the model which would "...help to reshape the processes of theological education and ministerial formation."¹¹

1. Pobee's initial impetus: a "revisit or evaluation" of theological education is needed.

John S. Pobee, Co-ordinator of the WCC Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) programme,¹² officially launched the study process in January 1994. He spoke of the viability¹³ of ministerial formation for today, using as his starting point a study produced in 1975 for the WCC Theological Education Fund (TEF) entitled *Viability in Context*.¹⁴

He considered that ministerial formation

is concerned with the enabling of God's people to be on mission in the world today. It is inside that necessity for the building up of the whole people of God that must be located in the equipping of the few (i.e. leadership) to be animators of the community of faith, interpreters of the message on which faith is built, of the community of faith to those others outside the community of faith and to be celebrants of the faith.

He added:

An important component of ministerial formation is theological education. One of the emphases in the TEF study.., is that theological education is at

¹¹ Konrad Raiser, *Towards Viable Theological Education*, 60.

¹² Prior to this he was the Associate Director of the Programme for Theological Education (PTE) and President of the International Association for Mission Studies of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

¹³ Pobee recognised that "for many viability is often a matter of finances", but he wanted to broaden this when he said that "Viability is about the capacity to generate life in this case in respect of formation and ministry..." "The First Gospel of Viability of Ministerial Formation", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.64, Jan 1994, 5.

¹⁴ Herbert M. Zorn, *Viability in Context: Theological Seminary in the Third World: Seedbed or Sheltered Garden?*, Bromley: Theological Education Fund, 1975. The Theological Education Fund (TEF) had invested in the TEE project since 1963. This book reflects on this process, which by 1976 had become "...clearly established as the most vigorous alternative creative form of preparation for the ministry..." (F. Ross Kinsler, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education*, (revised edition) Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981, 14.)

once theology, education and commitment...Viability is also about the structures and styles that will be conducive to the formation of students who are equipped to fulfil the task of ministry in the life of the church and the people of faith, individually and severally in the world.¹⁵

Pobee concluded that as ministerial formation is an “inheritor of tradition and assumptions...” it needed “...a revisit or evaluation.”¹⁶ A key question was “which aspects of inherited tradition must be continued today and in what form and why?”¹⁷

Examining theological institutions as he observed that

the seminary as a community of learners and scholars is hardly relevant for this time, partly because most students are often by no means thinking of monastic life and that ideas of community are elusive in an age when many students are established, married, second career persons.¹⁸

He also noted that since women have come into ETE programmes in large numbers, there was “the necessity to explore alternative programmes of theological education suitable to the life-styles and values of women.”¹⁹

Although acknowledging that TEE was in place in many parts of the world and that its philosophy and methodology of education were different from the traditional residential colleges, Pobee was still at pains to affirm the intellectual rigour and scholarship which is pursued in a university setting. He finds support in Michael Taylor’s statement that (the university)

...investigates the texts and uncovers the content and nature of Christian tradition and common wealth in a way for which I have neither the equipment nor the time but the results of which I am anxious to use.²⁰

Furthermore, Pobee argues, it can jolt the perspectives of people from an independent point of view and therefore it has its place.

¹⁵ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 6,7.

¹⁶ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 5. In a later article Pobee asserts that “renewal.. is the word that viability is reaching out to.” (“Moving Towards a Pentecost Experience in Ministerial Formation”, *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.68, January 1995, 18.)

¹⁷ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 5.

¹⁸ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 5.

¹⁹ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 6.

²⁰ Michael Taylor, “People at Work” in *Theology By the People*, Sam Amirtham and John S. Pobee, eds., Geneva: WCC, 1986. 128-129. (Pobee, “The First Gospel..” 8.)

1.1 Ecumenism and community.

Pobee postulated that a key element in sustaining a viable inherited tradition must be found in ecumenism. His reasoning was based on the belief that “truth in its fullness is discovered only in dialogue with others”²¹ and that this dialogue may have to take into account the pluralism of the context.

The theological agenda must now equip people to understand the faith and values of persons of other faiths and to develop appropriate forms of Christian apologies in response to other faiths.²²

He said this was articulated in David Tracy’s statement that “theology has three publics: academia, church and society.”²³ Furthermore, sound and viable theological education must be, in David Bosch’s words, “a dynamic interplay and creative tension between *theoria*, *poiesis* (i.e. the imaginative creation and representation of evocative images) and *praxis*”²⁴

For Pobee, the issue of viability in theological education and ministerial formation turned on the mix of academic excellence, technical proficiency, experience and commitment. The question he raised was: “How may these components be measured and what are the minimum requirements for the achievement of those necessary components of the formation process?”²⁵

Pobee was also convinced that a study on viability should be *inter-alia* about the place of the church as community and how that community expressed itself as the body of Christ and the people of God. He identified the people of God as

that human community focused on God made incarnate especially in Jesus Christ and with the poor i.e. those who suffer by exploitation, oppression, marginalization and structures as the paradigmatic example of it.²⁶

²¹ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 9.

²² Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 10.

²³ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 10. Tracy stated that “Theology (was) a generic name not for a single discipline but for three: fundamental, systematic and practical theologies... Each is concerned with three publics. Each is irrevocably involved in claims to meaning and truth.” (*The Analogical Imagination, Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, New York: Crossroad, 1981, 31.)

²⁴ David Bosch, “The Nature of Theological Education”, in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Vol.77, 1991, 3-17. (quoted by Pobee “The First Gospel...”, 10.)

²⁵ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 10.

²⁶ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 12.

Therefore a programme of formation needed to equip people to be in living contact and in friendship with the poor and provide openings for expressions of the church as community.

1.2 Summary.

Pobee concluded his invitation to exploration with four questions:

1. What programmes of formation would foster, if not ensure, the missionary and ecumenical vocation of the people of God, especially the ordained?
2. What programmes would foster the efficient ministry of the whole people of God and in that context, the ministry of the ordained?
3. What are the implications of the renewed emphasis on church as communion, body of Christ and people of God for programmes of ministerial formation? In this regard what does the sense of women in the community of faith mean for ministry and ministerial formation?
4. What does the basic subject of theology - God's sovereign rule - mean for the substance, style and method of theology? What are the implications of the values of the kingdom - sacrificial love, truth, righteousness - justice, freedom, reconciliation and peace - for ministry and ministerial formation? What educational process would foster the development of the people of God and their leadership to be well equipped to be symbolic units of those values of the kingdom?²⁷

These issues pointed to a search for new structures or methods. Although Pobee acquiesced in this, he believed that structures were instruments for carrying a vision, therefore the process of study of viability of ministerial formation was, at its heart, a search for a vision.²⁸

²⁷ Pobee, "The First Gospel..." 13.

²⁸ This theme is reiterated throughout the pre-Oslo debate as well as the Consultation itself. See, for example, John W. de Gruchy in the All-Africa consultation, 1995 ("The Ecumenical Imperative and theological Education/Ministerial Formation in Africa", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.71, October, 1995, 11-15.) Thomas Fitzgerald, Executive Director (WCC Programme Unit 1: Unity and Renewal) viewed the catalyst for the debate as being the quest for reconciliation and unity of the churches. "theological education with a strong ecumenical dimension contributes to the process of reconciliation and unity by being a profound catalyst for renewal. It does not aim at creating a hybrid or artificial expression of theology, but seeks to bring the churches, together with their teachers, their students and

2. The emerging debate that led to the agreed competencies²⁹: initial reactions.

Beginning with this paper from the co-ordinator of the ETE programme, the consultation period was launched. The debate was wide ranging and its participating constituency diverse.

In the initial discussions spanning the first year of the debate, several important issues emerged. However, often the particular concerns of a group were raised rather than discussion of the agenda set out by Pobee. It was only as the debate proceeded that there was a narrowing of the focus which finally led to a consensus at the Oslo Consultation in 1996.

2.1. The Latin American consultation: The place of the theological institution and the recipients of theological education.

One such issue concerned the place of the theological institutions in theological education, because what Pobee was saying seemed to challenge their purpose if not their existence.

Although Pobee spoke of seminaries as “hardly relevant for this time”, he did acknowledge the validity of intellectual rigour and scholarship in ministerial formation. Ofelia Ortega, who responded in the context of a liberation theology debate, which informed the Managuan and San José meetings, defended the classroom as “the right place to build an ecumenism inspired by a joint exploration of the Word.” She continued:

A place of study is a place for ideas to be formed, ideologies and concepts to clash, ruptures and creations to occur amidst the struggle between the old and the new...Whatever the standpoint of the student or teacher as they enter the classroom, whether it is liberation theology or a conservative theology, it has to be subjected to the test of collective reflection, prayer and praxis.³⁰

their theological traditions into creative contact and thus break down the ecclesiastical isolation of teachers and students.” (*Towards Viable Theological Education...*, viii.)

²⁹ Pobee’s search for “the minimum requirements for the achievement of those necessary components of the formation process...” (“The First Gospel...” 10) may be said to be stated in the agreed Oslo competencies which were stated at the end of the consultation period.

³⁰ Ofelia Ortega, “Viability for Whom and for What: Theological Education from the Underside”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 64, Jan 1994, 24. The theme is also taken up in Indian consultation. See

However, she also commented, “we cannot ‘learn’ theology the same way as mathematics. Our knowledge of God is renewed each time we embark upon certain practices in certain contexts where the Word of God interacts with the communities of women and men.”³¹ In her view, the methodology of theological education included not only learning the techniques of study and the contents of study subjects, but also the development of a relevant, proper theology for the congregations and communities.

This led to discussion of the ‘subjects’ of theological education as raised by Pobee. They asked “how efficient have been our traditional theological institutions in the formation of the poor?”; “how have new, alternative educational models developed? (e.g. TEE, study centres, etc.)”; “in what ways do the actual theological education programmes (residential or extension) in our institutions keep and communicate the new values and perspectives of the oppressed and marginalized people?”; “do the actual programmes of theological education reflect the dominant educational schemes, and are we transmitting the values of the dominant culture through them?”³²

Recognition by this group that their “theology has been westernised and needs renewal and criticism for our indigenous and African peoples”, was summed up in a quotation from Julio de Santa Ana’s *Thesis on Theological Education*, where “the highest aim of theological training is to have people who dedicate themselves to serving the communities with a view to expressing in practice the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah.”³³ In short, the contextualisation of theology through community, they believed, was paramount.³⁴

Anand Chandu Lai in ‘The Church’s Perception of its Role and Function for a New Age’, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.73, April 1996, 6ff.

³¹ Ortega, “Viability...” 24.

³² Ortega, “Viability...” 27.

³³ Julio de Santa Ana, “Tesis sobre la Educación Teológica in América Latina”, in *Educación Teológica en Situaciones de Sobrevivencia*, Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, San José, Costa Rica, 1991, 174 (quoted in Ortega, “Viability...” 28.)

³⁴ Contextualisation is a dominant theme throughout the consultation period. For example, the statement from the Caribbean consultation; “Our theology has to be contextual: a theology made in the Caribbean and for the Caribbean.” (Adolfo Ham. “Caribbean Theology: The Challenge of the Twenty-first Century” in *Caribbean Theology...*, 4.)

An immediate Roman Catholic response through Francis Frost, emphasised the difference in nature between the theological formation (for he saw theological education and ministerial formation as overlapping to a large extent) for lay ministry and the ordained ministry. Ordination, when viewed as a “sacrament”, called for a preparation for ministry distinct from the formation for lay ministries. This included a “setting apart” which “alone makes possible that availability of mind and heart, indispensable for benefiting from the ingredients of a balanced formation.”³⁵ In his understanding of sacramental ordination as a tenet of the Roman Catholic church, he saw little debate on the need of residential formation in an academic confessional community; it was, in his view, indispensable.

2.2. Response.

None of the protagonists would dispute that, academically, the institution will have a part to play in theological education. However, two essential points were raised; whether the student is better prepared by studying mainly in an academic confessional community; or whether keeping the student amongst his people and community and educating him there, is a preferred option for ministerial preparation. These raise questions of pedagogical method and access to theological education for men, women and the poor.

Ortega has in mind the place of women and men in the classroom as well as in the context. They are the students as well as part of the congregation for whom a relevant theology is essential development. Any emerging strategy, it was suggested, would have to mirror this.

However, reflecting on the Roman Catholic response, a third issue may be raised. The ministry for which a person is educated, may impose upon the process certain expectations which demand a particular educational approach. Theological education incorporates not only issues of method, content and accessibility, but also of ecclesiastical understanding of the end to which the person is educated. For example,

³⁵ Francis Frost, “A Roman Catholic Response”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 64, Jan 1994, 31.

a particular church may have its own ideas about points of 'formation' for a recognised ministry which the student and education provider would have to be aware of in order for these requirements to be met.

The availability of theological education to all, irrespective of class, wealth, race or gender was revisited several times in Oslo, as the documents will show. Whatever the calling to ministry, theological education was to be accessible to all people. The perceived danger was that access to particular avenues of theological education, for example the ordained ministry, may be restricted because of class, wealth, race or gender.

Two other points arose. Pobee and Ortega, although having the ordained ministry in focus, are eager to include lay people in ministerial preparation. As this may include issues of accessibility to theological education, in their minds, the place of the residential theological institution may not be as central as it had been in the past. However, there may be a role for these institutions through being centres for other educational methods. In other words, the residential school is not the focus of the debate, rather Oslo is looking to, but at the same time looking beyond, the residential theological institutions. Which method or model will now deliver the new vision of theological education?

Secondly, Ortega voiced concern over the 'westernisation' of theology and the need to enculturate it. Any new method or model would need to allow for flexibility in its adaptation to the local culture and needs of the church.

Significantly, these concerns had already been addressed through the setting up of TEE, the programme promoted by the WCC a generation earlier. It had been strongly influenced by Western curriculum development in its early years in Latin America. The thesis will examine why this form of theological education did not ultimately deliver on these concerns and what the new method or model might be that emerges in its place.

3. The European consultation: theological competence, pedagogy & ministerial formation.

Within this consultation, the place of theological competence³⁶ for the ministerial task was addressed by Susanne Blatt, a German trainee pastor. She referred to a 1984 commission set up by the Protestant German Churches (EKD) to look into the possibility of a new curriculum for ministerial formation. A 1988 paper published by the commission,³⁷ spoke of the

non-variable elements of theological competence as “knowledge, identification and communication skills.” The variable consists in the biographical background, regional differences and historical conditions of the ministry, such as changes in society. But fundamental are the obligatory teachings of the church...University studies should emphasise the tradition and teaching of the institutional church, its biblical and historical sources. Learning is done by reading and analysing text according to a certain methodology (semiotic, pragmatic, logic, semantic, literal).

The responses to this commission’s paper indicated several points of criticism. Theological competence was viewed by some as a “technocratic and expertocratic” concept which did not give room for a living, developing ecumenical ministry. This form of learning was seen as “pure reception and habitualisation” whereas theological learning needed to happen “in co-operative forms outside of the university.”³⁸

A response to this by Henry Wilson (World Alliance of Reformed Churches) showed that he was convinced that a corrective to the imbalances between the understanding of the tasks of the theological institution and the expectations of community, could come from innovative methods of pedagogy which were surfacing in different contexts like that pioneered by Paulo Freire³⁹ in Latin America.

The basic question posed to secular education - whether it domesticates or liberates - is equally relevant to theological education...the educational aspect of ministerial formation cannot be taken for granted. It needs to be

³⁶ An adopted “competence” in the final Oslo Consultation.

³⁷ Susanne Blatt, “Viability Debate-A German Woman, Trainee Pastor’s Perspective”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.65, April 1994, 7.

³⁸ Blatt, “Viability Debate...” 8.

³⁹ Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, highlights in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* the difference between giving people information and facilitating learning which leads to change. He advocated the latter, which he called “conscientisation.” (London: Pelican, 1972)

constantly scrutinised in the light of emerging critical thinking in the area of pedagogy as a whole.⁴⁰

Wilson was emphasising that the liberating nature of education must not be foreign to the debate of theological education. However, being theologically educated in one's home context is no guarantee that one is contextually or culturally oriented although this could appear to be assumed.⁴¹ Unless the sponsoring theological institution is sensitive to the changes taking place in culture and of the rising awareness of communities to their own social, cultural and contextual identities, education in this context could fail whether achieved on or off campus.

3.1 Response.

Freire's question on whether a particular pedagogy of theological education domesticates or liberates is a legitimate query. 'Domestication' could be understood in a number of ways. For example, it could mean 'parochial', rather than 'ecumenical'. If the programme is so narrowly focused to the needs of a particular confessing community, it could be said to be 'domesticating' the student.

'Domestication' may also be understood as educating in a 'home' context, rather than bringing the student into a new context with different people thinking in different ways and offering a different perspective. Attempts to stifle the liberative aspects of education must be viewed as contrary to its very purpose. Liberation is best understood, however, as a responsible exercise. As 'stone sharpens stone', so does one mind sharpen another; one society another; one race another and so on. Theological education is not exempt from this endeavour.

4. The Pacific Consultation: *orthodoxis* and *orthopraxis*.

Michael Putney, a staff member of a Roman Catholic Seminary in Brisbane, Australia, believed that there was a lack of resolution between the academic

⁴⁰ Henry S. Wilson, "Mobilising the Giant -Through Diet, Exercise or Dismantling: Viability in Ministerial Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 65, April 1994, 16.

⁴¹ Zenaida Lumba of the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) disagrees: "For theologians to be truly contextual, I suggest that it is important that they be educated in their region if not in their own country." ("A Response to John Pobee", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 69, April 1995, 32.)

programme and the pastoral programme in context and that this arose from the tension between *orthodoxis* and *orthopraxis*. This tension, he said, was about what should be the starting point - the tradition of the gospel or lived experience. In addition, pastoral theologians must ask “whether they teach the tradition of the gospel in its pastoral reflection independently of its classroom expression or whether they endeavour to draw the students’ classroom theology into the reflection.”⁴² Was the theology “usable” in the students’ context? Did they have the skills to translate it for their purposes?

Putney reckoned that those in the Roman Catholic tradition most affected by this tension were those who were responsible for spiritual or personal formation. Within a Roman Catholic Seminary, Putney surmised, there could be three parallel programmes in operation - the academic, the pastoral and the spiritual - each with its methodology, priorities and concrete goals. Participants in all three worlds must have some level of shared vision with regard to a “usable” theology.⁴³

To be effective, this focus must be on the needs of the world, not primarily on those of the churches. “Unless the churches and their educational institutions see themselves as part of the larger plan of God’s mission to the world revealed in Jesus Christ, they will continue to produce a theology which the world cannot hear.”⁴⁴ Putney was convinced that if it was happening in the church it would happen in the classroom, but a particular conversion was required of theological staff if they were to be the focus of such a change. He concluded, “ministerial formation will never be truly viable (generating life) unless the churches which our institutions serve are also striving to become viable themselves. We can only achieve viability together (ecumenical); and if we do it for the sake of the world (missionary).”⁴⁵

⁴² Michael Putney, “Viability of Ministerial Formation” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.66, July 1994, 9.

⁴³ Although ‘spiritual competence’ did not feature in the agreed core competencies adopted by the Oslo Consultation, Mary O’Driscoll (professor of ecumenics at the Pontifical University of St Thomas in Rome) proposed this as intrinsic to the debate. See John Pobee, “A Response by Mary O’Driscoll” in *Towards...*, 64.

⁴⁴ Putney, “Viability of...”, 12.

⁴⁵ Putney, “Viability of...”, 13. The United States-Canada regional consultation in Nashville (May 1995), called for theological schools to “root themselves more deeply in their own contexts...and

Robin J. Pryor pursued this further by asking the question: “Can or should the shaping and deepening of communion with God occur within the curricula of theological education, and more particularly within the broader processes of ministerial formation of which theological education may only be a part? In what ways can or should the experience of communion with God intersect and interact with curricula..?”⁴⁶ He believed that the classical core courses of theological education were an incomplete approach to ministerial formation as they emphasised the cognitive over the affective, speaking about God as distinct from speaking with God. He believed this led to a “cycle of cumulative negative causation” where candidates interpreted their call to ministry as “to serve the people of God”. This had implications for their expectations of meeting the needs of all the members, resisting changes in themselves and being unable to establish personal goals and priorities in ministry. This resulted in exhaustion, transfer effects, guilt and resentment.

Pryor sees spiritual formation ⁴⁷ as the central discipline of ministerial formation from which other areas derive their purpose and emphasis. He maintained that this emphasis would call for a restructuring of most theological colleges, a reworking of relationships with sponsoring churches, a change in field education and in educational methodology. “Pastoral spirituality”⁴⁸ was the goal. He called for the academic curriculum to encompass spiritual formation to promote the “being” of the minister as distinct from the “functions” of the minister.⁴⁹

4.1 Response.

The Oslo debate was strong on the formative aspects of theological education and spiritual formation as the centre of the process of theological education is a dominant

forge more effective relationships with the churches and communities they serve.” (“Towards a New Vision of Ministerial Formation”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.70, July 1995, 3.

⁴⁶ Robin J. Pryor, “Nurturing Spiritual Development in the Uniting Church: Spiritual Development and Theological Education.” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.65, July 1994, 14.

⁴⁷ An adopted Oslo “competence.”

⁴⁸ Pryor, “Nurturing...”, 19.

⁴⁹ In making this distinction it is understood that Pryor is not arguing for a separation to be made between “being” and “doing”, but rather that ministerial functions as the practices of the curriculum be driven by the “formation” rather than the “functions” of the minister.

theme. Whereas up to this point the consultations have dealt largely with method and accessibility of theological education, the Pacific consultation speaks very specifically to the content of that education. It is from this point that the impetus to inter-link the terms 'theological education' and 'ministerial formation', gathers pace.

The content of theological education should reflect the lived experience of the student as well as the tradition of which he is a part. That tradition, expressed through its understanding of what it perceives its particular place to be in God's mission to the world, must at its heart be missionary. For this mission to succeed, the formation of the student is paramount, expressing itself in his relationship with God and his heart for the world. The theological colleges as partners in this endeavour, must work with the churches, the student and the context to bring together education, formation and mission.

This debate has significance for the meetings of the Oslo Consultation where the formation of the student within the context plays a central role in its conclusions. It is also significant for the development of the thesis, as any proposed model of theological education will have to reflect the strength of this debate shown here and throughout the regional consultations.

5. The process so far.

By this point, about a year into the debate, the process of study was gathering pace and more regional meetings were taking place.

John Pobee⁵⁰ reiterated the essence of the process by asking the questions: "What constitutes good theological education and ministerial formation? How do we define 'good' in this context? What are the true indices of 'good' in ministry, theology, formation, education, and that, in a real plural world, and in spite of disunity among the people of God?...we must build on the good that already exists; we are not starting

⁵⁰ The significance of John Pobee's place in the debate becomes more important as it goes on. He is the prime mover and the 'spine' of the process, attempting to keep it focused on its task. Email contact with Dr Pobee was established with the aim to elicit more information from him concerning his own perceptions of the debate and to ask him to read parts of this thesis. Unfortunately Dr Pobee was unable to pursue this.

the quest *de novo* or *tabula rasa*.”⁵¹ There were several responses to Pobee’s questions and a debate ensued. These will be addressed under four points.

5.1 The subjects of theological education revisited.

In the earlier Latin American meetings, certain ‘subjects’⁵² of theological education were affirmed. These included Indian people and the use of their language; Blacks, and their cultural values; women, and their particular form of spirituality; and Pentecostals, with their apparent desire for theological education which was biblically oriented, pastoral and life centred, yet at the same time critical and systematic.

To this list of future church workers was now added “the so-called disabled, street children and youth, the anonymous masses of the big cities, the landless peasants and other marginalized sectors.”⁵³ The list implies that, in Pobee’s terms, “these are the good that already exists”.⁵⁴ Rene Kruger was convinced that the formation of these church workers should take three dimensions: academic study, practical work in a parish and the spiritual and socio-cultural development of the personality in community.

However, a study carried out by the Theological Education Desk of the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (Evangelisches Missionswerk, EMW), confirmed the difficulties faced in promoting the participation of women, for example, in theological education. The African section of the German study (done amongst eighteen institutions) demonstrated:

The fact that many churches do not send women to train for the ministry, the poor employment prospects, having no-one to look after their children, and the fear of not being accepted by church congregations as a woman minister were mentioned often. Over half of the women presently studying

⁵¹ John Pobee, Editorial in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 67, October 1994, 2.

⁵² “‘Subject’ in the sense of a perceiving, thinking and willing being and as opposed to an ‘object’”, René Kruger, “Biblical Perspectives on Ecclesiological Fidelity in Latin America,” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 67, October 1994, 6.

⁵³ Kruger, “Biblical Perspectives...”, 6.

⁵⁴ Pobee, Editorial in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 67, October 1994, 2.

theology experienced various kinds of gender-related obstacles before entering theological training.⁵⁵

On the teaching of women's theology it noted, "...not only a lack of teaching in this subject, but also a vast lack of literature which could enable students and staff to study the subject on their own and develop their own contextual theology."⁵⁶

From Latin America's fifteen partner institutions in this German report, forty per cent of women gave gender related obstacles they experienced before entering theological training as the reason for the low percentage of women students. However women's theology, taught in the context of Latin American liberation theology, "is taught as a subject in its own right or is going to be taught at over half of the institutions."⁵⁷

Amongst Asia's eleven partner institutions, the percentage of women students was 17% compared with 33% in Latin America and 11% in Africa (1994). Obstacles to and discrimination against women entering theological training was apparent and Asian women's theology "is only beginning to be a given a fixed status at theological colleges."⁵⁸

The report concluded that women still have

great difficulty in gaining access to church decision-making functions. Formal theological education is generally the prerequisite for this, but there are many gender-specific obstacles in the way as well. Once women have managed to enter theological training, they often encounter discrimination in the college and later in the church.

It recommended that courses of preparation for the ministry be included in "the TEE programmes available in many countries."⁵⁹

This point is significant. Here, the German report is acknowledging what seems to be a cultural barrier to formal education in these countries and suggesting that TEE, as

⁵⁵ Lothar Engel & Maureen Trott, "Women in Theological Education in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.72, January, 1996, 35. "The pressure of discrimination is seen as being more prevalent in the churches than in the colleges." 36.

⁵⁶ Engel and Trott, "Women...", 36.

⁵⁷ Engel and Trott, "Women...", 39.

⁵⁸ Engel and Trott, "Women...", 41.

⁵⁹ Engel and Trott, "Women...", 45.

a less formal method of education, gives women and others access to ministerial education. Has TEE been successful in training women for the ministry? Can TEE be inclusive in giving access to theological education, together with the delivery of a quality theological education usually attributed to the theological institution? Questions of this nature must form part of the critique of this method within the thesis.

5.2 Ecumenism and theological education revisited.

The second rejoinder to Pobee, that of the ecumenical aspect of formation,⁶⁰ was reiterated in a Roman Catholic response by Remi Hoeckman.⁶¹ He called for a meeting of the cognitive and affective dimensions. “To remain on the cognitive level is to reduce formation to information.” Priority must be given to “the affective dimension in all our ministerial and other formation programmes as far as ecumenism is concerned.”⁶² Quoting the *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*, (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1990, n.3.) where it states that “the truth possesses in itself a unifying force”, that “it frees men and women from isolation and the oppositions in which they have been trapped by ignorance of the truth”, and that “as it opens the way to God, it, at the same time, unites them to each other”, Hoeckman stated that ecumenical formation programmes should be designed to help people seek the truth. This has been “entrusted to the church” and that is why theology has “to be done within the church’s faith.” The purpose of theology and of theological education is “to be a service of truth to the faith of the community.”⁶³ Theological isolation will lead to theological fragmentation. Ecclesiological fidelity is an essential dimension of theological education and included exposure to different Christian traditions. This ecumenical imperative was inextricably linked with the church’s missionary vocation. Hoeckman quoted *The Study Document on Ecumenical*

⁶⁰ An adopted Oslo “competence.”

⁶¹ Remi Hoeckman, “Ecclesiological Fidelity and Ecumenical Theological Education”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 8.

⁶² Hoeckman, “Ecclesiological...”, 10.

⁶³ Hoeckman, “Ecclesiological...”, 11.

Formation of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, n.21;

While ecumenical formation must be an essential feature in every curriculum in theological training, care must be taken that it does not become something intended for individuals only. There must be commitment of learning in community.

This will necessarily include education in a cultural setting, by education which sees “the evangelism of culture as a primary task in Christian mission.”⁶⁴ The cultural setting within which ministerial formation takes place will not only shape the formation of the person, but may also dictate the methodology of that formation.

Within the European consultation, Martin Cressey, commenting on two British ecumenical models, The Selly Oak Colleges and The Cambridge Theological Federation, was convinced that the blending of ecclesiological fidelity and ecumenical theological education was essential for viable theological education. Without this blend

ministerial formation is deprived of vital elements. These are: the capacity of a minister to enter fully into the increasingly ecumenical life of local churches and in particular of the laity in them; the openness to be able to hear what the Spirit is saying to our church through other churches; and the courage to enter into today’s challenging world because we enter it together with friends and fellow-pilgrims of all Christian traditions.⁶⁵

John Pobee responded by going a step further and arguing that theological education *must* engage in interfaith dialogue. This required that we “not only hear the heteronomous call of the other but also take the other seriously as an adherent of a particular religion.” The particular contribution of theological education, said Pobee,

⁶⁴ Hoeckman, “Ecclesiological...”, 14.

⁶⁵ Martin Cressey, “Ecumenical Fidelity and Ecumenical Theological Education”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 16. The optimism concerning ecumenism expressed by Cressey and Pobee in particular does not find a wholehearted echo throughout the consultation. For example in the Australian/Pacific consultation (1994), Zenaida Lumba emphasised that “true ecumenism in theological education is far from blooming” (“A Response to John Pobee”, Vol.69, April 1995, 32.) Yet others, such as Thomas Fitzgerald, Executive Director of the programme unit on Unity and Renewal of the World Council of Churches is more positive. “The ecumenical movement is a healing movement which is bound to affect our churches in all the dimensions of life and service. As our divisions have wounded us, our reconciliation is healing us.” (“The Challenge of Unity and Renewal” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.69, April 1995, 57.)

was to search for new common language and symbols, so that the formative process became “a renewal of minds, bodies, spirits and hope.”⁶⁶ Ecumenism could then become “...a utopia which can open up theology to be relevant to the hopes and fears of people.”⁶⁷

That process, said John de Gruchy, must be authentic, creative and of quality. Quality theological education provided training in those technical skills which enabled those trained to practice ministry over the long haul. The essential ingredients were teachers and students of quality and a church which was committed and renewed. “Academic excellence...is not the primary goal. What is more important is the nurturing of pastoral gifts and spirituality, training in leadership, evangelism and prophetic praxis.”⁶⁸ “Authentic theological education was faithful to the Gospel and therefore trustworthy; done by authentic disciples of Jesus Christ and therefore authentic human beings; done for an authentic ministry in relation to the needs of the world in its pain and grinding poverty.”⁶⁹

The bringing together of ministerial formation and ecumenicity, is a challenge for theological education. Whereas the place of formation in ministry has already been raised, the proposed ecumenical link places it firmly within the remit and responsibility of the wider Christian ecclesial community. It is not only pertinent to the educational provider and the individual church and local context to address this, but in Oslo’s thinking, it now becomes the responsibility of all Christian churches to contribute to each other’s understanding in this regard.

5.3 Creativity and commitment in theological education.

The third response, creativity in theological education, was seen by de Gruchy to be the approach which enabled students to become sensitive to the work of the Holy

⁶⁶ John S Pobe, “Plurality and Theological Education”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October, 1994, 30, 31. Pobe is making a “cultural pluralism” argument in the context of what he perceives as an educational ecumenical imperative. In other words, cultural plurality spurs us on to look for different models. (cf. “the First Gospel”, 9).

⁶⁷ Pobe, “Moving Towards...”, 17.

⁶⁸ John W. de Gruchy, “Authenticity, Creativity and Ecumenical Theological Education”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 47.

⁶⁹ De Gruchy, “Authenticity...”, 47.

Spirit in the world and in their lives. Whereas rationality and creativity are often regarded as mutually exclusive, de Gruchy argued for theology as a rational science and theology as a creative exercise in mutual harmony. As we address changes in theological education, we must hold on to the concept of training “creative theologians.” These were people who could respond to changing circumstances, as they are not bound to particular situations or moments in history. “If authenticity is the ability to recognise heresy, creativity is the ability to recognise the *kairos* - yet also the ability not to absolutise it.”⁷⁰

Only so far as the church is authentically and creatively engaged in worship and mission, only in so far as the church is being a faithful witness to the reign of God, will it produce teachers and students who are able to pursue a quality theological education, and only then will it provide the necessary context within such an education can find its fulfilment in ministry.”⁷¹

John Pobee⁷² reiterated the historical interlinking of theology and ministry together with the traditions that surrounded them and the context in which they operated. In the tradition of ETE, ministry was the function of the whole people of God, but inside that general ministry was the specialised ministry of the few, namely of word and sacrament. The latter gained its relevance and significance in the context of the ministry of all of God’s people.

Ministerial formation, stated Pobee, is related to education but not identical with it. Theology also is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a commitment and a life-style and as such must be concerned with developing skills to enable others to be faithful to their vocation.

Viability, in Pobee’s thinking, was now being expressed by a move “...towards a Pentecost experience in theology, in ministry and in formation programmes. Viability, deriving from the French, *la vie*, life, was about the ability to give life, renew.”⁷³ Whereas the traditions of Europe and North America were the historical legacies of

⁷⁰ De Gruchy, “Authenticity...”, 49.

⁷¹ De Gruchy, “Authenticity...”, 49.

⁷² John S Pobee, “Moving Towards a Pentecostal Experience in Ministerial Formation”, *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 68, January 1995, 17.

⁷³ Pobee, “Moving Towards...”, 18.

many ecclesiologies of the southern hemisphere, these cultural legacies were now being questioned more than ever in the pluralism of the global village. Science and technology, especially through the communication revolution, introduced new possibilities which formation processes cannot ignore.⁷⁴ Yet received traditions assist in establishing identity, and structures must be assessed by some criterion to determine what should endure and what should be discarded.

Maitland Evans, writing about structures for ministerial formation, had suggested that many students in theological colleges were not impressed by the connection between the formation processes and the “real” ministry beyond. This led to “faith depression”, that was “a lowering of the quality, value and vitality of the students’ faith without opportunity for the corresponding process which engenders authentic quality, value and vitality which are anticipated by the people in the pews and vital for effective ministry and mission.”⁷⁵

However, Pobe further asserted that although the church leadership avowed that theology was the bloodstream of the church, they were often suspicious of theology and theologians as well as formation programmes. This may be because of their narrow focus on the “ministry of word and sacrament” which was quite different to how the earliest church communities perceived it, i.e. as multifaceted and varied. Today the focus of a multifaceted ministry of theologian, prophet, evangelist, preacher, lecturer and spiritual guide was often expected from one person. As it is rare, if not impossible to have all of these expressed in one person, formation should also include the identity and nurture of charisms within the church community.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ A paper delivered by Judo Poerwowidagdo at a Philippine consultation agrees: “These issues (the development of communication and information technology) ... imply that our teaching-learning process would not be confined to the four walls of the class rooms located within the campus, but our communities and local congregations will become our ‘classrooms’”. (“Remembering the Future: The Task of Ministerial Formation Today”, Vol.69, April 1995, 49). See also the sub-regional report (New Zealand) “We noted that theological education needs to be conducted in three modes - on campus, often in a residential context; in specific regions, frequently on a part-time basis; and *in situ*, where the student learns in the context of ministry.” (April 1995, 23)

⁷⁵ Maitland Evans, “Structures for Ministerial Formation and Mission” in *Ministerial Formation for Mission*, ed. J.S. Pobe, Accra, Asempa, 1993,55.

⁷⁶ This concept was adopted by Oslo as “leadership competence.”

Within theological colleges there were those who were not necessarily studying for the purposes of ordination. Michael Putney acknowledged that:

More and more roles in the church which do not require ordination, but really demand some theological competency, are now able to be filled by women and men with a theological degree. In addition pastors of parishes are discovering theologically trained members of congregations who can become their collaborators in ministry.⁷⁷

Ministry is a collaborative task, says Putney, and the leadership skills for that task are essential.

5.3.1 Response.

It is this collaboration in the ministry task which is a further challenge in developing an Oslo model. Bold steps will have to be taken to address these issues and strong leadership will be needed to implement new strategies. To speak of theological education as more than an intellectual exercise, as a commitment and a life-style which must be concerned with developing skills to enable others to be faithful to their vocation, is meritorious. Where it becomes denominationally sensitive, is in the context of ecumenism. To speak of ecumenism as "a utopia" (Pobee) may not be a factor easily accepted by churches encouraged to receive this model, for example, the Church of the Nazarene, the denomination to which the new Oslo model of theological education will apply in this thesis. The traditions of this denomination, which are historically fixed in the northern hemisphere, and primarily in the United States, find an uneven response in the other world areas in which it operates. As a global monolith with a global book of church order, it is careful not to legislate too specifically with regard to ecumenical contacts, leaving the response to the persuasions, theological or otherwise, of the denomination in different world areas. However, as part of this thesis, this particular tradition must be assessed by the criteria of valid theological

⁷⁷ Michael Putney, "Viability of Ministerial Formation: A Roman Catholic Response" in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.66, July 1994, 8. A point taken up by the Nashville consultation: "Theological schools are encouraged to continue to explore alternative institutional modes and technological advances, which might improve access to theological education for both those engaged and those not engaged in "professional" ministerial formation." ("Towards a New Vision of Ministerial Formation" in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.70, July 1995, 5.)

education and ministerial formation in an ecumenical setting, to determine what should endure and what should be reconsidered. Any debate on ecumenism must not stand in the way of creativity in theological education. Whether full agreement with Oslo can be reached or not in this regard, ^{cannot} dismiss the fact that replication of effort or blindness to the experience of others is not good stewardship of time or effort.

5.4 Theological education and missionary competence.

In a fourth response, and referring to an earlier Commission of German Protestant churches report, Koegelenberg supported the concept that ‘missionary competence’, stated by Konrad Raiser, was an essential element of ministerial formation.⁷⁸ This “should be enhanced through a stronger church training for future clergy from an early stage - instead of pure university knowledge, in order to deal with a society that is alienated from the church and religious tradition.”⁷⁹

With studies and training that led to the ordained ministry in mind,⁸⁰ the German rejoinder recognised that:

in university departments for Protestant theology in Germany, the number of students enrolled has fallen dramatically, in some places by about 50%. The social background of students has changed (growing number of married students; theology as second career study programme). A decrease in intimate knowledge of parish life among candidates can be observed.⁸¹

The churches had thus delegated the responsibility for the academic part of education into the hands of public faculties. An advantage which was claimed was the academic freedom of teaching and research which enabled the student to be critical of any kind of dogmatic dominance proposed by church institutions and to be part of an interdisciplinary or international academic dialogue.

⁷⁸ Konrad Raiser, “The First Gospel of Viability of Ministerial Formation: A Response”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.64, January 1994, 20. This concept was adopted as an Oslo “competence.”

⁷⁹ R.A. Koegelenberg, “Ecumenical,,” 29. Cf. S. Blatt, “Viability Debate - A German Woman Trainee Pastor’s Perspective”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.65, April 1994, 5.

⁸⁰ The German expression *theologische Ausbildung* refers to the narrower sense of theological education as “qualification for the ordained ministry.”

⁸¹ Lothar Engel, “The Study Process on Viability: Its Relevance for Theological education in Germany”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.72, 7.

The call was for a closer link between theological education and lay training so as to avoid a “mono-cultural” education of the ordained. Students should be exposed to parish life during an internship “in the form of a praxis year or semester in a congregation or project related to church and social life.”⁸² This would assist in developing the ‘missionary competence’.

However theological education was not denigrated, rather

a model of two phases could combine two elements: a basic, general theological study programme (maximum of four years and aiming at a master’s in theology) open to candidates for the ministry...in addition ...the churches should offer special training programmes (duration three years) at theological colleges. The already existing church-owned “*predigerseminare*” ...would have to be reorganised as colleges.

Sarah Mitchell was convinced that ministerial formation (which included missionary competence) was a process which included several different components of a ministry training programme. These included:

theological education, theory and practice of ministry, cultural studies and spiritual development, all of which are grounded within a cultural context. This integration takes place through carefully guided theological reflection, supervision and spiritual oversight... Ministerial formation is shaped by the tradition of the wider church, the culture of the wider community, the culture of the individual and the individual’s life experiences and beliefs.⁸³

⁸² L. Engel, “The Study,,,” 9. The “pastoral competence” adopted by Oslo is evident.

⁸³ Sarah Mitchell, “Ministerial Formation: A Model”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.72, January 1996, 11. For the church in West Africa, missionary competence is an essential part of spirituality which “should form the core element in the formation of the minister... Good and laudable as theological training is, in most cases it discourages rather than promotes spirituality.” The reason given was a contextual one, namely the fragile relationship between the people and the world of the spirits. This permeated the whole of society to the point where no dichotomy existed between the religious and secular aspects of life. Prayer was at the centre of an African traditional spirituality “which is as real as life.” In a theological institution which may be “still tied to the apron strings of our Euro-American mentors”, teaching in the area of spirituality was “not as deep and effective as expected. The glaring differences between their technologically advanced societies that tend towards civil religion and our semi-traditional and developing societies are not taken into account in such considerations. We do everything to make our products acceptable to our foreign friends at the expense of our existential realities.” Nkwoka asks, “is this the appropriate place where a minister-in-making should acquire the much needed spirituality in order to cope with the spiritual leadership of the church?” He concludes “...the seminary should be so developed as to be the well-spring of the spiritual formation of ministers.” (A.O. Nkwoka, “Spirituality and Ministerial Formation in West Africa”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol72, January 1996, 20,22,23,27.)

The call for a rigorous programme of theological education linked with internships in a local context, demonstrates the willingness by the consultations to move away from more traditional methods of delivery of theological education to the view of education being “multi-cultural” in its method. It uses the local context together with the established method. The goal is to make the process more mission oriented. Once again, the place of the local setting in terms of theological education is reiterated as a vital component of any model that emerges from the overall debate.

6. The United States consultation: A call for a new contextual methodology.

The consultation “story” moved along through the Nashville consultation for the US and Canada, which thought that ministerial formation may proceed along two axes: a college based model which, in light of globalisation and cultural pluralism, may use technological methods to meet the challenges of integrating theology and practice, church and seminary, specialisation and general competencies; and a mentoring/church-based model.

It is not clear whether this was in response to an earlier comment by Rene Kruger, an Argentinean-based educator, who had advocated an integral ministerial formation as containing three key elements: academic formation, ecclesial practice and formation of personality. Ecclesial practice “incorporates direct knowledge, experimentation and the exercise of the practical aspects of pastoral work”, which “can only be undertaken in close relationship with the churches.” Included in the formation of personality were “spiritual, psychological, community and social dimensions of the person,” which was “a thoroughly complex process that deserves special consideration.”⁸⁴

Ignoring this important aspect of ministerial formation indirectly leads to frustration, abandonment of vocation, depression, pathologies and aberrations, engendered by the overwhelming pace with which tragic situations must be confronted by those in the ministry.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Rene Kruger, “Ministerial Formation in the Southern Cone”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 68, January 1995, 32.

⁸⁵ Kruger, “Ministerial...”, 33. A point reiterated by the Australia, Aotorea-New Zealand and Pacific consultation, Sydney, November 1994. “It enables students to explore what study is doing to them as persons. If we do not learn how to attend to the affective side of our lives, as well as the academic and

Kruger had claimed that the general process of impoverishment in the Southern Cone would lead to fewer students being able to set aside time for full or part-time study. Therefore “reality requires the development of new forms of study alongside residential education.” In addition, “new forms of ministerial formation must be considered” as increased pastoral demands “cannot be attended by adequate preparation of pastors with several years of studies.”

Kruger commented on the difficulties being experienced by one form of ministerial formation for a Licentiate in Theology:⁸⁶

The density of the theological subjects and the need to forge an interrelationship with the corresponding sciences (philosophy, sociology, psychology, the Latin American reality) demonstrate that distance education has its limitations. It can be effective during the first years, but upon completing the introductory courses in Bible study and entering into the exegetical work and the dissertation, we are still unable to recommend an alternative to on-site study.⁸⁷

6.1 Response.

The North American approach to theological education, according to this consultation, is fairly clear cut. It is either a college based model⁸⁸ or a church based model. What Kruger is advocating is a third way to stand alongside the other two (although he does not state what this is to be!). This is necessitated by the poverty of some countries in the region covered by the consultation to support the college based model. New forms of ministerial formation are needed which bring together academic studies, ecclesiastical links and a process which brings about the formation of the

the practical, then in ministry burn-out is very much more likely to occur.” (“Ministerial Formation and Spirituality” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.69, April 1995, 26.

⁸⁶ An advanced form of the basic course of ministerial training given to those who have completed primary level education. Ross Kinsler believes there is a place for advanced studies for Latin American ministers: “The great majority of pastors and leaders in Latin America belong to the “middle” socio-economic and educational level.” (*Incarnation and Viability: The Evolution of a Model*” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.68, January 1995, 37.)

⁸⁷ Kruger, “Ministerial...”,34.

⁸⁸ An example of support for this can be found in *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Colleges*, (Jackson W Carroll, et al., Oxford University Press, 1997) which defends the place of the residential college in theological education. A main conclusion drawn is that the impact of the college’s culture on a student is in large measure a function of the student’s exposure to it. The student must be there to be formed by it (*Being There*, 268).

person. Kruger doubts whether residential education or distance learning can be this model, but does this come from his experience of best practice in these areas? There is no way of knowing. What seems to be evident so far, is that contributors to the Oslo debate cannot agree on any one approach being the complete answer.

By this stage, the Oslo debate is clearly saying that the quest for the best model of theological education is promoted by the quest for ministerial formation. A new model, or the revisiting of one that is established, must be done in light of the new vision where formation - which is done singularly and in community - is at the centre.

What seems clear from this latest exchange is that residential theological education is perceived by some to be limiting, extension learning to be failing, and distance learning to be inadequate. However, by singling out extension and distance learning for further critical examination we are following in the spirit of the Oslo debate and the track record of the WCC, where residential education, though often challenged, is seen as a springboard for these methodologies.

7. The South African consultation: ministerial formation and contextualisation.

J.R. Cochrane, writing from a South African perspective, said that recent history had taught them to attempt a theological education programme whose manifesto is contextualisation.⁸⁹ In attempting to define this, he clarified what theological education was not:

it is not in the first instance the transfer of a technique, a skill, a body of knowledge, a deposit of someone else's wisdom. It is part of a vision of the healing of a broken world, part of a commitment to those and that which is broken, part of a search for that which gives life in the midst of the forces which sow death. It is moreover essentially a common enterprise rather than an individual scholarly achievement. The South African experience has made this perspective a matter of method, and not just a matter of personal choices or ethical pluralities. It is part of what we mean by the term 'context'.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ This subject is taken up by Nyambura J. Njoroge in 'Ecumenical Theological Education and the Church in Africa Today', in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.70, July 1995, 22-23 and the response (in the Namibian context) by Christo Lombard, 'In Response to Nyambura Njoroge' in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.70, July 1995, 27.

⁹⁰ J.R. Cochrane, "Contextualization and Globalization in Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 72, January 1996, 29.

Contextualisation was “relating theory to practise, theology to real life, in the formal educational process.”⁹¹ However the difficulty in Cochrane’s mind was establishing the pragmatic link between theory and what works. He saw this pragmatism as thwarted by two questions: “in whose interest is theological education carried out?” and “towards what end is theological education carried out?” To the former question he observed that what might work well for one group holding the “reigning power” in a particular situation, may work to the disadvantage of another group. “The link between knowledge and interests and knowledge and power is what we are forced to face.”⁹²

The second question he saw as linked to interests and power which lay in the hands of teachers, researchers and administrators of institutions which shape the environment of learning. The true context is “the actual material conditions of pain and brokenness, healing and hope, as they are found among specific people in specific places, in a specific history.”⁹³ Don Edgerton summarised this as when “your feet teach your head; you walk yourself into a different way of thinking, and not the other way around.”⁹⁴

7.1 Response.

There is a danger here of letting the context solely dictate the way in which theological education is done. The context will always express need; if it were not so, there would be no place for ministry. However, the best theological reflection - which must be part of the search for a good model of theological education - has led theological educators in a particular path. That path, we assume, has emerged from a theological understanding which has led to a practical outworking in the historic method of theological education. Don Edgerton is only partly right. The head has been teaching the feet already. In other words, theological education method has been

⁹¹ J.R. Cochrane, “Contextualization...”, 31.

⁹² J.R. Cochrane, “Contextualization...”, 31.

⁹³ J.R. Cochrane, “Contextualization...”, 34.

⁹⁴ Dow Edgerton, “Stand By Me” in *Beyond Theological Tourism*, New York: Harper Collins, 1991, 22.

based on an understanding of theology, in this case, how God works through people in particular circumstances to prepare them for ministry. That the feet *now* begin to teach the head is good theological reflection. If a reassessment of the model is needed, let it be seen in this context, that is, constructing good pastoral theology and practice from a strong theological base.

8. The Asian consultation: tradition and local theologies.

In Asian Christian spirituality, according to a presentation made at the Northeast Asian Regional Consultation in November 1995, "local theologies" of *Homeland* Taiwan, *Minjung* (Korea) and *Denno* Japan, were perceived to be the context within which theological education was to be developed. This contextualised theology "Must take various and different situations very seriously, including religiously pluralistic situations, which in Northeast Asia also includes traditional folk religious practices."⁹⁵

Traditional theological education has been limited to training personnel: but the new ministerial formation is related to the building of a concrete ecclesial community.⁹⁶

Reception of the Tradition and its positive interpretation lay at the heart of the reformulation of doing theology, according to Ion Bria who wrote from an Orthodox standpoint. The re-imagining of "traditional theology" was necessary in order for it to be contextualised. "Orthodox theology is more than doxology, celebration, incantatory discourse; it implies preaching and interpretation of the Bible, teaching doctrine, history of dogmas, hermeneutics."⁹⁷

8.1 Response.

The exportation or imposition of western models of theological education in non-western settings have tended to bring with them western ways of theological thinking. Even within western nations, there has sometimes been the expectation that theology

⁹⁵ Park Keun-Won, "Viability of Ecumenical Ministerial Formation in the Northeast Asian Context", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 73, April 1996, 15.

⁹⁶ Park Keun-Won, "Viability...", 16.

⁹⁷ Ion Bria, "Time to Unfold Orthodox Theology: Problems and Resources in Contemporary Trends", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 73, April 1996, 21.

can 'travel' quite easily and should be quickly adapted by the receiving nation. This consultation shows that contextualised theologies are not only alive and well but now vying for a place in the 're-imaging' (Bria) of traditional theology. Whatever the new model looks like, it must reflect the need for a contextualised theology and attempt to overcome the limitations of past models in this regard. Yet the expectation is that it will also contain re-imaged "traditional" elements like Bible, Church History and Christian Theology.

9. Alternative models of theological education in light of the 'viability' debate.

As the consultation period came towards its conclusion, Ross Kinsler (Seminario Biblico Latinoamerica, Costa Rica) asked about what role alternative models of theological education could play in the future viability of the church, of communities and peoples and their environment.⁹⁸ In Latin America, the home of TEE, attempts had been made to "supersede the polarised polemics of extension versus residence in favour of the diversification of theological education." This had been attempted through keeping the students in their home countries, where most of the study requirements were fulfilled, and bringing them on to a theological campus for at least one intensive residential period. Kinsler noted that now they had to

diversify the modes of learning... and develop a diversified network of centres, sister institutions, adjunct professors and other resources, including an incipient electronic library network to undergird the entire process of learning, research and theological production rooted in the churches, cultures and social movements of the region.⁹⁹

This was a different approach to what John W. de Gruchy had stated earlier with regard to diversity in learning, "academic excellence...is not the primary goal. What is more important is the nurturing of pastoral gifts and spirituality, training in leadership, evangelism and prophetic praxis."¹⁰⁰

Yet the comment by the Honduran consultation was also significant:

⁹⁸ Ross Kinsler, "Alternative Models of Theological Education and the Viability Debate", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 74, July 1996, 32.

⁹⁹ Kinsler, "Alternative...", 36.

¹⁰⁰ John W. de Gruchy, "Authenticity, Creativity and Ecumenical Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 47.

It is our opinion that the pedagogical dimension cannot be reduced to a couple of didactic techniques, but rather that it constitutes a process that should take into account the background of each subject of the education process: the community from which the student hails, the particular situation of the student, the teachers, the educational institution and the social environment. All educational processes are engagements that involve motivation, knowledge, techniques, relationships, the affective - in other words subjective and objective factors.¹⁰¹

Although Kinsler is saying that a model has been found in the “diversification of theological education”, the Honduran consultation is not impressed. It sees theological education process as significantly student driven. If the needs of the student, as the subject of theological education, are not central to the endeavour, it will fail. Theological education, it claimed, is a process which is holistic in the way in which it encompasses all the “subjective and objective factors,”¹⁰² (motivation, knowledge, techniques and relationships).

The difficulty with such a task is that it defies compartmentalisation. In its endeavour to encompass all, it may be so diverse and so labour intensive (on the educational providers’ part) as to be impossible to deliver and to be consistent best practice. In theory, the Honduran goal of all subjective and objective characteristics being included in theological education cannot be contested. In practice, if a model is to be “viable” (Pobee), it stands a better chance if it is educationally recognisable, deliverable and sustainable, financially and in student numbers. Within this model, best practice can be encouraged; thus the expressions of concern in the Honduran consultation can be addressed.

However, it is apparent, at the end of this debate, that ‘viable’ theological education needs an agreed strategy to bring together the diversity of methods and approaches suggested in the consultation period. The further difficulty to such an approach is to

¹⁰¹ The Viability of Ministerial Formation in Today’s World, Summary of the Consultation, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 68, January 1995, 12.

¹⁰² A danger may be to see theological education as student driven at the expense of seeing theology as a human reflection on God. What drives the education process is of prime importance. A holistic approach still needs a proper focus.

ask whether this strategy is to be educationally driven, student driven, ecumenically driven, finance driven or mission driven.

10. Conclusion.

Key issues have emerged in relation to theological education. These are summarised as follows:

1. Theological education must include a search for a 'formative' model.

The quest for the best model of theological education is promoted by the quest for ministerial formation as an integral part of it. A new model, or the revisiting of one that is established, must be done in light of the new vision where formation - which is done singularly and in community - is at the centre.

2. Theological education should be done both in the academic institution and in the local community.

This theme raised questions such as: Can the classroom and the context combine in an emerging model which would answer questions of method, content and access? To what extent would this model comply with Oslo's new vision, and fulfil particular ecclesiastical expectations of formation for ministry?

3. Theological education should be contextualised.

Ortega and others voiced concern over the 'westernisation' of theology and the need for an education programme which could be enculturated in the local setting. This concern was already addressed in the setting up of TEE, a programme promoted by the World Council of Churches a generation earlier.

4. Theological education should be a liberative and responsible exercise.

Freire's question on whether particular pedagogues of theological education domesticate or liberate, arises in various forms in the debate. Allowing for education to liberate is a responsible though sometimes risky exercise. However it can be argued that the encouragement to think of new ways to make this happen is an essential goal of education.

5. Theological education should have spiritual formation at its centre.

The debate emphasised that to be in God's mission to the world, the church must at its heart be missionary. For this mission to succeed, the formation of the student is paramount, expressing itself in his relationship with God and his heart for the world. The theological colleges as partners in this endeavour, must work with the churches, the student and the context to bring together education, formation and mission.

6. Theological education should be gender-inclusive.

It was questioned whether TEE, as a less formal method of education, gave all candidates, regardless of race or gender, access to ministerial education. Does TEE only apply when formal routes are blocked, or could another model fulfil these criteria to a greater extent?

7. Theological education should be an ecumenical task.

The particular contribution of theological education, said Pobee, was to search for new common language and symbols, so that the formative process became "a renewal of minds, bodies, spirits and hope."¹⁰³ The debate demonstrated that some churches may be reluctant to assess their traditions of theological education and ministerial formation in an ecumenical setting. If the contribution of theological education in this context is accepted, it could play a part in determining what should endure and what should be reassessed.

8. Theological education should be reflection in a missionary context.

Students should be exposed to parish life during an internship "in the form of a praxis year or semester in a congregation or project related to church and social life."¹⁰⁴

Theological education should include, theory and practice of ministry, cultural studies and spiritual development, all of which should be grounded within a wider context.

¹⁰³ John S Pobee, "Plurality and Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October, 1994, 30, 31.

¹⁰⁴ L. Engel, "The Study,,", 9. The "pastoral competence" adopted by Oslo is evident.

This integration should take place through carefully guided theological reflection, supervision and spiritual oversight.

9. Theological education must ask questions concerning in whose interest it is carried out.

Who holds the power in the delivery of theological education? Those who hold the purse strings? The link between knowledge and interests and knowledge and power becomes an issue in any proposed model.

10. Theological education should be primarily student driven.

It is claimed that if the needs of the student, as the subject of theological education, are not central to the endeavour, it will fail. In practice, if a model is to be viable then it will have to be well thought out from the perspective of the three “publics” (Tracy) academia, church and society. All three are necessary for a sustainable programme.

Against this diverse background of opinion, the Oslo Consultation was convened in 1996. Was there a model or strategy which could meet the concerns of a world church? If so, could it bring together these concerns under the themes of theological education and ministerial formation - themes which had been closely linked in the debate?

Chapter 2

The Oslo Model: The Competencies which Emerged in the Global Consultation.

1. The Oslo competencies.

When the Oslo Consultation convened in August 1996, it might have been expected to respond directly and individually to the themes expressed in the debate. Instead, it attempted to establish core competencies which, it believed, had already been conceived in the debate and were now the essence of viable ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation.

Although recommendations on methods of delivery had been made, including TEE and distance learning, the Global Consultation seemed to be saying that if the driving force of theological education and ministerial formation were clearly stated through these core competencies, the starting point in the implementation of a new vision in theological education would be set and an appropriate method or methods would follow.

Konrad Raiser, General Secretary of the WCC, identified three competencies in the debate which he understood went some way to meeting Pobee's "minimum requirements" for viable theological education and ministerial formation set out at the beginning of the process.¹

The first of these was **pastoral competence**, which, he ascertained, takes its lead from the Classical Protestant form of the parish ministry. This may presuppose the continued viability of the traditional denominational parish system but now it has been overtaken by new ecumenical and missionary situations which demand pastoral skills.

Missionary competence was a new challenge. This arose from "the recognition that the process of enculturation of the Gospel has to be reopened under the conditions of the post-Christian secular culture of individualism and materialism." This hermeneutical task of reading the 'text' of this culture in the light of the Gospel, and re-reading the body of Christian tradition in the light of heightened cultural awareness,

¹ Konrad Raiser, "The Importance of the Ecumenical Vision for Theological Education and Ministerial Formation" in *Towards...*, 59ff.

means that ministerial formation must go beyond providing the academic and practical tools for appropriating the tradition. Raiser had made the comment earlier in the debate that “This requires leaving the protected place of the academy and sharing consciously in the everyday life situations of people.”²

Ecumenical competence must be present in ministerial formation, he argued, because of the profound changes which have taken place between churches and in the religious situation. Ecumenical competence is the ability to live a “dialogical existence” and students should be prepared “for a situation of constant ecumenical learning.”³ A ministerial formation which is mainly concerned with the continuity of one tradition, “misses this reality where the various Christian traditions are interacting often in one individual biography.”⁴

Other competencies had emerged during the debate and were now incorporated into the agreed Oslo Consultation documents. The **Competence of Leadership**, which enables, equips and discerns gifts of ministry in the community and includes the ability to empower the marginalized in the community and to mediate in conflict situations; and **Theological competence**, which includes the hermeneutical task of discerning and acting upon the symbols in the community which have become mediations of the gospel.⁵

² Konrad Raiser, “The First Gospel of Viability of Ministerial Formation: A Response” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 64, Jan 1994, 20. L.R. Rasor contributed with the comment that the process was a search for a relevant and contextual way of doing theology that can overcome “the dissonance between the training of theology in the academic setting and the experiences gained in communities.” (“The Struggle for Viability: Reflections on Ministerial Formation”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.21, July 1994, 5.)

³ Richard Dickinson had made the point that at a time of denominational and religious fundamentalisms theological institutions need to “consciously nurture and sustain an ecumenical vision as being a commitment essential to an adequate and appropriate response to the gospel for the whole world.” This only comes with “deep rootage within a community of faith and commitment, because that commitment flourishes in a through faith, not outside of it.” A conscious effort has to be made to “foster a greater sense of a whole church which includes persons and churches of a significantly different theological persuasion.” Richard D.N. Dickinson, “Seeking to be Informed by a Ecumenical Vision: Christian Theological Seminary Facing the Next Millennium.” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol 65. April 1994. 21,23,24.

⁴ Raiser, “The First Gospel...A Response”, 20.

⁵ Konrad Raiser “The Importance...” in *Towards...*,57, and the following debate. Also *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.75, October 1996, 1-53 where the Oslo Consultation is reported and the various competencies discussed through Consultation Workgroups.

Pobee, co-ordinator of ETE and the person who gave leadership to the process affirmed these competencies when he said,

If the ecumenical vision can orient all ministries towards the basic task of upbuilding the Christian community (*oikodomé*), then this five fold pattern of competencies can help reshape the processes of theological education and ministerial formation.⁶

Raiser raised the issue of methodology to deliver these when he stated that if “traditional forms of theological education and ministerial formation” were used, they would “not provide training for leadership in the sense of enabling, equipping and discerning the gifts of ministry in the community.”⁷ He continued, “a theological education which places the emphasis on obedience and correct observance of the rules laid down by tradition will not prepare people adequately for the responsibility of shared leadership.”⁸ Raiser thus wished to reiterate the argument for the competencies to become the starting point.

Mary O’Driscoll,⁹ in her response to Raiser’s competencies added a sixth element.¹⁰ **Spiritual competence**, which of necessity acknowledged that theological education and ministerial formation were ultimately about knowing God and thus included formation of character. This competency was added to the list as it was in keeping with what was raised in the three year debate particularly in light of the holistic emphasis placed on theological education.¹¹

The final “message” from the Consultation was that:

There is a consensus among us on the holistic character of theological education and ministerial formation, which is grounded in worship, and combines and inter-relates spirituality, academic excellence, mission and evangelism, justice and peace, pastoral sensitivity and competence, and the formation of character.¹²

⁶ Pobee, *Towards...*, 60.

⁷ Pobee, *Towards...*, 59.

⁸ Pobee, *Towards...*, 59.

⁹ Professor of ecumenics at the Pontifical University of St Thomas in Rome. The Roman Catholic church relates to the WCC on an observing capacity. It is not a full member.

¹⁰ Pobee, *Towards...*, 64.

¹¹ This sixth element is included in the final report.

¹² Pobee, *Towards...*, 1.

It perceived that the ETE programme was “important” in promoting these matters and

... the new Mandate that has been proposed. By encouraging a formation process which inspires, liberates, empowers, resources and affirms the ministries present in the whole people of God, ETE is also urging a radical change in attitudes of dominance and dependence. We are convinced that new life for all will result, and the formation of ministers who are human, not heroic, in churches which are vital and viable, and open to ecumenical resource sharing for mission, not de-humanised and despondent and shut in on themselves.¹³

At the final plenary session of the Oslo Consultation a statement of penitence and commitment was made:

We wish to acknowledge that some patterns of theological education have not assisted the church to move forward, to respond to hurting people, to relate holistically to the earth, or to be people-focused or Christ-centred. We grieve that we have sometimes ignored crucial insights about life and God in our work as theological educators. As we move into the twenty-first century we have a renewed commitment to remain open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit by listening more carefully to the multiple voices of God’s people and responding with life-giving forms of theological education and ministerial formation.¹⁴

The question now facing Oslo was “...how can the processes of theological education and ministerial formation be reshaped to achieve such goals?”¹⁵ An appeal from an Oslo Workshop summed up this important element of Oslo’s agenda with the following recommendation:

We urge educators to become familiar with new methodologies of education and encourage the development of programmes for ‘long distance learning’ for those people in ministries who are unable to attend theological academies.¹⁶

¹³ “Message to Churches, Theological Institutes and To the World Council of Churches From The Global Consultation on Ecumenical Theological Education: Its Viability Today - Oslo 5-10 August 1996”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol, 75, October 1996, 4.

¹⁴ “Message to Churches...”, 4.

¹⁵ Dr Barbara Brown Zikmund and Dr George Kondothra, (Workshop V, Oslo) “Towards a Common Core in Theological Education and Ministerial Formation”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.75, October, 1996, 31.

¹⁶ John de Gruchy and Kyariaki Fitzgerald “Workshop II: The Role of the Academy in Ministerial Formation and Theological Education”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 75, October 1996, 14.

What was apparent throughout the debate was that the needs of students as participants in the formative process would require a pedagogical shift in teaching methods. These methods, however, would need to be properly resourced.

A Working Party in the early days of the debate had stressed that:

A viable theological education 'leads students out': it not only provides information, but shares models and experiences, offers inspiration and prepares candidates for a variety of ministries. This can and does take place in a variety of settings including a university or seminary...

A viable theological education takes seriously the limitations of resources without compromising the quest for excellence. Where theological education is offered at a distance (or in extension), the following factors must be taken into account: adequacy of resources (faculty, library, classrooms), needs of individual learners, needs of their ministerial settings and availability of technology.¹⁷

Throughout the debate Pobee's new 'vision' for theological education and ministerial formation had led the call for methods other than the traditional college route to be used. Distance and extension¹⁸ learning had featured from time to time in this debate. As the thesis will demonstrate, the WCC in earlier debates had recommended theological education by extension as an efficient methodology. If distance rather than extension learning is being recommended, it needs now to be considered. Would this methodology meet the requirements for the delivery of the competencies?

Furthermore, would it begin to answer some of the issues raised in the three year debate? For example, would it allow for spiritual growth together with academic studies, practical work with the congregation and socio-cultural development of the personality in the community? Would it address the imbalance between men and women in all aspects of ministry by making theological education accessible to all irrespective of class, race and wealth? If the WCC's ultimate goal is ecumenical theological education, could this educational methodology express that?

¹⁷ Report of Working Group 2, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 52. This observation sits well with Freire's comments on whether theological education domesticates or liberates.

¹⁸ Distance and extension learning are both forms of decentralised education. They will be explained further as the thesis progresses.

The task for this thesis is to take these competencies (as the Oslo model) and to make them the starting point from which to suggest a way to 'reshape the processes' of theological education in the spirit of Oslo. The specific application of the model in the contemporary context will be the Church of the Nazarene.

The competencies reflect content which would be wholly compatible with what is generally accepted to be theological education. But more significantly, they are 'purpose driven', that is, their purpose is the formation of the minister. This is seen as an integral part of the education process.

Before considering this further, the validity of the competencies and the rationale for a new method must be encapsulated into a restatement so that the task ahead is clear.

2. The validity of the six competencies: analysis and response.

2.1 The competencies: the new holism in theological education and ministerial formation.

Oslo argued that developing and integrating pastoral, missionary, ecumenical, leadership, theological and spiritual competencies, were the marks of the new holism in theological education. As already noted, Pobee ascertained that these could "help to reshape the process of theological education and ministerial formation".¹⁹ Raiser had added that their strength lay in their collectivity and that they would be limited if emphasised individually. For example, if ministerial formation were limited to a pastoral model then it would not lead to a viable community.²⁰ This 'Oslo model', globally agreed through the WCC, now claims to be a driving force in the theological education debate and consideration of appropriate methods of delivery for this model is needed.

2.2 The competencies as core values.

The Oslo debate set out to discuss the viability of theological education which included well rehearsed themes of content and method.²¹ Its final competencies

¹⁹ Pobee, *Towards...*, 60.

²⁰ See Raiser, "The First Gospel...A Response", 20.

²¹ Much of the current debate could be traced back to the seminal work by H. Richard Niebuhr, (*The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry: Reflection on the Aims of Theological Education*, New York:

however, take a step back from the well-channelled debate and primarily address issues to do with core values. These values call for a change in attitude by both the providers and receivers of theological education.

Although the core values must first be given content, the method by which the values become reality must be one which allows accessibility for all. The answer to the viability question - which lies at the heart of the debate - is approached through the route of core values, which result in core competencies and the quest for an accessible method which will ground this formation process.

Thus the Oslo competencies contend for a new process. They indicate that it is now appropriate to ask whether theological education can be driven by competencies which are deemed to be holistic and formative, rather than primarily by questions of method and accessibility - although these questions are part of what the core competencies represent. This is a significant change of approach.

The competencies therefore, are understood as a new perspective Oslo brings to the theological education debate on ministerial formation. This should drive theological preparation from the centre outwards. Thus the formation of the person must take priority over the informing of the person, although the 'informing' is an essential part. This concept arises out of Oslo's restatement of the place of ecumenism in the educative process. Pobee claimed that "the truth is only found in dialogue with others".²² As 'others' are part of a missionary and ecumenical community with values of the kingdom, the seeds of ministerial formation are to be found there. Furthermore, the academic endeavour, which is a vital part of the equation, must play its part in the method and thus accessibility, of the competencies. This too, must be an ecumenical task.

However, Pobee issues a salutary warning as he perceives that this concept of ministerial formation could become "an inheritor of traditions and assumptions".²³

Harper and Row, 1956) and continued by others including Max L. Stackhouse, Edward Farley, Don Browning and Barbara Wheeler. See also footnotes 71,72 in chapter seven.

²² Pobee, "The First Gospel...", 9.

²³ Pobee, "The First Gospel...", 5.

Where the residential institutional community, for example, is part of a tradition in theological education, ministerial formation may be perceived by some only to take place there and as a consequence, the tradition is continued. This may not always be the reality as “ideas of community are elusive in an age when many students are established, married, second career persons”²⁴ and so the theological institution may not provide this community. Although this is contested by several throughout the Oslo conferences, it must be seen that Pobee’s concept is not to dismantle the institution, but to begin at the point of asking what setting provides the best opportunity for the competencies to be expressed. He asks “Which aspect of inherited tradition must be continued today and in what form and why?”²⁵

Oslo contends that ecumenism will also help to discover this setting. As the church locally is linked to the church globally, the desire to “be a service of truth to the faith of the community” should allow learning in community however this is expressed, whether in the theological community or the local setting. Ecumenical theological education can thus be blended with ecclesiastical fidelity. What Pobee in particular seemed to be saying was that parallel to the quest for ministerial formation, the educational endeavour, which will include its method, is of significance to the church and its mission. Viable theological education must be “a dynamic interplay and creative tension between theory, *poiesis* and *praxis*.”²⁶ Ministerial formation and theological education understood in the context of Oslo’s competencies should provide a viable way forward for this to happen. At the heart of the endeavour must lie ecumenical vision, expressed in formative terms through the competencies and in educative terms through method.

²⁴ Pobee, “The First Gospel...”, 5.

²⁵ Pobee, “The First Gospel...”, 5.

²⁶ David Bosch, “The Nature of...”, quoted by Pobee, “The First Gospel...”, 10.

3. Response: The core competencies.

The core competencies are significant and it is difficult to contest such high ideals. However they will only be as strong as their content and implementation. It is therefore necessary to make some observations in relation to these points.

3.1 The providers of theological education.

Each *provider* of theological education must take the other *providers* and *consumers* seriously in the quest to find a common language in the search for good models of theological education that allow ministerial formation to be at the centre. As this thesis will show, 'taking each other seriously' will have to apply equally to the two bodies that provide the focus of this thesis: the WCC and the Church of the Nazarene - a non member of the WCC and a reluctant advocate of global ecumenism.

An ecumenical approach, Oslo suggests, will a) avoid duplication of scarce resources, and b) help the theological institutions ask if they are perpetuating a tradition for its own sake. As the inheritance of all Christian churches is mission to promote the values of the kingdom, self examination by these churches should demonstrate whether present programmes of theological education acknowledge, permit and promote the competencies.

Here is a challenge to theological education. Oslo states that theological education fails when certain end results are not forthcoming. These end results are ecumenical and missional and thus societal. Educational programmes must work towards these ends and expect these ends. Churches, individually and severally must ask whether Oslo's goals are being reached.

If this vision is shared, and in being shared is tested, then a viable and lasting tradition may emerge. If the new vision has at its heart the new competencies, Oslo claims, then the structures that arise will be viable.²⁷

²⁷ The thesis will show that historically the Church of the Nazarene, in global terms, has been insular rather than ecumenical. However, developing regional and national patterns suggest a more open approach. Within the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland still reflects this insularity, but the other countries of the UK are becoming more ecumenical in outlook.

3.2 The competencies and content, method and praxis.

The core competencies speak to the content and method and thus praxis of theological education and in so doing they highlight the areas where the process could falter and thus not provide the desired results. With the *content* of the 'theological competence', for example, there may be ecclesiastical fidelity but there must also be ecumenical awareness. Oslo calls for theological learning to be done in co-operative forms outside the theological institutions. Where strong doctrinal differences appear, there may be difficulty in putting this into practice. Furthermore, this competence has to have its roots in good pedagogical *methods* which resist the teaching of theology as "pure reception and habitualisation" or mostly "technocratic and expertocratic".²⁸

The context for this must include the church community where Pobee asserted that there was often a suspicion amongst the church leadership of theology and theologians as well as formation programmes. This could be avoided, Oslo said, if ministry were seen as more than the specialised ministry of "word and sacrament" and rather as the multifaceted finding and nurturing of *charisms* within the church. This takes ministry beyond one 'specialised' person to be the ministry for all and by all. On this basis, Oslo identified leadership competence as being of utmost importance in identifying gifts amongst the congregation and "equipping the saints"²⁹ for works of ministry. As the competencies are to emanate from the centre of theological education, so the method through which they become accessible to all is central.

It is apparent that the competencies begin to ask questions of the application or *praxis* of theological education. What is taught in these competencies, and how and where it is taught have a bearing on the *praxis*. Oslo argued that *orthodoxy* rather than *orthopraxis* was often the starting point of the academic programme which emphasised the cognitive over the affective. The call was for one's "experience of communion with God" to be able to interact with the curricula to the point where "pastoral spirituality"³⁰ led to missionary purpose.

²⁸ Susanne Blatt, "Viability debate...", 8.

²⁹ Ephesians 4:12.

³⁰ Robin J Pryor, "Nurturing Spiritual Development...", 14.

On this theme in the debate, John W de Gruchy had strongly advocated that “academic excellence...is not the primary goal”. What is more important is the nurturing of pastoral gifts and spirituality, training in leadership, evangelism and prophetic praxis”.³¹ This was not, according to J.R. Cochrane, the transfer of a skill, but rather “it is part of a vision of the healing of a broken world, part of a commitment to those and that which is broken”³² What was needed, he maintained, was a context which related theory to practice and theology to life.

The argument is made that the competencies need a context in which to become effective *praxis*. In the Oslo debate, the context is understood to incorporate the local church and congregation as well as the society which it serves. Any ‘Oslo model’ will have to take this into account as a necessary part of the formation process.

4. Response: competencies and new learning styles.

The argument for new learning styles to present these new competencies, necessitates the “revisit or evaluation” called for by Pobee. By accepting this call and the validity of the competencies, a shift in emphasis is also accepted. This shift is towards the centrality of theological education as the formation of the person. This formation will, in Pobee’s thinking, promote kingdom values. Programmes of theological education would purport to provide this. The way of testing that they do or do not, may lie not only in what is presented and the way they are presented, but also in the reasons for which they are presented. The call is for a new vision to lie at the heart of theological education thus driving the reason and purpose for which they are intended.

This key shift will have significance for the Church of the Nazarene, as the thesis will show. The church views the education process as necessary in the context of fulfilling ordination requirements. However, one minister, interviewed for the case study, indicated that the Course of Study for ordination was presented to him as “hoops to be

³¹ John W de Gruchy, “Authenticity...”, 47.

³² J.R. Cochrane, “Contextualization...”, 29.

jumped through” rather than as part of the formation process for ministry.³³ To begin to think of the process as *primarily* ‘formative’ will be a new concept for the Church of the Nazarene in the UK and world-wide.³⁴ The method and thus accessibility of a programme which is driven from the centre by these competencies, would reflect on how seriously this shift is accepted by the educational providers.

However, the new vision claims to have mission at its heart. In Oslo’s words, it aims to “to fulfil the ecumenical and missionary vocation of the church”. Whereas these words may be expected from a Consultation sponsored by the World Council of Churches, they may not be linked so readily in the minds of other church groups. In the case of the Church of the Nazarene, which claims to be missionary in its outlook but not particularly ecumenical, to connect “formation” of the minister with “ecumenical and missionary” may not be a natural progression of thought. However, this church cannot afford to ignore a global consultation of this nature. Even though it does not purport to be ecumenical, it must reflect on the what is said as a provider and consumer of theological education for the ordained ministry. Moreover, the thesis will show that it readily took advantage of the WCC sponsored TEE programme in the past without apparent acknowledgement of its source. The Church of the Nazarene must be encouraged to see itself as a contributor to this debate through its experiences as well as a participant of the benefits of the debate through its theological education programmes.

5. Conclusion: theological education as educative and formative.

The competencies reflect the thinking that “theological education and ministerial formation” is both “educative” and “formative” in its emphasis. This is an important element of the Oslo conclusions and demonstrates a move in emphasis.

The general debate, however, is familiar for, as the next chapter will show, it is closely related to the discussions which led to the development of TEE, a WCC

³³ Respondent H, 18. (Appendices)

³⁴ The case study indicates, however, that the Dean of NTC considers the Course of Study to be formative, although they admit that this is not always made as clear as it should be. See Interview with Dr Kent Brower , 22. (Appendices)

initiative. High hopes existed for this model, which seem now to have faded in the light of the Oslo Consultation. Did the model fail because it was not as holistic as the approach Oslo now suggests? Was it too westernised and not culturally specific enough? Were there other reasons?

Now an attempt is being made to find a new way forward. The “new way”, the new “vision”, is an “educative” and “formative” theological preparation for ministry. By implication, the results of previous debates and models of theological education have not provided this.

The previous significant debate on this subject by the WCC led to the setting up of TEE. *Viability* was at the heart of that debate also. At that time, it was the issue of *viability in context* which caught the attention of the educators and churchmen. As contextualisation was at the core of educational debate the result, which was TEE, contended to be a thoroughly contextualised programme.

The title of the Oslo Consultation, *Ecumenical Theological Education: Its Viability Today*, continued the theme of viability. This time, by emphasising ministerial formation in theological education, Oslo is attempting to introduce core competencies which reflect the desire, not only for an ecumenical approach to the task of theological education, but an ecumenicity of theological education itself. Thus, an important part of ministerial formation is the people of God, within which the ordained person is formed. The six competencies reflect this holistic thinking.

6. The next stages of debate.

Having identified the main issues coming out of Oslo and having reflected on the competencies, the other areas of study need to be tackled before bringing all three together in a constructive practical theology in a contemporary setting, i.e. the Church of the Nazarene in the United Kingdom.

Firstly, the context of the ‘Oslo model’ will now be explored further, beginning with the debate which led to the setting up of TEE. Of interest will be the reasons why Oslo appears to reject TEE as a method which would convey its new vision.

Secondly, an analysis of the history of theological education for the ordained ministry within the Church of the Nazarene will be done, which will demonstrate that it has attempted to implement its own programme of TEE beginning in Latin America. A critical analysis of this working model will answer some of the criticisms addressed to TEE and demonstrate where it too, must face searching questions in light of Oslo.

Thirdly, in addition to these methodological issues, the recent emergence of Nazarene 'competencies' will provide further useful material for debate in the context of Oslo's own competencies and vision for theological education.

Fourthly, the Oslo Consultation suggested that 'long distance learning'³⁵ be considered as a means by which the competencies could be delivered to a wide audience. The Consultation sent out a warning however, that

Where theological education is offered at a distance (or in extension), the following factors must be taken into account: adequacy of resources (faculty, library, classrooms), needs of individual learners, needs of their ministerial settings and availability of technology.³⁶

Fifthly, theoretical principles of distance learning will thus be critically examined, but perhaps more importantly, the question will be asked if Oslo's philosophy of theological education and ministerial formation is compatible with the philosophy of distance learning. If there is compatibility, then delivering the Oslo competencies through distance learning methods becomes a possibility.

Sixthly, the step beyond this, is to examine through the case study, if the Oslo competencies are present in some form within the contemporary Church of the Nazarene distance learning programme and whether the distance learning methodology being used is of best practice.

Finally, from the case study results, and building on previous research within the thesis, it is intended to formulate an Oslo model of theological education and ministerial formation through the methodology of distance learning. This will take

³⁵ John de Gruchy and Kyariaki Fitzgerald "Workshop II: The Role of the Academy in Ministerial Formation and Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 75, October 1996, 14.

³⁶ Report of Working Group 2, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 52.

into account existing church requirements for the ordained ministry, adequate resources (about which Oslo was particularly concerned) and contributions which the Church of the Nazarene may be able to make from its experiences in distance and extension learning.

Chapter 3

TEE Revisited: The Debate Behind Oslo.

Much of the Oslo Consultation debate, particularly relating to the viability of theological education, had already been rehearsed in the measures which led to development of the Theological Education Fund and TEE.

The Oslo Consultation was promoted by the Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) division of the World Council of Churches. ETE traces its beginnings to the Theological Education Fund (TEF) which subsequently became the Programme on Theological Learning (PTE) and then renamed as Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE).

The Theological Education Fund, as the founding programme, had promoted a unique experiment which centred in Latin America and rapidly spread into North America and other parts of the world. The experiment was Theological Education by Extension (TEE).¹ As this subject relates directly to our study, space will be given to examine its development and impact on theological education. High hopes had been invested in this programme prior to Oslo and many of the same areas of debate had been aired during its development.

1. The philosophy behind TEE.

In 1963 a prototype programme was launched in Guatemala by the Seminario Evangelico Presbyteriano. It quickly grew and with its expansion generated both enthusiasm and controversy. Ralph D. Winter, a church growth theorist, described it as "the acorn that exploded".² The Theological Education Fund awarded a grant to the Seminary in 1964 to develop the project. By 1970 \$100,000 had been invested by the TEF in projects related to this programme.

¹ From 1963 the acronym TEE has become used widely to the point of including theological education pursued by extension learning methods whatever the source. In 1982 in the UK the Theological Education by Extension Forum (TEEF) was formed to assist in the exchange of information and expertise between those involved in the either the use or production of distance learning materials.

² Ralph D. Winter, 'The Acorn that Exploded' in *World Vision*, XIV,10:1970,15.

Had it not been for the eclectic and entrepreneurial nature of this Fund, it is doubtful whether TEE would have either come to birth or have had such a wide impact on theological education. It is useful to address this aspect of the history of the TEF as light is also thrown on the context of TEE where it is readily observed that it was born in the milieu of pedagogical debate surrounding theological education; a task which Oslo revisited.

The TEF was founded by the International Missionary Council (IMC) at the Sixth World Missionary Conference in Ghana in January 1958 and given a five year mandate. The programme was set up primarily to assist the theological education of young people in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Its funding was passed on in the way of grants to various educational projects. The TEF determined that (these)

Grants should be designed to develop and strengthen indigenous theological education. They should stimulate local responsibility, encourage creative theological thinking and provide a higher standard of scholarship and training which is suited to the needs of the churches to be served.³

With the amalgamation of the IMC and the World Council of Churches, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) became responsible for the TEF. Although its budget was no more than 3% of what was allocated in other ways for theological education in the Third World, the TEF saw as its mandate the use of its resources to help promote local initiatives. Small scale financial contributions were made and projects were scrutinised so that, in their words, 'relevance', 'authenticity' and 'contextualisation' of theological education took place.⁴ Numerous projects were entered into over the period of its first mandate which ended in 1965. During that period the TEF acted more as a catalyst for promising projects rather than an initiator of new experiments.

³ Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry: A Study of the Work of the Theological Education Fund*, (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1981), xiii.

⁴ Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training*, xiv. This terminology is reminiscent of the Oslo debate.

In proposing a second mandate,⁵ the Advisory Group set up by CWME suggested a new focus, namely:⁶ (i) strengthening academic competence, including continuing education of teachers, exchanges of professors, aid for regional theological centres and research projects. (ii) strengthening the student community by recruiting trainees and raising the entrance requirements of ministerial training. (iii) curriculum reform which involved “raising the academic level and making the curriculum relevant to the situation.”⁷ (iv) improvement of teaching methods and (v) a continuation of dialogue which would include a continuing education course for pastors. In adopting the report the CWME added one point, viz. “The strengthening of the Christian community in the theological training centres.”⁸

Focusing on indigenous theological education had been one of the TEF’s goals at its inception in 1958. Now it was a primary goal for its second phase. Until this time, the research model of theological training had been at the forefront of the thinking of the theological educators. The difficult task which faced the TEF was how to reach the goal of complete indigenization which would be genuine and lasting. Should it come about through substantial funding which would free the indigenous people to develop their own model, or through a development of a indigenous theological process which would allow them to think beyond the research model?

The problem about this particular objective was that it was too vague. There was little understanding of what was meant by ‘indigenization’ What was known was that it was to be ‘non-western’. However at that time western theologians had not experienced enough of any alternatives which might replace the existing model so they could not be of much assistance.⁹

⁵ Given at the meeting of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism (DMWE) in Mexico City in 1963. A Third Mandate was approved in 1969 and extended until 1977.

⁶ Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training*, 113.

⁷ Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training*, 113.

⁸ Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training*, 114.

⁹ A significant contemporary development of Liberation Theology in Latin America, also sought to contextualise for its locus a Christian theology which it perceived to be too ‘Western’ in its origins and concepts.

What seemed to be indicated was that the theologians of the 'Third-World Churches' had to be released from a one-sided dependence upon western theology so that they could do their own academic theological work. This meant that they had to increase their academic competence.¹⁰ On the other hand these theologians were expected to adapt to the educational style, habits and thinking of their own country. The feeling by some was that change could not be forced, it had to come from within the 'Third-World Churches'.

The TEF had succeeded in raising the awareness for ministerial training and raising the level at which it was operating. It chose highly qualified staff in various regions of the Third World to facilitate its efforts but this had the tendency of directing its programme towards the academically elite which could benefit from the Western style theological education and standards. Clearly, however, if ministerial training was to wholly succeed and become truly for the people, the TEF would need to address the training of all levels for ministry, ordained and lay.

During the time of its second mandate (1965 - 1970) there was a growing awareness among developing countries of the need for self - determination, free, as they saw it, from the economic exploitation of the industrialised nations. This same desire spilled over into theological education and the Western hierarchical structures which accompanied it also came under scrutiny. Now the impetus for change was coming more from the Third World Churches themselves. They had no wish to perpetuate education and ministry structures which seemed to be in total opposition to the famine, illiteracy and political powerlessness of the masses.

The question which arose was "Which church, which ministry and which ministerial training is relevant today in the developing countries? How can the church in its ministry and its training participate in the mission of God to people in conditions of suffering, oppression and exploitation."¹¹

¹⁰ A concept similar to Oslo's "theological competence".

¹¹ Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training*, 126.

The TEF tried to respond to these probing questions by encouraging four aspects of theological training: (i) the development of a true Christian community in the centres for ministry training; (ii) the recruitment of more candidates for the ministry; (iii) putting in place a continuing education programme for the pastors already trained and to encourage graduate and faculty research; (iv) to reform the curriculum and improve teaching methods.

The fact that change was needed was certainly being fostered within the church in Latin America. The contemporary writings of the Liberation Theologians led by Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Peruvian priest, encouraged the development of a 'theology from the underside', a theology that began with the poor in their context. Paulo Freire, a consultant in the Office of Education in the World Council of Churches in Geneva, spoke of the 'Western' style of education as an instrument of subjugation as it had, in his opinion, nullified critical awareness among its Third World consumers and had sustained economic and social domination of the poor.¹²

Freire was not alone in adopting the term 'conscientisation'¹³ to describe this new educational process. The Liberation Theologians were also using it to describe their theological process.¹⁴ By conscientisation they were referring to the process whereby people, as knowledgeable subjects rather than simple recipients achieve an awareness of the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives to the point where they are able to transform that reality. People should become participants in their learning.

Freire and others adjudged that the Third World educational process was tied up with a Western pedagogy, which - they considered - may suppress cultural awareness. This had to be addressed. A radical pedagogy in Freire's thinking, led to a dismissal of an elitism between teacher and student by means of a mutual learning process - the student from the teacher and the teacher from the student. "...in a rigorous

¹² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), 10ff.

¹³ Oslo's equivalent terminology was "Contextualisation".

¹⁴ Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1985), chapters 6 and 7 especially.

understanding of the process of knowing, seeing this as a social process, it is impossible to separate teaching from learning.”¹⁵

To interested observers, the inherent danger it seemed, was whether the pedagogy presently being used was firstly ‘political’¹⁶ - that is, it maintained the status quo of a western model of for example, the research school; secondly whether it was a pedagogy of circumstances - because of a scarcity of teachers and funds; or thirdly whether it was a radical pedagogy - which began with the reality of the students’ lives and their knowledge or opportunities or lack of them, instead of the teacher’s reality which is the context of his knowledge, not the student’s.

Although this awareness of the debate was present in theory, in practice the areas of graduate study and faculty research together with curriculum reform and a closer association of theological institutions, became the main thrust of the TEF during this period. The danger of bringing to the West - for theological education - those who were the educationally elite did pose its own problems. Would they culturally adapt? Would they return to their home churches?

One cannot be sure whether the low rate of indigenous teachers in all of the Third World areas tackled was reversed by what was being proposed, but certainly an attempt was made to address the issue of the lack of indigenous teachers. Africa seems to have benefited most. Lienemann-Perrin explains¹⁷ that in 1965 only 25% of the theological teachers in Africa were indigenous. This compared with 16% in the English speaking Caribbean; 30% in the Pacific; 48% in Latin America; 57% in East and South East Asia and 59% in Central America and Mexico. Three hundred and fifty-two financial grants were given with practically half of them going to Africans. In addition, regional courses for teachers of theology were set up in Africa and more

¹⁵ Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 177-178.

¹⁶ It could be argued that education *per se* is a political act. The nature of education has the inherent qualities to be political.

¹⁷ Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training*, 128.

resources were ploughed into that continent. By the end of the TEF's second mandate the percentage of African teachers had risen from 25% (1960) to 40%.¹⁸

The curricula of most of the theological schools in the targeted areas were copies of American, British or other European systems. Any reform of curriculum would have to go further than what was taught. A new theological orientation was required. It was perceived that theological institutions on their own could not accomplish this, it had to be done in conjunction with a structural and theological reorientation of the local church.¹⁹ This could not be forced on the churches or the missionary societies on which they were dependent. A vote of confidence was needed from that quarter as well as financial means for seeing these changes through.

The grants which the TEF made available must have been seen as innovative at the time. The question of how an authentic theological curriculum was to be developed was central, and several institutions and churches on each continent set about solving this problem in their own particular way. The result was characteristically different for each world area. One programme that was eventually adopted by most as an effort to address these questions was TEE.

2. The development of Theological Education by Extension (TEE).

Simply stated, TEE is decentralised theological education. It is a field based approach and does not interrupt the learner's ongoing relationships and commitments and thus cultural dislocation is minimised.

Kinsler described the prototype as "...that model of theological education which provides systematic, independent study plus regular supervised seminars in the context of people's varied life and work and ministry".²⁰ Developed at the Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala, where the first TEF grant was directed, it arose, not out of a

¹⁸ One wonders what happened to the Caribbean area with its low percentage of indigenous teachers. No figures are available, but one would have thought that the Caribbean would have been well placed particularly if language had been a determining factor in the use of this programme.

¹⁹ Oslo perceived a similar problem. Changes in approach to theological education and the involvement of the church community, had to include changes in the church itself.

²⁰ F. Ross Kinsler, ed., *Ministry by the People; Theological Education by Extension*, (New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1983), 14.

pre-designed model, but rather as a response to a series of local problems in ministerial training.

The growth of the Presbyterian church demanded trained leaders. As a result, the Seminary was founded in Guatemala City in 1938. However an inventory in 1962 revealed that only 10 of the 200 students who had studied at the Seminary were still in the pastorate. The main problem seemed to be that the students were reluctant to return to a rural life-style having lived and studied in the city. Interestingly this finds a parallel in the fears the TEF had about those from Third World countries who would study in the West and then either not return to their countries or return "Westernised".

The Seminary then moved to a rural setting (San Felipe, Retalhuleu, Guatemala), near to where the majority of the churches were located. This did not seem to resolve the problem completely, as many who genuinely wished to study could not leave families and employment no matter how close the Seminary was to their home.

Therefore in 1963 the residence programme was de-emphasised and the extension programme was begun. Several regional centres were established and a three-hour weekly seminar was given by the Seminary professors in each centre. Initially the students' travel expenses were paid. Periodically during the year, once a month at first, meetings were held at the Seminary for all the students.

Several difficulties arose. Students were not able to tackle the 'take-home' assignments they were given. This particularly applied to those less academically gifted. The solution was to develop a series of work books using an inductive methodology for the study of the Bible and traditional theological textbooks. These books were geared for individual study. Another problem was the immense diversity in the educational and socio-economic levels of the students. In response to these academic differences several levels were built into the curriculum design, enabling the students to build on their secular education, whether at Primary, Secondary or University level. More advanced students were expected to do more assignments, reports and projects.

The programme quickly revealed that there were many gifted leaders with high intelligence who had little or no academic training and, as a consequence, could not do the simplest exercises. To meet this need, an auxiliary extension programme was started to assist interested persons to complete their primary schooling. Over time, better government sponsored programmes developed and this second system became unnecessary.

Nearly all of these steps met with opposition from one or more sections of the Presbyterian Church of Guatemala. However, by 1966, not only had a planned extension programme emerged, but it was beginning to attract attention throughout the continent. Without increasing funds, the student body of the seminary had grown from 7 to 200, taught by 3 full-time and 12 part-time faculty members. In addition it seemed as though the training needs of the church were being met.

Although this form of training was proving to be successful in training people where they lived, it did place a great demand for personal discipline upon the student. However this in itself was seen as a screening process. Ill-equipped or unmotivated candidates were thus tested before being moved out of their homes and environments. Those who were able to leave, attended the residence programme and the numbers in seminary increased. The quality of the academic programme improved over the previous residential programme. This was due in large part to the greater maturity of the students and that they had already proved themselves in study.

It is worth noting that extensive theological training was available to all through TEE. Lay people who wanted to deepen their faith and understanding without committing themselves to candidacy for ordination formed a substantial core group. Mulholland summed up the comprehensiveness of theological education through TEE by saying,

... geographically (it reaches) to the different areas where the students live; culturally in accordance with the customs and needs of each zone; academically to the different levels of secular education; socially to the various classes; ecclesiastically to all present and potential leaders rather than only candidates for ordination; and chronologically to persons of all

ages as well as to individuals who desire a programme for continuing education through the years.²¹

As the popularity of the programme spread, the number of students enrolled²² increased dramatically from 14,000 in 1972²³ to 55,378 in 1980.²⁴ Whereas in 1969 no mention is made of TEE in the survey of theological education made by the World Council of Churches, the 1976 report states,

Theological education by extension is now clearly established as the most vigorous alternative creative form of preparation for the ministry. It may soon outdistance residential patterns of training as the dominant form of training for the ministry.²⁵

TEE raised significant issues in educational methodology. The mode of teaching moved from lecture to seminar and the student was entrusted with more independent study.

Traditional educational theories and structures were challenged. Issues such as educational technology, instructional objectives, programmed learning, consciousness raising, deschooling, adult education, open classrooms and case studies received heightened prominence in thought and discussion.²⁶

It was a methodology which was open to change. In its early days Ralph Winter pointed out that TEE would not, for example, automatically produce church growth unless the propagation of the Gospel and the pioneering growth of churches was a prominent part of the thinking of those involved in extension studies.²⁷ The result was that curricula were redesigned to respond to what was an original goal of TEE, i.e. more pastors and more churches. Here was theological education at its most

²¹ Kenneth B. Mulholland, *Adventures in Training the Ministry*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976), 66.

²² As the extension programme developed beyond Guatemala it was often promoted as a set formula without due regard to process.

²³ Wayne C. Weld, *The World Directory of Theological Education by Extension*, (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973), 10.

²⁴ Wayne C. Weld, *The World Directory*, 1980 Supplement. (Wheaton: The Committee to Assist Ministry Education Overseas, 1980), 6.

²⁵ The Theological Education Fund (TEF) report. Quoted in F. Ross Kinsler, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education*, (revised edition), (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), 14.

²⁶ Kenneth Mulholland, 'TEE comes of Age: A Candid Assessment after Two Decades.' ed. Robert L. Youngblood, in *Cyprus: TEE Comes of Age*, (Exeter: Paternoster Press, n.d.(1985?)), 14.

²⁷ Vergil Gerber, ed., *Discipline Through Theological Education by Extension*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 79.

pragmatic by responding to apparent needs and in so doing was responding to the claim that the traditional methods of theological education were not providing sufficient pastors for the burgeoning growth in Christian converts in many countries of the Third World.

Professor Alice Jacobs, (a prime mover in the Guatemalan promotion of TEE and a tutor at the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala)²⁸ maintained that TEE demonstrated that it was not only a vehicle for leadership development and the subsequent growth for existing church structures, but it was also a vehicle for the renewal and beneficial change of both ecclesiastical and social structures.²⁹

Firstly, regarding educational method, she maintained that TEE freed the student from 'intellectual domestication' and encouraged active participation and theological reflection. This is due she claimed, to the fact that the student was not a passive receptacle of information from a teacher, but was now much more involved in the education process. "There is communication and the interchange of ideas in which each person both learns and contributes new knowledge"

Secondly, alluding to theological content, this, she said, tended towards a holistic approach thus overcoming the dichotomy which results when,

certain categories of traditional evangelical pietism are divorced from concrete earthly realities. (TEE keeps students in contact with) people in their misery... we are not saying that we ought to discard spiritual, abstract, traditional language in order to be mastered by a purely material language. No, what we want to say is that TEE does not divorce these two factors, rather, it combines them.³⁰

Thirdly, a further claim for the efficacy of TEE was in the number of married women who had benefited from registration in this programme. In addition a high percentage of students enrolled in TEE had been lay people. The argument was then

²⁸ The actual founders of TEE were James Emery, Ralph D. Winter and F. Ross Kinsler. Ralph D. Winter was for ten years a Presbyterian missionary in Guatemala. He later became lecturer in the School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. This explains the close connection between TEE and the Church Growth Movement which came out of California.

²⁹ F. Ross Kinsler, *Ministry by the People*, 38.

³⁰ F. Ross Kinsler, *Ministry by the People*, 39.

made that those who had trained specifically towards ordination had done so within the largely lay group. This, it was felt, had lessened the distance between clergy and laity and made the ordination candidates very much aware of the issues faced by lay persons.

What Jacobs was claiming for TEE seemed to answer some of the questions raised in the Oslo consultation. Here was theological education which was indigenous and thoroughly contextualised. It was aware that in its context of exploited peoples it brought 'conscientisation' of culture. It was initially a local response to a local need. It was flexible and able to adjust to perceived weaknesses in content and goals. Did TEE go far enough? From Oslo's response, it appears not.

3. Oslo and TEE.

In launching the Oslo debate John Pobee used as a starting point, a 1975 study produced for the Theological Education Fund; *"Viability in Context"*. This study was produced at a high point in TEE's development. As stated above, a report from the World Council of Churches in 1976 said:

Theological education by extension is now clearly established as the most vigorous alternative creative form of preparation for the ministry. It may soon outdistance residential patterns of training as the dominant form of training for the ministry.³¹

Although this model is 'clearly established', Pobee is calling for a "revisit or evaluation"³² of theological education. This demonstrates that the high hopes placed in TEE do not seem to have been achieved. Why not? What are TEE's shortcomings and what can be learned?³³

³¹ The Theological Education Fund (TEF) report. Quoted in F. Ross Kinsler, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education*, (revised edition), Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981, 14.

³² John S. Pobee, "The First Gospel of Viability of Ministerial Formation", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 64, January 1994, 5.

³³ It could be stated that the Oslo debate includes negative comments on residential and distance learning programmes of theological education. This is true. However, the implied and overt criticisms of TEE are evident to the point where it is singled out. The WCC may be caught in a cleft stick in this aspect of the debate as it had promoted TEE and could not easily dismiss it outright. Acknowledgement of TEE's contribution to theological education together with some specific criticisms, are linked to a general call for a new vision in theological education method.

3.1 "Evaluation of TEE programmes": a PTE consultation, reported within the Oslo debate.

A survey of TEE philosophy was part of the Oslo debate. It affirmed that "the movement has spread to many countries and been popularised during at least the latter half of its twenty year existence".³⁴

Oslo included a report from a consultation sponsored by PTE on the "*Evaluation of TEE Programmes*" held in Costa Rica in May 1990 and a subsequent conference in Johannesburg in December 1993. What is evident is the diversity of opinion in how the evaluation of TEE should be approached. For example for Ralph W. Tyler,

The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realised... Since educational objectives are essentially changes in human beings, that is, the objectives aimed at are to produce certain desirable changes in the behaviour patterns of the students, then evaluation is the process for determining the degree to which these changes in behaviour are actually taking place.³⁵

Tyler is arguing that evaluation should not only be the measurement of the achievement of a pupil judged against established norms, but is broader than that. The behaviour of the student is to be measured twice, that is before and after the student has undertaken the programme. Only in this way can the educational objectives be assessed and agreement reached that change has taken place. On his reckoning, the educational objectives were not being realised because this type of evaluation was not being carried out.

Others argued for accreditation as the best form of evaluation. The standards set by an accrediting agency - which usually consists of a group of professional experts - are applied to the programme and its contents assessed. John Hanson commented that if

³³ "Message to Churches, Theological Institutes and to the World Council of Churches from the Global Consultation on Ecumenical theological education: Its Viability Today, Oslo, 5-19 August 1996", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.75, October, 1996, 4.

³⁴ Carol Mouat, "Theological Education by Extension: A Survey of TEE Philosophy", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 73, April 1996, 33.

³⁵ Ralph W. Tyler cited in Ross F. Kinsler and James H. Emery, eds., *Opting for Change, A Handbook on Evaluation and Planning for Theological Education by Extension*, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1991, 9.

there was any sign of “watering down” in the accreditation process then the programme was perceived as of “lower stature”; in other words it has less value than its European counterparts. This point was taken up by the Caribbean consultation when it said that its :

One concern about TEE models for ... full-time ordained ministers is that, while they facilitate community-related training, they run the risk of creating a second-class group of ministers. Perhaps it is too early in the day to tell, but it will be interesting to see what pastoral charges are entrusted to those trained in such programmes.³⁶

It is significant, that in the evaluation of TEE as a model of theological education, formal academic accreditation, as a way of demonstrating the comparable global strength of TEE, should be considered as a viable option. The history of TEE has shown that there was a strong desire to move away from “western” models, where academia was seen to be dominant, to more contextualised models.

Mouat observed that “there are important implications for the evaluation of non-traditional education, and for TEE in particular, where greater emphasis is placed on learner outcomes than on procedures and structures”.³⁷ In other words, the end result may reflect on what is taught, more than how it was taught. Thus Mouat seems to be calling for the method to be scrutinised. This is a crucial point where academic standards are seen to be an issue. Mouat seems to be calling for some transcultural value for such standards, something that is missing from TEE.

4. How the larger Oslo debate viewed TEE.

Although these areas of criticism were included in the Oslo consultation process, the larger debate went far beyond the PTE consultation. It can be condensed into three main areas of concern:

Firstly, Oslo stated that TEE must face the limitations of its resources which may compromise its quest for excellence.³⁸ The needs of individual learners, the adequacy

³⁶ Howard Gregory, ‘Ministerial Formation for the Caribbean’ in *Caribbean Theology...*, 91.

³⁷ Carol Mouat, “Theological Education,” 32.

³⁸ The Report of the Working Group 2 (*Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 52.) pointed out that in extension learning, resources (faculty, library, classrooms) needs of individual learners, needs of their ministerial settings and availability of technology” must be taken into account. Ross Kinsler,

of faculty, library and classroom resources and the availability of technology must be taken into account more than ever before. As TEE was the product of the two-thirds world, resources were always going to be an issue. Oslo seems to be saying that TEE has not kept up with developments in the way adults learn, the demand for better trained faculty and the new growth in technology which would assist in library and classroom resources.

Secondly, theological education must include an emphasis on spiritual growth together with academic studies, practical work with the congregation and socio-cultural development of the personality of the student in the community. This will include a thorough examination of the reasons for the imbalance between men and women in ministry preparation. In Oslo's view, TEE has not fully overcome the gender inequalities in the preparation for ministry.³⁹

Thirdly, it seems that Oslo challenged TEE because the programme was not perceived to promote ministerial formation in the way that Oslo now viewed it even although TEE appears to have the makings of a programme which could deliver this. For example, during TEF's second mandate it attempted to strengthen the academic competence of the teachers and to raise the academic level of the students within the call for "relevance, authenticity and contextualisation". Also Freire had called for the students to become participants in the process of indigenous theological education.

Yet Oslo seems to conclude - by its determination to explore other models - that TEE is not as student-orientated as it claims. Oslo is saying that students must become participants in a rigorous formational and educational process which should go beyond simply providing information, to that of incorporating the student in the

a strong advocate of TEE from the beginning, had stated that attempts were now being made in Latin America to address these needs through diversifying the methodology of theological education in order to "supersede the polarised polemics of extension versus residence..." with a "...network of centres, sister institutions, adjunct professors and other resources, including an incipient electronic library network to undergird the entire process of learning." ("Alternative Models of theological education and the Viability Debate", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.74, July 1996, 32.) There is an implicit acknowledgement by Kinsler that a lack of resources had hindered the effectiveness of TEE.³⁹ Report of Working Group 2, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 52. This problem is not limited to TEE.

process which should include the sharing of ministry models and experience. Oslo seems to imply that TEE was not fulfilling its desired aims. What seems to be needed is an approach to ministerial formation which would bridge the gap between formal intramural programmes and the communities in which people lived their daily lives. TEE's methodology does not combine the formal programme with the contextual need. In the process of contextualising theological education it has exposed the programme to weaknesses on the academic front. In addition, reports coming out of Costa Rica, where the method had been used extensively, indicate that a serious cost factor is involved in taking college faculty to students in their various settings.⁴⁰

As noted earlier, Professor Alice Jacobs had advocated that TEE as a programme freed students from "intellectual domestication" and argued that it encouraged active participation and theological reflection. Moreover she stated, the student is now involved in his own education. Jacobs would have maintained that TEE was a holistic programme of theological education.

What Jacobs appealed to was that TEE was a programme promoted by a Third World church at a time when the TEF was losing its way during its first mandate. Here was a providential discovery in the milieu of a pedagogical debate surrounding theological education. Furthermore, it was a providential local answer that soon became a global answer. Other Third World countries could accept and adapt the programme as their own. They, too, were sensitive to the imposition of Western educational structures and sought to understand what the 'indigenising' of theological education would mean to them.

TEE was a way of making theological education culturally aware. It was very suitable to the 'conscientisation' debate of the 1960's which sat well with the upsurge of Liberation Theologies both in Latin America and beyond. In addition, it responded well to Paulo Freire's claim that Western educational processes were "subjugating the poor" by beginning a programme that promoted theological education among the poor.

⁴⁰ Howard Gregory, 'Ministerial Formation for the Caribbean' in *Caribbean Theology...*, 90.

However, Oslo was indicating that these arguments were now insufficient. The debate had moved on, and although the indiginizing and contextualising of theological education were still live issues, they were now part of a new holism with ministerial formation and theological education at its centre.

Oslo's call through John Pobee for a "revisit and evaluation" is countered by the acknowledgement that TEE has spread and been popularised world-wide. Oslo's evaluation does not dismiss TEE altogether, but is particularly critical of its educational credentials. The three comments made earlier by the PTE San Jose contributors stand out. Ralph Tyler asks "Are the educational objectives of TEE being met?" John Hanson enquires "Are the programmes accredited?" Carol Mouat speaks of the danger of putting emphasis on "learner outcomes" rather than procedures and structures. These questions and Mouat's statement are not countered in the debate. Again, the implication is that the comments are legitimate.

Oslo speaks strongly for educational methods and structures which can be measured according to certain academic criteria. However it speaks even more strongly of 'forming' the student by not only giving him information but also involving him in ministry models and experience backed up by good resources. The implication for TEE is that this is not happening as holistically as Alice Jacobs described.

In light of these comments, TEE appears to be incorporated in Oslo statement:

Some patterns of theological education have not assisted the church to move forward...as we move into the twenty-first century we have a renewed commitment to remain open...to the multiple voices of God's people (and respond) with life-giving forms of theological education and ministerial formation.⁴¹

5. The end of TEE, the victim of a different agenda?

Behind the explicit and implicit criticism of TEE there has emerged the larger Oslo agenda. Oslo has attempted to shift the focus from theological education alone to

⁴¹ Message to Churches, Theological Institutes and To The World Council of Churches from the Global Consultation on Ecumenical Theological Education: Its Viability Today- Oslo 5-10 August 1996, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 75, October 1996, 4. With the criticisms of TEE being allowed to stand within the debate, it can be assumed that it too, is included in this comment.

theological education and ministerial formation. As the preceding debate demonstrates, the similarity of pedagogical discussion which led to the development of TEE and that which led to Oslo's "ministerial competencies" is apparent. However the focus of Oslo's "competencies" is on "ministerial formation" as part of "theological education".⁴² For Pobee, the viability of the competencies to fulfil this dual task turns on the mix of academic excellence, technical proficiency, experience and commitment. The question he raises is: "How may these components be measured and what are the minimum requirements for the achievement of those necessary components of the formation process?"⁴³ Thus the subsequent Oslo debate and the emerging competencies are formative, as well as educative in nature. They concern being as well as doing. They are a new attempt to define holistic theological education.

5.1 An adequate argument for new learning styles?

Has Oslo adequately argued the case for the further adoption of different learning styles beyond TEE to fulfil these formative and educative "competencies"? Are they so different that new learning styles are needed to present them?

As stated, it is apparent from the Oslo debate that some areas of the world still use TEE as a method of theological education. Some contributors to the debate raise questions about this method as has been demonstrated. However, other methods, such as those involving residential training are also questioned, though less vigorously.

Pobee insisted that there was no need to begin the quest for new models *de novo* but rather to re-examine what already existed. Programmes will survive, or new programmes emerge if the vision of a new holism in theological education is accepted, that is, that it is educative and formative. In order that 'kingdom values' are at the core of this double-edged approach, all of the competencies must be included.

The tenor of the debate indicates that there is, however, no great enthusiasm to perpetuate existing models. Diplomacy, and the quest for unity may have caused Oslo to hold back from condemning outright specific methods of theological education. The

⁴² Pobee, "The First Gospel," 10.

⁴³ Pobee, "The First Gospel," 10.

way forward is through programmes that promote ministerial formation in theological education. This was the new 'mandate',⁴⁴ the new vision, "to fulfil the ecumenical and missionary vocation of the church". Ecumenism, therefore, ("the truth in its fullness is only discovered in dialogue with others") lies at the heart of this quest. Only as this is acknowledged and practised will the content, method and accessibility of theological education become reality.

TEE is criticised but not dealt a death blow by Oslo. If we are to look ahead for answers, with Pobee's comment in mind about re-examining what already exists, we might ask what TEE has contributed to this type of educational method and what its next generation looks like.

In order to explore this and to substantiate the argument already made, a working model of TEE will be explained and critiqued in the next chapter. This will be a way of explaining some of Oslo's unspoken as well as verbalised criticisms. From a consideration of a working model it should be possible to determine more adequately why it appears that TEE cannot deliver the Oslo competencies.

6. Conclusion.

The PTE San José consultation on TEE in 1990, suggested that because

theological programmes should grow out of and respond to the needs of the Christian community and the larger community, so the evaluation process (of a theological education programme) must involve not only teachers and students but also the churches and their social contexts. This dialogue will normally include the tension between responsive accompaniment and prophetic challenge.⁴⁵

The assessment of whether a programme succeeds or not must take into account the tensions between the challenge - for example by a particular denomination - to provide theological education for the ordained ministry and the response it is able to provide.

⁴⁴ "Message to Churches, Theological Institutes and to the World Council of Churches from the Global Consultation on Ecumenical theological education: Its Viability Today, Oslo, 5-19 August 1996", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.75, October, 1996, 4.

⁴⁵ Kinsler and Emery, *Opting*, 103.

As the particular context of this thesis is the Church of the Nazarene, a survey of its educational history will include a focus on how it came to adapt a version of TEE in educating people for the ordained ministry. This church has invested in non-institutional learning since its founding, and has come to rely heavily upon this form up to the present.

In order to test the validity of TEE in general and the Nazarene programme in particular, it will be necessary to look beyond the programme itself to the perception of what it was meant to achieve, and whether that achievement reflected a formative and holistic approach to theological education - that which the WCC supports.

Initial examination indicates that TEE is not seen to be capable of delivering Oslo's competencies. It does not receive the ringing endorsement of Oslo because it is perceived to have flaws educationally and does not appear to make the grade in formative theological education. If TEE cannot deliver Oslo's vision of theological education, then the question of what can and does, remains.

6.1 A working model and its context.

To assist this discussion therefore, an analysis of a working model of TEE for the ordained ministry which was launched by the Church of the Nazarene in Central America, will be considered. A closer inspection of the programme may reveal why Oslo looked beyond TEE as a way towards a new vision for theological education. Additionally, questions are now being raised in Nazarene circles as to TEE's efficacy in preparing people for the ordained ministry. Recent 'competencies' have been developed which demonstrate contemporary thinking in the church on the subject of theological education.

As the Oslo and TEE debate had to be set in their contexts in order for them to be understood, so too will the Church of the Nazarene and its educational journey. It has been noted that ~~the~~ those who make theological education available are important players in understanding the merits of it. To see where, when and why the Church of the Nazarene brought in TEE, as well as making a critical analysis of the programme, may help in the understanding of why Oslo does not fully endorse it.

The question now asked is: "Beginning with its understanding of the ordained ministry, how has the theological education of the Church of the Nazarene developed over its one hundred year history?" As with Oslo, we ask "what are its key educational statements and practices in this regard?"

We will then assess the competencies emerging from the church's educational journey and begin the research task of evaluating them against its own criteria for theological education and those of the Oslo consultation, in preparation for the later case study.

Chapter 4

The Development of Theological Education in the Church of the Nazarene and the Emerging Competencies for Theological Education and the Ministry.

Having focused on the Oslo model, and how its competencies might be delivered, we turn to the Church of the Nazarene, where the 'Oslo model' will finally be applied. It will be seen that, from its beginnings, the church has viewed ministerial formation in a particular light. Its methodology of theological education for ordination, which included TEE, and the set of contemporary competencies it established for its global theological education process are of interest to this study.

In order to locate these elements, the place and ethos of theological education in the international Church of the Nazarene must be examined in its historical setting. To do this, a critical historical literature and archival¹ search of primary documents relating to its *theological education* must be attempted. It will be argued that, in its own journey, the Church of the Nazarene has experienced similar challenges to the WCC in determining the criteria for and the method of theological education.

1. The international Church of the Nazarene and theological education.

Before the Church of the Nazarene became a denomination at Pilot Point, Texas in 1908,² the uniting bodies had sponsored Bible colleges and universities or liberal arts colleges.³ These were however, in the words of the 1989 Education Commission report, "the lengthened shadows of individual leaders".⁴

One such example was the first theological college promoted by Phineas F Bresee, the founding father of the church who had acknowledged the need for educational preparation for those going into ministry. The early recognised ministry pattern of the

¹ The archive of the Church of the Nazarene is kept in its Headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, USA to which the writer was given access via Mr Steve Ingersoll (archivist). The archives of the British Isles Church of the Nazarene is housed at NTC. These were also accessible to the author.

² The author's researched history drawing on original archival records and published materials to show the *historical development* and emerging *structures of the ordained ministry* of the Church of the Nazarene, is to be found in the Appendices.

³ There were already 14 Bible Institutes, Colleges and Universities founded in the United States and Canada by the congregations who were eventually to be called Nazarenes (*Education Committee Report*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1964, 16.)

⁴ *Education Committee Report*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1989, 6.

church offered ordination as an Elder or consecration as a Deaconess and the new denomination was attracting young people who, in Bresee's words, "needed further training for efficient service".⁵

Some property was offered to the fledgling church in the Los Angeles area. Bresee, already overworked and somewhat cautious concerning this offer, handed the responsibility to a trusted co-worker, Mr Ruth.⁶ The matter was taken up. What was to become the Nazarene University and Deets Pacific Bible College opened in the autumn of 1902.

Miss Leora Maris⁷ was the first Principal and the institution steadily grew. By the end of 1908 a new tract of land had been bought, helped by a further gift from Mr Jackson Deets. Bresee described it as "a beautiful location, between Los Angeles and Hollywood."⁸

1.1 Early patterns of education identified.

The archival research will show that it could be argued that the unusual beginnings of the church and its declared goal of reaching the poor would militate against an educated ministry. Yet from the beginning, there was an emphasis on training and a development of college campuses that could only be explained by the vision of the church's early leaders.

Despite this apparent liberality in vision, it will be demonstrated in this chapter that certain expectations relating to the place of the colleges in the character development

⁵ E.A. Girvin, *A Prince in Israel*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1916, 179.

⁶ Bresee's initial reluctance to become involved in education was quickly swept away, particularly when the financial aid was made available from a Mr Jackson Deets to found the first college. E.A. Girvin, *A Prince in Israel*, 180.

⁷ The place of women in Nazarene higher education and ministry was established early in the life of the denomination. See, for example, Rebecca Laird, *Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene: the First Generation*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1993.

⁸ Bresee had been involved in theological education whilst in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He headed a board set up to study the relationship of the Methodist colleges to the annual conference. His committee's recommendation was the establishing in 1867 of a fully-fledged four year college known as Simpson Centenary College named after Bishop Matthew Simpson (a prominent bishop in the church since 1852) and the centenary of American Methodism. He served in the first board of trustees for sixteen years. Carl Bangs, *Phineas F. Bresee*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1995, 82. Previously Bresee had been made responsible for Higher Education by the 1863, 1865 and 1866 conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

of their students was quickly established. The colleges were expected to uphold some very high standards of behaviour, in light of the church's holiness ethic.⁹ This rigidity of approach and the expectation of a particular educational ethos (by some leaders more than others) was to shape the church's colleges up to the present time.

From the days following the founding of the church at Pilot Point up until 1921, the denomination sought to consolidate the theological institutions and develop criteria, related to classification and recognition of the colleges within the denomination. In addition, territory was defined within the United States in which each college could seek students and financial support.

This programme was given an early boost in 1908 when a "General Educational Board" with power to handle the property of the colleges and to supervise them was recommended. By 1911, Dr. Ellyson, president of the Pasadena College and one of the original movers of the proposition urged the Committee on Education, which was to meet at the upcoming General Assembly, to put the Board in place.

Ellyson wrote, the church "must not approve the multiplication of colleges beyond our needs and our ability to equip and sustain them." He maintained that three 'universities', one for the East, one for the West and one "in the South Central part of the United States" should be "thoroughly equipped and sustained" before any others were allowed.¹⁰ The committee adopted most of Ellyson's proposals except that they did not agree to limit the number of universities as some others were already pursuing the path of accreditation with academic bodies.

1.2 Early tensions in the educational, spiritual and character-building debate.

Three main educational establishments began to develop. These were Peniel College, Pasadena College and Olivet College. Olivet had seen a gradual increase in student enrolment until it stood at 234 in 1915. However it was facing financial

⁹ The place of the Church of the Nazarene in its Holiness context is explained in the Appendices.

¹⁰ T. Smith, *Called unto Holiness*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962. 259.
cf. Ellyson's article in *Pentecostal Advocate*, August 8th, 1907, 5.

difficulties and only the support of local Nazarene churches enabled it to survive the following crucial decades.¹¹

Bresee had faced similar problems with the Nazarene University funded by Deets. In 1909 the Hollywood property had been sold and the college moved to Pasadena. In 1910 it opened in its new campus and Ellyson became its President. The Dean H.Orton Wiley, developed a curriculum for a 'College of Liberal Arts', but little scholarly improvement took place and Ellyson resigned after only two years. Ellyson had set out to balance, in his view, the educational criteria of the college with those of the spiritual. In his inaugural address he said,

Our purpose is not primarily educational as this word is commonly used. We are to be a real training school to prepare men and women for true life. In this work education is an important incidental, but it is only an incidental.

Character building, he said, was their first and supreme objective- "holy character and useful life for goodness and efficiency."¹²

Another college was developing in Rhode Island. Again the struggle of how to make it financially viable was apparent. Its leaders E.E. Angell and J.C. Bearse decided to set up a small manufacturing shop to make brooms as this was considered to be a marketable product. In 1910 the hope was expressed that the college would prepare leaders with skilled trades for 'Industrial Missions' overseas. It seems that this was never realised. However the college was strong academically. Bearse (a lecturer) had graduated from Brown and Boston Universities. Olive Winchester (a tutor) was a graduate of Glasgow University,¹³ the Dean, Bertha Munro an honour graduate of Boston University and Stephen S. White was attending classes at Brown University.

¹¹ "Illinois Holiness University" in *Herald of Holiness*, April 14th, 1915, 13, and "A Report made to the Trustees of the University by B. F. Haynes" in *Herald of Holiness*, April 25th, 1917, 9.

¹² "Among our Schools" in *Herald of Holiness*, April 7th, 1912, 11. Character building as an essential competency for theological education, has remained constant throughout the educational history of the church. A renewed attempt at defining this has been made recently as demonstrated later in this chapter.

¹³ The first woman in the history of the University to graduate with a BD. Details are given later in the thesis.

The financial burden was eased by a campaign launched by the new principal, J.E.L. Moore. The eastern Nazarene churches responded to his appeal, the college survived, changed its name to Eastern Nazarene College and moved to Wollaston just south of Boston.¹⁴

The uniform national programme of higher education for the denomination suggested by Ellyson was not realised in these years. Perhaps personal and economic factors, or the responsibility which individual groups of Trustees felt for their colleges, overrode plans for a central control. In spite of this, key colleges were becoming thoroughly established in the main geographical zones of the United States.

1.3 The rationale for separate theological institutions.

By this time, higher education appeared to have the outright support of Bresee. However, his reasons for support were qualified in his 1915 speech to the General Assembly. Here he insisted that the church must attend to the higher education of its own young people,¹⁵ but only because “spiritual religion, and especially that which testified to the grace of heart holiness, was no longer welcome in the nation’s centres of learning”. If the young people of the church were to “go forth to our pulpits, our counting houses, our farms and our homes, full of the hallowed fire of the indwelling Spirit,” they must live “under the shadow of the Almighty in the classroom, chapel and social life of their college years.”¹⁶

Yet a month earlier in an address at Nazarene University, which proved to be his final words in this setting, Bresee had insisted that devotion and learning were not enemies but allies. “We have not forsaken the old classics,” he declared. “We do not fear philosophy. We delight in mathematics. We cultivate the sciences.” But in all of

¹⁴ T. Smith, *Called unto Holiness*, 262-263.

¹⁵ He also stated “Our pastors are an absolute necessity. The calling of pastors and their continuance in a charge demands your careful consideration. Evangelists are of great service and usefulness among us. In some parts of our church too much is expected of them, and they too largely take the place of pastors. This should be carefully avoided, and only such employed as are loyal to the church, and who assist in gathering up those reached, that the work may be subserved, and the results cared for, and who are ready to assist in the dissemination of the literature of our church.

Our licensed preachers should be pushed out into the byways, to preach and pray with the people, and should be given opportunities to preach and develop their gifts for still greater work”.

¹⁶ E.A. Girvin, *A Prince in Israel*, 448.

these matters the rule of life was the Word of God. "It is appealed to, honoured, studied" he said. "It is the standard of experience, morals, life."¹⁷

Although the place of the colleges was further recognised in 1916 when General Superintendent R.T. Williams stated "the holiness schools have done much in raising up the church,"¹⁸ the tension of the perceived need for spiritual formation which could be threatened by academic study, was beginning to dominate in the agenda of the theological education programme.

1.4 Educational "exclusivism" and the accreditation debate.

The strong hints of 'exclusivism' in education, made by Bresee and others in these early years, continued to gather support. When J.B. Chapman became the president of Peniel College in 1917, he restated what seemed to be the church's position that the aims of education were to "...protect young men and women from the apostasy growing in the world around them and to raise up a holiness ministry for the church", but acknowledged that

in order to do this we must secure for Peniel the standing of an A-1 college in the educational world. This will permit our students to enter the graduate schools of standard universities without examinations....Our Pentecostal Nazarene young people have a right to expect us to do this without delay...¹⁹

Chapman's signals were somewhat confusing, for he had often expounded the view that Nazarene colleges should remain colleges and not seek University accreditation and status. Yet despite this, a long struggle ensued in the campuses of the colleges for this very thing. There were many in favour of University status but for others this was not seen as the time to promote division on the grounds of educational aims but rather a time to identify oneself closer to the church and its exclusivist goals.

¹⁷ Smith, *Called unto Holiness*, 263; cf. Fourth General Assembly, *Proceedings*, 1914, 51; cf. H.O. Wiley "His Vision for Education" in the *Herald of Holiness*, Dec 13th, 1938, 10; E.A. Girvin, *A Prince in Israel*, 440-441.

¹⁸ E.A. Girvin, *A Prince in Israel*, 6.

¹⁹ *Herald of Holiness*, Vol.20, July 18th, 1917, 11.

Some seemed to be taking advantage of the church's dithering on this subject by pressing for a shorter time of ministerial preparation, but Chapman sternly rebuffed this too:

Some may chafe at the wait that is necessitated by thorough preparation, but let it be remembered that it is a scholar's task...It is not any longer possible for us to claim that our spirituality atones for our lack of preparation. The facts of experience do not substantiate this claim.²⁰

The problem seemed to be at the Bible School level of preparation on the one hand and University level on the other. Chapman was encouraging the development of "a few good colleges."²¹ This meant that those Bible schools still in existence from before the union had to "...expect to become colleges or cease operation as soon as they can; for they must sooner or later die."²² In doing this Chapman tried to pioneer a middle road between the Bible College and the University.

A mere Bible School course does not prepare people for preaching the gospel or for foreign mission work in this generation. We may not like the term, but just the same, our task demands an educated ministry.²³

Within fifteen years of its founding, not only had the church began a programme in theological education for the ordained ministry, but it had begun to wrestle with some of the issues of education and formation. This self examination period reaffirmed for some the necessity of spiritual formation in the colleges, but it also demonstrated that key church leaders were not content with an academic programme which might appear sub-standard. Through its near century of existence, the Church of the Nazarene has attempted to incorporate ministerial formation with an academic theological education, sometimes with uneven results. This merits further investigation.

2. Response: theological education and spiritual formation.

As early as 1909 Bresee had reminded the Nazarene University of the following

²⁰ *Report to the General Board of Education, February 18th, 1920.*

²¹ *Report to the Fourth Annual Meeting of the General Board of Education, March 15th, 1922.*

²² *Report to the General Board of Education, March 15th, 1922.*

²³ *Report to the General Board of Education, March 15th, 1922.*

principle of ministerial preparation:

It is not our job to turn out worldly men. There are a thousand institutions in the United States that are engaged in that business; it is our business to turn out men and women of God.²⁴

What this brought was an increased level of vigilance against campus 'worldliness.' In 1916 Bresee College had printed detailed rules which not only forbade the use of tobacco and obscene language but prohibited slang, chewing gum and "light and trashy literature" and "worldly songs and ragtime music."²⁵ In addition the General Board of Education,²⁶ which had been organised in 1917, opposed "undue emphasis on athletics and competitive games"²⁷ in the colleges and the sponsorship of "dramatics and other forms of literary entertainment out of harmony with the beliefs and practices of the Church of the Nazarene."²⁸ The debate on the validity of these prohibitions, which was seen to be wrapped up in character development, continued for many years²⁹ until

²⁴ E.A. Girvin, *A Prince in Israel*, 439-440.

²⁵ T. Smith, *Called unto Holiness*, 323.

²⁶ The Board of Education grew in stature. This was due in part to its strong foundation under the leadership of Chapman and H.Orton Wiley where it made strong efforts to correlate the educational work of the church. At that time the United States was divided into six educational districts which designated the financial support area of each college. However financial problems had never entirely disappeared. Because each college had operated on their own, some of them had overreached themselves in ambitious projects. Several rescue packages were launched against an indebtedness which, as early as 1922, had been half the value of the total college properties.

To solve the threat of indebtedness, the Board of Education had been given a voice in the setting up of each college's operating budget and in planning the expansion programme of the college. This made sense because there now was a growing demand for standardisation and accreditation which would have been impossible with a shaky financial foundation.

However even this plan had its difficulties. The church's national activities had been in the process of being placed under a single General Board to which the Board of Education reported. The result was a reversal of the idea to centralise college plans and instead the educational regions assumed this role. Regional trustees were elected from the various districts within the region including the District Superintendents.

By 1998, Church financial support reached \$24,159,531 (International Board of Education, *General Board Report*, 1999, 1.)

²⁷ Evidence of continuing legislation covering Church of the Nazarene athletics is apparent in the *Manual* (1997-2001), 902.4 "The schools, colleges, and universities of the Church of the Nazarene shall be bound by such regulations regarding intercollegiate activities as shall be recommended by the International Board of Education and adopted by the General Board. Similar statements appear in the 1964, 1976, 1989 and 1993 *Manual*.

²⁸ T. Smith, *Called unto Holiness*, 323.

²⁹ As recent as the 1997 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene the following paragraphs were reaffirmed; "Whereas, there is danger in the excessive use of dramatic productions in our schools and colleges; be it resolved that this practice be carefully restricted and greater emphasis be placed on the spiritual exercise that leads to sound Christian experience." *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 902.5.

two significant Commission reports were published in 1964 and 1989 which attempted to address these and other issues.

Of particular interest is the recent report of the International Course of Study Advisory Committee Commission (1997) which produced the *International Sourcebook on the Standards in Education*.³⁰ This attempted to standardise the educational requirements of the church after almost a century of debate. What arose within it was a contemporary set of competencies relating to theological education and ministerial formation. With these and Oslo's competencies forming a 'bifocal' view, the issues can be tested through the case study.

3. Theological education: the methodology.

Parallel to this academic and spiritual debate, which will be laid aside temporarily, was the methodological debate which related to the development of various permitted training routes into the ordained ministry. It is in this context that a practical example of TEE is raised which may assist in the Oslo/TEE debate of the last chapter. To set the example in its context, a further critical historical literature and archival search of primary documents setting out the *educational methodology* within the Church of the Nazarene is offered.

3.1 Residential colleges as the normative route for theological education.

Since its beginnings, the church has consistently stressed the importance of the college route of ministerial preparation.

Completion of a liberal arts degree from a Nazarene or other approved educational institution, followed if possible by an advanced degree from the Nazarene seminary, is one method of preparing for the Nazarene ministry. This should be considered normative and anything else an accommodation to special conditions.³¹

These 'special conditions' include other ministry training routes.

³⁰ This report will be examined in detail later in the thesis.

³¹ *Handbook on Ministerial Studies*, Pastoral Ministries, Church Growth Division, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1993, 26. Cf. *Manual*, 1997-2001, "Education for Ministers", paragraphs 424-425.2.

Persons with a call to full-time ministerial service, if age and circumstances permit, are encouraged to attend a Nazarene college and complete both a college degree and a seminary (post-graduate) degree.³² However, if circumstances do not permit this, consider the *alternatives* available.³³ (italics mine)

It is these 'circumstances' and 'alternatives' which diversify the training routes. One is the Distance Learning route, the second is Nazarene Bible College, Colorado route (for non-degree North American candidates) and the third is the TEE route.

3.2 Distance learning.

Early in the history of the Church of the Nazarene (1928) a Home Course of Study for ordination was adopted.³⁴ This home-based course, taken over a minimum of four years and a maximum of ten,³⁵ relied in its earliest years on the tutorship of senior ministers on the various districts. The Course, (renamed the Directed Study Course in 1983) still exists and is "considered the entry level for the courses leading to ordination".³⁶ The methodology is recognised to be that of distance learning although up until recently this terminology was not used for the course.³⁷

3.3 Nazarene Bible College.

The idea for this college came out of the 1964 report from the Education Commission. The Commission detected a gap in the educational preparation of ministerial students primarily in the 'non-college' area. By this was meant the preparation of the minister who, for educational or other reasons, was not able to matriculate in a degree course. It had been the practice to offer such students a Bible Certificate course within the established colleges but a questionnaire circulated among

³² This would be four years (in the United States system of education) for the undergraduate degree and a further three years for the post-graduate degree, making seven years in all.

³³ *Handbook of Ministerial Studies*, 1993, 26.

³⁴ This was initially run by the Board of General Superintendents and the Department of Education, (*Manual*, 1928, paragraph 250.7) but was later transferred to the Department of Education and the Ministry who in turn assign its local organisation to the District Boards of Ministerial Studies in the respective countries.

³⁵ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 424.

³⁶ *Handbook of Ministerial Studies*, 1988, 48. "Entry level" is assumed to be the minimum level of studies for the ministry. Cf. *HMS*, 442.1 where this is reiterated.

³⁷ The definition of distance learning is accepted by the church as "classes taught by remote connection to the professor and the sponsoring body by Internet, satellite or other delivery system" *Great Commission Pastors for the 21st Century: A Global Strategy for Theological Education*, Kansas City: International Board of Education, Church of the Nazarene, 1999, 19.

District Superintendents revealed that 61% did not feel that this training was sufficient for ministry.³⁸

The Commission reminded its readers that such a concern had been raised as far back as 1919 by a General Superintendent. It quoted:

The greatest weakness of our system as I see it is this: We have not prepared to take proper care of the young man or the young woman of limited education, who, nevertheless, feels called by God to preach and cannot possibly go to our school longer than one or two years, on account of advanced age and a family to be supported. A person like this cannot be sent through the regular mill. He needs a special line of training, by teachers who are familiar with his peculiar needs and drawbacks, and give him help in his limited time. These young people as a rule, are not able to rise in usefulness as those who are younger and have more time for preparation; but some degree of success and usefulness lies within them or God would not have been so unkind as to call them. These young people deserve and must have some consideration.³⁹

The Commission then went on to state

If the Church of the Nazarene lives up to its God-given task of Evangelism for all classes...we must provide for their ministerial training, geared to their scholastic levels and give them every advantage to serve God and the church to the best of their improved abilities.⁴⁰

Its main recommendation was that a denominational Bible School (not a liberal arts college like the others in existence in the United States at that time) be set up for

...the man, who feels called to preach or to Christian service, but, because of age, family, academic status, or other circumstances, is either unable to meet college entrance requirements or will profit more by a Bible School programme.⁴¹

For this college, no accreditation was encouraged or even expected. This was a return to the Bible School model that J.B. Chapman had so strongly repudiated forty years earlier. This was a significant development for Nazarene theological education.

³⁸ Education Commission Report, 1964. 173.

³⁹ Education Commission Report, 173.

⁴⁰ Education Commission Report, 174.

⁴¹ Education Commission Report, 174.

In 1985, the President of the college Dr Jerry Lambert said "NBC is designed for the adult learner desiring to prepare for the full time ministry. The college offers lay persons opportunity for continuing educational training through our Lay Certificate Program." in Mark R. Moore (ed), A Mission for Excellence, Bradley, ILL: Broadway Printing, 1985, 15.

Not only did it confuse the ongoing debate on the emerging competencies for theological education by having a non-academic dimension, but provided another way into the ordained ministry.

The tensions in administering these three routes to ministry (Nazarene Bible College; undergraduate college or university degree possibly followed by a Seminary (post-graduate) degree; or the Distance Learning Course⁴²) cause difficulties particularly within the district Boards of Ministerial Studies who are called on to oversee them.⁴³

As far as the Distance Learning route is concerned, the *Handbook* recommends that,

The board should insist that a newly licensed minister who desires to prepare for ordination by means of the Directed Studies Course shall apply for permission in writing, and in his or her application state fully the reasons for choosing this route. The request should be considered in the light of (i) the judgement of the District Superintendent and (ii) the basic principles expressed in HMS 441.⁴⁴

It then goes on to aver that,

Permission should not be granted for reasons purely of personal convenience or preference, and certainly not if the board has reason to believe the applicant desires the Directed Studies Course because it seems easier as well as less expensive. If an applicant is not established in a pastorate, is reasonably unencumbered, and does not require special preparation, the board will do both the candidate and the church a great

⁴² The TEE model is more popular in non-western countries where the Church of the Nazarene ministers. The Distance Learning route is used mostly in 'western' contexts.

⁴³ Each district within the Church of the Nazarene has an elected Board of Ministerial Studies which "...shall be composed of five or more ordained ministers, elected by the district assembly to serve for a term of four years.." (*Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 229). The Board is ultimately responsible for the ministerial studies of ministerial candidates "... according to the instructions in the *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*" (*Manual* 1997-2001, paragraph 230.4) A second Board, named the Board of Ministerial Credentials, "...shall be composed of not less than five nor more than fifteen ordained ministers (who)..shall serve for a period of four years.." (*Manual* 1997-2001, paragraph 226). This Board is to "...carefully examine and evaluate all persons who have been properly presented to the district assembly for election to the order of elder..." (*Manual* 1997-2001, paragraph 228.1. In 1998, in each of the two districts of the UK (Scotland and Northern Ireland; England and Wales) these two Boards were united and renamed the Board of Ministry. The oversight of ministers from application for ministry through ordination and into lifelong learning (through an approved programme of study) is the responsibility of this Board on each district. "The purpose of an approved program of study is a course that will help ministers fulfil the mission statement of the Church of the Nazarene...". *Manual* 1997-2001, paragraph 424.3.

⁴⁴ The section in the *Handbook* (paragraph 441) relates to "The Qualification for Elder or Deacon", 23. The *Handbook on Ministerial Studies* was replaced by the *International Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* in 1999.

service by insisting that training for the ministry be done in the church's educational institutions.

The reasons for such a course demonstrate that the Church of the Nazarene wished to extend an opportunity to all who felt called by God to enter the ministry. In the early days of the church where colleges, particularly in the United States, were scarce and distances between them great, the demands of a growing church necessitated a flexible approach to theological education. Even though Doctors Bresee, Chapman and others who were founding fathers of the church advocated college-based training, the eschatological message of the church encouraged its "sons and daughters to prophesy" (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17). It was believed that the Second Coming of Christ was near and as a consequence, training for the ministry was, in these early days, an afterthought for many. What was considered to be more important was to have men and women filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the Gospel.

Before fifty years of the church's existence had elapsed, the 1964 Education Commission report revealed that "Within the Church of the Nazarene 800 to 1,000 non-college men are enrolled in the district Course of Study."⁴⁵

4. CENETA: The Nazarene Response to TEE.

Within ten years of the 1964 Commission report, a response was formulated by the Church of the Nazarene to apparent success of TEE in Latin America. This was an important geographical region for the church. It was experiencing dramatic growth and ministers were needed in large numbers.

The response, finally launched in Guatemala in 1977⁴⁶ (significantly, the home of TEE), took the name of *Centros Nazarenos de Estudios Teologicas Avanzados*

⁴⁵ *Education Commission Report*, 1964, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 170.

A further recommendation came from this report that, "The Department of Education be directed to develop and implement a correspondence course to cover the *Manual Home Course of Study* (Distance Learning) using the best current educational correspondence study techniques combined with required area training institutes, and that the correspondence courses be supervised by the Boards of Ministerial Studies using uniform examination procedures". (*Report*, 1964, 174). Had this "correspondence course" been implemented, a fifth route into the ordained ministry would have been possible.

⁴⁶ The author was present at this meeting, held in the *Hotel Pan Americano*, in Guatemala City.

(CENETA) translated as Nazarene Extension Centres of Advanced Theological Studies.⁴⁷

In order to critically assess this development which is of considerable interest in light of the Oslo debate, we shall first consider the programme itself.⁴⁸ Its main objective was:

To provide an advanced and contextualized education to graduated students of Bible Institutes, native pastors and lay people interested in entering the pastorate in Latin America and other Spanish speaking areas including Mexico... with an end to responding in an efficient way to the actual problems facing the Church of the Nazarene and the community in general.

Nine specific objectives were established:

- “1. To provide experience and depth in indispensable disciplines for pastoral work, viz.; administration, teaching methods, social sciences, etc., by means of an adequate education.
2. To provide and establish a biblical and philosophical base for the meaning of the pastorate, e.g., identifying the work of the pastor in light of the Bible and history; the mission of the pastor in relation to the community, etcetera.
3. To provide knowledge of the Bible by means of study and the use of instruments of interpretation with a view to a more adequate and pertinent use of the Bible in the Church in particular and Latin American society in general. To deepen the pastor’s capacity for his work in pastoral care which includes the support of psychology in counselling, interpersonal relations etcetera.
4. To provide a course of study stipulated in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene so that those pastors, who for many reasons cannot register in a theological institution but can and wish to complete their studies, may do so and be ordained elder.

⁴⁷ The CENETA programme has since been adapted for thirty three of the fifty nine Nazarene colleges world-wide. The churches definition of extension classes is: “full classes taught off-campus by a qualified instructor under the auspices of an educational institution.” *Great Commission Pastors...*, 19.

⁴⁸ *Reglamentos de Estudios Ministeriales a Distancia*, produced jointly by SENDAS, San Jose, Costa Rica and ITN, Guatemala City, Guatemala (the text is my translation from Spanish).

5. To provide a bridge between the candidate and the sponsoring institutions. The institutions provide the opportunity to begin preparation for the ministry through distance learning without the candidates' need to leave their place of ministry. Later, if the candidate so desires, the accumulated credits may be transferred to a sponsoring institution and a higher level of education completed in residence.

6. To provide an adequate ministerial preparation alongside an existing pastoral ministry. This will combine pastoral experience with classroom work and through this enable the pastor, who may never have the opportunity to register in a theological institution as a resident to have the academic experience of this level through face to face contact with lecturers of the theological institutions of the Church of the Nazarene.

As the candidate can transfer study credits to one of the institutions, the combination of pastoral work and active ministry will alleviate the tendency to remain at the theoretical level that sometimes is noted in the student who is prepared through a residence programme.

7. To provide the future students of the two regional institutions (The Nazarene Theological Seminary of the Americas, San Jose, Costa Rica (SENDAS) and the Nazarene Theological Institute, Guatemala City, (ITN)), practical experience in the ministry in the student's culture and regional area. When the student then travels to one of the institutions, he/she will be helped in their preparation as they will have their own cultural setting firmly in mind and will be more eager to return to their own country and region following their studies.

8. To foster a spirit of confidence in the institutions and strengthen the fraternal bonds between faculty members and pastors. This spirit of confidence is indispensable so that the pastor feels motivated to recommend new candidates to the theological institutions. It will also help the districts so that they are more open to support their students; at the same time this good relationship will permit mutual reflection on the type of pastoral training that the church needs.

9. To bridge the gap that already exist between the pastors and a population with a growing academic preparation and to close any gap in preparation between pastors who are graduates of the Institute and those who have graduated from the Seminary. So that the pastoral body of this part of the world keep in mind that the theological institutions are within the jurisdiction of the churches and that as a consequence, they have to look out for, decide for and opt for the work of theological education.”⁴⁹

4.1 Reasons for the project.

The authors of the project considered that, because a high percentage of pastors had only studied in Bible Institutes⁵⁰ and had not had the opportunity or the necessary means to continue with their studies, this had resulted in the churches receiving the same limited instruction as its pastor. It was concluded that the church had been influenced by the philosophy of formal education to the point where theological education was open only to those who had finished secondary education or university studies. As a consequence, pastors who did not have the entrance qualifications thought necessary, had been marginalized.⁵¹

It was noted that in the United States of America, Europe and parts of Latin America there existed programmes of theological instruction of a professional character which did not require formal entrance requirements. These programmes saw as valid all types of previous learning experience. In addition, the experiments carried out by the Seminario Biblico Alianza (Alliance Bible Seminary) in Ecuador, Chile, Peru and Columbia, the Seminary Biblico Latinoamericano (Latin American Bible Seminary) and

⁴⁹ This coincided with an earlier statement made in the writer's hearing by the Regional Director, Dr Jerry Porter in the *1st Regional Conference of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*, held in Monterey, Mexico, January 1984. He said: "The theological institutions should not guide the church, rather the church must guide the theological institutions. After all, the church created these institutions for service and never should the educational institution dictate to the church the direction it should go."

⁵⁰ Many Latin American church and parachurch organisations offered 'Bible Institutes' which were usually of an educationally minimal standard.

⁵¹ This was not an accurate statement as a student who had completed Primary schooling could be in theological studies at ITN, Guatemala.

the Universidad a Distancia de Costa Rica (the Distance University of Costa Rica) showed that this kind of project was feasible and practical.⁵²

4.2 The Methodology of the Project.

The programme is viewed as 'naturally residential and extra mural' and consists in the decentralisation of 'residences' or 'sites'. Each 'residence' centre has its own character, timetable, leadership, teaching staff, library etc. Teaching is divided up into two 'blocks'. 'Block A', taught by teachers living locally and 'Block B' by teachers from SENDAS or the ITN who travel to each 'residence' centre to teach these courses.

Block A:

These classes are taught locally by local tutors and include group work, field work and evaluation. Three hours per week are set aside for this. Practical experience is a simultaneous part of the project so if the student is not a pastor, and hence unable to be involved in practical work in the church, then the District church is encouraged to allow the student to commence a church or to become a co-pastor in an established church.

For each hour spent in class the student is advised to spend four hours in study. The duration of the course depends upon the credit hours assigned, for example: a one credit course lasts three weeks (nine class hours), a two credit course six weeks (eighteen class hours) and a three credit course nine weeks (twenty seven class hours).

Grades are given according to the entry level on the course which in turn reflects the previous level of study. Those students who are aiming for the Minimum Level Certificate (the equivalent of a secondary school diploma) and who have a previous minimum study level of five or six years in primary education, have to attain a minimum of grade 'C'. Students who aspire to the Advanced Level Certificate (the equivalent of a high school diploma) and who have a minimum of primary and three

⁵² Systems do exist of this nature but care must be taken so as to interpret them in their context. Mature Entry is an option for students over 21 years and Approved Previous Experiential Learning (APEL) for more mature students. However these programmes do not offer automatic entry to a University or College.

years of secondary schooling) have to achieve a minimum grade of 'C+'. University Level Certificates (for those who have completed high school) are given on the completion of study with a minimum grade level of 'B'.⁵³

Block B:

These courses are taught differently. Two or three times in each year, for a maximum of sixteen days on each occasion, an intensive course is taught at the local centres by visiting lecturers, usually from ITN or SENDAS. During each intensive period of classes sixty hours of teaching is offered (30 hours per class; i.e. two courses worth three credits each). Through the four year training programme there are four periods of intensive courses thus offering eight courses of three credits each. Accommodation for the visiting lecturer is covered by the district church. Travel costs are shared by SENDAS and the district church.

4.3 The relationship between Block A and Block B.

Courses in Block A are taught throughout the year. Each time a Block B intensive course is taught, Block A courses are suspended. Pastors without previous training have to successfully complete Blocks A and B. Graduates of ITN or SENDAS on the other hand, are required to successfully complete Block B.

4.4 The relationship between the distance and residence programme.

It is agreed that the residence programmes of the ITN and SENDAS will accept the majority of the credits offered through CENETA. If a student wishes to register for a residence course however, there will be some other basic requirements.

To enter the non-degree ministerial course at ITN, complete primary education is required as a pre-requisite. For the Bachelor in Theology degree, at least primary and three years of secondary education is needed. In addition, the candidate must have completed one year in the CENETA programme and have successfully completed thirty-six credits.

⁵³ In 1981 it was reported to a CENETA meeting the writer attended in San Jose, Costa Rica, that 17.7% of students registered on the course did not have complete primary schooling (6th Grade).

To matriculate in the SENDAS programme for the Licentiate,⁵⁴ the student must have completed secondary education and have spent at least one and a half years in the CENETA programme having successfully completed forty-eight credits. For entrance to either institution, CENETA courses must have been passed at the C+ level to be recognised by the institution.

4.5 Certificates offered by CENETA.

Three levels were established:

1. Students who complete all of their studies within CENETA (Block A & Block B) with a minimum grade of C+ will receive the Certificate of Christian Ministry given jointly by ITN and SENDAS.
2. Those who have already graduated from a Bible Institute and complete Block B of the CENETA programme with a minimum grade of C+ will also receive the Certificate of Christian Ministry.
3. Students who have not completed primary and three years of secondary education, but have completed Block A and Block B of the CENETA programme with a minimum grade of C, will receive the Diploma of Christian Ministry. This level of study is considered to be the minimum needed to meet the course requirements set down in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene for those entering into ministry.⁵⁵

4.6 Curriculum.

The number of credits per course, and the way the courses contribute towards the final Diploma/ Certificate/Degree is set out in detail in the original documentation. A summary is given below.⁵⁶

	Block A	Block B	Total
Biblical Literature	18	6	24
Theology	7	9	16

⁵⁴ This degree was recognised as being higher than an undergraduate degree but lower than a masters degree. Graduates were termed 'Licenciados'.

⁵⁵ This would be the minimum requirement for a District Minister's licence, which would then be followed by a minimum of two years in an assigned ministry.

⁵⁶ One credit equals nine class hours. In the case of practical work, this is usually pastoral work which is monitored by the local teacher.

Practical work	33	15	48
Church History	9	0	9
Secular history and Science	4	12	16
Spanish literature	7	6	13
Totals	78	48	126

4.7 Administration of the course.

CENETA is co-ordinated from the Nazarene Seminary of the Americas (SENDAS) in San Jose, Costa Rica. It offers to the local centres a course guide which describes each course to be given. Models and syllabuses are available from the residence institutions namely ITN and SENDAS. Help and support from lecturers at these institutions is offered in the setting up of local centres.

Each student is asked to pay an amount for each course taken. This is set by the director of the centre who places this money in a central fund from which all students are then helped with their travel costs. Students are encouraged to buy their own textbooks. The church districts in which the centres are placed are asked to cover the travel costs of the local teachers and to pay an honorarium.

The courses are open to members of the Church of the Nazarene who have a Local or District minister's licence, spouses of pastors or even pastors who are ordained elders. Lay members can also matriculate but are requested to pay 50% more for each credit hour of class and will not receive any financial help for travel costs. In addition a letter of recommendation is required from their local pastor or District Superintendent. Each new student is required to take two courses as a prerequisite to the full course of study. These courses have to be completed in six months.

5. A critical analysis of CENETA.

There are several points in the document which call for comment and analysis.

Firstly, to the casual observer it may seem unusual for a ministerial training course to require teaching in the social sciences. There is a historical precedence for this. The course of ministerial training set down in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene

has consistently followed an American model based on a liberal arts college training. History, social sciences and 'pure' sciences are still part of that model.⁵⁷

The *Manual* course for ordination states that twelve credit hours are required for Church History including the History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene. An additional twelve hours are needed in other history courses such as a regional history of the place where the course is being taught (e.g. European, African, etc). Social sciences are also included in this twelve hour period. These include Sociology, Economics and Political Science.⁵⁸ In addition, the language of the area and its literature together with speech and communications skills in that language, are given eighteen credit hours.

At first sight it appears that CENETA stays with this *Manual* route, but on close examination some large changes are evident. It gives less weight to Church History (nine credit hours) but more to secular history and science (sixteen hours). Surprisingly only thirteen hours is given to Spanish literature, against the eighteen hours recommended.

Other changes can be seen when the *Manual* programme is compared with the CENETA programme:

Manual

Biblical Literature	18 credit hours
Theology	18 credit hours
Homiletics, Practics, and Religious Education	18 credit hours
Church History	12 credit hours
Evangelism and Missions	6 credit hours
Local language, literature and speech	18 credit hours

⁵⁷ The aspirations of the original propagators of the concept were that a minister should have a rounded education.

⁵⁸ Paragraph 434.1 *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, 1989. 204-205.

Philosophy and Psychology	12 credit hours
History and Social Science	12 credit hours
Science (Physical or Natural)	6 credit hours
Total	120 credit hours

Compared with:

CENETA

	Block A	Block B	Total
Biblical Literature	18	6	24
Theology	7	9	16
Practical work	33	15	48
Church History	9	0	9
Secular history and Science	4	12	16
Spanish literature	7	6	13
Totals (credit hours)	78	48	126

The total number of CENETA credit hours surpasses the *Manual* requirement but the mix is significantly different. One can only assume that this particular mix was approved by the Education Department of the church. If this is so, it only adds to the already growing impression among church educators that the *Manual* requirements act as guidelines only, an impression which the Education Department of the church would not condone. The evidence, however, speaks to the contrary.

5.1 Assessment.

Herein lies both a danger and an asset. Flexibility is needed in theological education especially as the church is trying to cater for the diversity of one hundred and twenty world areas. However, if the requirements continue to be treated so loosely, they will cease to be valid and a world-wide credential (ordination into elders and deacons

orders) based on a recognised common theological training base, will be under threat.⁵⁹

Secondly, CENETA rose out of necessity and its development was one of expediency.⁶⁰ The two institutions, ITN and SENDAS were not producing a sufficient number of pastors for the growing number of churches. World-wide there are more ordained and licensed ministers in the Church of the Nazarene than there are churches.⁶¹ However, because of the phenomenal growth rate of the church in Central and South America over the past twenty years, the demand has grossly outstripped the supply.⁶² This church growth period coincided with the emergence of TEE in Central America. The Church of the Nazarene seems to have quickly adapted the model and CENETA was the result.

No doubt financial constraints came into the picture. It would have been impossible to have financed the development of existing or new institutions to cope with the extra demand. CENETA was a way to train ministers at a low cost where they lived. It had to work.⁶³

This raises the third point - the pedagogical methods of extension learning and their validity. The teaching of courses in Block A is done by local lecturers. The Director of the local centre is encouraged to select lecturers "who have the best qualifications

⁵⁹ Other non-American Nazarene institutions work the minimum of the *Manual* requirements into their courses, often substituting what is thought to be a more relevant and indigenous subject into the curriculum for a *Manual* required course and viewing this as an equivalent credit.

⁶⁰ Dr Porter, the Regional Director, reiterated the need for flexibility when he said, "If God sees an ecclesiastical structure that is rigid and reduces the number of people who can potentially be prepared as pastors, He will have to choose either to call only a few people into the ministry or simply to call people and give them sufficient grace to be pastors without an adequate theological education. Neither of these options is what God really wants." *1st Regional Conference of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*. However, flexibility and expediency are not always driven by the same motives.

⁶¹ 16,665 ministers and 12,165 churches (1998 figures). Office of the General Secretary, "Statistical Comparisons", September 30th, 1998.

⁶² The latest figures still show a shortfall in ordained and licensed ministers in this region: 2,437 ministers and 2,811 churches (General Statistics, September 30th, 1998). This figure showed an even greater divergence before the introduction of TEE.

⁶³ This perception is confirmed by the 1989 Nazarene Education Commission Report, where it states "The facilities of our World Mission Institutions could accommodate expanded enrolment, but the heavy General Budget subsidisation in these institutions demands careful enrolment control", 74-75.

possible.”⁶⁴ They are required to submit a syllabus, for every course taught, to SENDAS for approval. Lecturers at SENDAS and ITN are also available for consultation if necessary.

Two points emerge. Firstly, the teaching expertise and professional qualifications of these lecturers vary widely. CENETA does not offer any kind of preparatory course for them and professional help, though offered by SENDAS and ITN, is rarely (to the writer's knowledge) taken up.

Secondly, the teaching method is largely based on pre-printed materials which encourage study based on the presentation of multi-choice answers. As the literacy rate is very low (for the countries as a whole) it is difficult, if not impossible to expect all students to procure and read the text books.

As a result, the intensive courses of Block B are what give credence to the programme. Bringing in lecturers from SENDAS and ITN for periods of sixteen days, which include various class exercises and conclude with a final exam, is more quantifiable and more easily regulated.

Thirdly, when CENETA was launched in the mid 1970's, one of its aims was 'to provide the future students for the two regional institutions.'⁶⁵ Around twenty five years later only one residence-based institution survives - SENDAS. ITN has become a local 'centre'. A visit by the writer to Guatemala in June 1993 (in the course of this research) confirmed this. The campus is still there but very run-down and with only a skeleton staff. It survives by being rented out to various church groups for retreats. Twice a year students from the Guatemala City area use it as a place to meet for their intensive courses. The vision of providing students for residence training has not been realised.⁶⁶

In an interview with the present Director of ITN, Rev Federico Melendez, he indicated that finances had dried up from the General Church and there was a

⁶⁴ *Reglamentos*, 8.

⁶⁵ *Reglamentos*, 2.

⁶⁶ 1998 figures show 20 students on the ITN campus and 300 in extension centres. SENDAS had 64 on campus and 511 in extension centres. (General Board Report, 1999, 12).

reluctance on the part of the student to leave home and study in residence. Scholarships, which had been readily available up to 1985, had also ceased to exist. Residence study, which had been heavily subsidised by the church, was now impossible, even if students wished it. On the other hand scholarships still exist for the SENDAS campus, and the five countries of Central America and the northern countries of South America still send students there. One has to conclude that CENETA has exceeded its initial remit, unless from its beginnings there was a hidden agenda of which the initial participants were not aware.

Fourthly, one important element of CENETA is the practical work or 'field experience.' The syllabus states that its purpose is "To provide the student the opportunity to work out his/her calling to ministry through field work whilst involved in academic study. This combines experience in the field with study in the classroom. In this way the call to ministry is evaluated and confirmed."⁶⁷

Field involvement is insisted upon to the point where a student can take no more than three courses without being involved in practical ministry. The *Reglamentos* leave little room for manoeuvre by stating:

If the student is not a pastor, and hence unable to be involved in practical work in the church, then the district church is encouraged to allow the student to commence a church or to become a co-pastor in an established church.⁶⁸

The way in which a student is "encouraged...to commence a church" appears to go against accepted church growth principles. This is a student who may have taken no more than three classes and may not have any experience in this kind of ministry. This 'maverick' approach to church growth is, in the writer's experience, quite typical of the Central American Church of the Nazarene. It may raise serious questions about the long-term viability as well as the short-term wisdom of such an approach for church growth in that region. For example, if a church were commenced by the student, there may be no experienced mentor to guide his ministry development.

⁶⁷ Block A, "Practical Theology" syllabus, *Reglamentos*, 35.

⁶⁸ *Reglamentos*, 4.

Furthermore, the roundness or holism of that ministry would seem to be in question if the theological and educational base from which the student started was weak. Those who were recipients or shared in the ministry, may be disadvantaged by the lack of ministerial preparation.

CENETA student numbers in the Mexican and Central American region continue to increase.⁶⁹ The continuing growth of the church in Latin America calls for the best trained ministry that the church can offer so that the future stability and church growth of this region is more certain. Is TEE providing this?

5.2 Conclusions.

TEE and its Nazarene equivalent, CENETA, has certainly broken new ground and given an opportunity to many, lay and clergy, to be trained. It is the tunnel-vision of this route to ministry that is disturbing. Many arguments can be made for the validity of keeping students 'at home' and in their own town and finance must be a consideration. Yet the statement in the *Reglamentos* that CENETA would "alleviate the tendency to remain at the theoretical level that sometimes is noted in the student that is prepared through a residence programme",⁷⁰ deserves investigation beyond this thesis.

Also in considering the residence programme, a significant statement from the *Reglamentos* must also be addressed, namely that CENETA is set up

So that the pastoral body of this part of the world keep in mind that the theological institutions are within the jurisdiction of the churches and that as a consequence, they have to look out for, decide for and opt for the work of theological education.⁷¹

To say that "...theological institutions are within the jurisdiction of the churches..." raises a further theological debate beyond this thesis. However, suffice to comment that the language of hierarchy is being used here, whereas the language of church

⁶⁹ There are "1200 students in extension programmes" (*General Board Report*, Kansas City: Church of the Nazarene, 1999, 13). 1998 statistics show 101,694 members in this region. *Annual Church Statistical Reports*, Kansas City: Church of the Nazarene, December 17th 1998.

⁷⁰ *Reglamentos*, 2.

⁷¹ *Reglamentos*, 3.

bodies working in union would seem more theologically appropriate to describe what should be intended. In addition, the local churches appear to represent the Church of the Nazarene "...of this part of the world..." and, by inference, seem to wield more power than those in other parts.

Robert W. Pazmino made an important point when he said that

While the (seminary) is a community of scholars, it is *also an arm of the church*, and its participants have personal and corporate relationships with Jesus Christ and the Christian church.⁷² (italics mine)

CENETA's *Reglamentos* do state that CENETA will help "to bridge the gap that already exists between the pastors and a population with a growing academic preparation." However, whether churches could determine what kind of theological education should be given to meet that need is a moot point. Putting colleges within the jurisdiction of churches may cause the educative task to be driven by expedience rather than good practice. The argument of expedience could be directed against the whole CENETA endeavour. By attempting to meet a need for quality theological education, it seems to have failed to produce a programme which would have credence world-wide.

Similar issues arise in the Oslo debate. It would strongly propose that theological education be person-centred, not be driven from expediency. The educational programme exists for the student and this understanding must take precedence over political or financial reasons, although financial viability is not far from Oslo's thinking. The student must have a voice in the structure of the programme. If this is absent, the motivation may well also be absent.

This has implications for the Church of the Nazarene. As the programme of theological education is largely imposed, the student has little say about the learning process. Where choices are restricted, personal motivation may be lessened. What may be expedient in terms of programme, may not provide the dividends in the long

⁷² Robert W. Pazmino 'A Response to Apologia, with Special Reference to the Seminary as a Faith Community', in *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological Education*, ed. Max L. Stackhouse, Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988, 230.

term if students understand that they are being sidelined in decisions about their theological education.

Oslo's viability debate is formation driven. It places the formation of the student firmly at the centre of the process. The formative competencies should "help to reshape the process of theological education and ministerial formation."⁷³ These are the new core values which must be accessible to all. Theological education is now to be driven from the centre outwards.

Oslo has made the point that theological education must be centred in inter-personal relations including dialogue within and outside of the group.⁷⁴ Theological education primarily by private study is a poor substitute for study in a community and one questions whether it can be truly formative.

For this reason it appears that, if it is too expensive or impossible for many reasons to have all students in a full-time residency programme, a form of education that has both residential and non-residential training needs to be encouraged. Residential training does offer the advantage of training in community with access to teachers and library facilities. Non-residence training on the other hand gives an opportunity to decentralise theological education. Teachers are then in touch with students, as students continue in their employment. If this is done with the addition of residential periods at sub-centres of a theological institution, then more credence may be given to the educational process as the teachers would also be the lecturers of the institution. Where this is not the case, and local adjunct teachers are employed to do this work, there must be a minimum recognised standard of educational achievement on the part of these teachers or the training may run the risk of being devalued by the students.

Secondly, theological education must not abandon theological content. A knowledge of the truth involves primarily the use of the mind; thus a content-centred theological education which emphasises a study of theology in its biblical, historical,

⁷³ Raiser, "The First Gospel...A Response", 20.

⁷⁴ Cf. David Tracy's three 'publics'. Also Oslo's emphasis on ecumenism as "the truth is only found in dialogue with others". (Pobee, "The First Gospel", 9).

apologetic and systematic forms must form an essential part of theological education, a point which may be in conflict with a 'student centred' approach. Educators and churchpersons must resist the temptation to place too much emphasis on 'practice' rather than 'theory'. The balance between 'knowing' and 'being' and 'doing' must be constantly watched.

This is where periods in the residence school may have an advantage. As a community of believers it should be a microcosm of the Church in worship, study and community life. The variety of social strata of students and teachers should contribute to this. Thus 'ministry' naturally continues through college years because college life should be a reflection of the Church community. It must not be forgotten that in many institutions of theological education, the laity outnumber those preparing for the ordained ministry. This laity is made up of many informed and motivated members of local churches who have the ability to "ground" the educational endeavour in the affairs of life. A sense of reality can thus be brought into the classroom and the institutional community.

Where this may be weak is in the 'doing' of theology outside of the college community. Non-college training may emphasise the 'doing' to the detriment of the 'knowing'. But every opportunity must be given for students to create their own community. Where this is the life they have always known as "the poor amongst the poor" the opportunities for diversity in community will be limited, thus the residential intensive short courses throughout the year must attempt to place the student in a different setting so that community life is experienced in some of its diversity. The best informed local community may or may not be better placed in a rounded experience of ministry than that of the institutional community.

Thirdly, theological education must maintain a standard of excellency not least because it is a ministry of the Church. A system of accreditation can be an important means whereby these standards are kept. Parochial thinking can be thus avoided and in addition many students are attracted to such accredited courses. An educational programme which is worth its salt will not consider purely finances or convenience to

be its driving forces. For this reason a TEE programme must have an association with a residence-style theological institution which, in turn, has its own accreditation. This will better assure a greater integration of the academic and the practical.

Fourthly, there is a place for inter-active study materials such as those prepared for the TEE courses. It is acknowledged that an examination-controlled system may demote the practical in the minds of the students. However study techniques which incorporate seminars, assignments and essays which involve tutorial guidance, can ensure a greater inter-disciplinary reflection, something which is lacking from the TEE programme.

Perhaps too much dependence is put upon field work in the CENETA programme. It is given double the amount of credit hours than Biblical Literature and three times as much as Theology. The field work is usually the student's own place of work whether it be as pastor or layperson. By its very nature this must be restrictive and is a drawback of the programme. There does not appear to be a programme of supervision for this field work.

It could be argued that residential theological education on the other hand mostly provides for practical training concurrent with academic studies. This occurs through week-end placements and ministry during the vacations. Further training is given through internships or curacies. This vocational training can develop specialisation's and the use of ministry charisms. For these reasons, the residence programme can offer more than a programme which 'trains on the job'. The student is exposed to a wider community and engages in a variety of teaching approaches.

6. Critical observations.

Extension education may be prone to a disseminating model of knowledge which does away with the independence and critical thinking of the learner. In Hiscox's words, it engenders "unfortunate paternalism" and "uses methods which foster

dependency rather than independent thinking and responsibility for one's own learning."⁷⁵

This is one of the greatest challenges to TEE especially when note is taken of Ian Ramsay's comment that the:

overall task of (theological) education is not primarily to inform and certainly not to indoctrinate, but to provide that atmosphere, climate, framework of ideas, patterns of argument, in which people grow to their fulfilment, and find a true humanity and a true glory.⁷⁶

Secondly, from a sociological perspective is it always in the students' interest to be taught as the 'poor amongst the poor'?⁷⁷ There may be reasons of paternalism rather than sociology at work here, where a decision is made that the poor must remain amongst the poor. It can be seen how neighbourliness and community can help the student 'ground' his theology, but is there not an argument for a system which enables the student to temporarily leave his or her home setting and enter into a residence community where a different and perhaps better style of living is demonstrated? Must a higher standard of living always be seen in a negative light?

A phenomenon, sometimes referred to as 'redemption and lift', often takes place when a person is converted to Christianity.⁷⁸ Perhaps it would do less harm to allow this to happen by exposure to a better standard of living through attendance at a residence institution which is usually located in a larger town. In addition, it can only be helpful to be exposed to the broader debate which of necessity takes place in a residential and classroom setting. A formation of character which arises in collegium, challenges the possible narrowness of solitary study and life in the home setting.

⁷⁵ Rhoda Hiscox, 'TEE in Britain', *British Journal of Theological Education* (BJTE), Vol.1, No.1, Summer, 1987, 25.

⁷⁶ Ian Ramsay, 'Towards a Theology of Education,' Bloxham Lecture, 1972, quoted in Hiscox, 'TEE in Britain', 7.

⁷⁷ In Third World situations, students would be expected to remain in their villages or towns. Their context was usually one of poverty. Their education would take place amongst their peers.

⁷⁸ This term has been coined in Evangelical Christian circles to describe the phenomenon which can be explained as a change of behaviour in the convert which may result in a better use of time, money and personal resources. A consequence can sometimes be seen in a change of habit and lifestyle which is generally observed to be better than the person's previous state.

Intensive courses through TEE, which take students out of their surroundings, but into another similar local setting (not usually a residential school), are normally presented only two or three times a year in fortnightly periods and, although going some way towards a communal learning situation, may not come close to the benefits of the residential school, or periods spent within it, as in a distance learning model.

As the 1989 Education Commission Report stated:

...the campuses have been, and will continue to be, places where lifestyle education appropriate to the doctrine and experience of holiness is a central responsibility. Accordingly, the residential campus is the ideal setting for the full impact of the discharging of this responsibility to be felt. The mission (of the church) carries far beyond cognitive learning. It drives and shapes both curricular and co-curricular activities.⁷⁹

Thirdly, in Latin America, where TEE was born, the place of human rights in the witness of the church is, and has for some time now, been at the forefront of church thinking. This, and the question of training women for the ministry, has overtaken some of the arguments for the efficacy of TEE. Although some married women are taking advantage of the courses, it is highly unlikely for cultural and family reasons that many of these will go into the ministry of the church.

As TEE spread, it increasingly became understood as an education for the 'less well educated'. Early research done by Weld showed that of all TEE students in Latin America, 0.5% had spent 2-3 years in University, 2.5% had High School diplomas, 35% had finished Primary School and 62% had less education than that.⁸⁰

Was it then a form of second class training? Did it become a substitute for formal academic training? In answer to these justifiable questions it must be asked whether Latin America needed academically trained ministers as much as it needed non-academic lay preachers. Church growth was such that, according to Weld,⁸¹ of the 75,000 congregations in Latin America in 1967, 90% of the 'preachers' never had any

⁷⁹ Nazarene Education Commission Report, 1989, 131.

⁸⁰ Wayne C. Weld, *The World Directory...*, 10.

⁸¹ Wayne C. Weld, *The World Directory...*, 10.

theological training. The question then posed is: what was more urgent, the quality or quantity of theologically trained pastors?

Fourthly, the question of pedagogy is again evident. What is the driving force behind TEE? It began because of the high drop-out rate in pastors trained in the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala City. Its 'success' could easily be measured in the large numbers of students in the programme.⁸²

However, how valuable are the teaching methods used? It is acknowledged that teaching and learning should be inseparable. The reason that they are often viewed apart is that learning becomes a possession - in the first instance - of the teacher, who then gives the information to a student who becomes the possessor of that information. The inseparability of teaching and learning comes about when knowledge becomes something that can become known by the student, rather than a possession of the student. In order for this to happen the teacher and the student must know each other and learn from each other and their circumstances. It is teacher and student learning and being taught on the journey. Knowledge, understanding and subsequent change come about as a meaningful consequence.

The debate is whether this is happening in TEE. To begin with, the teacher and student are together only occasionally. Thus teaching and learning are separated as the teacher is not truly learning from the student - he may be asking all the wrong questions or providing irrelevant information - nor is the student learning from the teacher. The curriculum may well become a 'possession' but not a 'knowable subject'.

Fifthly, for political or even economic reasons TEE looks attractive. Fewer residence schools are needed, fewer teachers required. Is this a false economy in the long term? Politically, the extension movement is attractive for it stifles the clamour for a residence school wherever an educational programme is needed. With the

⁸² There is no evidence of an investigation into the reasons for the poor showing of graduates in ministry in the Presbyterian Church. Nor does there seem to be any analysis of the pedagogical methods of the Seminary. Would this have also demonstrated an abyss between teaching and learning or were the reasons wholly sociological?

burgeoning growth of the church in Latin America, TEE must have seemed attractive to church policy makers.

Sixthly, CENETA poses a challenge to Nazarene residential institutions. No longer can an appeal to the 'norm' be sufficient when addressing the prospective ministry student. Both residence and distance programmes are challenged to be as holistic as possible if they are to survive.

A recent statement by Dr. Esselstyn, Regional Education Co-ordinator for the African Region demonstrates an aspect of current church thinking in this regard:

The tremendous demand for the preparation of ministers as a result of the rapid growth of the Church of the Nazarene is putting heavy strains on the education system. Our current residential programs produce about 100 pastors each year. If we are to meet the growth needs we need to produce nearly 10 times that number each year...The de-centralised and extension systems are the primary vehicle for providing training...and for the preparation of mature students with families for the ministerial role. Currently we have at least one de-centralised or extension program on each of the six fields of the region.⁸³

The 1998 statistical report shows 7,084 students enrolled in Extension Centres world-wide.⁸⁴

Finally, is it possible to have 'critical reflection' in the context of maintaining a fully active ministry? It may be argued that, because TEE does not allow the student to step back and reflect in the context of different settings and through various methodological approaches, critical reflection is being sacrificed to some extent. Furthermore TEE may be not be giving the tools for reflection nor the space in its programme in which to reflect.

7. TEE and Oslo in light of the Nazarene CENETA experience.

The TEF had not been uncritical in its support of TEE. One of its main concerns was the conservative-evangelical influence on TEE through various foreign mission societies outside of the WCC. The TEF felt that TEE was introduced to Latin

⁸³ Dr. Esselstyn, "Africa Region Report" in the *International Board of Education* report to the General Board, Kansas City: Church of the Nazarene, 1999,3.

⁸⁴ *International Board of Education* report to the General Board, 1999, 3.

America by North Americans as a way of mass educating congregational leaders in quickly growing churches.⁸⁵ This seemed to be supported by the number of new TEE centres which sprung up and which had their allegiance to conservative - evangelical churches. Lienemann-Perrin asks “was it a reform for liberation from American domination in ministerial training, or was it a means of strengthening the American evangelisation campaign?”⁸⁶ Suspicions may have been compounded by the content of the programmed texts used by the centres. In the early years of TEE these texts were almost always written by North Americans.⁸⁷ Peter C. Wagner⁸⁸ had been made secretary of the Latin American Committee on Theological Texts (CLATT) so the Pasadena connection tended to sideline Kinsler and Emery who were more on the side of the liberal ecumenists.

A. Sapsezian, the Associate Director of the TEF, expressed the view that programmed teaching would have either a liberating or domesticating effect dependent on who used it and how. It could be perceived as indoctrination or a creative opportunity for the student. However, it was not until 1974 that the Latin American Association of Institutions and Theological Seminaries by Extension (ALISTE) took responsibility for the content of the texts.

The analysis of the Nazarene version of TEE helps in understanding why the Oslo debate looked to, but moreso, beyond TEE for the future of theological education. The number of occasions in which TEE is referred to in the Oslo debate, indicates that extension programmes were still very popular throughout the world. Yet Oslo was calling for “a new vision”, a “new mandate” for a “holistic” approach to theological education and ministerial formation.

⁸⁵ The TEF identified the Committee to assist Missionary Education Overseas, (CAMEO), founded by the Evangelical Foreign Missions Associations and the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association, as one of the prime movers of TEE in Latin America. This evangelical groundswell of support for TEE may partly explain why the Church of the Nazarene adopted it so readily.

⁸⁶ Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry*., 208-209.

⁸⁷ Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry*., 210.

⁸⁸ Fuller School of Missions, Pasadena, California, USA.

The research carried out above shows that the questions surrounding TEE can be grouped into three areas. These arise from the theological, pedagogical and ideological presuppositions behind the programme. Much of the Oslo debate and resulting competencies centred on these issues and whether these were fulfilled through TEE.

Although all of the Oslo competencies are “learned”, that is they are educative competencies where skills have to be adopted, they can be said to be formative competencies, that is, they are concerned with being as well as doing, of character formation as well as education.

However, in Carol Mouat’s words TEE’s success was to be determined through “learned outcomes” which would be demonstrated in the competency of the final product rather than “procedures and structures” which form the ethos of the programme. It appears however, that TEE flounders on this ethos; that is, the theological, pedagogical and ideological presuppositions behind the programme.

7.1 Theological presuppositions.

TEE’s goals, as the thesis has demonstrated, are more *educative* than *formative*. Its theological presuppositions were intended to be ecumenical and this is shown by the way in which control of the TEE texts, in the early days, was wrested from Peter Wagner and other avowed evangelical writers, and placed with a more ecumenical body in ALISTE. However from the Oslo debate it can be seen that the texts used in TEE are not as ecumenical as it would want. The German report spoke of as few as fifty percent of South African institutions embarking on a course for “women’s issues” for example and some programmes are still influenced by Western models.

Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) which succeeded the TEF and PTE in 1994, has given strategic support to programmes promoting ecumenicity, yet Oslo shows diversity in this regard. The Roman Catholic church, albeit an observer in the process, views ordination as a Sacrament, and calls for a preparation for ministry which is distinct from the formation for lay ministries. This includes a “setting apart” which “alone makes possible that availability of mind and heart, indispensable for

benefiting from the ingredients of a balanced formation.”⁸⁹ Its view on ordination is not shared by many within the WCC and its setting apart of ordinands is not the approach Oslo would foster. Ecumenism argues for “openness to hear what the Spirit is saying to our church through other churches...”,⁹⁰ thus a Roman Catholic approach does not appear to meet this criteria.

The “interfaith dialogue” called for by John Pobee, which he sees as necessary for the formative process, is not immediately evident in TEE. As far as the Church of the Nazarene is concerned, an ecumenistic approach does not form part of its CENETA programme, in fact the church could be said to be rather parochial and insular.

Freire is convinced that ecumenicity is linked with the wider goal of theological education:

ministerial formation will never be truly viable (generating life) unless the churches which our institutions serve are also striving to become viable themselves. We can only achieve viability together (ecumenical); and if we do it for the sake of the world (missionary).⁹¹

Ecumenical viability according to Freire, stems from singular viability in the churches. One cannot be achieved without the other. The viability of the Church of the Nazarene must be encouraged to be seen as a positive contributing factor to the health of the church ecumenically and to a global understanding of theological education. An Oslo model for the Church of the Nazarene should include such understandings.

7.2 Pedagogical presuppositions.

The pedagogical presuppositions behind TEE were meritorious; namely to make theological education available to all through extension learning. Contextualisation of the programme aimed to incorporate within it all those who could benefit from it, as well include within it a recognition of the setting within which these people lived.

When TEE was launched in Latin America it rode the prevalent wave of “conscientisation” which was being promoted by Liberation Theology.

⁸⁹ Francis Frost, “A Roman Catholic Response”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol 64, Jan 1994, 31.

⁹⁰ Martin Cressey, “Ecumenical Fidelity...”, 16.

⁹¹ Putney, “Viability of...” 13.

Contextualisation was a popular reason for decentralising theological education. In addition, it released theological education from “western” influences.

What Oslo seems to indicate, however, is that this contextualisation was not as complete as was expected. For example, theological education through TEE is still largely gender specific. African and Honduran consultations called for better access for the poor and ethnic groups to theological education. The South African consultation bemoaned the lack of women on teaching faculties.

“Contextualization” in the TEE setting was meant to take into account the process of secularity, technology and the ongoing struggle for human justice which characterises the history of the nations of the Third World. The concept was that contextuality is global⁹² as well as local. That is, that in contextualizing theological education a global vision is incorporated. Whatever is meaningful in context has relevance and applicability in a global scale; if this were not so, the contextualization would be unhealthy. Ralph W. Tyler points out that:

If mature students bring to the learning process their experience of life and ministry, if their programme provides a serious encounter with the life and ministry of God’s people throughout the Bible, down through history, and around the world, then genuine theological learning and ministerial formation can take place.⁹³

This seems to have been in the mind of the TEF when it expressed the following:

As originally conceived by the extension pioneers, this programme was clearly concerned with doing theology in a liberating and creative way, enhancing the mature and critical reflection of the participants no matter how unschooled...TEF assistance should stimulate the search for this kind of critical awareness, thus aiming to develop the full potential of the method among the whole people of God.⁹⁴

However, as Cochrane argued in the Oslo debate, the link between theory and practice in this regard is often thwarted by two questions: “in whose interest is

⁹² The task is “...to educate persons who are able to think globally and act contextually.” cf. Dieumeme Noelliste, *Toward a Theology of Theological Education*, Seoul, Korea: World Evangelical Fellowship Theological Commission, No.10.1993,5.

⁹³ F. Ross Kinsler and James H. Emery, *Opting for Change: A Handbook on Evaluation and Planning for Theological Education by Extension*, Geneva: PTE, World Council of Churches, 1991.9.

⁹⁴ Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry*., 217. Cf. (Ministry in Context,42).

theological education carried out?” and “towards what end is theological education carried out?” It the first question he concluded that what might work well for the group holding the “reigning power”, might actually work to the disadvantage of the group being taught. To the second he considered that the interests and powers of the teachers, researchers and administrators of institutions which shape the environment of learning will determine the end result.⁹⁵

In the CENETA programme, the Church of the Nazarene demonstrated financial “power”. An view confirmed by the 1989 Nazarene Education Commission Report, where it states:

The facilities of our World Mission Institutions could accommodate expanded enrolment, but the heavy General Budget subsidisation in these institutions demands careful enrolment control.⁹⁶

In other words, the existing colleges could not be financed to cover the necessary growth and budgetary controls militated against building new colleges.

Its “interest” is also numerical. Rapid growth demanded instant ministers. TEE provided students studying in their home environment whilst they continued to serve their congregations.

That theological education should be contextualized is generally accepted by most educators in this field. Theological thinking must adapt to different cultural settings and relate to the context of its setting through its curriculum, pedagogical methods and academic ideals. However if contextualisation is not “working” there remains the challenge of an integration of the academic, spiritual and practical dimensions of theological education and a place for innovation and flexibility in rethinking curricular design and patterns of theological education. This challenge is not limited to TEE;⁹⁷ other models may produce better results.

⁹⁵ J.R. Cochrane, “Contextualisation...”, 29-34.

⁹⁶ *Education Commission Report, 1989*, Kansas City: Church of the Nazarene, 74-75.

⁹⁷ See a secondary paper by Bruce J. Nicholls in the Lausanne Conference on World Evangelization, entitled ‘Theological Education and Evangelization’, in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice, papers and responses of the International Conference on World Evangelism (ICWE)*, (Minneapolis, Minn: World Wide Publications, 1975), 634-648.

The pedagogical method - extension learning - has provided the medium to reach many students. It was innovative in its time, but the preceding debate demonstrates that it has certain flaws. The Oslo consultation indicates that it is not providing the results which could be expected.

7.3 Ideological presuppositions.

TEF was set up to generate resources to make it possible for third-world countries to be part of current developments in theological education. With proper educational programmes in these third-world countries, it was claimed that a brain-drain would be avoided, the high expenses of training someone in the West would be evaded and contextual education would be ensured. With the emerging affluence of new emerging economies (NEE), in which many TEE programmes are located, has the financial problem been resolved? On the other hand a perceived difficulty is the Western model of full time training with full time ministers, priests and pastors. Full time education requires a campus, faculty, library, office, kitchen and maintenance staff.

In a useful study, Herbert Zorn observed that a "financially viable model of the traditional pattern" has a minimum of 120 full-time students and 8 full-time instructors with a support base of a church or group of churches with a minimum membership of 300,000. The support and running expenses come primarily from the contributions of these churches and the fees are paid by the students, usually accounting for 75% of the running costs. His conclusion was that only 20-30% of third-world theological education programmes fit this model.

A "viable non-traditional model", for example, TEE, requires a total student body of 200 and the equivalent of 4 full-time instructors. All or most of the students are part-time and the chief expense is travel and the production of teaching materials. A related church membership of 50,000 is sufficient to meet the running expenses.⁹⁸

Zorn's pragmatic approach has its value. Parallels can be thought of where missionaries have introduced technical equipment to third world areas which has

⁹⁸ Herbert M Zorn *Viability in Context: A Study of the Financial Viability of Theological Education in the Third World - Seedbed or Sheltered Garden?*, London: TEF, 1975, 78-80.

become obsolete on the missionaries' departure, because the maintenance cost was too high. Quality education calls for investment; second-rate programmes can be dismissed by discerning consumers.

This is borne out by the desire for accreditation of the programme from neutral academic bodies as expressed in the Oslo debate. John Hanson's statement that from the African point of view, if there is any sign of "watering down" in the accreditation programme it is perceived as of "lower stature", in other words it has less value than their European counterparts. Carol Mouat counters by saying that "historically those who have stood for standards have had to give way to those who stood for relevance, who in turn developed new standards."⁹⁹ It is TEE's "standards" which have now come under Oslo's scrutiny.

Many reasons have been put forward as to why TEE did not fulfil Oslo's new vision. The method has supporters as well as detractors, as the Oslo debate shows. It is, however, as if the method has become too encumbered and too politicised. The previous debate shows how it has been used for particular ends, and how it has been shaped by ecclesiastical needs. Oslo indicates that it wants to acknowledge TEE but build on its inheritance. The method that is closest pedagogically to TEE is Distance Learning.

8. Conclusion.

As the thesis has shown, there are four adopted routes into the ordained ministry of the Church of the Nazarene. Two are residential models - a Nazarene college, University or Seminary and the Nazarene Bible College, Colorado Springs. The two non-institutional models are CENETA (TEE) and Distance Learning. The latter began in the early days of the church as Home Study but continues as an acceptable route into the ordained ministry for Nazarenes world-wide.

It is observed, however, that where the TEE model is dominant in two thirds world nations, the Distance Learning model defers to it. The Church of the Nazarene in the

⁹⁹ Carol Mouat, "Theological Education...",31.

United Kingdom does not have a TEE programme, therefore its ministerial candidates either attend the Nazarene Theological College, Manchester or subscribe to the Distance Learning route.

Distance learning, as a programme which purports to draw on multiple resources, would appear to be the successor to TEE. With its emphasis in the use of the student's context, residence schools, technological and other resources it would be worth considering whether the best practice of this model would provide the new vision, and thus the methodology, for Oslo's formative competencies.

Before considering this, however, one further stage must be tackled. Just as Oslo drew on the TEE debate and yet tried to move beyond it to discover other methodologies, the Church of the Nazarene has been involved in a similar debate. In 1996 Oslo published its findings, summed up in its competencies. In 1997, the Church of the Nazarene published its latest thinking in a seminal document. It too, presented "elements for the theological preparation of ministers."¹⁰⁰

Further work must be done on the Oslo competencies themselves in light of this set of Nazarene competencies which emerged through the 1997 Commission report. Questions of compatibility will have to be asked. How closely do the Nazarene competencies comply with those of Oslo? As the Oslo competencies emerge from a global ecumenical consultation it could be argued that they take precedence over Nazarene competencies. However, if there is some compatibility, then the task is made easier. On the other hand, if there is diversity, questions must be asked of both camps. The contribution of both sets of competencies to each other will be a significant aspect of the research.

Apart from the comparative study which will now be attempted on the basis of the written competencies, the case study, which will use the Oslo competencies as its benchmark, may throw up significant comments from the interviewees. This should

¹⁰⁰ *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination*, Kansas City: Church of the Nazarene, 1997, 9.

illuminate what actually is being learned and how people are being “formed” through the distance learning programme in the Church of the Nazarene in the UK.

In other words, we begin with the comparison on paper, noting areas of confluence and digression. Then, using the Oslo competencies as the foil, the case study is tackled. This allows the students and others to speak. These results should provide a rich vein of theoretical and practical comparison.

By addressing the Oslo competencies in the context of distance learning in the Church of the Nazarene in the UK, we are asking questions of the educational method. Is it delivering the Oslo competencies? Could it deliver the Oslo competencies? What needs to be addressed? The competencies, in light of the Nazarene comparative exercise, or the method of distance learning in the light of best practice?

The task following this assessment, is to set about building an “Oslo model” which would address Nazarene theological education by best practice distance learning for the ordained ministry in the UK.

Chapter 5

Oslo and Nazarene Competencies Compared and Contrasted.

1. The 1997 International Sourcebook.

A decisive step in addressing the underlying competencies of Nazarene theological education came through the publication of an *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination* and regional derivations of it.

The thinking behind what was to become the *International Sourcebook* originated from an annual consultation, begun in 1990, amongst international theological educators, church administrators, pastors and laity held at Breckenridge, Colorado. The process focused on the critical issues facing the church and its educational providers world-wide. As a result of the Breckenridge meetings, legislation was introduced and passed at the 1997 General Assembly that changed the way future Nazarene ministers would be educated. The Assembly ordered a *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* to be created by each world region. To assist with the project, the Board of General Superintendents¹ appointed the International Course of Study Advisory Committee (ICOSAC).² ICOSAC, composed of members from around the world, developed the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination*. All regional *Sourcebooks* were to be in compliance with the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene and the *International Sourcebook*.

In setting "the minimal standards for ordination and ongoing education across the regions," the *International Sourcebook* recognised that,

The variety of cultural contexts around the world makes one curriculum unsuited for all world areas. Each region of the world will be responsible for the development of specific curricular requirements for providing the educational foundations for ministry in a way that reflects the resources and the expectations of that world area.³

¹ Six General Superintendents are elected quadrennially by the General Assembly and serve for that period.

² *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 424.5.

³ *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination*, Kansas City: Church of the Nazarene, 1997, 5. *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 424.1. New paragraphs were added into the *Manual*, 1997-2001 where necessary. Where a *Manual* reference is given in future footnotes, new material is being added to this, the church's book of governance.

An equivalent of three years full-time ministerial study was confirmed as the minimum requirement for ordination.⁴ Those who have completed this Course of Study need to have achieved the church's expectations in the areas of course "content, competencies, character and context."⁵ These expectations and abilities could be developed "through a variety of courses or structures."⁶

In clarifying that theological education promotes personal formation, the *International Sourcebook* stated that,

The Church of the Nazarene believes that a call to the ministry is also a call to prepare. A significant part of the preparation is education.... Education for ministry in the Church of the Nazarene includes both general and theological education. General education fosters a growing understanding of the historical and current context in which the minister is called to serve. Theological education is an essential part of spiritual development and character formation. It also makes accessible to the individual the rich resources of the Christian faith, enabling the minister to serve humankind and meet societal needs redemptively.⁷

The "four major elements identified for the educational preparation of ministers" (the four "C's": content, competencies, character and context), "...must be embodied in each curriculum programme leading to ordination."⁸

Though curriculum is often thought of only as academic programmes and course content, the concept is much larger. The character of the instructor, the relationship of the students and instructor, the environment, and students' past experiences join with the course content to create the full curriculum. Nevertheless, a curriculum for ministerial preparation will include a minimal set of courses that provide educational foundations for ministry...⁹

The global philosophy of Nazarene theological education set out in the *International Sourcebook* was clarified in a document prepared for the 1999

⁴ *International Sourcebook...*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, Pastoral Ministries, Church of the Nazarene, 1999, 11. (*Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 437.4).

⁵ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

⁶ *International Sourcebook...*, 13. This is confusing language. The 'Course of Study' is the recognisable definition of the ordination course within the Church of the Nazarene. *Manual* paragraph 424.

⁷ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

⁸ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

⁹ *International Sourcebook...*, 9. *Manual: 1997-2001*, paragraph 424.3.

International Board of Education meeting.¹⁰ The document, entitled *Great Commission Pastors for the 21st Century: A Global Strategy for Theological Education, Church of the Nazarene*, claimed that it was “critical to develop a comprehensive strategy of theological education for ministers.”¹¹ This required an integration of “all aspects of the person of the minister, and of the disciplines needed by the minister, and instructional arms of the church.”¹²

Pivotal for the church’s understanding of the gospel there is a confidence that the whole person is the object of Christian redemption and transformation. Rather than viewing the creative dimensions of the human spirit as at odds with the Christian faith, the Church of the Nazarene holds that one goal of education is to foster a creative, responsible and just fulfilment of personhood in community, to the glory of God.¹³

The document sees a motif running through the evolution of education in the denomination, namely: “Christian transformation and witness (which entails) a gracious cultivation of the whole person in both its corporate and individual dimensions.”¹⁴ “The Church of the Nazarene wants that its ministers will be able to understand and effectively address both the global and local cultures in which they serve.”¹⁵ It believes that the church’s Course of Study, as well as its college and seminary curricula, support this expectation.

The church is “...open to using new models of delivery and to an aggressive use of technology, all in the interests of assuring and preserving quality.” It recognises “... the error and arrogance of trying to impose North American and European education models on the rest of the world. (Instead)...the church is seeking to establish a global

¹⁰ The latest revision is dated 4th February 1999. It contains clarification of the *Sourcebook* requirements, for example how the minimum modular requirements in the Course of Study for ordinands can be delivered over three years.

¹¹ Resource Institute for International Education/ International Board of Education, *Great Commission Pastors for the 21st Century: A Global Strategy for Theological Education*, Kansas City: International Board of Education, 4th February, 1999, Introduction, 3.

¹² *Great Commission...*, 4.

¹³ *Great Commission...*, 22.

¹⁴ *Great Commission...*, 22.

¹⁵ *Great Commission...*, 23.

partnership in education...that recognises and incorporates the strengths and particularities of all cultures.”¹⁶

2. The four C’s: The “four major elements identified for the educational preparation of ministers.”¹⁷

The *International Sourcebook* contended that the curriculum (of the Course of Study) must “integrate the four elements of ministerial preparation.”¹⁸ These were identified as Content; representing the acquisition of the biblical, theological and historical knowledge necessary for the minister, Competency; which involved the acquisition and development of the skills for ministry, Character; which referred to the personal qualities of the minister and Context; which dealt with the environment in which ministry would take place. These were described in the following way:

Content: Knowledge of the content of the Old and New Testaments, the theology of the Christian faith, and the history and mission of the Church is essential for ministry. Knowledge of how to interpret Scripture, the doctrine of holiness and our Wesleyan distinctives, and the history and polity of the Church of the Nazarene must be included in these courses.

Competency: Skills in oral and written communication, management and leadership, finance, and analytical thinking are also essential for ministry. In addition to general education in these areas, courses providing skills in preaching, pastoral care and counselling, worship, effective evangelism, Christian education and church administration must be included. Graduation from the course of study requires the partnership of the educational provider and a local church to direct students in ministerial practices and competency development.

Character: Personal growth in character, ethics, spirituality, and personal and family relationships is vital for the ministry. Courses addressing the areas of Christian ethics, spiritual formation, human development, the person of the minister, and marriage and family dynamics must be included.

Context: The minister must understand both the historical and contemporary context and interpret the world-view and social environment of the culture where the church witnesses. Courses that address the

¹⁶ *Great Commission...*, 24.

¹⁷ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

¹⁸ *International Sourcebook...*, 10, (*Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 437.28). cf. *Manual* 424.3.

concerns of anthropology and sociology, cross-cultural communication, missions, and social studies must be included.”¹⁹

The “desired outcomes of educational preparation...” which should be integrated into the four “C’s”²⁰ were:

For the minister “to be”, the desired outcomes are expressed in:

1. Loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength and the neighbour as oneself as expressed in Christian holiness.
2. a deep spirituality with an abiding sense of God’s call.
3. existence as a person in relationship to the community of faith.
4. unquestioned integrity and honour.
5. compassion, patience and perseverance.
6. self-discipline and self-control.
7. humility, gentleness and sensitivity to others.
8. passion and courage.
9. wisdom and discernment.
10. vision and commitment.

For the minister “to know” the desired outcomes are to have:

1. A thorough knowledge of the holy Scriptures and methods of interpretation.
2. a clear understanding of Christian theology and especially the place of Christian holiness within it.
3. a solid grasp of the history of the Christian church and its mission through the centuries.
4. a knowledge of the Wesleyan theological heritage and traditions.
5. a working knowledge of the disciplines of the spiritual life.
6. an understanding of the significance, forms and place of Christian worship in the community of faith.
7. a firm understanding of Christian personal and social ethics.

¹⁹ *International Sourcebook...*, 10. (*Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 424.3)

²⁰ *International Sourcebook...*, 10.

8. a knowledge of communication theory and skills, especially preaching and including teaching and interpersonal skills.
9. a clear understanding of the dynamics of Christian service leadership, local church administration, and models of mission and ministry; and the similarities to and distinctions from secular models of leadership and management.
10. an awareness of the brokenness of the human condition-both personal and societal.
11. an understanding of the dynamics of the human life, groups within the local church and society, including marriage and family.
12. a grasp of the span of human history and culture, particularly of the minister's own context.
13. an awareness of cultural trends and influences in contemporary society including religious pluralism.
14. a knowledge of the operation of the polity and practice of the Church of the Nazarene.
15. an awareness of the legal framework in the society in which the congregation functions.

For the minister "to do", desired outcomes are to :

1. Model a godly life and vital piety.
2. think prayerfully about personal, familial and congregational development.
3. act with integrity and honour in all relationships.
4. respond to others with the love of God.
5. lead the people of God in worship, mission and service.
6. equip the saints for the work of ministry.
7. preach the Word of God with clarity in a culturally appropriate fashion.
8. teach by word and example.
9. evangelise the lost, feed the flock.
10. articulate clearly the mission of the congregation and the Church.
11. minister to the brokenness of persons and society.

12. communicate the truth in love.
13. listen with care and discretion.
14. facilitate the ministry of all the people of God at the local level.
15. organise the local congregation as needed and appropriate.
16. assess the effectiveness of programmes and plans.
17. acquire skills in information technology and other media essential for ministry and mission.
18. pursue life-long learning.

“Any scheme of study should be designed to assist the candidate to develop the principles expressed above. Any such scheme is merely the beginning point of a lifetime of formal and informal development.”²¹

The *Great Commission* document envisaged that “...the Nazarene education system must integrate all of the aspects of the person of the minister, and of the disciplines needed by the minister, and instructional arms of the church.”²² Five interlinking agencies empowered this integration; these were, the student (at the centre), the teacher, the local church, the theological institution and the Board of Ministerial Studies.²³ The philosophy underlying this approach is built on the following assumptions:

1. The preferred educational setting is the classroom - replaced by other means only when needed. Other formats complement residential education.
2. Theological education must be transforming and requires mentoring, modelling and as much personal interaction as possible.
3. Course modules must be designed so that even distance learning modules require interpersonal interaction, personal evaluation and, where relevant, field experiences.

²¹ *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination*, 10, (Manual, 1997-2001, paragraph 437.2.

²² *Great Commission...*, 8.

²³ This is also stated in the *International Sourcebook*, 13, and in the *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 424.3: “...graduation from the Course of Study requires the partnering of the educational provider and the local church to direct students in ministerial practices and competency development.” As indicated earlier in the thesis, the Board of Ministerial Studies has been renamed the Board of Ministry in the UK.

4. Every minister is encouraged to move as far up the educational ladder as possible.
5. After completing the Course of Study, a minister is expected to be committed to a lifetime of study and development.²⁴

Although the four “C’s” of the Course of Study “may be developed through a variety of courses or structures,”²⁵ the time allocated to each competence within each programme was to be; Content 30%, Competency 25%, Character 10% and Context 10%. 25% was left undesignated, to be assigned as appropriate to the student and the setting so that all programmes reach 100%.²⁶

The *Great Commission* document detected a continuing motif through the evolution of education in the denomination and concluded that: “Christian transformation and witness entail a gracious cultivation of the whole person in both its corporate and individual dimensions”²⁷ and that this was demonstrated in the church’s historic commitment to education. In this, “the church conducts education as having much to learn and to teach.”²⁸

While the church affirms the primacy of Scripture in theological education, it wants ministers to be informed by and conversant with a wide range of human learning and exploration... The Church of the Nazarene wants that its ministers will be able to understand and effectively address both the global and local cultures in which they serve.

It goes on to state,

Education in the Church of the Nazarene protects the proper autonomy of the sciences, commerce, civil government, the arts and leisure. But in its education efforts, the denomination employs faith and thought to understand how the Lordship of Jesus Christ bears on the entire range of human life with all its contexts.²⁹

And,

The Church of the Nazarene, is open to using new models of delivery and to an aggressive use of technology, all in the interests of assuring and

²⁴ *Great Commission...*, 5,6.

²⁵ *International Sourcebook...*, 13.

²⁶ *International Sourcebook...*, 12.

²⁷ *Great Commission...*, 22.

²⁸ *Great Commission...*, 23.

²⁹ *Great Commission...*, 24.

preserving quality... The denomination recognises the error and arrogance of trying to impose North American and European education models on the rest of the world. Instead the Church of the Nazarene is actively seeking to establish a global partnership in education, a partnership that recognises and incorporates the strengths and particularities of all cultures.³⁰

Manual statements by the church attempted to demonstrate that the colleges and universities reflect "...an integral part of the church" and "...an expression of the church."³¹ Furthermore, they provide the spiritual environment "...in which people can be redeemed and enriched spiritually, intellectually and physically, "made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work" (2 Tim.2:21).³²

The *Manual* Educational Mission Statement speaks of:

...education in the Church of the Nazarene (as being) rooted in the biblical and theological commitments of the Wesleyan and holiness movements and accountable to the stated mission of the denomination (and) aims to guide (students)...in nurturing and in expressing in service to the church and world consistent and coherent Christian understandings of social and individual life.³³

The ethical and moral elements which informed early theological training in the Church of the Nazarene have also shaped subsequent ministry preparation in an extraordinary way. By promoting a varied programme of theological education within the Course of Study, the church has sought to reflect its roots and make theological education accessible to all who are called to the ministry of the church.

3. The benchmarks of the Oslo Competencies.

To assist in the comparative exercise of the Nazarene and Oslo competencies, the benchmarks of the Oslo competencies are set out:

3.1 The spiritual competency:

- is at the centre of the educational task.

³⁰ *Great Commission...*, 25.

³¹ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 380.

In 1933, 926 students were enrolled in Nazarene colleges. By 1998, enrolment totalled 26,176 students on campus and extension centres globally. The church has 59 colleges, universities and seminaries located in 40 countries. (International Board of Education, in *General Board Report*, 1999, 1)

³² *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 380.

³³ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 380.1.

- is not a skill, but part of a vision and commitment in the person that relates theology to life.
- is a process which develops with the practice of certain competencies.
- is integrated into theological education.
- other elements are seen to derive their emphasis from this competency.
- it is done in community and for community.

3.2 The theological competency:

- Theology is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a commitment and a life-style and as such must be concerned with developing skills to enable others to be faithful to their vocation.
- it includes the hermeneutical task of discerning and acting upon the symbols in the community which have become mediations of the gospel. The contextualisation of theology through community is paramount.
- theology is a rational science and a creative exercise in mutual harmony. As we address changes in theological education we must hold on to the concept of training “creative theologians.” These were people who could respond to changing circumstances, as they are not bound to particular situations or moments in history.

3.3 The pastoral competency:

- ministerial formation is a central part of theological education.
- the development of the pastoral competency is done in the church context.
- ministry and missionary situations require pastoral as well as educational skills.

3.4 The leadership competency:

- enables, equips and discerns gifts of ministry in the community.
- includes the ability to empower the marginalized in the community and to mediate in conflict situations.
- can only come about where there are leaders and followers.

3.5 The missionary competency:

- is wrapped up with the purpose of theology and of theological education.

- only so far as the church is authentically and creatively engaged in worship and mission, only in so far as the church is being a faithful witness to the reign of God.
- mission is sharing consciously in the everyday life situations of people.

3.6 The ecumenical competency:

- the ecumenical imperative is inextricably linked with the church's missionary vocation.
- theological education *must* engage in interfaith dialogue.
- ecumenism encourages a formation process which inspires, liberate, empowers, resources and affirms the ministries present in the whole people of God.

4. Comparing and contrasting the Oslo competencies and the Nazarene “four major elements of the educational preparation of ministers”³⁴ (the four “C’s”).

The Oslo competencies identify six areas of preparation which are considered to make up what is theological education. Each *competency* has within it essential elements of *content*, which must be expressed within a *context*, for the content to be effectively understood and applied. It can also be stated that as each competency is addressed, the *character* of the student is encouraged to develop. Thus it can be contended that, at first observation, there is common ground between the Oslo competencies and the Nazarene “elements” of content, competency, character and context.

4.1 Two significant areas of contrast.

4.1.1 Ministerial development.

The first significant area of contrast is in the approach to ministerial development of the two programmes. Two seemingly complementary statements on the relationship between ministerial formation or spiritual development and theological education can be found in both:

³⁴ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

An important component of ministerial formation is theological education. One of the emphases in the TEF study.., is that theological education is at once theology, education and commitment....Viability is also about the structures and styles that will be conducive to the formation of students who are equipped to fulfil the task of ministry in the life of the church and the people of faith, individually and severally in the world.³⁵ (Oslo)

Theological education is an essential part of spiritual development and character formation. It also makes accessible to the individual the rich resources of the Christian faith, enabling the minister to serve humankind and meet societal needs redemptively.³⁶ (Nazarene)

However, the approach is different. The Oslo competencies are essentially “ministerial formation-driven” whereas the Nazarene four C’s are “course or content-driven”.³⁷ They are “four major elements identified for the *educational preparation* of ministers.”³⁸ (italics mine) The statement quoted above which speaks of “theological education as an essential part of spiritual development” is preceded by a strong support for the educational endeavour:

The Church of the Nazarene believes that a call to the ministry is also a call to prepare. A significant part of the preparation is education.... Education for ministry in the Church of the Nazarene includes both general and theological education. General education fosters a growing understanding of the historical and current context in which the minister is called to serve.³⁹

The starting point for Oslo is to see ministerial formation as the goal, and view theological education as *an important component* in pursuit of that goal.⁴⁰ The Nazarene approach is to begin with theological education as the goal and view it as *an essential part* of spiritual development and character formation.⁴¹ The difference is one of emphasis. Both recognise the place of theological education and ministerial formation. Oslo begins with ministerial formation - and views theological education as

³⁵ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 6,7.

³⁶ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

³⁷ Significantly, “Content” is the first of the four C’s and is given a higher percentage rating in the minimum requirements of the Course of Study (30%). “Character” is assigned 10%. (*International Sourcebook*, 12) See also footnote 42.

³⁸ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

³⁹ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

⁴⁰ Pobee, “The First Gospel...” 6,7.

⁴¹ *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

an *important* component- the Church of the Nazarene begins with theological education and views it as an *essential* component which will give rise to ministerial formation. It is what drives the endeavour that makes the difference.

Oslo anticipates that a holistic theological education will make something happen within the person that will “form” the person spiritually, theologically, in leadership, pastorally, missionally and ecumenically. The Nazarene four C’s are promoted through a Course of Study, which, although it allows for regional and cultural variations, must cover these “elements” to a minimum percentage.⁴²

Oslo places spiritual competency at the centre of all the competencies as it understands that “theological education and ministerial formation are ultimately about knowing God.”⁴³ The Nazarene approach is less specific in practice. Here, the “C” of “character” is given an identifiable 10% of the Course of Study, which could rise to 35% if the “undesigned” percentage is also taken up in this area.

Nonetheless, spiritual and character formation is expected in the candidates as a result of theological education for ordination. This can best be summed up by a statement in the USA regional *Sourcebook* which anticipates, as a result of the educational task, an “ability to apply understanding of his or her ongoing

⁴² Of the Course of Study, 30% must be given to Content (Biblical, Theological, Historical and Ministerial); 25% to Competency (Communication skills, pastoral skills, management skills, analytical skills, leadership skills); Character 10% (Ethical, spiritual and personal growth, incarnational leadership, commitment to God and Church, passion for the lost, covenantal life style); Context 10% (Information, system and environments of learning, pluralism: religious, historical and cultural, community interface: social, ethical, legal and judicial, Church and ministry) Undesignated 25% (to be assigned as appropriate to the student and the setting). *International Sourcebook...*, 12. It may be argued by Nazarene educators that the difference in emphasis is purely academic. After all, the formative competencies of Oslo have to be given *content* which will be taught in a *context*, in order that *competency* and *character* might be evident. Nazarene educators may say that it is not that the 4 C’s are course-driven, but rather that the course must address the 4 C’s. Furthermore, that the *International Sourcebook* is concerned with the educational standards of the minister and how these contribute to ministerial formation, recognising that it cannot be done without the local church or that the task can be completed in a three-year period. It can be counter-argued, however, that the Nazarene approach is as a “Course of Study” where all competencies have to be covered to an agreed minimum. It is suggested that this gives a difference in emphasis and approach to the preparation of the student for ministry.

⁴³ John Pobce, *Towards Viable Theological Education*, Geneva: WCC, 1997, 64.

developmental needs across the life course of the minister to the pursuit of holy character.”⁴⁴

In light of the church’s teaching, “the pursuit of holy character” has certain overtones related to the pursuit of a holy life in relation to its teaching on holiness and entire sanctification. A brief excursus is needed here as this understanding has a very specific history.

Excursus:

This teaching comes from the church’s Wesleyan Methodist roots. John Wesley preached, explained and defended “Christian Perfection” continually using the phrase “faith working by love” (Galatians 5:6) which he felt summed up the message of Christian holiness.

He understood perfection as a gift of grace offered to all the people of God. Central to this was the atonement,⁴⁵ for by the work of the cross sin is defeated and the true believer becomes dependent upon Christ. So then to the one who is justified by faith that same person can be sanctified wholly by faith instantaneously and know the experience of “love excluding sin”.⁴⁶ Entire Sanctification (i.e. perfect love) was understood as a higher stage of the pilgrimage where the Christian is saved from all sin and perfected in love.

Wesley was aware of the dangers of this stress upon perfection, dangers of enthusiastic claims and a failure to see the deep sinfulness of sin. To guard against this he preached and taught a number of safeguards.

⁴⁴ *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*, Kansas City: Pastoral Ministries, Church of the Nazarene, 1999, paragraph SMD 437.36.

⁴⁵ The grace of God is central to Wesley’s understanding. He spoke of prevenient grace where God (out of divine love), initiates contact with people as they are unable (because of original sin or depravity), to reach out to God. Wesley stated that humans are by nature totally corrupt; that this corruption is because of original sin, and that they can be justified only through Christ. (see Melvin E. Dieter, ‘The Wesleyan Perspective’ in *Five Views on Sanctification*, Grand Rapids: Academic Books/Zondervan Publishing House, 1987, 22.)

⁴⁶ For Wesley, justification was ‘initial sanctification’. Justification implies what ‘God does for us’ through Jesus Christ. Sanctification is ‘what he works in us by his Holy Spirit’. This is the beginning of the journey of faith. (See Wesley’s sermon ‘Justification by Faith’ in *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol 1, Sermon 5, Albert C Outler (ed), Nashville: Abingdon Press 1984, 182ff).

Firstly he constantly appealed to Scripture. Whatever did not pass this test was to be discarded. From the outset Wesleyan holiness was to be “scriptural holiness”.

Secondly he appealed to reason, dismissing the irrational. “To renounce reason is to renounce religion...religion and reason go hand in hand...all irrational religion is false religion.”⁴⁷

Thirdly the place of the “means of grace”. All converts were encouraged to attend the sacraments in their local parish church. These were not to be neglected.

Fourthly the fellowship of the group and its discipline was encouraged. In Wesley’s words, the fellowship of the gospel was “directly opposite” to the solitary nature of mysticism:

...solitary religion is not found there. “Holy solitaires” is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than “holy adulterers”. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.⁴⁸

Fifthly Wesley stressed that the perfection he was propagating as “Christian perfection”. It was not a pre-fall (Adamic) or angelic or a resurrection perfection. There would be ignorance and mistakes but he believed in a moment by moment dedication of oneself to God drawing on the merits of the atonement although never freed from the temptation normal to human existence.

Sixth he taught against spiritual pride, fanaticism and self-delusion. In his *Plain Account*,⁴⁹ he states:

Another ground of these and a thousand mistakes, is, the not considering deeply that love is the highest gift of God- humble, gentle, patient love; that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love, and that all the gifts above mentioned are either the same with or infinitely inferior to it. It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this - the heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion - there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more

⁴⁷ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, The Bicentennial Edition, Frank Baker (ed), Oxford and Nashville: Oxford University Press and Abingdon Press, Vol.V, 1975-1993, 357-369.

⁴⁸ John and Charles Wesley, *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, Vol. 1, G. Osborn (ed), London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1868, xxii.

⁴⁹ John Wesley, *Works*, Vol.X1, 430.

love you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, "Have you received this or that blessing?" if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong, you are leading them out of the way, and putting them on a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth of Corinthians. You can go no higher than this till you are carried into Abraham's bosom.

Excursus ends.

Since Wesley's death there have been several identifiable shifts in emphasis and understanding of Wesleyan theology and tradition, not least within the Church of the Nazarene. Nonetheless, the pursuit of Christian holiness in its contemporary understanding, would be expected of all Nazarene students.

A complication to this is, however, that a single contemporary understanding of holiness does not exist within the Church of the Nazarene despite statements to that effect in its *Manual*.⁵⁰ Furthermore, how the "pursuit of a holy character" could be measured in educational terms would be difficult.

In relation to the debate in hand, three points may now be made:

1. Oslo and the Nazarenes would probably agree that the content of modules which promote this goal may be as authoritative as any other material presented for any other module. The study of the spiritual disciplines, for example, is a legitimate body of material for presentation in such modules. So long as the material is not authoritarian, and that the power to learn still lies with the learner to accept or reject the material, it is a worthwhile task.
2. In Wesley's thinking, the "pursuit of a holy character" was communal - in fact it cannot be done in isolation ("no holiness but social holiness"). Whilst it is argued by some Roman Catholic commentators in Oslo that the residential confessing

⁵⁰ "We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect. It is wrought by the Holy Spirit...(and)...provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by faith, preceded by entire consecration.... We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is a result of growth in grace." *Manual* 1997-2001, Articles of Faith (X. *Entire Sanctification*) paragraph 13,14.

community is the best place for this,⁵¹ to exclude the wider Christian community outside of the theological institution from this task would be folly. Whilst legitimate arguments could be made for the unique opportunities for the development of character within an institutional confessing community, in Nazarene terms, this would exclude the wider social context for the development of personal holiness of which Wesley spoke.

3. Where the worshipping community becomes the “mentor” and the wider secular community the “context”, the possibilities for the appropriation of the content of such modules on spiritual and character development become more viable.

In light of what has been stated, the *Manual* elaborates on the requirements thus:

The perpetuity and efficiency of the Church of the Nazarene depend largely upon the spiritual qualifications, the character and the manner of life of its ministers. The minister...must have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and be sanctified wholly by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.. The minister...must be an example in prayer.⁵²

Oslo anticipates that character building and spiritual development will permeate theological education, whereas the Nazarene Course of Study attempts to plan for it. In this there is a common goal but a different approach. It could be argued that planning admits to a more academic and administrative approach whereas putting the concept at the centre typifies a particular expectation of a programme. It probably could be agreed that where a specific programme is elaborated to promote ministerial formation in a specific way for a Christian purpose, neither Oslo nor the Nazarenes would have difficulty in agreeing with the concept. Oslo wants to prioritise the concept in order that it may permeate the programme. The Nazarenes want to plan for

⁵¹ Francis Frost stated that this included a “setting apart” which “alone makes possible that availability of mind and heart, indispensable for benefiting from the ingredients of a balanced formation.” In his understanding of sacramental ordination as a tenet of the Roman Catholic church, he saw as indispensable the need of residential formation in an academic confessional community. (‘A Roman Catholic Response’ in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.64, January 1994, 31.)

Research done by a Professor Brynner (London Institute of Education) on university education supports the thesis that higher education amongst other things “engenders an interest in community involvement” and “greater participation in the community”. (‘It’s official: university makes you happier and healthier’ in *The Times*, 11 April, 2000, 8-9).

⁵² Church of the Nazarene, *Manual*, 1997-2001, Paragraphs 400, 401.2, 401.4.

the concept in order that it is seen to be addressed. The Oslo approach is made in the context of a world-wide ecumenical movement where it is impossible to set out a Course of Study. The Church of the Nazarene however, although also working world-wide, can be more prescriptive in giving a general plan of a Course of Study which leads to ordination. Within this, it can attempt to make sure that this area is addressed. Moreover, in the area of the development of "holy character", the church has certain historical expectations reflected in the above illustration, although it is not in global agreement of how these should be expressed today. It may be that an Oslo model would assist the Church of the Nazarene in its quest to fulfil these expectations within its candidates for the ministry. A formative approach to theological education (the Oslo model) may sit well with the church.

4.1.2 Ecumenism.

Another area where a contrast in approach is evident is in the ecumenical competency. Oslo affirms that the ecumenical imperative is inextricably linked with the church's missionary vocation and that because of this, theological education must engage in interfaith dialogue. Furthermore, it is convinced that ecumenism encourages a formation process which inspires, liberates, empowers, resources and affirms the ministries present in the whole people of God.

The Church of the Nazarene makes the following statements on the Church:

We believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

God calls the Church to express its life in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit; in worship through the preaching of the Word, observance of the sacraments, and ministry in his name; by obedience to Christ and mutual accountability.

The mission of the Church in the world is to continue the redemptive work of Christ in the power of the Spirit through holy living, evangelism, discipleship and service.

The Church is a historical reality, which organises itself in culturally conditioned forms; exists both as local congregations and as a universal body; sets apart persons called of God for specific ministries. God calls

the Church to live under His rule in anticipation of the consummation at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁵³

This is expanded through three key statements on the Church:

The Church of God is composed of all spiritually regenerate persons, whose names are written in heaven.

The churches severally are to be composed of such regenerate persons as by providential permission, and by the leadings of the Holy Spirit, become associated together for holy fellowship and ministries.

The Church of the Nazarene is composed of those persons who have voluntarily associated themselves together according to the doctrines and polity of said church...⁵⁴

Although the Church of the Nazarene would see itself as a denomination in the “mainstream” of Christian churches, it demonstrates limited ecumenical credentials. It is not a member of the World Council of Churches. However, individual churches are given full autonomy on membership of local ecumenical groups including “Churches Together”.

In the area of theological education a dichotomy exists. The theological institutions of the Church of the Nazarene welcome students from all denominations.⁵⁵ At NTC, Manchester for example, all students are required to sign a declaration which states: “I certify that I am willing to comply with the College’s ethic.”⁵⁶ This certification is preceded by the statement:

Since Nazarene Theological College is a College of the Church of the Nazarene, we expect that our students’ way of life will be consistent with the ethical and moral standards of the Church. These standards include honouring and respecting the person, the integrity, the reputation and the needs of others; respecting both the property of the College and that of the College community, and the highest regard for oneself as God’s creation.⁵⁷

⁵³ *Manual*, 1997-2001, Articles of Faith, (XI. *The Church*), paragraph 15.

⁵⁴ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraphs 23,24,25.

⁵⁵ One example of this is NTC, Manchester where students from 23 denominations were registered (Statistics, NTC Registry 1999). No student would be barred from studying at the college if, having been made aware of the ethos of the institution, they wished to matriculate.

⁵⁶ Application Form for admission to NTC, Manchester, 4.

⁵⁷ Application Form for admission to NTC, Manchester, 4.

The ethical and moral standards of the church are not set out, and any prospective student would need to investigate these. Those that are mentioned (“honouring and respecting the person...”) are general enough so as to be adopted by any Christian theological college. It could be said therefore that NTC is ecumenical in its approach to the point that any student, of a religious persuasion or none, may be able to sign up to the printed statement.

However, there is lack of evidence of an overt link between the Nazarene statements on the Church and ecumenical co-operation in theological education. The Church of the Nazarene does not have a track record of ecumenical learning between its theological institutions and those of others. This is affirmed by recent reports. In the *Great Commission Pastors for the 21st Century* it states that “the Church of the Nazarene is actively seeking to establish a global partnership in education.”⁵⁸

However, this partnership is not ecumenical, but rather in-house; “the responsibility for Nazarene ministerial preparation is shared by all Nazarene institutions of higher education.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, its aim is “to mobilise the entire faculty of the Church⁶⁰ to contribute to the entire educational ministry of the church.”⁶¹ This ‘faculty’ is “The Academy: an association of Nazarene scholars..” from which will come a “Global Faculty: an official roster of faculty from the academy with international teaching experience upon whom the church can call for strategic educational assignments.”⁶²

On the other hand, theological institutions are encouraged to see themselves as part of the universal Church: “all educational entities must be committed to equipping all the people of God for ministry to the whole Church in its mission to the world.”⁶³ Therefore, an awareness of the theological task within a universal Church setting is evident, but the task is seen to be done by Nazarene educators.

⁵⁸ *Great Commission Pastors...*, 24.

⁵⁹ *Great Commission Pastors...*, 3.

⁶⁰ This is mistakenly capitalised in the document. It is obvious that the Church of the Nazarene is meant here and not the universal Church.

⁶¹ *Great Commission Pastors...*, 16.

⁶² *Great Commission Pastors...*, 16.

⁶³ *Great Commission Pastors...*, 3.

In practice, however, non-Nazarene educators may find a teaching role in a Nazarene institution. At NTC, Manchester, the Faculty Handbook states that “lecturers have a responsibility to support the religious aims and ethos of the college...”⁶⁴ In 1999, one full-time lecturer,⁶⁵ one seconded full-time faculty member from a para-church organisation and five visiting lecturers were non-Nazarene.⁶⁶

There is a difference, then, between Oslo’s overt ecumenical imperative of interfaith dialogue and the cautious Nazarene approach. Nazarenes welcome input within their institutions by non-Nazarene teachers and students and see their task as contributing to the ministry of the universal church, however, the welcome is not as bold as Oslo’s. The content of the Course of Study, though containing essential Nazarene elements, is not intended to be sectarian as indicated by the NTC *Faculty Handbook* statement on “Principles of Academic Freedom and Responsibility.”

Nazarene Theological College recognises that the highest mission of its faculty is the pursuit of truth and the teaching of their best understanding of truth to the church through the student body. Such a pursuit and such teaching cannot occur without a clear commitment to academic freedom. At the same time, Nazarene theological college recognises and affirms its commitment to the historic Christian faith as interpreted within the Church of the Nazarene. This commitment necessitates a faculty united in loyalty to the advancement of the church through their constant search for the truth. In the context of a Christian college, there can be no basic conflict between truth and the ultimate welfare of the church.

Six statements then follow, including:

...It is recognised that communication of truth includes the honest and balanced lecture room presentation of alternatives, particularly to the lecturer’s own conclusions and to the generally accepted positions of the church.

...It is recognised that the pursuit of truth may include the investigation, the interpretation and evaluation, of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the church...

⁶⁴ *Faculty Handbook*, Nazarene Theological College, 1997, 12.

⁶⁵ This appointment came about through an amalgamation of another church college with NTC. The lecturer in question was employed by NTC until his retirement in 2000.

⁶⁶ *Academic Regulations* 1997-1999, 11-12.

...It is recognised that loyalty to the church requires that the faculty teach in sympathy with the spirit of the Church of the Nazarene's Statement of Belief and General Rules. This implies reasonable interpretation in the personal application of such beliefs and rules.⁶⁷

Here is a functional ecumenicity. NTC allows non-Nazarenes to teach, and there is no regulation against a non-Nazarene becoming a full-time faculty member. It is an open question, however, if such a person could become a full-time lecturer in theology, for example. This has not been tested, and if it were, a wider ecumenical debate may be opened.⁶⁸

The history of the Church of the Nazarene⁶⁹ may provide clues as to why it tries to be as open as possible to ecumenical influences but finds itself restricted in how far it can go. Its founder, Phineas F. Bresee, came out of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America in the late nineteenth century. The church has grown to over a million in membership in more than one hundred and twenty world areas, but it is still financially dependent on the American arm of the church. Although democratic in its church polity and practice, the voting block of the USA church is powerful and reflects conservative influences throughout the fifty states. Ecumenism, which may be strong in some areas of the world, is allowed to express itself, but there is no global recognition of the WCC, nor has observer status been officially considered.

The formal global expressions of ecumenicity are absent from the church, but attitudes in some areas of the world, may allow for more openness. Parts of the UK may be such areas.⁷⁰

4.3 Theological competence.

Oslo views this competence as more than an intellectual exercise; it is a commitment and a life-style and as such must be concerned with developing skills to enable others to be faithful to their vocation. The competence has at its centre the concept of

⁶⁷ *Faculty Handbook*, 11.

⁶⁸ As an affiliated college of the University of Manchester, it is accepted that this University recognises that a confessional college can set its own hiring criteria within legal boundaries.

⁶⁹ See the Appendices.

⁷⁰ The Church of the Nazarene in Northern Ireland is a notable exception to this.

training “creative theologians,” people who could respond to changing circumstances, and not be bound to particular situations or moments in history.

If NTC is seen as a typical Nazarene example of a theological institution,⁷¹ a supportive statement of this intent can be found in its *Faculty Handbook*:

Nazarene Theological College is a community of Christian scholars and learners which seeks to present a view of life and humanity that will guide, stimulate and equip students to realise a life of redemptive service to their fellows.

Therefore, within a Wesleyan context as interpreted by the Church of the Nazarene, the College attempts to create an educational programme which enables students to advance toward achieving a mature grasp of, and a creative, vital integrated commitment to the Christian faith...increasing their capacities for genuinely critical and creative thinking...⁷²

However, Oslo calls for this competency to be done in co-operative forms outside of the institutions. In the statement above, ‘critical and creative thinking’ that will ‘stimulate and equip students to realise a life of redemptive service’, promises not to be “technocratic and expertocratic” - a criticism levelled by Oslo. The *Manual* statement may not escape this criticism; concerning the theological competency of the minister it says:

He or she will have a thirst for knowledge, especially of the Word of God...good understanding and clear views concerning the plan of redemption and salvation as revealed in the Scriptures.” (The) “... minister must have a strong appreciation of both salvation and Christian ethics.”⁷³

Therefore, quite how this competency could be worked out in a Nazarene context, to the satisfaction of Oslo, is unclear. The UK theological institution, however, does seem to be more in tune with the thrust of the competency. As there are non-Nazarene lecturers in NTC (though not in theology) ecumenical awareness may permeate more readily than in a Nazarene pastoral setting.

⁷¹ As all theological institutions of the Church of the Nazarene come under the remit of the International Board of Education, this Board is made aware of all academic and administrative regulations within each institution. It can be concluded therefore, that the regulations of NTC, Manchester would lie within an acceptable ethos. Furthermore, as the UK is the aim of the Oslo model, it is legitimate to use NTC as the educational example.

⁷² *Faculty Handbook*, 13.

⁷³ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraphs 401.4, 401.2.

4.4 The pastoral, leadership and missionary competencies.

All the Oslo competencies are to be understood in their context. In these three, that context is quite specific. The development of the pastoral competency is done in the church context (church, community, people). The leadership competency enables, equips and discerns gifts of ministry in the community, and mission is sharing consciously in the everyday life situations of people.

The Church of the Nazarene *Manual* states that the pastoral competencies of the minister are:

... to preach the Word; to administer the sacraments; to equip the saints for the work of the ministry; to care for the people by pastoral visitation, particularly the sick and needy; to seek, by all means, the conversion of sinners, the entire sanctification of the converted, and the upholding of God's people in the most holy faith; to have care of all departments of local church work.⁷⁴

The expectations of leadership are:

To correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. To give leadership to the evangelism, education, devotion and expansion programmes of the local church...The pastor shall be ex-officio, president of the local church...⁷⁵

And of mission:

The minister must have a deep sense of the fact that souls for whom Christ died are perishing, and that he or she is called of God to proclaim or to make known to them the glad tidings of salvation. To seek, by all means, the conversion of sinners, the entire sanctification of the converted, and the upbuilding of God's people in the most holy faith.⁷⁶

However, there is a point of contrast here between what the *Manual* perceives to be the "context" in practicing ministry and what the theological institutions perceive to be "context" in theological education for ministry. The "context" element of the Nazarene Course of Study consists of *teaching about* the context of ministry.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraphs 413, 413.1, 413.2, 413.4, 413.5, 413.8, 413.9.

⁷⁵ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraphs 413.7, 413.14, 413.23.

⁷⁶ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraphs 401.2, 413.8.

⁷⁷ "The minister must understand both the historical and contemporary context... Courses that address the concerns of anthropology and sociology, cross-cultural communication, missions and social studies must be included." (*International Sourcebook*., 10)

A survey of regional *Sourcebooks* confirms this. Two examples are given. The African Region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*, states that to fulfil the requirements “courses covering the following areas” would be offered:

National history in the context of world and African history. Contemporary issues including political science and civic education where possible. Principles of the social sciences. Principles of cross cultural ministry and missions. African, Biblical and Western world views. An integrated presentation of God’s creation...which will provide a base for understanding the Christian positions on various aspects such as magic, witchcraft, divine healing and medicine.⁷⁸

The Caribbean, Mexico, Central America and South America *Guía de Desarrollo Ministerial* (Ministerial Development Guide) states that:

To desire that your ministry can understand the customs that are in favour amongst certain groups, and that you are able to utilise this understanding, you should be able to:

Have a basic understanding of modern society and its daily expressions. To develop the capability to rightly observe the attitudes that permeate human encounters. To understand social dynamics and apply the information to specific ministry situations. To analyse and describe congregations and communities. To explain the culture in which you work.⁷⁹

Even although the Nazarene approach is that wherever the Course of Study is being given, and by whatever means, the teaching is about the context where the student is, or where the student will find himself following his theological studies, “the preferred educational setting is the classroom - replaced by other means only where needed...”⁸⁰

Oslo places the learning directly within the context of doing. In Nazarene theological education, the emphasis is on teaching about the context of which the student may or may not be part. The context in Oslo’s perception is the location of

⁷⁸ *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development: African Region 1998-2002*, Florida, SA: Africa Region Curriculum Committee, 1999, 34-35.

⁷⁹ *Guía de Desarrollo Ministerial*, Kansas City: Case Nazarena de Publicaciones, Regiones CAR, MAC y SAM de la Iglesia del Nazareno, 1999, S-2 36. Translation from Spanish.

⁸⁰ *Great Commission...*, 5,6.

ministry; in the Nazarene educational perception it is more likely to involve stepping aside from the location in order to learn about it.⁸¹

Too much could be made of this divide and Nazarenes may protest that it is too definitive. What it comes down to is a different approach to the core competencies. For Oslo they are formative, and thus theological education is driven from the centre (the student) outwards. For the Church of the Nazarene they are ways of defining a Course of Study necessary for the ordained ministry. It could be argued that Oslo had the liberty to express the fulfilling of these competencies without having to find a structure which was financially viable or ecclesiastically specific. For the Church of the Nazarene, a standard of education for the ordained ministry, financial viability and the demands of a global church may have caused it to be much more prescriptive in its method.

5. Conclusion.

5.1 Is there common ground between the Oslo and Nazarene competencies?

Are these great differences? They may appear so at first examination. However, they are mainly of approach or degree. It could be stated that where a specific programme were elaborated to promote ministerial formation in a specific way for a Christian purpose, neither Oslo nor the Nazarenes would have difficulty in agreeing with the concept. In fact, the Nazarene programme speaks of theological education as “Christian transformation and witness (which entails) a gracious cultivation of the whole person in both its corporate and individual dimensions.”⁸²

Oslo wants to prioritise the competencies of ministerial formation in order that they may drive the programme. The Nazarenes want to plan for “competency” in order that it is seen to be addressed within theological education. However, it is unfortunate that the ‘C’ of Competency in the Nazarene programme is skills-based.⁸³ The difference could be claimed to be one of semantics, but the Nazarene “desired outcomes of

⁸¹ “The preferred educational setting is the classroom” *Great Commission...*, 5,6.

⁸² *Great Commission...*, 22.

⁸³ “Skills in oral and written communication...skills in preaching...” *International Sourcebook...*, 10.

educational preparation” are weighted towards “knowing” and “doing” and less in “being”.⁸⁴ However, the philosophy underlying the Nazarene approach acknowledges the transformation of the person, although every minister is “encouraged to move as far up the educational ladder as possible.”⁸⁵ Its drive is primarily educative, with formation of the person being expected through the process. Oslo is primarily formative in its approach with theological education and its context as important components of the process. There is enough common ground however, to initiate the development of an Oslo model with a strong Nazarene contribution to its shape.

In ecumenicity, Oslo has a more overt ecumenical imperative of interfaith dialogue whereas the Nazarene approach is more cautious. Here the difference is one of degree. A formal ecumenical recognition has not been made globally, but individual countries are allowed some movement in their own settings. In the other competencies - pastoral, leadership and missionary - it can be proposed that there is a similarity of purpose. In Oslo, the church and the community are the contexts in which these and the other competencies are learned. The Church of the Nazarene, though open to a variety of approaches and methods, states a preference for its competencies - the classroom.

Despite these differences, there is sufficient common ground to pursue further debate in this area. As a global document, the Oslo competencies offer an excellent foil with which to explore and promote a globally accepted set of competencies for any Christian denomination to follow in the pursuit of theological education for the ordained ministry.

Furthermore, they do challenge the Church to consider formational education in whatever form it may be viable. For the Church of the Nazarene, the shift to an Oslo

⁸⁴ *International Sourcebook*., 10. *The Eurasia Region Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination*, attempts to correct this somewhat by stating, “The primary aspects (of ministry development) may be described in terms of ‘being’, ‘knowing’, and ‘doing’ which together encompass the whole person. Each of these aspects has a variety of expression. All three should be present in every minister, although some may be more evident, and some may be less evident, in each. Some may be present in more advanced form; others may be present in less developed form. (April, 1999, 3)

⁸⁵ *Great Commission*., 5,6.

model based on ministerial formation promoted through the competencies, may not be as great as first perceived. A Case Study approach to an existing Nazarene programme in the UK should provide evidence of how far the church is from adopting, and even contributing, to an Oslo model. This will be done as part of this thesis.

5.2 Is there a common method to present these competencies?

It is the form or method of delivery of the programme which brings in the second part of the equation. It has been demonstrated that Oslo wanted to move away from TEE as it did not appear capable of delivering the competencies. A new vision was sought. Furthermore, Oslo responded to the issues raised in the three year debate by agreeing on competencies, not on method. The issues raised still remain. These were issues of contextualised theological education; theological education that “liberates” rather than “domesticates” and is student rather than institution driven; issues of gender and access to theological education, and issues concerning institutional interests behind theological education which could stunt its effectiveness. Can a new method address the issues as well as deliver the competencies?

Recommendations were made in Oslo to look towards methods of distance learning. It is a globally accepted form of education and its antecedents in TEE can be clearly seen, which may make it a natural successor to that method. If this method were linked with the Oslo competencies within a mainstream church setting, for example, the Church of the Nazarene, how would this fare as method and content of theological education for the ordained ministry?

It appears that the church would be close enough to many of the Oslo competencies to consider them seriously and its openness to other forms of learning including distance learning should make this a viable topic for research. Furthermore, the Nazarene experience in theological education may have something to contribute to the Oslo debate.

Having attempted to establish the place of the Oslo competencies in the context of the Church of the Nazarene, and having explored how TEE in its present

understanding was not considered to be a method which fulfilled Oslo's competencies, we now turn to the methodology of distance learning itself.

The point of departure is to attempt to establish the theoretical principles of distance learning and then ask whether this method can fulfil Oslo's vision. The further step would then be: "Can distance learning deliver the Oslo competencies in the context of the Church of the Nazarene's Course of Study for the ordained ministry?"

Chapter 6

Theoretical Principles of Distance Learning.

Distance education has come of age. Traditional educators and government leaders the world over are its latest advocates as they struggle with the challenges of democratising higher education in increasingly difficult fiscal conditions. There is scarcely a modern university that is not significantly involved in distance education and many political leaders envision a virtual university of the future, one which is more cost-efficient and technologically based.¹

There is a growing recognition of the worth of distance education as the knowledge base expands and is communicated to the larger educational community.²

Almost without exception, studies have shown that students taking courses via distance education technologies achieve as well as students taking courses via traditional methods.³

The classroom is not dead, but it is now being combined with (distance learning) methods.⁴

The history of distance education is familiar enough for it to need no further rehearsal here. What is normally referred to as distance education or distance learning,⁵

¹ Terry Evans and Daryl Nation (eds), *Opening Education*, London: Routledge, 1996, xi.

² D Randy Garrison, 'Quality and Access in Distance Education: Theoretical Considerations' in *Theoretical Principles of Distance Education*, Desmond Keegan (ed), London: Routledge, 1988, 10.

³ J.R. Kendall & M. Oaks, 'Evaluation of Perceived Teaching Effectiveness: Course Delivery via Interactive Video Technology Versus Traditional Classroom Methods', *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, Fall, 1992 (Quoted in the *Report of the Task Force on Distance Education*, Penn State University, November 1992, 30) (subscribed electronically).

⁴ John Knell, Deputy Director of Futures, The Industrial Society. Presentation at *The World Open Learning Conference and Exhibition (WOLCE)*, Birmingham, 5 October 2000. He also made the statement that "online learning is distance learning."

⁵ The terms are often used interchangeably. Desmond Keegan prefers to use the term 'distance education' because it includes both distance learning and distance teaching. See *Foundations of Distance Education*, London: Routledge, 1990. In defining terminology, it is worth noting the connection between distance learning and open learning. Rowntree points out that 'if the philosophy of open learning is to do with improving access and learner control, then the method usually involves some element of distance learning. However, while open learning usually involves distance learning, not all distance learning systems are particularly open. It is possible to use the method without the philosophy. (Derek Rowntree, *Exploring Open and Distance Learning*, London: Kogan Page, 1992, 30. Mary Thorpe views distance learning as but 'one variant of open learning' which is 'an umbrella term' referring to a whole series of varied educational initiatives and provision. (Mary Thorpe and David Grugeon, *Open Learning for Adults*, Harlow: Longman, 1987, 2, 8). Garrison takes a different approach: open learning systems are not equivalent...to distance education generally." (D. R. Garrison, *Understanding Distance Education*, London: Routledge, 1991, 119). Discussion of today's usage of the terms is set out by Börje Holmberg in *Theory and Practice of Distance Education*, London: Routledge, 1992, 2-3.

involves the sufficiently significant separation of teacher and learner although fuller definitions have been offered:

Distance education, like any formal method of educating, is a means by which someone who desires to learn engages in some form of communication with someone who can educate. In distance education as in other educational programs, the learner must acquire knowledge, develop skills in using that knowledge, and gain understanding of the value and application of that knowledge in the broadest possible context. However, distance education differs from most other forms of education in that the learner and the teacher are geographically remote from one another, rather than in the same room in a face-to-face situation.⁶

Distance learning is learning at a distance from one's teacher - usually with the help of pre-recorded, packaged learning materials. The learners are separated from their teachers in time and space but are still being guided by them.⁷

D. Keegan, drawing from other scholars, established seven principle characteristics of distance learning:⁸

The first four are generally accepted, but the last three - according to Eastmond - are open to debate.⁹

a. separation of teacher and student. The learner may be separated in space or in time.

Further definitions are included in a memorandum by the EC:

'Distance learning is defined by any form of study not under the continuous or immediate supervision of tutors, but which nevertheless benefits from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organisation. Distance learning has a large component of independent or autonomous learning and is therefore heavily dependent on the didactic design of materials which must substitute for the interactivity available between student and teacher in ordinary face to face instruction. The autonomous component is invariably supported by tutoring and counselling systems which ideally are provided at regional/local study centres and to an increasing extent by modern communications media. Because open distance learning is meant to be adaptable to the pace of the student, the material is generally constructed in units or modules geared to specific learning outcomes.' (Com 91-388, Paragraph 15, quoted in Naomi Sargant and Alan Tuckett, *Pandora's Box?*, Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 1997, 13-14). See also the discussion on various aspects of the attempts to define distance learning in G. Rumble, *The Planning and Management of Distance Education*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1986, 12ff.

Recently, the term 'distributed learning' has emerged. This is described as encompassing "both distance learning and online learning and reflects the increasing use of technology in learning and the development of more flexible forms of study. Distributed learning can take place at a distance or can be delivered to students on campus as part of a face to face programme." University of Manchester distributed learning website at <http://www.man.ac.uk/dldev>, 1.

⁶ Penn State University, "Report....," 7.

⁷ Derek Rowntree, *Exploring...*, 29. See also Holmberg's definition which, he observes, 'has been widely accepted'. Börje Holmberg, *Theory...*, 3.

⁸ D. Keegan, *The Foundations of Distance Education*, London: Croom Helm, 1986.

⁹ Daniel V. Eastmond, *Alone but Together*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1997, 10.

- b. influence of an educational organisation.
- c. use of technical media.
- d. provision of two-way communication
- e. absence of group learning, with students largely taught as individuals.
- f. participation in the most industrialised form of education. (division of labour, mechanisation, mass production etc).
- g. independent learning. Learners learn in private away from others.

Distance education grew out of “a need for a concept broader than correspondence study that would encompass new communications technology for the delivery of education at a distance.”¹⁰ In essence, teaching and learning in distance education are with few exceptions based on two constituent elements: a pre-produced course and non-contiguous communication between students and teachers. Although the programme may contain elements of face-to-face interaction between tutors and students, the occurrence of such contiguous communication may need to be structured rather than dependent on the possibility, opportunity or inclination of students.

This form of education calls for special teaching-learning strategies and techniques which can be identified by distinguishing characteristics.¹¹ Although there is an enormous variation in these strategies and techniques, in the behaviour of teachers and learners and in the environment itself, distance education patterns are recognisable.

It is *not* the purpose of this chapter to evaluate distance learning as an educational tool - for it is understood as an established and credible educational form - but rather to identify the criteria or characteristics of what is generally accepted as good practice in this form of education.¹² By doing this, it can be determined how this differs from TEE and how the methodology could be considered for the delivery of the Oslo competencies.

¹⁰ Garrison, *Understanding...*, 2.

¹¹ A separate study is that of distance learning management and administration which is considered to be outside the remit of this chapter.

¹² Evaluation of distance learning is attempted in several of the key texts quoted. An example can be found in Derek Rowntree's writings where he identifies several issues for debate. (*Exploring...*, 238-250.)

1. Distance Learning: identifying the criteria.

The debate over distance learning has often centred around issues of student access to this form of education and the quality of the educational method. Although these perspectives must be addressed and balanced when designing education at a distance, they often express two philosophically divergent assumptions regarding the purpose and viability of distance education.

One view may approach distance education primarily in terms of whether students can access it. The other may assume that in terms of quality standards, distance education cannot simulate face-to-face education. It is becoming apparent that both extreme views are not viable as the understanding of distance education develops.

1.1 Access.

Historically the *raison d'être* of distance learning has been wrapped up in issues relating to access. According to Garrison,¹³ this has had the tendency to blind educators to issues of quality and paradigmatic shifts as to how distance learning is now conceptualised and practised. With almost daily developments in information technology including the refining of teleconferencing and computer-mediated communication, the image of the solitary learner is changing. Programmes that combine conventional and distance learning approaches may assist issues of quality without greatly affecting those of access. In other words, access is increasingly less limited by technology than by perceptions of the limitations of that technology.

If data, currently available in the United States, can be applied to the United Kingdom, then it shows that students today are typically older and married.¹⁴ They are increasingly involved in part-time rather than full-time instruction, and less likely to be able to study in residence. Thus access to education becomes more of an issue to be resolved, especially when traditional education has been offered during the times suitable to faculty and institutions but less suitable to these students. In addition,

¹³ D Randy Garrison, 'Quality...', 10.

¹⁴ Edgar J. Elliston, 'Leadership Development in Distance Education', Unpublished seminar paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1995, 1.

resources are usually based on the campus and access for employed students can be a difficulty.

Quite soon over half the adult population will be over fifty, and with earlier and earlier retirement, coupled with increased life-expectancy, many millions of people are going to have twenty-five years of active life ahead of them...the old education fed by the acquisition of book knowledge will not be appropriate for many of them.¹⁵

Access however, is not just a resource question, the question also relates to the learning itself. Is its content accessible to a wide range of people? Are some excluded because the course places a high value on reading and writing skills, which, if there are formal entrance requirements, may exclude some? Do group elements of the course provide a crèche, for example? Allen Tuckett states:

The ability to attract students from the least powerful, least privileged classes and groups is a useful measure of the openness of a course, institution or system.¹⁶

In addition, is the technology accessible? Yeomans argues that “existing factors such as aptitude, availability, awareness, income and location will be made worse and overlaid by new technology-bases factors.” He contends that access to learning may actually be made more difficult by the wider use of technology claimed to be able to improve it. He adds however that “This contention cannot ...be used as a reason for avoiding use of the technology...”¹⁷

Answering the question “giving access to whom and by what means?” give opportunities of response which can demonstrate the strength of, as well as be a challenge to, distance learning.¹⁸

¹⁵ Michael Young ‘Education for the New Work’ in N. Paine (ed), *Open Learning in Transition*, Cambridge: National Extension College, 1998.

¹⁶ Allen Tuckett, ‘Open Learning and the Education of Adults’, in *Open Learning in Transition*, N. Paine (ed) National Extension College, 1998, 165. See also N. Paine in ‘Access, Autonomy and Personal Development Issues Facing TEE Today’, *British Journal of Theological Education*, Vol.2, No.4, Spring 1991, 32.

¹⁷ Keith Yeomans, *Learners On the Superhighway?*, Leicester: The National Organisation for Adult Learning, 1996, 15.

¹⁸ Naomi Sargant *et al.* addresses access and openness in *Pandora's...*, 16ff.

1.1.1 Flexibility.

The access debate also includes issues of flexible delivery and content. Using accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL), learners may not need to spend time on topics they are familiar with. Time is an important element of flexibility for it means that learners can learn when they wish, rather than fitting into someone else's timetable. Flexibility brings choice in where the learning is done as well as allowing the student to pursue the studies at his or her own pace. It may, for example, release the student from the fear of group learning in certain situations. This may be face-saving, especially where the group setting has been a barrier to prior learning experiences.

Flexibility allows choice as to what the student will learn in the programme. The student is more in control of his or her own progress.¹⁹ Additionally, flexibility may encourage innovative quality teaching where there is an opportunity to use delivery systems and teaching tools in a more suitable way. Individualised tutoring can allow support staff to respond to individual's needs and interests rather than aiming a class-based course at the average level of the group.

It has been argued that distance learning has moved through three generations.²⁰ The first was characterised by the predominant use of a single technology, typically correspondence education. The second integrated a multi-media approach with specifically designed distance learning materials, but mediated through a third person rather than the originator of the material. The third, which is the current model, is based on two-way communications media and allows for direct interaction between the teacher who originates the material, and the student. Additionally, the same media promotes interaction between students either individually or in groups. Each

¹⁹ Holmberg states; "...distance education can be extremely flexible. It is adaptable to students' conditions in that they can learn anywhere and at any time....It is inherent to distance education that organised learning can occur whenever students have opportunities and inclinations to study. In principle it leaves the student entirely in command." He continues elsewhere: "distance education requires a degree of maturity in its students as they usually carry out the study activity autonomously." Holmberg *Theory...*, 154, 168.

²⁰ See A.W. Bates, *Technology, Open Learning and Distance Education*, London: Routledge, 1996, 23-26. Garrison concurs, *Understanding...*, 50.

generation has given a progressive increase in flexibility through learner control, opportunities for dialogue and new types of educational organisation.

The argument is made, that, because of increasing flexibility in the methodology, access to distance learning is easier now than before, and that arguments based on the limitations of access, may be based on an earlier generation of distance learning practice.

1.2. Quality.

The second area of debate centres around the quality of distance education as a method. How can quality distance education be identified? With reference to quality in university teaching Roger Ellis states:

quality itself is a somewhat ambiguous term since it has connotations of both standards and excellence...In its simplest form, quality in university teaching would be that which satisfies the primary customer, the student. This notion is expressed more formally by the British Standards Institute: 'Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.' Thus the needs of the students might be stated by them or might be implied on their behalf by the teacher.²¹

However, the institution which offers the teaching may have to satisfy others who may also be identified as customers. These include colleagues, heads of department, funding bodies and employers.

Another way to describe quality would be to perceive the presented course as suitable for the purpose for which it is intended.²² The quality of the teaching would be determined by its fitness to achieve a stated purpose. The purpose of teaching is, of course, learning. So the quality of teaching can be measured in its fitness for the purpose of promoting learning.

²¹ Roger Ellis, 'Quality Assurance for University Teaching: Issues and Approaches', in *Quality Assurance for University Teaching*, Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, 1993, 3.

²² According to a statement by D.P Davis, University of Wales, Lampeter, quality is demonstrated if "... the content of the course is suitable for the purpose for which it is intended." (Global Consultation on Open Access Theological Education, Oxford, 10th February 2000).

At first sight, these definitions of quality seem to be poles apart. However, in the end, the 'fitness for purpose' and the 'satisfied customer' cannot be separated. Ellis suggests a working definition as:

Quality refers to the standards that must be met to achieve specified purposes to the satisfaction of customers.²³

Therefore, to assess the quality of distance learning it is necessary to have a set of criteria or standards. How these are agreed to and how quality is interpreted is central and crucial to the operation of viable distance learning. If the consumer is a key element in the judgement of quality, the method and its content will look to student response as a necessary part of quality control. The method will need to ensure that support mechanisms are in place for this to happen.

1.2.1 Support.

Learning is a two way process between the teacher and the student and quality education should promote this. Distance learning methods of education, by their very nature, can foster learner autonomy. Students make their own decisions about their learning objectives, the subjects they will study and the learning and teaching resources and methods they will make use of. However, general and individual support for students in this learning process is also necessary.²⁴ Feedback is needed from tutors that relates to their specific concerns.²⁵ To some extent this can be provided mechanically, but on its own, this can be impersonal. Distance learning must enable students to get personal help and support from a variety of people.²⁶ Paulo Freire

²³ R. Ellis, 'Quality...', 4.

²⁴ Garrison quoting D.O. Pratt ('Technology and Instructional Functions' in J.A.Niemi & D.D.Gooler (eds) in *Technologies for Learning Outside the Classroom*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 83, reiterates that support and encouragement through feedback "is a particularly crucial function when considering persistence and discontinuance of learners at a distance." (*Understanding...*, 100).

²⁵ Holmberg gives details of a study done by J.A. Bååth (*Postal Two-Way Communication in Correspondence Education*, Gleerup: Lund, 1980, 31) on the practices of thirty four European distance education institutions. By far the most important function of non-contiguous communication proved to be "to give the students effective feedback - help them to correct their mistakes and control their progress." (*Theory...*, 96).

²⁶ "The special circumstances that apply to distance students also necessitate some kind of counselling service." Holmberg, *Theory...*, 113.

called this "convivial dialogue" which enables content, methods and objectives to be continuously renegotiated.²⁷

It is generally accepted that interaction with the material and between the educator and student in a sustained way is vital in facilitating critical learning. The quality of the learning experience is dependent on encouraging students to critically analyse different perspectives, develop personal meaning and validate this through actions which challenge or affirm this perspective. Cognitive learning is not an autonomous function. "Students best create and validate understanding in an interactive environment where concepts are offered, challenged and acted upon."²⁸ In other words quality in distance education needs a collaborative interdependence where the student takes responsibility for personal meaning and also for testing it out in a learning community. The combination of interpersonal and small group communication could form the emerging paradigm for worthwhile and achievable goals in distance learning. This gives a three-way perspective to the use of "identifying, understanding and confirming worthwhile knowledge" (Garrison), that is, between the learner, the educator and the community.

Education is not a solitary undertaking. The emerging paradigm of distance learning builds-in a community or group element. Not every student will benefit equally from this, but there is an obligation to provide mechanisms within the programme to help students to know how *to* learn and identify how *they* learn, so that they can make an informed choice about the process of their learning. Community learning is vital if the student is not to become idiosyncratic and myopic. They must be given the opportunity to question their own assumptions. Community interaction plays an essential part in this.

Evaluation of the process is an essential part of this support. For as well as submitting areas such as course design and delivery to scrutiny, the learner and the

²⁷ John Taylor identifies four components: information, advice, counselling and evaluation or feedback. 'Computer based guidance' in *Open Learning for Adults*, Mary Thorpe and David Grugcon (eds), 209.

²⁸ Garrison, 'Quality...', 16.

tutors will want to know that their responses are being listened to. In the words of Mary Thorpe

...it should be a *collaborative* exercise, undertaken in the interests of *all* those engaged in the teaching/learning process, and open to their inspection, not 'owned' by management. As to purpose, I take it as axiomatic that evaluation is for development - of learning and the quality of the learner's experience, of service and the quality of the curriculum the institution offers, and of competence and the careers of staff employed by the institution.²⁹

Holmberg identifies five criteria as the bases of evaluation. These are:

1. Comparing objectives and performance standards with achievement.
2. Consulting experts.
3. Consulting future employers.
4. Consulting teaching bodies.
5. Investigating students' attitudes.

He reiterates the necessity of asking the parties concerned about their opinions, expressing that although evaluation is a general educational concern, it has "some special implications for distance education."³⁰

It must be stated, however, that external benchmarks through accreditation with recognised educational institutions can only strengthen these criteria. For example, D. P. Davies' comments about quality being demonstrated if the "content of the course is suitable for the purpose for which it is intended", cannot be divorced from the adoption of agreed external benchmarks. 'Internal' benchmarks, however agreed, cannot bring the benefits of close scrutiny by an external educational body, who, in turn, is assessed by its peers.

²⁹ Mary Thorpe, *Evaluating Open and Distance Learning*, Harlow: Longman, 1988 (quoted in Rowntree, *Exploring...*, 229).

³⁰ Holmberg, *Theory...*, 170, 174-177.

1.3 Criteria of Distance Learning: access through flexibility, quality through support.

In 1969 the Open University³¹ attempted to bring these concepts together in its Charter when it stated:

The advancement and dissemination of learning and knowledge by teaching and research, by a diversity of means such as broadcasting and technological devices appropriate to higher education, by correspondence tuition, residential courses and seminars, and other relevant ways, and ... to provide education of University and professional standards for its students, and to promote the educational well-being of the community generally.³²

Where access is the driving motivation, and with the means to make that possible, distance learning is attractive. As a predominantly private form of learning, pre-packaged printed or internet course materials can be delivered to as many students as possible regardless of time and location. Where accessibility and flexibility is uppermost in the minds of the educators, a particular set of assumptions regarding the theory of distance learning exists. These are usually positive.

However, recent debate³³ has refocused on quality and support aspects of the educational transaction itself. This has included the nature and frequency of communication between teacher and student as well as student and student. Garrison *et al.* observed it to be possible to make reasonable choices in the educational procedure to bring about a balance of quality and accessibility, but the design and delivery of distance education would ultimately determine if that balance was achieved.

If the design of the course relies on pre-packaged print materials as the main source of information and learning, as opposed to it being a resource to stimulate reflection and discussion, the outcome is unlikely to be balanced. Moreover, if the pre-packaged

³¹ The Open University will hold its first virtual graduation ceremony in March 2000. This is believed to be a world first. The Open University has 15, 640 purely online students. ('Students are Masters of Illusion', in *The Times*, 21 February, 2000, 1).

Another world 'first' was announced by *The Times*: "The first global degree to be delivered solely over the internet, an MSc in IT, has been launched in Europe thanks to a partnership between the IT industry, the private sector, and the University of Liverpool." *The Times*, 'Online IT Degree Launched', *Interface* suppl. 9.

³² Charter of the Open University, 1969, paragraph 3.

³³ D.R.Garrison, *Understanding Distance Education*, London: Routledge, 1989; D.R Garrison and D. Shale, *Education at a Distance: From Issues to Practice*, Malabar, Florida: R.E.Kreiger Publishing Company, 1990.

learning materials have as their purpose self-instruction, then the orientation of the course will incline towards a prescribed set of learning goals. Self-instructional materials depend upon confirmatory feedback from the teacher in order to indicate whether the prescribed goals are being reached. Where there are higher level cognitive goals which demand opportunities to negotiate learning objectives, and where students are encouraged to critically analyse course content through discussion and action, the self-instruction material is inappropriate. According to Winn, the challenge is to “monitor and adapt to unpredicted changes in student behaviour and thinking as instruction proceeds.”³⁴ For this to happen, sustained two-way communication is necessary.³⁵

Existing communications technology, including teleconferencing and computer-generated communication make it possible to address the criteria indicated. A danger arises when the advances in communication possibilities just provide an ‘add-on’ to a prescribed and pre-packaged course. As Salomon *et al.* point out “No important impact (in terms of cognitive effect) can be expected when the same old activity is carried out with a technology that makes it a bit faster or easier; the activity itself has to change.”³⁶ As communication choice becomes greater, the ideal of the interdependent teacher-learner (a cognitive/constructivist) approach becomes more prominent as an issue of quality. Thus the paradigmatic choice for educators is between the ideals of providing information faster, more efficiently and in a more user-friendly way, or using the information tools, to challenge learners to construct meaning within a learning community.

³⁴ W. Winn, ‘Some implications of cognitive theory for instructional design’ in *Instructional Science* 19 (1), 1990, 64.

³⁵ Peter Jarvis has an significant comment: “Both the self and the mind are learned phenomena that emerge through the same process of transforming experiences into knowledge, skills attitudes, values, feelings etc. which are stored in the brain and from which emerge both the mind and the self. It is from this body of knowledge etc. that individuals are able to impose meaning on their own situations and experiences...Learning...is a matter, therefore, of modifying the individual biography, which in its turn will affect that manner by which future situations are experienced.” (Peter Jarvis, *Adult and Continuing Education: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed, London: Routledge, 1995. 57, 67.)

³⁶ Salomon, G., Perkins, D.N. and Globerson, T. ‘Partners in cognition: extending human intelligence with intelligent technologies’, *Educational Researcher*, 19(3), 8. (quoted in D.R. Garrison, ‘Quality...’, 13.)

2. Unpacking and understanding the foundations of the criteria.

The criteria now stated need to be understood in the larger context of the educational endeavour. The reason for this is because the criteria are readily identified in the substantial body of literature, they cannot be applied without attempting to understand and be reminded of the educational reasoning and the communication technology behind this established form. Furthermore, stated criteria can alter in emphasis with the results of ongoing research. In other words, there is, behind the principles stated above, a call for an awareness of the foundations of the educational endeavour on which these principles are based. It is worth being reminded of some of these foundations and how our thinking concerning them is constantly challenged.

2.1 'Education at a distance' versus 'Distance Education'.

Distance learning is often promoted on the grounds of the positive separation between teacher and student. This may not always be helpful as it perpetuates an emphasis on the 'form' it takes. If this 'form' is technologically dependent, it can assume an importance to the point where the media or 'form' is dominant. This diverts attention from the critical issue that it is 'education', first and foremost, working under the physical constraints of distance which inform the method with which the education is perceived and delivered. Thus to think of distance education as 'education at a distance' may place the emphasis where it should be i.e. on the educational endeavour.

Garrison identifies this endeavour as:

a process most simply characterised as an interaction between teacher and student for the purpose of identifying, understanding, and confirming worthwhile knowledge. The transaction between teacher and student represents a mutually respectful relationship.³⁷

With a focus on independence, distance learning is able to offer accessibility and flexibility. Independence is the freedom to study when and where the student wishes, and technology will foster this. Interaction, on the other hand, may be limited by the same technology, especially if the student does not have equal access to it. As Juler

³⁷ Garrison, 'Quality...', 13. Garrison reiterates this in *Understanding...*, 9.

observed: "attempts in distance education to encourage independence on the part of students usually entail the educational materials assuming...a dominance which severely limits the nature and amount of interaction which may occur."³⁸ In other words, the media must not overwhelm the educational endeavour which, of necessity, includes interaction with the material and the teacher.

2.2 Technology and Distance Education.

Normally, in the contemporary use of the term distance education, some forms of educational and delivery technologies are combined to deliver and facilitate the learning experiences. Which technologies are available to promote distance learning that meet the criteria already stated?

Elliston says:

Distance education requires a higher level both of support for the learning experiences and evaluative feedback for student assessment because of the lack of face-to-face interaction. These differences often serve to catalyse better designed materials and feedback mechanisms both for self-evaluation and teacher evaluation. They also stimulate significantly expanded library and other support services.³⁹

Because the interactive element is an essential part of distance learning, educational tools like 'programmed learning texts' and 'teach yourself books' are perceived only to be part of the endeavour. Similarly, instructional television broadcasts (e.g. Open University), audio and video taped lessons, and computer learning programmes, *on their own*, would not be considered as complete forms of distance education. They are a significant part if they are linked to some form of two-way communication that allows for interaction between the teacher and the learner.

Two-way communication may be established using a wide variety of media including computer communications, telephone, and mail services. Emerging technologies like

³⁸ Juler, P. 'Promoting interaction: maintaining independence: swallowing the mixture.' In *Open Learning*, 5 (2), 1990, 26.

³⁹ Edgar J. Elliston, 'Leadership...', 1.

interactive multi-media and fibre-optic networks are already expanding the interactive capabilities of distance education and the future looks promising in this regard.⁴⁰

The goal of distance education is to transcend the barriers of time and space between the teacher and the learner. In the past, success in correspondence study, telecommunications, and other programs proved the worth of distance education. But today, with the explosion of technological resources and the expansion of our expertise in creating programs, distance education is becoming one of the most promising growth areas in higher education. In the future, it will certainly become even more important.⁴¹

Kirkwood states the range of media available as under three main headings: audio, video and computers.⁴² Rowntree adds print,⁴³ audio-visual, projects and human interaction.⁴⁴ Sargant argues for television as “free at the point of use, reaches people in their own homes, and has a greater reach than any other education and training medium.”⁴⁵ Laurillard explains that computer based learning (CBL) and its derivative, computer based training (CBT) have three principal determinants. These were institutional integration (where the institution accepts responsibility for launching the programme), pedagogical fit (where it is appropriate for its intended use) and staff awareness (where individuals, whose work will be affected by the innovation will be involved.)⁴⁶ Yeomans explains the basis of approach to understanding access to learning through information and communications technology (ICT) in five stages:

⁴⁰ Kathy Macchi, General Manager of V-SPAN, believes that an ISP (Internet Service Provider) pricewar will mean a greater e-learning audience. “The development of Broadband technology will bring about interactive learning in groups, which will bring a different level to education. Web conferencing will be possible without people leaving their desks and the ISP’s will become ASP’s (Application Service Providers). Content is king, but infrastructure is god.” Kathy Macchi does acknowledge however, that cost is a factor in this equation. Presentation at WOLCE, Birmingham, 5 October, 2000.

⁴¹ Watkins & Wright, “Looking To The Future”, *The Foundations of American Distance Education*, Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall-Hunt, 1991. Quoted in Penn State University, ‘Report...’, 7.)

⁴² See Adrian Kirkwood’s helpful chapter ‘Selection and use of media for open and distance learning’ in *Materials Production in Open and Distance Learning*, Fred Lockwood (ed), London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, 1994, 64-71.

⁴³ Holmberg concurs, stating that “...print, in the form of printed texts, is the most important medium for subject matter presentation in distance education.” (*Theory...*, 69).

⁴⁴ D. Rowntree, *Exploring...*, 97.

⁴⁵ N. Sargant, *Pandora’s...*, 45.

⁴⁶ Diana Laurillard, ‘Introducing computer based learning’ in *Open Learning in Adults*, Mary Thorpe and David Grugeon (eds), 47-49.

- a. awareness: are both users and providers aware enough of the technology to make effective use of it and to ensure its wide availability at an affordable cost?
- b. situation: is technology available at the site where learning takes place?
- c. user cost: can the learner afford the hardware, software, line and other costs of learning in this way?
- d. content relevance: are the available learning products appropriate to the learner's needs?
- e. competence: is the learner sufficiently competent in the technology to use it effectively and is the learner provider competent enough to teach and make learning materials available in this way?⁴⁷

Whatever media are used, the decisions must be preceded by an analysis of the target group and the specification of clear objectives. In Schramm's words "There is no cookbook of recipes for media selection that can be applied automatically in every educational system."⁴⁸

2.2.1 Technology as the servant of the process.

The argument already raised has indicated that a misconception in distance education may be that success and accomplishment in face-to-face teaching can simply be spread and proliferated through other media and qualify as a workable model.⁴⁹ On the contrary, the use of technology to increase class sizes or cover distances *without* the appropriate didactic design and pedagogical method may diminish the learning outcomes, no matter how successful the source material may have been in the face-to-face classroom environment.

Thus the claim that instructional materials, which may be in limited though useful variety within a traditional classroom setting, could through motion, sound, image, and the interplay of a wide variety of media, combine with traditional text to make learning

⁴⁷ Keith Yeomans, *Learners...*, 15.

⁴⁸ W. Schramm, *Big Media, Little Media*, Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977, 263, quoted in Holmberg, *Theory...*, 73.

⁴⁹ Vaughn Waller, Chairman, eLearning Network, sounds a cautious note: "There is no evidence (no figures available) that online is better. People think that e-learning is everything but we can't just type text and think this is training." Presentation at WOLCE, Birmingham, 5 October 2000.

a more interesting and challenging position for the student, must be set within the wider pedagogical and educational goal.

There is general agreement among researchers that people retain about 20 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what they see and hear, and 75 percent of what they see, hear, and do. Interactive multimedia is the tool most appropriate to arriving at that 75 percent retention in formal education.⁵⁰

Electronic communication is not the same as every day informal talk and working in a close environment with colleagues. If students communicate electronically during their studies, the programme must also allow for them to communicate effectively without electronic means. Although constantly developing IT skills are vital, so too are social skills and competencies in the educational process.

2.2.2 Technology as the servant of education.

Technology is an essential criterion of distance learning. However it must not be allowed to drive the educational endeavour to the detriment of the educational task. It is primarily education at a distance rather than distance education. With this caveat, assessment on the technology to be used can proceed.

Paul Palmarozza, Managing Director of Intellexis International Ltd - an e-learning provider, said:

Learning must be put into practice. Unless the person's behaviour changes, the learning isn't there. So then we ask - how can technology help?⁵¹

The Distance Education Online Symposium⁵² identified ten key factors which may be applicable to most distance learning strategies which are highly electronically dependent: These were:

1. That **instructors** are one of the most critical factors in the implementation of distance learning in the electronic classroom.

⁵⁰ Geoffrey R. Amthor, "Multimedia In Education: An Introduction," *Ultimedia*. Milford, Conn: International Business Magazines, 1992. (Penn State University, Report..., 9)

⁵¹ Presentation at WOLCE, 5 October 2000.

⁵² DOESNEWS, Vol.8, No10, 1998, 4-8. (subscribed electronically)

2. That **site facilitators**, who manage administrative operations in the electronic classroom, are equally important.
3. That **appropriate training** must be given to these members of staff.
4. That the opportunity for **teacher and students to interact** is seen as vital.⁵³
5. That there is **correct operation of the technology**. Where there are malfunctions, the flow of information is inhibited.
6. That importance is given to the **quality of graphics** which are clear and easily read on television monitors.
7. That a **student guidebook** to support the telelecture or other form of distance learning be provided.
8. That there be **adequate planning time** for the instructor. It is observed that the preparation of the lecture, the development of the guidebook, the preparation of graphics and the working of the technology takes more preparation time compared to the traditional classroom.
9. That there be a **comprehensive evaluation plan of the hardware technology**, the instructor, the facilitator and the content of the lecture.
10. That the **students have access to training** through information updates.⁵⁴

Brian Merison, General Manager, British Association of Open Learning, adds a significant reminder:

Keep the focus on the learner and the learning environment. The isolated learner with a lack of support from a mentor and other learners is at a disadvantage. Enhanced offers must be made to learners through communication media that is synchronous and asynchronous. This is 'time-shifted' education and is the goal. We are looking for learning activities that bring real responses, not just in front of a screen but in real situations.⁵⁵

⁵³ Law and Sisson found that the distance learner can find enjoyment and satisfaction with programmes when they are clear, flexible in their structure and there is ample opportunity for feedback and dialogue. M. Law and M. Sissons, *New Directions for Continuing Education: Involving Adults in the Educational Process*, S.H. Rosenblum (ed), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985, 43-53.

⁵⁴ DEOSNEWS, Vol. 8, No. 10, 1998, 4-8.

⁵⁵ Presentation at WOLCE, Birmingham, 5 October 2000.

2.2.3 Technology and the global village.

The computer has altered the very nature of how we think, do business, entertain ourselves, and interact with one another. Video has created a world of images that shape our opinions, beliefs, commerce, and even our political process. Communications networks have made the world much smaller and promise to create a true "global village" with a vast common market that exists outside of increasingly ineffective barriers like national boundaries and political influence.

The telecomputer will revitalise public education by bringing the best teachers in the country to classrooms everywhere. More important, the telecomputer will encourage competition making education respond to global conceptions of quality, learning, and educational results.⁵⁶

With the development of various technologies has come the capacity for national and international connections. So distance learning has been part of the globalisation process which is part of the contemporary world. Local news events, for example, become global events in moments. Global websites are accessible from local computers. The world wide web and other global technologies mean that in speaking of distance learning we need to also speak of global learning. Education cannot be divorced from a global culture. "Local" is no longer defined in terms of "home"; globalisation has defined distance and has produced a "travelling" culture where space and time and territory are redefined.⁵⁷ Even if a course is offered locally, it is done in the context of a global reality.

2.3 Maintaining integrity in educational thinking with regards to adult learning styles.

Maintaining the integrity of the educational transaction through distance learning is necessary to keep it within the mainstream of educational thinking and practice. The educational theories on the way adults learn, challenge the teacher dominated, content focused approach of education. It is generally accepted that adults often bring work experience to their educational experience, so a high degree of relevancy will be

⁵⁶ George Gilder, *Life After Television*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1992 quoted in the Penn State University, 'Report...', 12.

⁵⁷ See Roland Robinson, *Globalisation, Social Theory and Culture*.

expected which may be worked out in contemporary life experience. This body of learners will be increasingly concerned with life-long learning opportunities, and specific educational programmes geared to their needs.

Several models of adult learning styles have been proposed⁵⁸ including that suggested by Honey and Mumford.⁵⁹ Their Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) is an eighty item, four scale inventory. It consists of twenty items for each of the four learning styles: activist, reflector, theorist and pragmatist. An example is given here:

2.3.1 Characteristics of the subscales of the LSQ.

Activists	Reflectors	Theorists	Pragmatists
like to involve themselves in new experiences	like to stand back and observe	like to analyse and synthesise	keen to try out new ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice.
tend to be gregarious, constantly involving themselves with others tend to centre activities around themselves	collect data and think thoroughly before coming to a conclusion. tend to be cautious and prefer to take a back seat in discussion	like to adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking	take the first opportunity to experiment with applications practical down-to-earth people who like to make practical decisions and engage in solving problems
bored with implementation and consolidation	act as part of a wider picture which includes past, as well as present observations.	uncomfortable with subjective judgements	tend to be uncomfortable with open-ended discussion

They accepted that evidence of all four forms may be present and any adult may be dominant in one or more. To illustrate: distance learning methods must account for the 'activist' who learns by doing. Here, thinking is done as the person works the information through in life situations. Distance learning forms of solitary learning may

⁵⁸ Examples include a commonly used model by D.A. Kolb's called the Experiential Learning Model (ELM), 1984. (*Learning Style Inventory: technical manual*, Boston, MA: McBer and Company, 1984.) His categories were: convergers, divergers, assimilators or accommodators. This has an associated measure, the Learning Style Inventory (LSI), (Kolb 1976), revised in 1985. R.R. Schmeck *et al.* (1977), (*Applied Psychological Measurement*, 1, 413-431) proposed a four scale, sixty-two item Inventory of Learning Processes (ILP) on the basis of contemporary ideas in experimental psychology concerning human learning. Malcolm Knowles lists four assumptions of andragogy (adult learning): self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning. (*The Modern Practice of Adult Education*, New York: Association Press, 1970, 33-49, and *The Adult Learner*, M. Knowles *et al.*, Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing, 1998, 35ff).

Rowntree develops four concepts of learning as: memorising, understanding, application and personal development. (Rowntree, *Exploring...*, 46).

⁵⁹ Peter Honey and Alan Mumford, *The Manual of Learning Styles*, 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Peter Honey, 1992.

not be suitable for this learner as this does not evoke enough adrenaline in the student to drive him forward in the process. For 'reflectors', there is the need to deal with a body of information, then work out their answers and respond to them. The group work element of distance learning may be difficult for this adult learner however, as spontaneity is usually required of this type of environment as debate features strongly. 'Reflectors' may find it difficult to cope with the need to 'think on their feet'.

The 'theorists' do their learning in frameworks of knowledge where there is a breakdown of argument and debate in a linear way. Learning is done in a detached, theoretical way, and thus the information is assimilated. Learners of this kind may find that they are able to identify and target what they should learn and tailor it to meet their requirements, particularly when revising for examinations.

The 'pragmatist' sees little point in learning unless they see the need for it. So early in the distance learning process the useful material needs to be discovered by them in order to maintain their interest.

The characteristics of any distance learning programme should be aware of these issues so that all four learning styles can learn. The students representing all four learning types need to come together at various times so as not only to appreciate how others learn, but to open themselves to the challenge of other learning styles.⁶⁰ These learning styles are a challenge in developing acceptable characteristics for distance learning.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Mary Thorpe's comment is useful in considering the motivation of adult learners at the beginning of a programme. "...the initial starting motivation needs to be confirmed by the early experience of study, if the learner is to make an effective commitment to learning. The 'induction period' will throw up different problems in different systems of learning; the important point is that it exists, that starting to study is not accomplished by the simple act of enrolling on a course. There is a period when the learner consciously reassesses whether study, and this course, was an appropriate choice for them. The design of material and the approach of teaching and support-staff need to reflect an active awareness that students will be reflecting on their decision to enrol, possibly with considerable anxiety, during the earliest stage of coursework." ('Adult Learners in Open Learning' in *Open Learning for Adults*, 73-74).

⁶¹ Moore considered that learners of a particular cognitive style respond more favourably than others to distance education. (M Moore, 'Cognitive Style and telemathic teaching', *International Council for Correspondence Education Newsletter*, No.4, 1975, 3-10).

Whilst it is impossible to enter fully into the debate on how adults learn, this brief description of the Honey and Mumford research indicates that distance learning programmes must attempt to address this area. It is understood that adults learn selectively from a predetermined pattern of study, picking and choosing those aspects which 'fit' for them. Distance learning may look directive, however we cannot control learning when we are not totally in control of the context within which learning is taking place. Initiating adult students into a particular learning mode indicates a desire to control not only what is learned but how it is learned. Distance learning courses must allow students to make informed choices about the process of their learning. Controlled programmes could produce long-term dependent learners. Although essential teaching and support is necessary, it could be argued that it must take the risk of creating self-learners who are not dependent on carefully constructed courses or sensitive facilitators of study groups in the longer term. Some measure of dependency will always exist in education. The one who is learning will always depend for certain things on the one who is facilitating that learning. Getting the balance right between control and dependency is essential in distance learning. In Paulo Freire's words "Education must liberate, not domesticate." How the material is presented, the implicit perception it makes of the students and the demands it makes, can all play a part in how the student will learn. Ferro suggests that

if the teacher views his role as more facilitative...he expects the participant to be much more active in the learning process and even to take major responsibility for her learning experiences and her personal development and growth.⁶²

Good practice distance learning takes these issues seriously. Materials are often related to previous knowledge and personal experience. The learner may 'dialogue' with the material through a variety of 'activities'⁶³ or by 'virtual' dialogue with fellow learners. A Study Journal, where the student records reactions, reflections, questions

⁶² Trenton Ferro, 'The Authority of the Word', in P. Jarvis and N. Walters, (eds), *Adult...* 37.

⁶³ See Derek Rowntree, *Preparing Materials for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning*, London: Kogan Page, 1994, 102.

and observations is now commonplace. Self evaluation fosters responsibility for the learning experience.

Three trends have been identified in adult education which are helpful to this debate. The first is a trend "towards the unity of education, work and life based on the notion that learning is most effective when it is related to and integrated with working and living."⁶⁴ A second trend, according to Garrison, is in adult self-directed learning.⁶⁵ The third is "lifelong education, based on the notion that in a world of accelerating change, learning must be a continuing process from birth to death."⁶⁶

Distance educators must see that the best hope for the realisation of lifelong education is the adoption of distance education methods and communications technology which are compatible and complementary.

2.4 Financial viability: a changing economic picture.

At a time when both students in general and theological institutions in particular are feeling the financial pressures from changing government policy on the funding of students in private colleges,⁶⁷ distance learning may become more attractive as a cost effective method.

This was also raised in the Oslo debate (and noted earlier) when Pobee spoke of the financial challenges facing theological colleges. He referred to work done by Herbert M Zorn⁶⁸ who, when commenting on residential theological education, observed that a 'financially viable model of the traditional pattern' has a minimum of 120 full-time students and 8 full-time instructors. The support base for this model is a church or group of churches with a minimum membership of 300,000 and the support and running expenses would come primarily from the contributions of these churches and

⁶⁴ M.S.Knowles, 'The growth and development of adult education' in J.M.Peters (ed) *Building an Effective Adult Education Enterprise*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980,40. Quoted in Garrison, *Understanding...*, 107.

⁶⁵ Garrison, *Understanding...*, 107.

⁶⁶ Knowles, 'The growth...' in Garrison, *Understanding...*,107.

⁶⁷ See unpublished Council of Independent College and Research Institutes (CICRI) report on Treasury proposals for the funding of students at 'private' theological colleges. Five options presented. 1999,1.

⁶⁸ Herbert. M Zorn, *Viability in Context: A Study of the Financial Viability of Theological Education in the Third World - Seedbed or Sheltered Garden?*, London: TEF, 1975, 78-80.

the fees paid by the students This would cover 75% of the costs. His conclusion was that only 20-30% of third-world theological education programmes fit this model.

On the other hand a 'viable non-traditional model' requires a total student body of 200 and the equivalent of 4 full-time instructors. All or most of the students are part-time and the chief expense is travel and the production of teaching materials. For this model a related church membership of 50,000 is sufficient to meet the running expenses.

Although Zorn had theological education by extension (TEE) in mind as the non-traditional model, his comments are useful for comparing a traditional model with the cost-saving potential for a distance learning programme. However, commenting on the cost effectiveness of open learning, in which distance learning may play a part, Rowntree says

Many people think open learning means learning on the cheap. This may or may not turn out to be true. Whether it is cheaper than 'conventional' learning depends largely on which media are used and how many learners are involved.⁶⁹

Kirkwood points out that even in distance learning, "...cost factors ... play a key role in many decisions that are made about the use of media for open and distance learning."⁷⁰ The financial viability of distance learning over other forms of learning cannot be assumed. The costs in producing, delivering and supporting distance programmes may still give best value for money but the cost may be in significant amounts.⁷¹

⁶⁹ D. Rowntree, *Exploring...*, 178.

⁷⁰ Adrian Kirkwood, 'Selection...', 67.

⁷¹ Holmberg considers the Open University as a case study for the economics of distance education. The conclusion drawn is that "the Open University is more economical than conventional British universities..." *Theory...*, 192. However Garrison argues that "Cost efficiency must not be the hallmark of distance education. The important task for all educators is to pursue effectiveness. And effectiveness is very much associated with the appropriate form and nature of the communication process." (*Understanding...*, 123).

3. Conclusion: the emerging paradigm.

3.1 Combining access with flexibility, quality with support.

Distance education must be viewed not as a separate genus but as an educational activity that is different only by the physical separation of teacher and student.⁷²

Distance learning is dependent upon communication mediated via technology and therefore there needs to be an appreciation of what is technologically available as well as being aware of educational needs. The emerging paradigm necessitates using technologies that facilitate an educational transaction that values collaborative and critical interaction while providing access in an affordable way.⁷³ Teleconferencing or computer mediated conferencing (CMC) does not allow for the spontaneity and immediacy of oral communication and, like other computer programmes, may need to be supplemented by other media forms.⁷⁴ However the digitalisation of communication may mean that the electronic technology which makes use of this, can provide these media forms in a more flexible way than ever.⁷⁵ Digital television, for example, is an illustration of how programmes can be seen and heard when the consumer so desires. Access to the internet is now possible through digital television.

Whatever forms of communication are used, balancing access with quality will demand difficult, but not impossible decisions. Whereas the *dominant paradigm* could be said to be typified through independent study as the ultimate educational goal (thus reflecting the use of the correspondence course and the mail), the *emerging paradigm* has a different educational ideal. Here the quality of education is determined by the *nature and degree* of the two-way communication between teacher and student as well

⁷² Garrison, *Understanding...*, 122-123.

⁷³ Sargent describes the convergence of communication technologies as 'telematics'. (Naomi Sargent, *Pandora's...*, 38).

⁷⁴ Garrison elaborates on computer managed learning (CML) and computer assisted learning (CAL) as "the promise of providing full and proper control of learning at a distance." *Understanding...*, 82-89.

⁷⁵ See Starr Roxanne Hitz, *The Virtual Classroom*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1995, 6-7.

as the *collaboration with others in the testing and acting out* of the educational process. Education is, in essence, a social learning experience so it is not always at-home with pre-packaged course materials designed to assist private forms of learning.

The traditional teaching models that have been adapted to distance education have not satisfied the diversity of needs and learning styles of these adult distance students. The search for a suitable teaching model should therefore be replaced by a mix of teaching and learning behaviours that will promote effective student control over their learning.⁷⁶

Any theoretical framework for distance education will need to recognise and reflect on the differences between the dominant and emerging paradigms so that the outcomes of the planned programme can be realised. Access with flexibility, quality with support are strong educational criteria for electronic distance learning. The same may be said of whatever method of learning is used.⁷⁷ Distance learning is a credible educational form which has proved that both access and quality education can be achieved by this method.

Some dangers may imperil distance learning but traditional education and training are not perfect either. Distance learning has enormous potential if the dangers can be overcome to harness that potential. Rowntree asks

Can we make learning more productive and satisfying - both for existing learners and for people who have never previously thought of themselves as learners and may even think of themselves as non-learners? Can we develop an open learning fit for the kind of society we'd like to live in? That is the challenge.⁷⁸

John Knell, Deputy Director of Futures, The Industrial Society sounds a warning:

Fragments of our learning future are already here, but there are learning paradises next to learning deserts.⁷⁹

The survival of distance learning indicates that it has risen to these challenges in the past. However in identifying a set of criteria for a modern day contextualised

⁷⁶ Garrison quoting P Inglis, 'Distance Learning is Dead! Long Live Distance Learning', *International Council for Distance Education Bulletin*, Vol.15,51, in *Understanding...*, 40.

⁷⁷ Garrison argues for the integration of three essential elements which parallel the four identified. "Independence without the necessary proficiency and support dimensions of control presents only the illusion of control and will result in dissonance, stress and dropout." (*Understanding...*, 30).

⁷⁸ Derek Rowntree, *Exploring...*, 250.

⁷⁹ Presentation at WOLCE, 5 October 2000.

presentation of the Oslo competencies, a continuing evaluation of distance learning method must be attempted.

There appears to be sufficient dynamism within the developing distance learning methodology to ensure that it cannot be ignored. The breadth of issues, reflected in the above debate, allows for a flexible use of this methodology to give better flexibility with access and quality with support.

At its simplest level (*the dominant paradigm*), where access to technology is denied or is difficult, it can function with printed materials, occasional face to face contact, organisational support and feedback mechanisms. This is first generation distance learning model has much in common with TEE.

At its most developed (*the emerging paradigm*), it can use the best of research methods to target the learners, set clear objectives and choose the correct media for delivery of the educational programme. The nature and degree of the two-way communication of teacher and student, as well as collaboration with others and the testing out of the programme becomes dominant. Consideration of better designed materials and feedback mechanisms, with good library and support services become a natural part of the educational endeavour.

Therefore, there is sufficient dynamic in this method, and identity of best practice, for us to take it forward to the next stage of research. It is a significant advance on TEE methodology and seems to offer within its remit the possibilities of delivering the Oslo competencies. Furthermore, it does not seem to carry the same 'baggage', whether that be political, sociological or ecclesiological, that has plagued TEE. It must be kept in mind, however, that distance learning methodology is highly media dependent, and although its ethos is such that it can be used in all parts of the world, it may be restricted by local limitations in the availability of technology.

In order now to establish the compatibility of distance learning method with the delivery of the Oslo competencies in the context of the Church of the Nazarene in the United Kingdom, compatibility of philosophy and method must now be ascertained.

Chapter 7

Compatible Philosophies and Methods for Delivering the Oslo Competencies Through the Best Practice in Distance Learning in a Church of the Nazarene Programme of Theological Education for the Ordained Ministry.

1. Is Oslo's philosophy of 'ministerial formation and theological education' compatible with the philosophy of distance learning?

In a previous chapter, the Oslo competencies and the four major elements of the educational preparation of ministers in the Church of the Nazarene were compared and contrasted. Although the approaches and emphases were significantly different, it was concluded that ministerial formation in theological education is a common theme in Oslo and the Church of the Nazarene in relation to preparation for ministry:

An important component of ministerial formation is theological education. (which is) at once theology, education and commitment. (Oslo)¹

Theological education is an essential part of spiritual development and character formation. (Church of the Nazarene)²

However, compatibility in the content of ministerial preparation is only part of the equation. The *delivery method* is another significant part. Both Oslo and the Church of the Nazarene are open to how this content might be conveyed to the student:

....Viability is also about the structures and styles that will be conducive to the formation of students who are equipped to fulfil the task of ministry in the life of the church and the people of faith, individually and severally in the world.(Oslo)³

....through a variety of courses or structures.⁴ (The church is)...open to using new models of delivery and to an aggressive use of technology, all in the interests of assuring and preserving quality.⁵ (Church of the Nazarene)

Whilst accepting that Oslo and the Church of the Nazarene may be open to various methods, it has already been concluded in the thesis that the Oslo competencies will be

¹ Pobee, "The First Gospel..." 6,7.

² *International Sourcebook...*, 9.

³ Pobee, "The First Gospel..." 6,7.

⁴ *International Sourcebook...*, 13.

⁵ *Great Commission Pastors...*, 24.

adopted as the driving force for the content of the case study, which, in turn, will be grounded in the Course of Study for the ordained ministry in the Church of the Nazarene.

It can be concluded, on the basis of the research in the previous chapter, that distance learning is an established method which builds on and develops the strengths of models of extension learning of which TEE is a strong representative.

It has been shown how the WCC developed TEE through the TEF, therefore it is appropriate that distance learning, which develops many of the characteristics of TEE, should be seen as TEE's successor. Methodologically it seems to fit well with the WCC's attempts to provide accessibility and quality for theological education, and thus should be considered as a viable option for delivering the Oslo competencies.⁶

However, just as in a previous chapter, research was undertaken to ascertain the *compatibility* of the competencies of Oslo and the Church of the Nazarene, now research on a comparison of the *philosophies* of Oslo and distance learning must be attempted to determine their consonance.

As distance learning is an educational method which is now being called upon to deliver the competencies, it must be determined whether Oslo and distance learning have shared values and approaches which would make them compatible. From making these connections, and thus adding to those already established, field-work research criteria could then be conceived for the imminent case study. This case study would constitute a further area of research for a new model which would attempt to bring together the Oslo competencies, the distance learning method and the Nazarene Course of Study.

The comparison of philosophies begins with distance learning. Having established, in the previous chapter, the criteria or characteristics of what is generally accepted as

⁶ Furthermore, this is supported by discussion within the Oslo consultation. See John de Gruchy and Kyriaki Fitzgerald "Workshop II: The Role of the Academy in Ministerial Formation and Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 75, October 1996, 14.

good practice in distance learning,⁷ it is now worthwhile attempting to further identify its educational ethos.

1.1 How is 'education' defined in the distance learning literature?

"The problem of defining education with any precision is extremely difficult" according to D.R. Garrison. He quotes Schofield as stating that 'modern philosophers have abandoned the attempt', and thus concludes that "...agreement is unlikely about what we understand education to be."⁸ Malcolm Knowles acknowledges this difficulty, but makes the effort by defining education and learning in the following way:

Education is an activity undertaken or initiated by one or more agents that is designed to affect changes in the knowledge, skill and attitudes of individuals, groups or communities. The term emphasises the educator, the agent of change who presents stimuli and reinforcement for learning and designs activities to induce change. The term learning, by contrast, emphasises the person in whom the change occurs or is expected to occur. Learning is the act or process by which behavioural change, knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired.⁹

The awareness that learning, not teaching,¹⁰ is a decisive factor in education, and that the learner is the focus of its purpose, has brought support to distance education as a form of independent study. Education is seen not only as an attempt at disciplined study for specific useful purposes, but necessarily includes an awareness of the need for greater student autonomy.

Rather than attempt to agree on exact definitions, Garrison and other exponents of distance learning, try to identify features and issues which are seen to be important characteristics of education and learning as they appear in distance learning. Holmberg identifies these characteristics of education as covering "a wide spectrum: from the development of personality and cognitive structure, via guided learning and problem solving, to the training of knowledgeable and well-adapted professionals or

⁷ Further evaluation of distance learning is attempted in several key texts. An example can be found in Derek Rowntree's writings where he identifies several issues for debate. (*Exploring...*, 238-250)

⁸ D.R. Garrison, *Understanding Distance Education*, London: Routledge, 1991, 10.

⁹ Malcolm Knowles, Elwood Holton and Richard Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Company, 5th edition, 1998, 10-11.

¹⁰ See Peter Jarvis, *Adult and Continuing Education: Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge, 1996, 19.

examinees.”¹¹ He breaks this down into several specifics which he calls “intrinsic characteristics” which are primarily:

1. “the applicability of distance learning to large groups of students as a kind of mass communication.
2. the possibility of improving the quality of instruction by assigning the best subject specialists and educationalists available to produce courses for large groups of students.
3. the effectiveness of the method, proved by the students’ acquisition of knowledge and skills.
4. the economy of the large-group approach...and that study can take place during leisure time.
5. the possibilities for individualisation of study pace...and content.
6. the student’s habit-forming experience of work on his/her own which is felt to develop independence and lead to greater autonomy than other types of study.”¹²

In the previous chapter, criteria were proposed as a means to judge the extent to which certain educational principles could be considered to be distance education. These highlighted the accessibility and flexibility of delivery of the education method as well as the care for quality and the assessment of that quality through evaluation and support.

In identifying *philosophical* characteristics of education, Garrison detects three criteria. First, that “to be judged educational, the subject matter must be considered worthwhile in terms of the development of the individual.” The previous chapter considered one aspect of the worth of the subject matter in terms of quality, both in meeting the needs of the individual and the purpose for which the programme was intended.

Second, that a shared experience of exploring a common world is acquired, “through active and critical exploration, knowledge and understanding, (and) being integrated

¹¹ Börje Holmberg, *Theory and Practice of Distance Education*, London: Routledge, 1992, 8-9.

¹² Börje Holmberg, *Distance Education*, London: Kogan Page, 1977, 18.

into the individual's view of the world." Third, education "identifies processes for intentional initiation of a student into modes of thought and awareness deemed of value by both teacher and student such that knowledge and understanding are achieved."¹³ An important characteristic of this concept and practice of education and learning is therefore, that it is not something forced on to reluctant students, but is a collaborative exercise of interdependence between student and teacher.

1.1.1 The emphasis on the roles of the teacher and the student.

The roles of the teacher and the student form basic building blocks in all educational philosophy. However, in distance learning it is believed that the mediation of a teacher is made easier with the introduction of technologies which support interactive and individualised delivery. This makes more achievable the negotiation of meaning between student and teacher in the educational process. This is not through coercion or manipulation but a mutual dialogue and debate in a journey which seeks understanding and knowledge.

The imbalance on either side is warned against. Garrison cautions the teacher against being "... thrust into the role of simply being another resource servile to the wants of the student."¹⁴ The teacher will be authoritative but not authoritarian.¹⁵ So the content is not being passed on as though it were to be received uncritically, but rather it may represent societal knowledge, which is open to questioning and change. Thus part of the process of teaching is to critically analyse this knowledge and develop new perspectives. Distance learning as a methodology, it is perceived, is eminently suited to this educational endeavour.

The way in which Distance Learning uses various communicative forms strengthens this claim. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the variety of media available to teacher and learner further facilitate openness and access to the educational process which is part of distance learning philosophy.

¹³ Garrison, *Understanding...*, 11.

¹⁴ Garrison, *Understanding...*, 12.

¹⁵ See Knowles on his own conversion from teacher to facilitator of learning. *The Adult Learner*, 198-201.

Media which include conversation, group discussions and tutorials are seen as being facilitative and true forms of communication... Communication allows room for the negotiating of meaning and the prospect of mutual learning through dialogue and discussion... through potent and insistent feedback.¹⁶

It is the various forms of dialogue and discussion which facilitate the absorption of the knowledge in the student. Larsen argues "that knowledge cannot simply be transmitted but must be induced in the learner."¹⁷ That is, it is induced through a sustained two-way communication through an active and voluntary participation of the learner. Garrison adds, "knowledge depends upon what one does with information and how it is integrated into existing cognitive structures through interaction with others. Knowledge is awareness developed through critical analysis."¹⁸ Thus organised knowledge is meaningful information whose acquisition is a focus of educational activity. This organised knowledge uses the sound application of basic principles of best practice in distance learning through good planning and sound instruction.

This collaborative educational exercise which is supported by many media forms, is experienced and tested in the learner's context. The learner may be new to this context but there are previous learning experiences which the learner has accrued which will, in turn, contribute to the outcomes.

The common outcomes of the educational process are agreed by the teachers and learners in light of the perceived demands of the community within which the learner will function. As defined in the previous chapter, an educational programme must be fit for the purpose for which it is intended, so the community will have a say in what that purpose is to be.

¹⁶ D Rowntree, 'Two styles of communication and their implications for learning', in J Baggaly, H Jamieson and H Marchant (eds), *Aspects of Educational Technology: Volume III Communication and Learning*, London: Pitman Publishing, 1975, 284.

¹⁷ S Larsen, 'Information can be transmitted but knowledge must be induced' in *Programmed Learning and Educational Technology*, 23 (4), 1986, 331.

¹⁸ Garrison, *Understanding...*, 16.

If these three dimensions are viewed as three interrelated circles - teacher, learner, community - then a clearer view is given of the thinking behind distance learning.¹⁹ The teacher and learner teach and learn in a context. Distance learning philosophy would say that education must be done in context for it to be truly effective. Furthermore, there is a need for critical reflection on practical experience, and communities play an important part in this. Students are given opportunities to identify their practice in light of what they are learning. Through 'situational analysis' (a point which will be returned to later), to help people understand the ramifications of what they are doing. Questions which assist in this endeavour may include: "what do we do?"; "what means, ideas and symbols do we use to interpret what we do?" and "what gives us the mandate (authority) to do what we do?".

How adults will learn through these collaborative exercises, mediated by technology and in context, becomes a question for the operation of good distance learning. As was noted in the previous chapter, adults demonstrate a variety of learning styles. Using distance learning as an educational method, necessitates the philosophical 'meeting of minds' of the educators and learners as well as an understanding of how the context will contribute to the learning process.

Having set out the main elements in the thinking behind distance learning, we turn to the Oslo literature.

1.2 How is theological education defined in the Oslo literature?

1.2.1 It is open and accessible to all.

The opening up of theological education to make it available to all, irrespective of class, wealth, race or gender was a constant theme in Oslo.²⁰ It stated clearly that,

¹⁹ An interesting link is made with the Nazarene interrelated five circle approach of student, tutor, local church, Board of Ministry and theological institution. See *International Sourcebook*, 13, and in the *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 424.3: "...graduation from the Course of Study requires the partnering of the educational provider and the local church to direct students in ministerial practices and competency development."

²⁰ Examples: Ofelia Ortega, "Viability for Whom and for What: Theological education from the Underside, A Latin-American Perspective", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.64, January 1994, 23. Francis Frost, "A Roman-Catholic Response", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.64, January 1994, 31. Vuadi Vibila, "Women and Theological Formation", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 22.

whatever the calling to ministry, theological education must be accessible to all people.²¹ It perceived a danger in that access to particular avenues of theological education, for example the ordained ministry, may be restricted because of class, wealth, race or gender.

1.2.2 It relates theory to practice.

In explaining its philosophy of theological education, Oslo attempted various definitions. Pobee, in his opening presentation of the Consultation, quoted David Tracy's definition that theology has three publics: academia, church and society²² and used David Bosch's comment that a sound and viable theological education was "a dynamic interplay and creative tension between *theoria*, *poiesis* (i.e. the imaginative creation and representation of evocative images) and *praxis*."²³ For John Pobee, theological education was combined with the formation of the person (ministerial formation) and turned on the mix of academic excellence, technical proficiency, experience and commitment.²⁴

1.2.3 It is relevant theological education.

The relevancy of the educational endeavour was reiterated by Ortega when she commented that, "we cannot 'learn' theology the same way as mathematics. Our knowledge of God is renewed each time we embark upon certain practices in certain contexts where the Word of God interacts with the communities of women and men."²⁵ So then the methodology of theological education included not only learning the techniques of study and the contents of study subjects, but also the methodology to develop a relevant theology for the congregations.

Focus Group III, "Ministerial Formation and Mature Aged Students", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.69, April 1995, 27.

²¹ At the beginning of the process, Pobee sets this out as a "guidepost" for a viability study. "The First Gospel...", 11.

²² David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination, Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, London: SCM, 1981. (quoted by Pobee, "The First Gospel", 10)

²³ David Bosch, "The Nature of Theological Education", in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Vol.77, 1991, 3-17. (quoted by Pobee, "The First Gospel", 10.)

²⁴ Pobee, "The First Gospel", 10.

²⁵ Ortega, "Viability", 24.

1.2.4 It is learning in context.

Sarah Mitchell was convinced that the contextualisation of theological education and ministerial formation was a process which included several different components of a ministry training programme. These included:

theological education, theory and practice of ministry, cultural studies and spiritual development, all of which are grounded within a cultural context. This integration takes place through carefully guided theological reflection, supervision and spiritual oversight... Ministerial formation is shaped by the tradition of the wider church, the culture of the wider community, the culture of the individual and the individual's life experiences and beliefs.²⁶

J.R. Cochrane, writing from a South African perspective, said that recent history had taught them to attempt a theological education programme whose manifesto was contextualisation. In attempting to define this, he clarified what theological education was not:

It is not in the first instance the transfer of a technique, a skill, a body of knowledge, a deposit of someone else's wisdom. It is part of a vision of the healing of a broken world, part of a commitment to those and that which is broken, part of a search for that which gives life in the midst of the forces which sow death. It is moreover essentially a common enterprise rather than an individual scholarly achievement. The South African experience has made this perspective a matter of method, and not just a matter of personal choices or ethical pluralities. It is part of what we mean by the term context.²⁷

To function in a context and learn in that same context, Park Keun-Won reiterated: "Traditional theological education has been limited to training personnel: but the new ministerial formation is related to the building of a concrete ecclesial community."²⁸

1.2.5 The way is opened for other forms of theological education.

Oslo called for theological learning to be done in co-operative forms outside of the theological institutions. This competence had to have its roots in good pedagogical methods which resisted the teaching of theology as "pure reception and habitualisation" or mostly "technocratic and expertocratic".²⁹ Henry Wilson contended

²⁶ Sarah Mitchell, "Ministerial Formation: A Model", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.72, January 1996, 11.

²⁷ J.R. Cochrane, "Contextualization and Globalization in Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 72, January 1996, 29.

²⁸ Park Keun-Won, "Viability...", 16.

²⁹ Susanne Blatt, "Viability debate...", 8.

in the debate that being theologically educated in one's home context, may correct these.³⁰

The argument for new learning styles to present these new competencies in the context of ministerial formation, necessitated the "revisit or evaluation" called for by Pobee.³¹ Pobee's case for ministerial formation was centred on the enabling of God's people to be on mission in the world today. However, inside that necessity for the building up of the whole people of God must be located the equipping of the few (i.e. leadership).³² An "important component" of ministerial formation is theological education. However this education is "at once theology, education and commitment," in other words it is formative. The way in which it becomes viable "is also about the structures and styles that will be conducive to the formation of students."³³

This approach to ministerial formation would, in Pobee's thinking, promote kingdom values. Although every programme of theological education may purport to provide this, the call was for a new vision to lie at the heart of theological education and drive the endeavour.

Such a philosophy was to be liberating and 'lead students out': "it not only provides information, but shares models and experiences, offers inspiration and prepares candidates for a variety of ministries. This can and does take place in a variety of settings including a university or seminary..."³⁴

Whereas Oslo was open to the variety of possible settings for theological education, it took seriously the limitations of resources in some settings, but called for an uncompromising approach in the quest for excellence. Where theological education is offered at a distance (or in extension) it claimed, the following factors must be taken

³⁰ Henry S. Wilson, "Mobilising the Giant -Through Diet, Exercise or Dismantling: Viability in Ministerial Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 65, April 1994, 16.

³¹ Pobee, "The First Gospel...", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.64, January 1994, 5. Also in a later article Pobee asserts that "renewal.. is the word that viability is reaching out to." ("Moving Towards a Pentecost Experience in Ministerial Formation", *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.68, January 1995, 18)

³² Pobee, "The First Gospel...", 6.

³³ This integration is uppermost in Pobee's mind when he writes, "...the emphasis is that theological education is at once theology, education and commitment." "The First Gospel...", 6.

³⁴ Report of Working Group 2, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 52.

into account: adequacy of resources (faculty, library, classrooms), needs of individual learners, needs of their ministerial settings and availability of technology.³⁵ If distance learning and Oslo are to be compatible, these comments must be considered seriously. Consequently, the thesis will return to this at a later point.

1.2.6 Concluding summary: The Oslo Competencies thus contend for a new process.

Ministerial formation is the task of “enabling of the people of God to be on mission in the world today..,” within which is located “the equipping of the few (i.e. leadership)...” An “important component” of this is theological education, which is also formative through - “...theology, education and commitment..- which should foster ecumenism,...because truth in its fullness is only discovered in dialogue with others.”³⁶

The questions for a new process were summed up by Pobee:

1. “What programmes of formation would foster, if not ensure, the missionary and ecumenical vocation of the people of God, especially the ordained?”
2. What programmes would foster the efficient ministry of the whole people of God and in that context, the ministry of the ordained?
3. What are the implications of the renewed emphasis on church as communion, body of Christ and people of God for programmes of ministerial formation?
4. What educational process would foster the development of the people of God and their leadership to be well-equipped to be symbolic units of those values of the kingdom (sacrificial love, truth, righteousness - justice, freedom, reconciliation and peace)?³⁷

Pobee called the search for “new structures”, “important.” However he continued, “...structures are instruments for carrying a vision. So the process of study of viability

³⁵ Report of Working Group 2, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October 1994, 52.

³⁶ Pobee, “The First Gospel...”, 6, 9.

³⁷ Pobee, “The First Gospel...”, 13.

of ministerial formation is a search for a vision that will enable the development of a people of God...as well as structures that will enable the realisation of the vision."³⁸

Pobee wrote these words at the beginning of a process which, after three years, concluded that the six (Oslo) competencies provided the essence of ministerial formation, that is, they provided central markers of a "programme of formation". In this regard, Pobee's first two questions, stated above, are addressed.

The third question is addressed by Oslo's view of the body of believers as included in the task of ministerial formation both of itself, and as the context within which the formation of the ordained leadership takes place. As the debate has demonstrated, a major contributor to the context is the ecclesiastical milieu in which the ministerial formation will take place.

The fourth question is one of educational method. A question for this thesis is whether distance learning could be a suitable method in this regard and could carry the new vision expressed through Oslo. It was concluded that methodologically it developed the concept of extension learning and would thus be compatible with Oslo's wider heritage which included TEE. As far as a compatible philosophy is concerned, it is now necessary to bring the elements together to ascertain if common ground exists.

1.3 Is there common ground between the philosophy of education in Oslo and the philosophy of education in the distance learning literature?

1.3.1 Compatible philosophies and operational criteria.

Some initial comments can be made in this regard. Through analysing concepts and identifying underlying values,³⁹ it is initially apparent that there is much common ground between the philosophies of Oslo and distance learning. The characteristics of both dovetail in a remarkable fashion. The common thinking in terms of openness of learning, the merits of contextualisation, quality control and variety in presentation forms, demonstrates that they can be profitable partners. The philosophy behind

³⁸ Pobee, "The First Gospel...", 13.

³⁹ For further debate in the philosophy of education in adults, see for example, K.H. Lawson, *Philosophical Issues in the Education of Adults*, Nottingham: Continuing Education Press, 1998, 19-32.

distance learning is compatible with Oslo's thinking behind "the search for effective ministerial formation."⁴⁰

However the compatibility debate is not as straightforward as this. Although Pobece began the three year process by stating,

...the seminary like the university grew out of a monastic model and thus the institution was seen as a community of learners and scholars who together search for the meaning of the Word of God in order to live it out faithfully. That model is hardly relevant for this time, partly because most students are often by no means thinking of monastic life and that ideas of community are elusive in an age when many students are established, married, second career persons. That creates a new situation which reaches to the heart of viability. Which aspects of the inherited tradition must be continued today and why?⁴¹

He also recognised that other factors have influenced the debate,

...patterns of ministerial formation were based on male experience, (whereas) now women have come into the programme in large numbers. That creates the necessity to explore alternative programmes of theological education suitable to the life-styles and values of women and that, in dialogue with the styles and values of men.⁴²

Thus, there was the necessity "...to be sensitive and responsive to changed and changing times."⁴³

Oslo also identified several factors which influence the debate on ministerial formation. First, theological education, as an important component of ministerial formation, must now be understood more clearly as "not only the imparting of knowledge and information...(but also engaging) people with experience, hopes and fears for the creator God."⁴⁴ It is part of a formative exercise. The viability issue (of ministerial formation programmes) concerns the creativity of the structures and organisation of theological and ministerial formation."⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Pobece, "The First Gospel...", 7.

⁴¹ Pobece, "The First Gospel...", 5.

⁴² Pobece, "The First Gospel...", 6.

⁴³ Pobece, "The First Gospel...", 6.

⁴⁴ Pobece, "The First Gospel...", 6.

⁴⁵ Pobece, "The First Gospel...", 6.

Viability is “about methodology” but it “is also about the structures and styles that will be conducive to the formation of students who are equipped to fulfil the task of ministry in the life of the church and the people of faith, individually and severally in the world.”⁴⁶ In this context, the methodology of distance learning is raised:

We urge educators to become familiar with new methodologies of education and encourage the development of programmes for ‘long distance learning’ for those people in ministries who are unable to attend theological academies.⁴⁷

However, in the Oslo debate, Kruger commented on the difficulties being experienced by using distance learning as a form of ministerial formation in his particular experience:⁴⁸

The density of the theological subjects and the need to forge an interrelationship with the corresponding sciences (philosophy, sociology, psychology, the Latin American reality) demonstrate that distance education has its limitations. It can be effective during the first years, but upon completing the introductory courses in Bible study and entering into the exegetical work and the dissertation, we are still unable to recommend an alternative to on-site study.⁴⁹

Distance learning as a philosophy, addresses many of the questions of accessibility, quality and formation that Oslo raises, but like any human method it is open to accusations of fallibility. In its philosophy and method it must take seriously the limitations of resources both in its theory and its application. Any Oslo model using distance learning should not function only on the basis of drawing on two globally accepted sets of ‘competencies’ or ‘methodology’. How it works ‘on the ground’ within the limits of local resources will be the best indicator of compatibility of philosophy and practice. One or both may need adjustment as a consequence.

⁴⁶ Pobe, “The First Gospel...”, 7.

⁴⁷ John de Gruchy and Kyariaki Fitzgerald “Workshop II: The Role of the Academy in Ministerial Formation and Theological Education”, in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol. 75, October 1996, 14.

⁴⁸ This involved a Licentiate in Ministry programme which was an advanced form of the basic course of ministerial training given to those who have completed primary level education. Ross Kinsler believes there is a place for advanced studies for Latin American ministers: “The great majority of pastors and leaders in Latin America belong to the “middle” socio-economic and educational level.” (Incarnation and Viability: The Evolution of a Model” in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.68, January 1995, 37.)

⁴⁹ Kruger, “Ministerial...”, 34.

1.3.2 Identifying specific areas of concern within the compatibility debate.

With a broad field of agreement in terms of common thinking, values and ethos, two points must be stated in relation to distance learning and Oslo's view of theological education, which could be a potential weakness in some contexts. These pertain to the development of the student as a person in relation to Christian ministry and the learner's place in the educational activity.

Whilst it could be argued that all education is formative, theological education often brings confessional overtones and expectations to the task that could shape the formation of the person in a specific way. Although the specific competencies will be assessed in terms of their compatibility with distance learning methods, these two important points are made:

1.3.2.1 Distance Learning philosophy promotes authoritative teaching but not authoritarianism.

Within the philosophy of distance learning is the recognition that it is a multi-disciplinary approach to education and learning. In relation to theological education and distance learning two initial statements may be made:

1. As a pedagogical method, distance learning assists in making information accessible to the learner. This information is expected to be addressed by the student and various responses are expected in order that the learning may be assessed.
2. In the case of theological education, where the information made available to the learner is set - by the provider - in a confessional context, and is seen as objective 'truth', the learner should be encouraged to respond to it as he would to any authoritative material which is open to debate and questioning. If, however, communication of this 'truth' or 'faith' assumes an authoritarian rôle - that is, it is presented by the provider as something that has to be (or strongly expected) to be accepted - the response of the student may be limited by this expectation.

The point is raised that for theological education to attempt to convey a 'once for all' fixed and universally valid orthodox theology, derived from the Bible as 'truth' and thus 'known and defined', is a parody of true theological education. Such an

educational endeavour would fall foul of Oslo's philosophy and the philosophy of learning adopted by distance learning where the teacher is authoritative but not authoritarian. Thus information is not passed on as unquestioning truth.

Oslo's definition of theological education promotes learning to read the Bible and to theologise in context and dialogue with people in other contexts. Distance learning assists in this endeavour by being specifically context related in its philosophy.

A corrective is made however by Peter Jarvis, where it is his observation that to some extent all education is authoritative:

...education is about the social provision of learning opportunities (in which the) providers might seek to control the content of what is to be taught. It would almost seem irrational if that control were not exercised in some way or other. Hence, the state seeks to control the content of the national curriculum, the employer does not send a carpenter on a metallurgy course, nor do churches provide courses on the arts of burglary.⁵⁰

Yet it is propitious that defining the nature of Christian truth - and thus to influence development in others - whilst once the task of the dogmatician, is now equally the task of the hermeneutist. This is evident in the emergence of various hermeneutical approaches which include the reader-response theory where the rôle of the reader is acknowledged. Thus while theological education for the ordained ministry within a defined confessional stance may demand acknowledgement of certain 'truths', distance learning methods would encourage the developments in theological study - such as hermeneutics - which allow for and acknowledge student response in this confessional context. It could be said that the distance learning philosophy would acknowledge this need, and respond to it.

Although some of these considerations mentioned above may apply in any educational setting, they are of particular interest to distance learning where information is received by the learner generally through the written word. Additionally,

⁵⁰ Peter Jarvis, 'The Educational Mission of the Church to Adults - a Quest for Truth?' in *Epworth Review*, 1 (1999), 88-94.

although the distance learning mode of instruction promotes individual study, the material is often presented - in its written form - as 'authoritative'.⁵¹

In the form of theological education discussed in this thesis, the specific task is to educate the minister to ordination. A certain body of material is expected to be delivered by the course in order for this to be done.

At some stage, the learner will choose a particular position in relation to his or her commitment to the particular church for which he or she is preparing for ministry and to the body of material coming to him or her through the course. At some stage the knowledge becomes known and the learner and material become united. It is generally accepted that the degree of response by the learner will determine whether the material is understood to the point where it is accepted as authoritative, and change begins to take place within the person. This is where education becomes learning by internalising - by making the material one's own, by appropriating it and giving it significance and meaning - thus change takes place within the person.⁵² Perry points out that there is:

...a point of critical division between 'belief' and the possibility of 'faith'. Belief requires no investment by the person. To become faith it must first be doubted. Only in the face of doubt is the person called upon for that act of commitment that is his contribution, his faith.⁵³

⁵¹ The authoritative element may be couched in the understanding that "education consists of passing on the accumulated and considered wisdom of society. Running concurrent with such an approach is the development of intellectual skills which involve manipulation of that knowledge so that one acquires the ability to analyse, evaluate, compare and contrast (the material)." Alison de Cornu, 'Issues pertaining to adult students of theology studying at a distance: self, pedagogy and ethics,' unpublished paper given at the Global Consultation on Open Access Theological Education, Oxford, 9 February 2000, 10.

⁵² A further perspective is the work done by Marton and Säljö where 'deep', 'strategic' and 'surface' learners are identified. The authors concluded that surface or shallow learners deal with the information at a superficial level with little internalisation of the material. Strategic learners will choose what information to absorb, whereas deep learners may select certain aspects of the information and pursue depth of understanding to the exclusion of breadth. 'On Qualitative Differences in Learning: I - Outcome and Process; II - Outcome as a Function of the Learner's Conception of the task', *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol 46.1976, 4-11, 115-127.

⁵³ W.G. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970 (1999 posthumous edition), 131.

Jarvis indicates that:

Being is about understanding, which in turn is about knowing rather than having knowledge.⁵⁴

Theological education in a confessional setting must allow for honest interaction with the body of material by the student and a breadth of response which does not limit the educational endeavour. The internalising of 'faith' and 'spiritual development' as a consequence of internalising the information coming to the student, may seem unique to theological education. However, it could be argued that all education causes change in thinking and consequently, behaviour. The development of a spiritual element in that task - as a consequence of receiving information and internalising it - is not foreign to the educational endeavour. It would depend on church authorities to examine the student prior to ordination as to whether this journey of learning and faith was deemed confessionally orthodox..

In a global church like the Church of the Nazarene, the regional *Sourcebooks* reflect some differences in approach to this. The *Sourcebook* from the USA speaks in general terms: "You'll want to give special attention to the theology of the church in your preparation for the ministry."⁵⁵ The Africa region *Sourcebook* on the other hand is more specific. "...in order to actually enter the ministry in the Church of the Nazarene you will need to come to agreement with its doctrines, standards and procedures."⁵⁶ It continues, "If you find yourself in strong disagreement with the beliefs, policies or procedures in the Church of the Nazarene, then the Church of the Nazarene is probably not the church in which you should serve. You should explore other churches which have different forms of government or different understandings of Scripture."⁵⁷

The Canadian *Sourcebook* is less specific but nonetheless encourages certain standards:

⁵⁴ P. Jarvis, *Paradoxes of Learning: On Becoming an Individual in Society*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993. 169,170.

⁵⁵ *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development, USA*, paragraph 436.56. The Caribbean, Mexico and Central America and South America Regional *Sourcebook* is a direct translation of the USA document. (*Guía de Desarrollo Ministerial*, paragraph 434.54)

⁵⁶ *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development, Africa Region*, 14.

⁵⁷ *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development, Africa Region*, 15.

The National Vision statement for the Church of the Nazarene in Canada says that we will 'experience and promote the holy life'... This means that our values and priorities will be different, in a number of respects, from the values and priorities of other churches, even those who call themselves evangelical.⁵⁸

In the UK, the Board of Ministry on each district interviews licensed ministers every year before recommending renewal of their licenses to the District Assembly. The interview prior to ordination is more structured. An example of this can be found in the recommendation made to the South District Assembly in 1997 which read:

That having graduated from their courses of study, having met all the requirements for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene, and having been examined by this Board relative to their testimonies, call to full time service, ministerial gifts and experiences, that the following be elected to elders' orders...(names then follow)⁵⁹

In an earlier chapter it was proposed that, if NTC Manchester were used as an example of Nazarene colleges world-wide, authoritative teaching that was not authoritarian is expected and encouraged. This would rest well with the educational philosophy of Oslo and distance learning. Even the college's statement concerning the demand that students accept the ethos and abide by the rules of the college would not be seen to be detrimental to the learning process. Therefore, it could be concluded that if Oslo's competencies and the distance learning method were adopted world-wide, there would be enough room for movement.

However, the African statement appears a little more restrictive. It is not known how the teaching methods of the African colleges compare with the others. To move towards a global adoption of Oslo and distance learning philosophies may mean a re-think in that world region.

Every denomination reserves the right to teach its students in the ways of the denomination. The philosophy behind the Oslo competencies and distance learning method would allow for this form of authoritative teaching. Where difficulty may be experienced is where the teaching is authoritarian to the point that students are

⁵⁸ *Canadian Ministerial Preparation Sourcebook*, 33,34.

⁵⁹ *Minutes of the South District Assembly*, Church of the Nazarene 1997, 53.

expected to comply with the thinking of certain world regional ordination Boards of Ministry in order to complete the Course of Study.

1.3.2.2 The learner's place in the educational activity.

Secondly, the challenge for both the providers of the course material and the organisers of the distance learning method which delivers it, is to pass the authority to the learner so that the course and its delivery become tools for development and construction of the person in the context of ministry.

The presentation of the material and the demands it makes on the learners - which would include the implicit perception it conveys of its learners - can play a part in fostering the learners' ability to exercise independent authority in the learning activity.

Trenton Ferro comments

if the teacher views his rôle as more facilitative... he expects the participant to be much more active in the learning process and even to take major responsibility for her learning experiences and her personal development and growth.⁶⁰

A counterbalance to extreme individualism in learning is offered by distance learning methods and lies at the heart of its philosophy. This is based on the premise that relating the learners' experience to prior knowledge as well as personal experience helps students to become more engaged with the material.⁶¹ Rowntree, for example, gives fifteen ways of how activities help the learners to 'dialogue' with the content.⁶² Additionally, the use of IT and computer conferencing encourages 'dialogue' with the tutor and other students. The place and rôle of the community and the contextualising of learning is strong in best practice distance learning methodology.

A Study Journal (a point returned to later) is now commonplace in distance learning strategy and in some programmes students can decide whether to submit this as part of

⁶⁰ Trenton Ferro, 'The Authority of the Word' in P. Jarvis and N. Walters (eds) *Adult Education and Theological Interpretations*, Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company, 1993, 37.

⁶¹ See Alistair Morgan, *Improving Your Student's Learning: Reflections on the Experience of Study*, London: Kogan Page, 1993.

⁶² Derek Rowntree, *Preparing Materials for Open, Distance and Flexible Learning*, London: Kogan Page, 1994, 102.

their assessment. The self-evaluation required for the Journal is another way of promoting self discovery and character building.

Relationships lie at the heart of ministry development. Although the student may enter into a 'relationship' with the material on the course, it is a relationship of evaluation and discrimination that one may adopt with any written material. It could be argued that this provides a more neutral territory for assessment than if the student were to evaluate the material face to face with a tutor, hence the 'authority' of provider is lessened, and of the learner strengthened.

This is a strength of distance learning in that the learner *is given time* to assimilate and assess the material. The learner is exerting control in the various aspects of the distance learning activity which includes opportunities to assess the validity of the content of the course with others inside and outside the confessional group. If this is done, personhood should have the context in which to develop and aspects of ministry formation addressed.

In these aspects, distance learning is stronger than TEE whose practice is to keep the student mostly on location. If the Church of the Nazarene in the UK were to fully adopt the philosophy as well as the methodology of best practice distance learning, the minister-in-learning would no longer be the lone student, but rather his prior experience, his personal context, and interaction with the content of the course and its tutors through various methods, would strengthen his development as the minister-in-ministry.

However, in order to make the philosophy and methods applicable and measurable, criteria for testing their compatibility must now be attempted. It is one thing to speak of compatible philosophies but another to test them in a particular context, in this case, theological education for the ordained ministry in the Church of the Nazarene in the UK.

2. Delivering the Oslo competencies through Distance Learning methods.

In order to make clear the connections between the Oslo competencies and distance learning philosophy and methods, each competency will be restated in summary form.

Key criteria in use in distance learning method will then be proposed. It is understood that several criteria could be brought to bear for each competency, and that the process is often nuanced. In distance learning, the range of delivery methods is broad yet the examples suggested are considered to reflect the essence of the methodology, and to be suitable for the competencies they will deliver. It is also recognised that although the previous chapter dealt with certain principles of distance learning, particular technological approaches were discussed. There is no need to repeat these here, but rather to consider how this criteria applies in practice.

The step beyond this is to establish *operational criteria* for evaluating the form of distance learning which makes up the theological education process of the Church of the Nazarene. This will then be tested through the case study research.

2.1 The Oslo competencies in summary form.

Spiritual Competency: is at the centre of the educational task. It is not a skill, but part of a vision and commitment in the person that relates theology to life.⁶³ It is a process which develops with the practice of certain competencies and is integrated into theological education. All other elements are seen to derive their emphasis from this competency. It is done in community and for community.

Theological competency: Theology is more than an intellectual exercise; it is a commitment and a life-style and as such must be concerned with developing skills to enable others to be faithful to their vocation. It includes the hermeneutical task of discerning and acting upon the symbols in the community which have become mediations of the gospel. The contextualisation of theology through community is paramount. Theology is a rational science and a creative exercise in mutual harmony. As we address changes in theological education we must hold on to the concept of

⁶³ This Oslo competence can be delivered by distance learning where an authoritarian approach is shunned in favour of giving authority to learner to learn within the context of study. In John Pobee's words that theological education *must* engage in interfaith dialogue "not only hear the heteronomous call of the other but also take the other seriously as an adherent of a particular religion." In the search for new common language and symbols, the formative process becomes "a renewal of minds, bodies, spirits and hope." John S Pobee, "Plurality and Theological Education", in *Ministerial Formation*, Vol.67, October, 1994, 30, 31.

training “creative theologians.” These are people who can respond to changing circumstances, as they are not bound to particular situations or moments in history.

Pastoral Competency: Ministerial formation is a central part of theological education. The development of the pastoral competency is done in the church context. Ministry and missionary situations require pastoral as well as educational skills.

Leadership competency: enables, equips and discerns gifts of ministry in the community. It includes the ability to empower the marginalized in the community and to mediate in conflict situations. It can only come about where there are leaders and followers.

Mission competency: Mission competency is wrapped up with the purpose of theology and of theological education; only so far as the church is authentically and creatively engaged in worship and mission, only in so far as the church is being a faithful witness to the reign of God. Mission is sharing consciously in the everyday life situations of people.

Ecumenical competency: the ecumenical imperative is inextricably linked with the church’s missionary vocation. Theological education must engage in interfaith dialogue. Ecumenism encourages a formation process which inspires, liberates, empowers, resources and affirms the ministries present in the whole people of God.

3. Identifying the criteria.

Certain criteria will now be identified which will be examples of how the synthesised educational and theological criteria can be measured. These are initially stated in broad terms, the reason being that they will inform the questions for the case study. They should then be strongly evident in detail in the new model to be developed in chapter nine.

3.1 Distance Learning criteria which assist the development of the learner within the community.

It has been shown that there is much common ground in the philosophies of Oslo and distance learning and furthermore, that distance learning could deliver the Oslo competencies. However, it appears difficult if not impossible, for an educational

method alone to deliver a vision or commitment which is, at its heart, deeply personal and formative. Two preliminary points are reiterated:

1. The distance 'element' of the process may strengthen the competencies. These have strong community overtones in their expression, but are strongly personal in their development. The immediacy of a teacher⁶⁴ may mould these competencies in a particular direction, where the influence of a wider community at a distance from the teacher may be beneficial.
2. The personal and community interaction which is fostered in distance learning is important here. Normally evidence would be called for in the expression of the competencies as learning outcomes are usually determined by what someone can explain or reproduce or do, personal learning goals will be dominant. The student can then be asked by the community in which he is learning to question these goals, revisit them, and ask if they are being met.

"Delivering" competencies however, does include "content" and the assimilation of that content by the student, and assessment of the content by the teachers and the learning community in which the student will serve, will have to be included in the learning outcomes.

This context of community for 'doing theology' will have to be addressed in an intentional way. How the formation of the student will take place in the community, will partly depend on what methods are set up by the distance learning process. This intentionality of method will seek to ensure that the community context is adequate enough to help the learner address the issues. If not, then the context may have to be widened. The use of other 'communities' may be considered. For example, the students may be brought together periodically as a 'community of learners' to discuss their progress. Exposure to various communities should help to strengthen and test

⁶⁴ In relation to the teacher, Jarvis states: "Teachers should put themselves at the disposal of the Other. Teaching is a matter of entering a relationship with the Other solely for the benefit of the Other." Peter Jarvis, *Ethics and Education for Adults in a Late Modern Society*, Leicester, NIACE, 1997, 115.

the competencies. Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the contexts will be a necessary precursor for the method.

Whatever the interaction between teacher, student and community, Courtney raises the issue of whether it is right to intrude into the life of individuals who appear to be stuck at a particular developmental level. Should the teacher or the community attempt to motivate the student to develop in character and spiritual formation which lie at the heart of the competencies?

He concludes:

These questions are not easily answered, and they won't be answered in the same way for every adult educator. But, at the very least, they suggest that the assumption of growth, which is a pivotal element in models of adult development, is not to be taken without reflection over ultimate implications.⁶⁵

To deliver "vision and commitment that relates to the theology of life"⁶⁶ is a daunting if not impossible task for any educational endeavour. However, by giving more responsibility to the learner in a context where there is time to reflect, engage with others and work out the implication of the knowledge for oneself, the person is respected and allowed to grow. Personal growth is not only at the heart of the Oslo competencies but at the heart of all learning.

Some specific criteria are suggested:

3.1.1 Situational analysis.

In ministry in context, a situational analysis which considers the student as a person, the ministry in which he or she is engaged, the community to which he or she relates within the world at large, will play a significant part.⁶⁷ This analysis will involve

⁶⁵ Bradley Courtney, 'Personhood - Personal and Faith Development' in P Jarvis and N Walters (eds), in *Adult Education and Theological Interpretations*, Malabar: Krieger Publishing Company, 1993, 165.

⁶⁶ See Konrad Raiser, "The Importance of the Ecumenical Vision for theological Education and Ministerial Formation", in *Towards Viable Theological Education*, John Pobe (ed), 54-60.

⁶⁷ Other analytical structures include social analysis - which draws on the knowledge that individuals and communities have of their own situation. Structural analysis - which tries to describe the various systems in society, the way in which they relate to each other, and what binds them together. Conjunctural analysis, which concentrates on the forces at work within the community at any given moment.

members of the congregation as it includes an attempt to understand how the organisation (the church) operates, and how theology may be put into practice. It will also involve developing a view of society at large, particularly in its pluralist nature, in order to understand the context in which ministry is exercised.

Beginning with the creation of a database, an assessment of the situation becomes cumulative throughout the educational task and will be constantly added to, modified and developed. This requires in Raiser's words, "... leaving the protected place of the academy and sharing consciously in the everyday life situations of people."⁶⁸

3.1.2 Applying theology to ministry.

In thinking theologically and taking theological responsibility for ministry, the student's understanding of God and his purposes for the church and world ought to be the main criterion of being, saying and doing in ministry. Doing this however, is not a matter of personal opinion but becoming self critical in the light of the Bible, Christian history and contemporary thought.

Practising theology competently is to consciously and self critically choose to do ministry in the light of rational reflection on what is relevant. Applying theology, in the context under consideration, is to apply it to ministry. The ministry scenario is often complex and gives many opportunities to reflect on various issues. As the problems are addressed, not only is theology applied but it is also being created. There are new challenges which constantly address what is known, thus they call for a new thinking which may lead to new theological developments. This goes beyond reflecting on the Bible and tradition, rather it is a discussion with these and other relevant sources to determine their strengths and weaknesses. New and creative thinking may emerge which, in turn, will come under scrutiny by others.

An example of this can be found in the literature produced by Westminster College, Oxford, School of Theology, which is part of Westminster College Open Theology Programme. (*Applied Theology: Situation Analysis Handbook*, 1995?, 7,9)

⁶⁸ Konrad Raiser, "The First Gospel...", 20.

Distance learning not only promotes the student as the “reflective practitioner” (Donald Schön),⁶⁹ but the method itself also comes into this same creational orbit. As the distance learning method promotes the competencies, it too is being assessed. The freedom to reflect, apply and evaluate both the theology and the method is a double strength of the endeavour.

3.1.3 Reflecting on practice.

Distance learning gives the stimulus and provides the *guidance to reflect* on the practice of ministry. Oslo is strong on the spiritual and character development of the person in promoting and leading to the pastoral task.⁷⁰ The opportunity to reflect on practice is a necessary part of the competencies, and a particular strength of the distance learning method.

Don Browning suggests three aspects to the process of reflection:

1. What within a particular area of practice are we actually doing?
2. What reasons, ideas and symbols do we use to interpret what we are doing?
3. What do we consider to be the sources of authority and legitimation for what we do?

He continues,

The description of these practices engenders questions about what we really should be doing and about the accuracy and consistency of our use of our preferred sources of authority and legitimation.⁷¹

The pastor-student thus becomes the reflective practitioner. The competencies may invoke sociological and organisational as well as theological and historical elements.

⁶⁹ Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, London: Temple Smith, 1983. “this process involves practitioners in a dialogue with situations in which they reframe them in relation to what has gone before. These they then test and remake so as to fit more closely the particular. This structure of reflection-in-action requires close attention within the education of ...professionals.” 138. See also Johannes A. van der Ven, *Education for Reflective Ministry*, Louvain: Peeters Press, 1998.

⁷⁰ See particularly “A Response by Mary O’Driscoll” in *Towards Viable Theological Education*, 61.

⁷¹ Don Browning, ‘Toward a Fundamental and Strategic Practical Theology’ in *Shifting Boundaries: Contextual Approaches to the Structure of Theological Education*, Barbara Wheeler and Edward Farley (eds), Louisville: Westminster Press, 1991, 304.

However the ministry task does overlap into areas of the social sciences, and these too can reflect important perspectives into the theological endeavour.⁷²

The process of reflection is a life-long activity rather than a one-off exercise. To help in this task, the student is invited to use the criteria developed and agreed. These will allow the student to stand back from the area of study, to use these criteria (or categories of analysis) to try to understand more about the object of study.

As noted earlier, in developing the competencies, there are three stakeholders involved in determining the outcomes of the educational task: the students, the learning communities (within which the church will play a major rôle) and the providers of the information, who may also be the “guardians” of a particular tradition. The learner on his or her own may only identify ‘felt’ needs, or ‘immediate’ needs in the competencies. The church community may have more clearly defined categories within the competencies which they can identify. The providers, from experience of working in the area, may identify skills, knowledge and attitudes which need to be present. Outcomes such as pastoral care, church organisation and leadership are informed by the thorough consultation between these three stakeholders.⁷³

3.2 Distance Learning methods which assist reflection: the portfolio and study journal.

As noted earlier, a Study Journal is now commonplace in distance learning strategy. A portfolio is a similar tool used in distance learning. At its simplest, a portfolio is a collection of evidence. It has the purpose of showing to someone else, perhaps a teacher or examiner, evidence of learning and of reaching a certain level of attainment. The benefits of a portfolio approach are threefold:

1. The range and type of evidence can be varied. It takes assessment systems beyond the traditional essays and exams and provides an added flexibility. Reflective

⁷² Core to that endeavour is personal reflection on what is happening within the student.

⁷³ Interestingly, Ivan Illich, in focusing on the de-institutionalisation of education, identified four groups: learners, elders (experts in enabling others to learn), models (those who model what the learner may want to achieve) and peers (others studying with the learner). *Deschooling Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, 146.

journals, photographs, brochures, essays, references, notes from reading and so on, are suitable pieces of evidence to include.

2. Responsibility for assembling the portfolio lies in the hands of the learner. By becoming involved in reflecting on their learning, they select from the evidence and put it together to make an integrated portfolio. The process of building the portfolio adds further benefit as the learner uses evidence from different aspects of their life and learning. As this is done, there is a greater likelihood of them integrating learning into the fabric of their life rather than keeping it as an isolated pocket associated with the course.
3. The portfolio approach offers a consistent and reliable way of accrediting prior learning⁷⁴ which may open up new possibilities in the length of time required for ordination education. If it were used in this way however, the educational provider would need to make clear to the student the learning outcomes it is looking for so that equivalents between educational requirements and approved prior learning can be drawn up.

Portfolios are generally put together with a competency methodology. When speaking of learning outcomes, the competency statements which can emerge from portfolios can go a long way in ascertaining whether learning is being done.⁷⁵ Portfolios, in the context of well constructed and clearly specified learner outcomes, help to identify what has been learned (including accrediting prior learning), and thus place less concern on how it has been learned. This gives more power to the learner who can choose ways and time frames of learning.

3.2.1 Workbooks.

A workbook, produced by the providers of distance learning assists with five different but interrelated activities:

1. to collect data and build databases on the area of study.

⁷⁴ See Michael Eraut, *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*, London: Falmer, 1994, 84.

⁷⁵ Useful information can be gleaned from the way competencies are used in the NVQ system. See for example, Eraut, *Developing...*, chapters 8,9.

2. to guide students in reflection and give written opportunities to record what happens.
3. to reflect privately upon and evaluate, analyse and prepare future areas of work and study.
4. to guide the student in accessing information which will assist in the analysis of his situation and, through step by step guidance, help in the understanding of the salient features of the context.
5. to help the student develop his own models of good practice.

The first activity facilitates the others. By putting these into operation through the medium of a workbook the student can be helped in comparing one activity with another as they are attempted.

The outcome objectives of a workbook helps the student to:

1. establish benchmarks related to aspects of their work, their feeling about it and their evaluation of it.
2. refine and develop their ability to collect, collate, analyse and evaluate information about their work.
3. practice and develop their ability to extract from databases information required and to present it in an accessible form.
4. establish procedures and practices which become habitual aids and thus promote their development.⁷⁶

Workbooks, which are used widely in distance learning, are flexible tools. Not only can they be added to and subtracted from easily and quickly in a physical sense, but as the student's situation alters the workbook can be updated by provider and student to support ongoing reflection.

⁷⁶ These points are drawn from *Situation Analysis and Work and Vocational Consultancy Workbook*, Westminster College, Oxford, nd. (1995?), 7, 8.

3.3 Distance Learning methods which assist community learning: residential schools.

Completion of workbook materials forms the basis of residential schools. In other words, the distance learning programme will set out what has to be completed by the student in advance of the first residence school, the second and so on. The completed sections of the workbook form the basis of the study done in the residence school which then uses this as a basis for other related studies. The student is directed in other aspects of analysis which assists in the completion of the next section which is done in the student's own community. This calls for discipline on the part of the student. Equally, as the student reflects and acts, questions arise which are not addressed by the workbook and the sponsoring institution has to listen out for student feedback and evaluation.

3.3.1 Mentors and group learning.

Area mentors play an essential part in the method. Mentors and individual students meet together on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to the programme. Some time in some of the sessions will be spent in work relating to the periodic residence schools, but the overall progress of the student would be uppermost in the agenda. Area groups of students are formed. Assignments from the residence schools can often best be done in groups. These may form part of the area group tutorial. As noted earlier, adults demonstrate different learning styles and the group format is a good way of bringing them together so that each is allowed to contribute in the way in which he or she feels most comfortable. Group meetings such as these can alert students to various learning styles which may, in turn, assist them in understanding not only each other, but the members of the church community they serve.

3.4 Distance Learning methods which assist openness in theological education.

The fundamental characteristic of distance learning which encourages the openness of learning, is philosophically in harmony with Oslo's ecumenical view. In the last chapter, Rowntree was quoted as saying:

Can we develop an open learning fit for the kind of society we'd like to live in? That is the challenge.⁷⁷

A similar challenge laid down by Oslo relates to ecumenism in learning which promotes the competencies. Distance learning, because it allows this openness to context, however that is understood, can help to develop an ecumenical theological education.

An example of this has been attempted in the UK with apparent success. This involved the setting up of the Scottish Churches Open College. David Goodbourn outlined the ecumenical characteristics of this as including:

1. the sharing of core work in adult theological education.
2. the staffing of the ecumenical projects by using seconded denominational staff.
3. keeping the structures simple with the finance being handled through existing denominational structures.
4. flexibility - as a key word in the project.

However, to create collaboration between the churches and universities in a consortium, Goodbourn also noted how tough questions about theological education were squeezed out and the great advances envisaged by such an endeavour were not fully realised. The educational model in use tended to be a traditional one, where the teacher is the initiator of learning and the students were expected to repeat what was learned. Additionally, questions of finance and organisation had to be resolved.

Despite the apparent restrictions, he considered the distance learning aspect of the programme to be robust as various methods of delivery are attempted which include "a combination of home study, local support, group work and residential weekends."⁷⁸

Terry Evans and Daryl Nation support a move of this nature:

The complexity of future educational endeavours points to a need for dialogue between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners, and across the various sectors, traditional disciplines and national contexts of

⁷⁷ Derek Rowntree, *Exploring...*, 250.

⁷⁸ David Goodbourn, 'A Churches Open College for Scotland', in *British Journal of Theological Education*, Vol.4 No.2, Spring 1991, 37-47. Helpful personal discussion with David Goodbourn at the *Global Consultation on Open Access Theological Education* (Oxford, 7-11 February 2000)

education. It is all too easy to be consumed by one's own specific educational practice, in its particular context, and to ignore the potential contributions that could be made to, and from, other educational contexts.⁷⁹

4. Conclusion.

In answer to the question: "Is Oslo's philosophy of 'theological education and ministerial formation' compatible with the philosophy of distance learning?" It can be stated in light of this research that, in terms of access to learning, the merits of contextualisation, quality control, the students' learning experience and variety and pace in presentation forms and content, there is strong evidence of compatibility. The philosophy behind distance learning is compatible with Oslo's support for "the search for effective ministerial formation."⁸⁰

The distance learning principles and methods which have emerged from this research call for a fundamental shift in the philosophy and subsequent delivery of 'traditional' theological education, but this particular avenue of research is not within the remit of this thesis. However, it is also immediately apparent that modules cannot simply be taken from the classroom and delivered by distance learning using the technological or other means available.

The case study may reveal that in the Nazarene context this is what has been attempted and that the programme has suffered as a result. On the other hand, the fact that students are learning in context may - intentionally or otherwise - have offset some weakness of the education method.

Furthermore, the Oslo competencies may already be in evidence through ministerial experience, which the criteria allow for, rather than through the intention of the programme itself. If this proves to be the case, the programme will need to be structured and intentional to the point where the student's experience is guided rather than left to chance.

⁷⁹ Terry Evans and Daryl Nation 'Educational Futures' in *Opening Education*, Terry Evans and Daryl Nation (eds), London: Routledge, 1996, 176.

⁸⁰ Pobe, "The First Gospel...", 7.

The operational criteria for such a programme (i.e. the promotion of the Oslo competencies through a distance learning programme) do raise some issues however. For example, the issue of the balance between individuals taking responsibility for their learning and the need to belong to a peer group of learners. Decisions will have to be reached about learning communities and the value of the local church or parish as a learning community. Also, the institutional question of where the power in education resides. Is it with the provider, the learner or the church? These, and other significant issues raised in this research would need to be addressed.

As Evans and Nation state:

The irony here is that while the speed of change in computer and communications technologies is held to be rapid and accelerating, in education itself there is an apparently slow pace in change at the institutional, bureaucratic and practical levels. This is not a preface to a simplistic argument about the reluctance of educators to change, but rather an observation about the tensions that exist between education's purposes to preserve and sustain important traditions as well as to prepare people to construct their futures.⁸¹

In order to further focus the debate, and move towards addressing these issues, a case study must now be conducted on the existing Nazarene distance learning course. From this research, conclusions may be drawn for the way forward for the Church of the Nazarene in the UK and its programme of theological education for the ordained ministry.

⁸¹ Terry Evans and Daryl Nation, "Education Futures...", 176.

Chapter 8

A Case Study of the Effectiveness of the Current Model of Distance Learning in Use for Ordination Training in the Church of the Nazarene in the UK.

In order to locate the case study in its United Kingdom setting, and to give a context to its research methods, it is necessary to locate the place of theological education in the UK ecclesiastical milieu. Primary documentation from the Nazarene archives in the United Kingdom as well as published materials, will provide the data for research in this area.

1. The setting for the emerging pattern of theological education in the Church of the Nazarene in the UK.

The Church of the Nazarene in the United Kingdom did not come about until 1915 and then only initially in Scotland, with a union incorporating the Pentecostal Church of Scotland. The founding of the Pentecostal Church of Scotland was the result of the religious experience and ministry of George Sharpe. He was born near Craigneuk, Lanarkshire and in 1865 felt a strong call to preach the gospel. His eldest sister promised to meet his expenses if he would go through Edinburgh University and enter the ministry of the Church of Scotland, but out of a sense of inferiority he declined the offer.¹

In 1885 he was asked by an American, Mr Rose, to represent his firm in France in the setting up of a new factory. This was accepted by Sharpe, but the plans did not materialise and Sharpe found himself instead in New York working as a clerk for the company.

He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in Cortland, New York State and within a few weeks he was asked to pastor a small country church at Elmstump. The mother church at Cortland recognised his gifts and offered to help him train for ministry. Sharpe accepted and within a few weeks he began his studies.² Several church placements followed and Sharpe's ministry seemed to prosper. As a Methodist

¹ George Sharpe, *This is My Story*, Glasgow: Messenger Publishing Co., n.d.(c. 1948), 13.

² G. Sharpe, *This is...*, 26.

minister he was aware of the Methodist doctrine of holiness and came across many in his congregations who testified to it. Sharpe writes of a point where, feeling that “the pressure of truth and the Holy Ghost” were upon him, consecrated himself wholly to God and professed to God’s work in him. “Suddenly the Holy Ghost came and filled the cleansed temple. Praise God. He witnessed that the work was done.”³

In the summer of 1901 Sharpe and his family spent a holiday in Scotland and whilst in Ardrossan was asked to preach at the Congregational church there. A call to pastor the church immediately followed and Sharpe accepted. His induction took place on November 24th that same year.

Although the church grew over the next four years something came to Sharpe’s notice, namely “a revelation of an undercurrent being fostered by officials against the doctrine of holiness.”⁴ This and other incidents convinced Sharpe it was time to move on. He resigned from the pastorate and moved to the Parkhead Congregational Church, becoming their Pastor in September, 1905.

Sharpe took stock of his ministry. In his *Short Historical Sketch* he comes to the conclusion that, “I should preach what I found in the Bible. Second that I should also preach my experience and my convictions.” He continued, “If the Wesleyan doctrine of Entire Sanctification is a heresy then there are possibly more heretics in the world than there are orthodox believers. Methodism of all types accepts this heresy...”⁵

Despite growth in all departments of the church Sharpe found himself evicted from his charge just over a year later. In his opinion

...possibly three things led to up to this. First the holiness services conducted by the pastor which did not find favour with two classes, those who never attended them and those who attended them irregularly. Second, a letter sent by the pastor while in the United States where he was a worker in a camp meeting. In this he described a scene there and expressed the wish that something of the same nature might happen at home. Third, a sermon preached on “Worship the Lord in the beauty of

³ G. Sharpe, *This is...*, 29-32.

⁴ G. Sharpe, *A Short Historical Sketch of the Church of the Nazarene in the British Isles*, no pub., n.d. (c.1926) 13.

⁵ G. Sharpe, *A Short Historical...*, 16.

holiness". It was claimed that the sermon was provocative of strife because the preacher had said that while he was pastor of the church he could do no other than preach the glorious doctrine of holiness.⁶

Sharpe's opinion of the reason for his dismissal appears to be verified by the call made to the church members by the officials: "All church members are requested to be present at (this) meeting at which our Pastor's attitude on the question of Holiness will be discussed."⁷

Feelings ran high and amid chaotic scenes a motion was made to dismiss the pastor on two months' salary. As the meeting broke up in disorder a deacon, Robert Bolton, called together under the gallery all those who still wanted Sharpe to be their minister. About 80 responded.

The Great Eastern Road Halls were rented for services and the new church began. It was given the name Parkhead Pentecostal Church. Sharpe had said "If we organise a new church, the word 'Pentecostal' will be in it."⁸ Certainly Sharpe was clear that "the doctrine of Entire Sanctification (should) be declared as taught in the Word of God."⁹ By 1907 the church had grown to 225 members and had moved into a new building at Parkhead Cross.

There was no thought in Sharpe's mind of starting a new denomination.¹⁰ But his new congregation became a rallying point and soon others joined in the movement from Paisley, Uddingston and Blantyre. The first Assembly of the Pentecostal Church of Scotland took place on May 7th and 8th, 1909.

The corporate life of the denomination developed in two ways. Evangelistically, one of the first committees formed was that of Church Extension and Evangelism. By the Third Assembly this had become the Home Mission Committee. Its main purpose was to assist groups who wished to join the Pentecostal Church of Scotland.

⁶ G. Sharpe, *This is ...*, 71.

⁷ G. Sharpe, *This is...*, 72-73.

⁸ Jack Ford, *In the Steps of John Wesley; the Church of the Nazarene in Britain*, Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968, 41. (Ford quotes Andrew Robertson, a deacon of the church, in an interview 17.10.57).

⁹ G. Sharpe, *A Short Historical...*, 28.

¹⁰ J. Ford, *In the Steps...*, 43.

Apparently it was not particularly successful in this and Dr. Jack Ford, writing about this period, considered that it was more the personality of Sharpe which drew other groups into fellowship with the church.¹¹

1.1 Union with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene.

Sharpe was “a product of the American Holiness Movement.”¹² He frequently visited America and a considerable amount of encouragement was given from his friends there. This was undoubtedly one of the several strands which came together to foster union with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. Phineas F. Bresee, the founder of the Church of the Nazarene, had read an account in a British periodical of the First Assembly of the Pentecostal Church of Scotland and had printed it in full in the *Nazarene Messenger*.¹³ Timothy Smith, a Nazarene historian, states that “every major holiness paper published in America carried some account of Sharpe’s work between 1907 and 1909.”¹⁴

Sharpe himself had been influenced whilst in ministry in America by Mr Milton Williams who was a member of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene in Chicago. Olive Winchester¹⁵ also had contacts with the Nazarenes and it was she who helped to sow the idea of unity in the minds of some of her Parkhead contacts.

The 1910 General Assembly of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene was aware of the interest being created and sent a General Superintendent, Dr. Edward Walker, to Scotland to make contact with Sharpe.¹⁶ There was an inexplicable delay in the enactment of this decision and Dr. Walker did not arrive in Scotland until the spring of 1914. It was agreed that Dr. Sharpe would visit all of the local congregations of the Pentecostal Church of Scotland presenting the pros and cons of union with the

¹¹ J. Ford, *In the Steps...*, 56.

¹² J. Ford, *In the Steps...*, 56. A description of the Holiness Movement and the place of the Church of the Nazarene within it can be found in the Appendices.

¹³ The church’s official journal. G. Sharpe, *A Short Historical...*, 34.

¹⁴ Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness, The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962, 240.

¹⁵ See chapter 4, footnote 14. Also footnote 28 in this chapter.

¹⁶ Dr. Walker’s ancestry was British and in addition he was an excellent expository preacher whose style appealed to his British audience.

Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. June 30th, 1914 was set as the final date for a decision.

1.2 Overcoming some democratic and ecclesiological barriers to union.

Following Sharpe's tour he was able to report that "eight churches had voted; 176 in favour of union and 7 against."¹⁷ This, however, was not the overwhelming vote it appeared to be. Statistics for 1914 show a membership of 621 so just over 28% voted for the union. Ford wondered whether "the enthusiasm of the leaders was entirely shared by the rank and file."¹⁸

A second General Superintendent, Dr. H.F. Reynolds, arrived from America. He encountered problems of church order. The Parkhead congregation were reluctant to accept the term "steward" as the title for lay leaders. They had used "deacons" and saw this as a lifetime appointment whereas the 'steward' was appointed annually.¹⁹

The same congregation now realised that another cost of union would be the loss of their Pastor, Dr. Sharpe. He would become a District Superintendent in a full-time capacity.

As far as ministry order was concerned there was little to change. Their 'ordained minister' was the equivalent to the 'elder' in the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene and the 'licentiate' or 'pastor', equivalent to the Nazarene 'licensed minister'. The only change in the composition of the church board was that a youth representative would now sit on that board.

Once more, the decision was left to all of the churches. Reynolds returned to America and Sharpe began another round of visits to try and convince the churches about union.

Sharpe was dedicated to church order and organisation. He said,

¹⁷ Ford, *In the Steps..* , 60.

¹⁸ Ford, 61.

¹⁹ A conversation with Dr. T. A. Noble (February, 1995) whose father was a member of the Parkhead church, revealed that the use of the term 'deacon' by the Scottish church over against 'deaconess' by the Nazarenes was an important issue and threatened the union.

I have never been an independent. I have always believed in proper church government with laws that interpret the character of the church and such as will also sustain its well-being through various vicissitudes and experiences. A preacher is not a dictator and cannot be the conscience of other people. The people are not to be "lawless masters" having a democratic spirit that tends to "mob-rule." An organised church in the Holy Ghost will have beneficent rules and conditions and advices that will harmonise the people and the preachers into a bond of holy love that neither time nor changes can break.²⁰

A committee was appointed to consider the question of union. It reported to the Assembly recommending the union of the two denominations and the appointment of George Sharpe as District Superintendent. Union was finally consummated on November 5th, 1915 and ratified by the General Assembly in Kansas City the following year.²¹

1.3 The International Holiness Mission and the Calvary Holiness Church.

Two small holiness denominations in the British Isles united with the Church of the Nazarene in a three-year period. They brought to the church their own brand of church order and discipline which was to affect the British church for years afterwards. The International Holiness Mission was a layman's movement begun in 1907 by David Thomas a London businessman. A group of missions grew up around London and it began to take the shape of a denomination.

Two of its members went to South Africa in 1908 and in 1914 the work, which by this time was flourishing, was recognised as the South African Branch of the International Holiness Mission. The area of ministry in South Africa overlapped with that of the Nazarene missionaries there and fellowship began.

In 1934 there was a split in the Mission when four of its ministers - Reverends James, Ford, Ravenhill and Filer withdrew over the issue of spiritual gifts and began the Calvary Holiness Church.

Meanwhile the South African work of the IHM became larger than the work in the UK. Consequently the financial burden became too great. The IHM Executive

²⁰ G. Sharpe, *A Short Historical...*, 54.

²¹ *Manual*, 1928, paragraph 98.

Council looked for a merger with a larger church. J.B. Maclagan, a minister in the Church of the Nazarene, had accepted the position of superintendent minister in the IHM in 1945 and helped them to work towards a merger with the Church of the Nazarene. The union was formalised in April, 1952 with the approval of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene.²²

The union strengthened the church. Twenty-seven churches and 885 members were added to the British Isles District. Whereas prior to the union there were only five Nazarene churches in England, there were now thirty-nine. The work in South Africa equally benefited. The British District now divided into South and North with a District Superintendent in each.

The Calvary Holiness Church meanwhile was aware of these developments. They had tried to bring about a reconciliation with the IHM for years but without success. The CHC had a small work in Pakistan and Colombia. It did however maintain a small college at Stalybridge known as Beech Lawn Bible College.²³

In the summer of 1954 Ford and James took the initiative and spoke to Frame and Maclagan. Questions were raised about divorce, baptism, premillennialism²⁴ and in particular the gifts of the Spirit.

In January 1955 Frame and Maclagan met with the Board of General Superintendents in Kansas City. Permission was given to the two British Superintendents to pursue the union. This finally took place in Manchester on June 11th, 1955.

2. The development of the educational structures within the UK Church of the Nazarene.

Prior to the union with what was then the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, George Sharpe had started a Bible School in Glasgow named The Parkhead Holiness Bible School. Its first meeting was on September 22nd, 1908 and its purpose was to

²² Minutes, Board of General Superintendents, March 3rd and September 6th, 1952.

²³ Enrolment had peaked at 16 but dropped to 6 by 1953. Ford, *In the Steps...*, 168-169.

²⁴ The CHC officially accepted only baptism by immersion and made premillennialism an article of faith whereas the Nazarenes took a much broader position on these issues.

train men and women to preach at home and abroad; but more than this, it was to help those who were not called to preach to know more about the doctrine of Entire Sanctification. Courses included Theology, Holiness, New Testament Doctrines, Exposition of Isaiah, Homiletics, Works and Methods, Grammar and English Composition.²⁵

This became its ministerial training institution. Classes for lay and correspondence students continued and by 1912 about a dozen students were in training. Sharpe had in mind a separate college building and funds from friends in America made this a reality in 1912. A building was purchased and named "The Pentecostal Bible College".²⁶ An American, Olive M. Winchester, had come to Scotland to attend Glasgow University.²⁷ She had vigorously advocated that a holiness college be organised to help perpetuate the holiness work in Scotland. Miss Winchester was well accepted by the fledgling church and she was ordained into the Pentecostal Church of Scotland even though some questioned Sharpe about the wisdom of this. He replied that "as a custom had been broken down in the University when Miss Winchester was admitted, he did not think this church should debar her".²⁸ She taught in the Bible School for four years before returning to the United States.

²⁵ George Sharpe, *A Short Historical..*, 34.

²⁶ 1 Westbourne Terrace, Kelvinside, Glasgow.

²⁷ In 1912, Miss Olive Winchester (a part-heiress of the Winchester Rifle estate) became the first woman to receive the BD degree from the University of Glasgow. This took a special resolution of the University trustees. Rebecca Laird, *Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene; the First Generation*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1993, 92.

²⁸ When the vote was taken, 21 voted in favour of the ordination, 1 against and 3 abstained. This ordination included the "right to marry, baptise and dispense communion". (Rebecca Laird, *Ordained Women...*, 93.) An undated newspaper clipping from 1914 shows that her ministry broke new ground in Scotland concerning the ministerial role of women. The article states: "At a marriage... yesterday, the clergyman who assisted at the ceremony was a lady - the Rev Olive M. Winchester, upon whom the degree of Bachelor of Divinity was conferred at Glasgow University, two years ago. Miss Winchester, who is fully qualified by her University career to undertake the ministry of a church, has been ordained by the Pentecostal Church, and is thereby entitled to officiate at a wedding. Yesterday's wedding was the first at which she has assisted, and probably is the first in Scotland at which a lady minister has officiated". (clipping attached to hand-written notes from the Executive Meeting of the Pentecostal Church of Scotland, May 5th, 1913).

This seemed a large undertaking for such a small denomination especially as war was imminent . Miss Winchester returned to the United States in June, 1914 and although Sharpe laboured on, many men were now being called up for war work.

Later Sharpe said of this time,

The expenses were insurmountable and the membership of the churches, not having had the vision, and not under the obligation to support that work, the college was closed, the building was sold and our hopes for that time at least were blasted. To me it was a great disappointment. The costs were great and the losses, both in money and prestige were large.²⁹

However, true to the spirit of the man, he never gave up the desire entirely. By 1926 he was ready to begin again and secured the support of the District Assembly.³⁰

... we are glad that the District Assembly has moved in this direction. So many are now seeing the need of training for our ministry so that there will be no dubiety concerning their loyalty and faithfulness to our policy, our ideals and our doctrines. A property has been bought, this time in Motherwell, and it is hoped that the new College will open this year, (1926), in the month of September.³¹

A shortage of students, lack of support from the district and illness in his family meant that the school closed two years later in June 1928.

Sharpe returned for a second period of Superintendency in 1928. After three years of numerical gains and losses in the church, the Education Committee of the District urged the establishment of a college in Glasgow. However Sharpe resigned that year (1931) and took up the pastorate of the Parkhead church, so the recommendation was not enacted.

Apart from repeated calls from a succession of Education Committees for the opening of a college, nothing transpired until the Reverend George Frame became the

²⁹ George Sharpe, *A Short Historical...*, 54.

³⁰ The Board of Education of the Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, also encouraged this step as Sharpe, who had resigned the Superintendency of the church the previous year to take up the position of Missionary Superintendent, was back in the Assembly in 1926 as "minister without charge" due to the financial problems in sustaining the post of Missionary Superintendent. Sharpe then took up the responsibility of restarting the Bible School. (Jack Ford, *In the Steps of John Wesley, the Church of the Nazarene in Britain*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968, 66).

³¹ George Sharpe, *A Short Historical...*, 53-54. This building was in fact Sharpe's home. It still exists and has been visited by the writer. It is located near to the present Church of the Nazarene in Motherwell.

superintendent of the British Isles district in 1940. He was faced with the continuing problem of the lack of applicants for the ministry. The practice had been for those preparing for ministry to be attached to a senior pastor on the district, and some limited study material was made available. Frame was determined to establish a college and after a two year search he found a property in West Hurlet near Glasgow.

This time however, a grant was made available from the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene and Frame became the prime mover of the project. Hurlet Nazarene College came into being in 1943, admitting its first students in 1944. Frame worked in the dual role of superintendent of the district and principal of the college until 1954. At that point the Reverend Hugh Rae, a graduate of Glasgow University, became Principal.

One year into his principalship the merger of the Calvary Holiness Church with the Church of the Nazarene took place. The campus of the Calvary Holiness College (Beech Lawn Bible College) at Stalybridge near Manchester was sold together with the Hurlet campus. Both colleges were brought together in a new site in Didsbury, South Manchester and the British Isles Nazarene College (BINC) began.³²

The Reverend Rae continued as principal until 1966 then returned in 1973 until his retirement in 1985. Between 1966 and 1973 the Reverend Jack Ford held the principal's post.³³ The present principal is the Reverend Dr. Herbert McGonigle.

3. The development of Distance Learning in the UK Church of the Nazarene.

Shortly after the union between the Pentecostal Church of Scotland with the Church of the Nazarene over eighty years ago, the Home Study programme³⁴ was introduced

³² Renamed Nazarene Theological College in 1990.

³³ Jack Ford, *In the Steps of John Wesley...*, 56-72 and *Proceedings of the General Board*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1948, 45.

³⁴ *Manual* 232.6. This term was a catch-all phrase for remote learning of some form. In 1985 "Home Study" became "Directed Study". (*Handbook on Ministerial Studies*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1986, 7.) The Directed Studies course has always been distinct from extension education. The report *Great Commission Pastors for the 21st Century*, perpetuates this distinction when it says, "extension and distance formats are second choice options and draw on the educational institutions." (1999, 10). Furthermore, it describes extension learning as "Full classes taught off-campus by a qualified instructor...under the auspices of an educational institution" and distance learning as "classes taught by remote connection to the professor and the sponsoring institution by Internet, satellite, or other delivery system." "Course modules must be designed so that even distance

internationally in 1928 and, in various forms, has run parallel to the college route into ministry since British Isles Nazarene College was established in 1944.³⁵

A British adaptation of this distance learning route was allowed for in the church's global constitution. Firstly, the *Manual* permits "cultural and linguistic adjustments"³⁶ and the *Handbook on Ministerial Studies* acknowledged that "Canadian Nazarene College and British Isles Nazarene College operate within a different academic framework..."³⁷ Although the college has educated most of the ministers for the church in the UK, the distance learning route has continued through the Districts' Boards of Ministerial Studies.³⁸ From time to time, concerns about the falling numbers of candidates to both programmes, particularly the college programme, have been raised.

3.1 The Commission on the Ministry and the College, 1976.

A Commission was set up by the British Isles Executive Council (BIEC) and its starting point was "the concern about the inadequate number of students graduating from British Isles Nazarene College and entering the Nazarene ministry,"³⁹ but its remit went beyond this to include "...the ministry as a whole...the minister's call, his education, and his remuneration and conditions of service."⁴⁰

Several recommendations were made by the Commission which were accepted in the first instance by the British Isles Executive Council and then, on its recommendation, by the British Isles Districts at their subsequent District Assemblies. Acceptance was

learning modules require interpersonal interaction, personal evaluation, and, where relevant, field experiences." (1999, 10, 20). As this describes what was initially "Home Study" and then "Directed Study", from this point, programmes in the British context will be referred to as "distance learning". The reason for this is that the UK has never had an extension learning programme for ministry.

³⁵ Ministry structures within the Church of the Nazarene are explained in the Appendices.

³⁶ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraphs 424.3, 425.1

³⁷ *Handbook on Ministerial Studies*, 1993, paragraph 442.

³⁸ The Church of the Nazarene in the UK divided into two districts in 1953. The North District broadly consists of Scotland and Northern Ireland, the South, of England and Wales. Each district has its own district boards. The name of the Board of Ministerial Studies was changed to the Board of Ministry in 1999. (*Journal of the British Isles South District Assembly*, 1999, 7 and *Journal of the Proceedings of the British Isles North District Assembly*, 1999, 1.

³⁹ Church of the Nazarene British Isles Districts, *Report of the Commission on the Ministry and the College*, (RCMC) March 1976, 4.

⁴⁰ RCMC, 4.

also forthcoming from the Pastoral Ministries department in Kansas City.⁴¹ Thus a singularly British system was born which, up until very recently, was a unique Nazarene educational adaptation.

3.1.1 A residential Selection Conference.

The Commission proposed a selection conference at which applicants for the ministry would be examined. It was anxious to separate the procedures of selection for the ministry from those of admission to the college. The former it considered to be the responsibility of the church as a whole, whereas the latter was the responsibility only of the college. This made sense as not all students were applicants for the pastoral ministry and the recommendation kept the college out of any church politics which might come into the selection procedure. In addition, it was felt that the entrance requirements for the college must be dealt with separate to the selection procedure so that one did not influence the other.⁴²

The selection conference would be run by a Selection Panel made up of two ministerial and one lay representative from each district, the two District Superintendents and college Principal (ex officio) and a representative from the college staff, usually the Dean.⁴³

Accepted 'applicants' (thereafter called 'candidates') would apply to the college and, provided they had gained or would gain the entrance requirements, successfully complete the course and were called to minister in a local church, ordination would follow after a minimum of two years spent in 'assigned ministry' to that local church.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Letter from Edward S. Mann, Director, January 18th, 1977. (NTC archive) "...and that the special policies adopted by the British Isles Commission on the Ministry and the College be implemented..."

⁴² If the candidate was accepted by the selection procedure but did not have the entrance requirements for the college, then the internally validated Certificate in Pastoral Studies (upgraded to a Diploma in Pastoral Studies in 1995) was an option as it had lower entrance requirements and gave the minimum education for ordination. In addition, mature entry to the degree course could be sought if the candidate was over 21 years of age.

⁴³ Before applying to the Selection Panel, the applicant normally holds a Local Minister's License given by the local church (*Manual* 426.2). The Selection Panel normally reports back to the Board of Ministerial Studies who determine the course of study and its route - college or distance learning.

⁴⁴ The "assigned ministry" for Deacons or Educators may differ according to circumstances. See *Manual* 1997-2001, paragraphs 428-428.4; 429.3.

The Commission recommended that the length of the college course be extended from three to four years and that this should include a student placement with a pastor within or beyond the four year period.⁴⁵

3.2 The Distance Learning route and the College.

The distance learning route had caused difficulties prior to this *Commission* report for one main reason. District Superintendents on both British districts were often under pressure to fill vacant churches and would, on occasion, assign a person to a pastorate without due regard to procedure.

The Commission sought to normalise this through the selection procedure and also made the recommendation that, irrespective of the educational qualifications of the candidates, a “minimum of four year’s study of divinity” should be the norm for ordination and “in no case for less than one year.”⁴⁶

As the four year course existed at the college, it meant that an additional one year course was to be developed for distance learning candidates. This was done by asking approved candidates for the ministry to attend three residence terms, one per year over a period of three years, as well as continue with their distance learning.⁴⁷ The college administered the course until 1983, when its administration reverted to the Secretaries of the North and South District Boards of Ministerial Studies. However, throughout this time the course continued to be jointly promoted by the college and the districts’ Boards of Ministerial Studies. Tutors were mostly drawn from college faculty but the cohort did include approved graduates. The course on offer was the college-validated, Certificate in Pastoral Studies, and met the minimum educational requirements for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene.

⁴⁵ This was adopted and two six week placements now occur in the student’s second or third year.

⁴⁶ *RCMC*, Section IV (a), 8. It was understood by this that even if a candidate met all of the academic criteria, a minimum of one further year of studies at Nazarene Theological College was required.

⁴⁷ These began in the January term but now take place in the May term. Three terms equals one year.

In 1983, the discussion was raised again in the BIEC,⁴⁸ this time with the thought of abolishing the distance learning course within twenty five years and reverting to the college-only route. The apparent thinking behind this was that the distance learning course as it was set up, was not fully preparing candidates for the ministry.⁴⁹

A compromise was reached by the two British districts through the decision to develop this minimum ordination course to beyond what was required by the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. Although a full degree course was not in mind, it was felt that the minimum requirement of the church fell too far short of what was necessary.⁵⁰ In order to do this they set up the British Isles Board of Examiners (BIBE)⁵¹ to oversee this development. Its Terms of Reference stated that,

the Board of Examiners shall approve ... a Course of Directed Study for students...who have been permitted by the relevant Board of Ministerial Studies to take a course of study for the Nazarene ministry other than the degree course or the course for the Diploma in Theology and Pastoral Studies or an equivalent four-year course of study at another Nazarene college.⁵²

This extended course of study reflected the previous studies undertaken by a candidate and was divided into two schemes, A and B. Scheme A was for candidates holding a recognised qualification in theology, and Scheme B for those who did not have any theological qualifications. Additional distance learning courses were then offered according to the determined needs of the candidate.

⁴⁸ *Education for the Nazarene Ministry in the United Kingdom*, Report of the BIBE (T.A.Noble, ed.), 1995, 5.

⁴⁹ *Education for the Nazarene Ministry in the United Kingdom*, 5.

⁵⁰ "These provisions made specifically by the British Church of the Nazarene were undertaken not only to provide a more thorough preparation for the ministry for those totally unable to take the full-time college course, but also to provide consistency in the treatment of those entering the Nazarene ministry throughout the United Kingdom." *Education...* 5.

⁵¹ Members of the British Isles Board of Examiners (BIBE) were nominated by both District Boards of Ministerial Studies to the British Isles Administrative Board who formally appointed them. The Principal and Dean of the college together with the District Superintendents were members *ex-officio*.

⁵² British Isles Board of Examiners, *Constitution, Terms of Reference and Standing Orders*, 1.

This was a significant step forward, for now the British church had an approved⁵³ scheme of selection and study which meant that all candidates spent at least the equivalent of one year in the Nazarene Theological College and studied more than the minimum required by the *Manual*. Even those candidates who came from another world area and already holding a district license from the sending district, were not exempt from the British requirements for ordination.

It should be added that if a candidate for ordination came through a non-Nazarene college or University, this educational process would be accepted if the education received was considered to be *bona fide*.⁵⁴ Normally the candidate would be required to take specific courses in the doctrinal distinctives of the church as well as a course on its history and polity. This could be done by either the Distance learning route or by attending a local Nazarene college.

3.3 Moves to strengthen the Distance Learning course.

As already stated, between 1983 and 1995 all non-college distance learning courses were administered through the Secretary of the BIBE instead of the college, although the course was still jointly promoted by the college and the Boards of Ministerial Studies.⁵⁵ Members of college faculty sat on the BIBE and the Board of Ministerial Studies, so a common purpose was advanced.

In 1995, the BIBE revised the distance learning scheme whereby the administration of the scheme returned to the college. In addition, the distance learning modules would now be regular modules of the college degree programme, with the college lecturers as the main tutors and adjunct tutors (normally practising ordained ministers) appointed as mentors to the candidates.

⁵³ Letter from Edward S Mann, Director of the Pastoral Ministries Department of the general church. January 18th 1977, "...that all ministerial candidates spend the equivalent of one year at the college".

⁵⁴ Normally academic transcripts would be submitted to the appropriate boards and the local Nazarene college for assessment.

⁵⁵ From 1976-1983 Nazarene Theological College had administered these courses but a change in administration at the Pastoral Ministries office which coincided with a change of the General Superintendent in jurisdiction, meant that the administration moved out of the college's hands.

Between 1976 and 1995 the jointly promoted course of study led to the Certificate in Pastoral Studies. Now successful candidates were to be awarded a Diploma in Pastoral Studies, internally validated by the college, but with the possibility on successful completion, to have some advanced standing on the BA course if requested.

Four schemes replaced the current two schemes (A and B) to take into account the range of previous qualifications of the candidates. The number and type of modules beyond the one college year would then be determined. Now Scheme A was for candidates with no prior higher education. Scheme B for candidates with a degree but not in theology. Scheme C for candidates with a minimum two year Diploma in Theology but not from Nazarene Theological College, Manchester (NTC). Scheme D for candidates with a degree in theology but not from NTC.⁵⁶

3.4 Distance Learning and the route to ordination.

As the distance learning route was seen as an alternative and perhaps easier route to ordination, some candidates for the ministry have raised with the Boards of Ministerial Studies, what they perceive to be legitimate reasons for not going to college for full-time theological studies. These have included family circumstances, age, lack of finance or perceived lack of ability.

In addition, District Superintendents, anxious to fill churches, have sometimes placed a person in a ministerial charge and then persuaded the relevant Board of Ministerial Studies that the distance learning route was best for the candidate. It did seem on occasion that the candidate who made the best case for not going to residential education was given the distance learning option.

Church traditions and “successful” ministers were often cited in support of the distance learning option. After all, it was alleged, the church had managed for many years with the scheme. However few District Superintendents or Boards of Ministerial Studies followed the *Handbook's* directive that permission must be sought in writing from the candidate who was granted permission by the Board and District

⁵⁶ Dr Tom Noble, *Education for the Nazarene Ministry in the United Kingdom*, a handbook produced for the BIBE, 1996.

Superintendent only after all the circumstances surrounding the request were taken into account.⁵⁷

In 1995 a recommendation was made by the BIBE to the British Isles Administrative Board⁵⁸ (BIAB) and the two Boards of Ministerial Studies setting out criteria to assist the Boards in their decision as to which route the candidate should take into ministry.

Those requesting permission to take the distance learning route “will be assessed according to a number of factors and given points according to their circumstances.”⁵⁹

The relevant factors were considered to be the age of the candidate, his or her experience of the Church of the Nazarene, and previous education. Some consideration would also be given to personal circumstances. This scheme was adopted by the two Boards of Ministerial Studies at an extraordinary meeting called in Carlisle on the 19th June 1995. However with subsequent changes in leadership and a growing uncertainty in some quarters regarding these decisions, new changes were soon mooted.

3.5 The McAlister Commission.

At the June 1997 meeting of the BIAB it was agreed to set up a commission to review the 1976 *Commission on the Ministry and the College*. The chairman of this commission was the Reverend Philip McAlister, a pastor of a large Church of the Nazarene in Northern Ireland and a graduate of the college.

The final report was sent to the two District Assemblies in March 1999 and adopted by the BIAB on the 9th July 1999. The Commission affirmed that “...the normative educational route for entry into the ordained ministry...is a full-time course of study at NTC” and that “there are those who come into the ministry...by other routes”.⁶⁰ The other routes were understood to be the Schemes A,B,C and D of the distance learning programme.

⁵⁷ HMS, 1993, paragraph 443.6.

⁵⁸ The renamed British Isles Executive Council. This name change came from the 1985 General Assembly (*Manual*, 1985, paragraph 385).

⁵⁹ BIBE Report, 10th June 1995 and 19th June 1995.

⁶⁰ The McAlister Commission Report 1999, 2.

The Commission agreed to add a greater flexibility to these schemes by allowing “substitutions and exemptions” of modules within the Course of Study and that the most appropriate educational route to ordination would now be determined by the Boards of Ministerial Studies following Selection Panel interviews.

The work of the Commission was overshadowed by contemporary material being produced through the International Course of Study Advisory Committee (ICOSAC) and the Pastoral Ministries Department of the Headquarters of the Church of the Nazarene in Kansas City. The result was an *International Sourcebook on Development Standards for Ordination*. This master document was passed on to the world regions to develop their own *Regional Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*. The McAlister Commission was reminded of the *Manual* statement that “The District Ministerial Studies Board shall carry out its responsibilities in conformity with the official *International Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*”.⁶¹ Thus, any further changes the McAlister Commission thought to make were now brought under scrutiny of the global church through the *International Sourcebook* and its regional application.

A correlation of College courses and distance learning courses with measurable outcomes is attempted in the *International Sourcebook*. The outcomes, as previously stated, are grouped around four major elements;

content represents the acquisition of the biblical, theological and historical knowledge necessary for the minister. *Competency* involves the acquisition and development of the skills for ministry. *Character* refers to the personal qualities of the minister while *Context* deals with the environment.⁶²

“Desired outcomes of educational preparation”⁶³ are integrated into the four elements and “assist the minister in the process of “being”, “knowing” and “doing”.”

⁶¹ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 231.2.

⁶² *International Sourcebook...*, paragraph 437.1.

⁶³ The *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*, a USA regional version of the *International Sourcebook for Developmental Standards in Ordination*, 1999 states that “some of the required outcomes can only be introduced in a theoretical way in academic setting or through directed study...candidacy (for ordination) will provide the arena in which (to) develop important skills that are required for ministry.” *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*, paragraph 437.30.

These are minimum outcomes that should be achieved regardless of whether (one) pursues educational preparation via the college and seminary path or the directed studies path.⁶⁴

4. The Case Study.

The case study for this thesis, is the Certificate in Pastoral Studies (1976-1995), then changed to the Diploma in Pastoral Studies (1995- 1999) by distance learning. Both courses met and continue to meet the minimum educational requirement for ordination in the United Kingdom.⁶⁵ They also comply with *Manual* requirements, and the Diploma course presently meets the minimum three year Course of Study set down in the *International Sourcebook*.⁶⁶ Candidates for this distance learning course complete nine modules taught intensively in NTC whilst the student is in residence over three

⁶⁴ *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development, USA*, paragraph 437.28. Here the term, “directed study” is used as a catch-all for all non residential college courses. In other regional *Sourcebooks*, there is sometimes confusion with the terminology. In many world areas, apart from the usual college route, both extension learning and a form of distance learning are in place. For example, in the Caribbean Region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* there is a Decentralised Theological Studies track (a TEE equivalent) and a Distance Learning Programme. The Course of Study Committee-Caribbean Region sees the Caribbean Nazarene College route as “the ideal path for educational preparation for ministry in the Church of the Nazarene”, whereas the “Decentralised Theological Studies” track is for those who cannot continue in college residence for one reason or another. The Distance Learning Programme “should follow the guidelines of the Decentralised Theological Studies programme... however... this will be the least used track of education and is not recommended”. (*Sourcebook for Ministerial Development, Course of Study Advisory Committee, Caribbean Region*, paragraphs 437.2, 437.5 and 437.7.)

The African Region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* identifies a college and a “distance learning programme” (*Sourcebook for Ministerial Development, Africa Region Curriculum Committee, Florida, S.A.: 1999, 27, paragraph 437.2.*) which it perceives as an “extension programme” presented through “distance learning systems” (*Sourcebook... Africa Region, 27, paragraph 437.2*), where “some courses can be taken by correspondence” (*Sourcebook... Africa Region, 27,28, paragraphs 437.2, 437.3.*)

The equivalent Latin American document, indicates a college/seminary and *programas de extensión* (extension programmes). (*Guía de Desarrollo Ministerial (Guide for Ministerial Growth)*, Kansas City: Casa Nazarena de Publicaciones, 1999, S-21, paragraph 437.0.)

The Canadian *Sourcebook* promotes Canadian Nazarene College as “the normal path of educational preparation” but speaks of “a directed study program which enables a student, over a period of several years to complete a course of study for ministerial preparation” (*Canadian Ministerial Preparation Sourcebook*, Kenneth Clair MacMillan (compiler) The Education Committee, Church of the Nazarene, Canada, 1998, 56.)

All *Sourcebooks* call for the local District Board of Ministerial Studies to provide at least one option to the college/seminary route and state that diplomas or certificates which result from the programmes be given by a local Nazarene college. This indicates the input given by these colleges to extension and distance learning options, however they are presented.

⁶⁵ See the Appendices for the Diploma in Pastoral Studies curriculum. This compares with 48 modules in the BA programme.

⁶⁶ *International Sourcebook... 11. (Manual, 1997-2001, paragraph 437.2.)*

summer terms, each lasting one month. The remainder of the course - fifteen modules - is completed by distance learning. Substitutions and exemptions are allowed according to established prior learning criteria and the candidates are registered on Schemes A, B,C or D according to previous educational experience.⁶⁷ The minimum length of time is the equivalent of three years full-time study,⁶⁸ and the maximum time allowed for the completion of the course is ten years.⁶⁹

4.1 Why this Case Study has been selected.

Over twenty years after the 1976 Evans Commission, which reaffirmed that the college route was the “normative” educational route into the ordained ministry, the Boards of Ministry are still opting for the distance learning route for a number of candidates.

Following the Selection Panel procedure, the successful candidate is “placed on a course of study” by the Board of Ministry for the district under which the candidate holds his membership. The candidate is not “graduated from the course of study” until his name is placed before the District Assembly and General Superintendent for ordination. In the UK, being “placed on a course of study” refers to either the full-time college route or the distance learning route.

With these fixed parameters,⁷⁰ it can be determined that since 1976, of 182 candidates on the ordination course and registered with a Board of Ministry, 102 students have been “placed on a course of study” through the full-time college route.⁷¹

⁶⁷ The McAlister Commission added that “assessed experiential learning could gain credit when deciding the amount of education required for ordination”. *McAlister Commission Report*, Belfast: 1999, 2.

⁶⁸ The equivalent to three years full-time study is stipulated by the *International Sourcebook for Developmental Standards for Education*, 11.

⁶⁹ *Manual*, 1997-2001, paragraph 427.4.

⁷⁰ See footnote 43 where the normal procedure is described. However, over the past 24 years, there have been instances where an applicant has not held a local license prior to selection Panel interview. Equally there have been instances where an applicant has been ‘placed on a course of study’ without going through the Selection Panel. In setting these parameters, a small distortion is inevitable. However fixed points are needed for the case study, and those selected do reflect recorded and quantifiable data.

⁷¹ Others students will take the ordination course who are not candidates for the Nazarene ministry. For example, other denominations, who have students at the college, will recognise the course. Others will be part of independent churches. Some may choose the course as it offers supervised placements in various aspects of ministry.

In the same period, 80 candidates (43.9% of the total) have been “placed on the course of study” by the Boards as distance learning candidates.⁷² All 182 candidates have been interviewed at least once by the respective Boards of Ministry, however, not all have completed the course and gone through to “graduation from the course of study”.⁷³

From 1976 until 1989, of the 87 candidates, 44 were registered in the full-time college course and 43 in the distance learning course (49.4% of the total). A study of the past ten years (1990-1999), shows that of the 95 candidates on the ordination course of study, 57 were in the full-time college route and 38 in the distance learning route at any point during that period (40% of the total). Closer analysis of the five years since 1995 shows a percentage increase in distance learning candidates to 45.6% of the total.

The rigour of the distance learning route (post 1976) as a path towards ordination has not been tested.⁷⁴ The 1976 Commission was a seminal point in the practice of distance learning in the Church of the Nazarene, and it is a suitable point at which to begin the case study. Moreover, students are more easily contacted, and some are still in ministry today and thus able to reflect on the worth of the course.

The course itself adopts the following methodology:

⁷² *Journal of the Proceedings of the British Isles North District Assembly, 1976-1999. Journal of the Proceedings of the British Isles South District Assembly, 1976-1999.* (NTC periodicals library) Also *BINC/NTC Graduates*, registry and student files stored in the Registrar's Office, The White House, NTC.

Research done by Dr H. Rae looked at those who began ministry in the Church of the Nazarene but are no longer in the denomination. He researched between the years 1957 until 1997. Of the 27 who graduated from the Home Study (DL) route 20 left the denomination in this period (74%). Of the 40 who graduated through the college route, 20 left the denomination (50%). Those who graduated from the distance learning route served an average of 7.14 years. The college graduates served for an average of 7.5 years. (Undated report acquired by the author from Dr H. Rae).

⁷³ Terminology used by the Boards of Ministry to describe the access to and the graduation from the ordination course. See for example, *Journal of the Proceedings of the British Isles South District Assembly, 1999*, “Board of Ministry” report, No.1,5,53.

⁷⁴ There is no evidence of research having been done between 1928 and 1976 either; however the programme of this earlier period is not the subject of this case study.

1. The two district sponsoring Boards are the Boards of Ministry and the sponsoring institution is NTC.⁷⁵
2. The minimum course is defined in handbook and elaborated in syllabus form.
3. Each syllabus has an appointed NTC tutor (or graduate - 1976-1995) and a designated off-campus mentor. This mentor is normally a practising ordained minister who is another point of contact for the student both for academic and pastoral needs.
4. The student is an accepted candidate for the ordained ministry and is a practicing licensed minister with a local parish. The local church is expected to be the context within which he interprets his learning.
5. The NTC Registrar, in conjunction with the Secretaries of the district Boards of Ministry, guides the candidate through the study process.
6. Two modules must be passed each year to maintain licensed minister status and to remain as a candidate for ordination.
7. As modules are identified, the Registrar alerts the appointed NTC tutor and the Secretaries of the Boards, the designated mentor. The syllabus is sent out by the tutor, together with a reading guide and relevant printed excerpts.
8. Email, telephone, postal and fax contact is set up, together with occasional meetings as deemed necessary.
9. The student is guided by the tutor in self study. Support is offered by NTC library including book purchase and postage, inter-library loans and computer access. If the student should wish to visit the college, accommodation, reading and library facilities are offered. This includes access to previous exam papers.
10. The mentor, who will have previously completed the course through college study or distance learning, is available as a pastoral or academic support for the student.
11. Assessment is through essays, book reviews and a final examination.

⁷⁵ NTC is, in A.W. Bates' words a 'dual mode' institution. It has on campus students and yet offers some of its courses at a distance. The number of distance students is small compared with the total enrolment. A.W. Bates, *Technology...*, 24. Garrison calls these "mixed institutions", of Type 5, the 'Australian integrated mode', *Understanding...*, 115.

12. The distance learning modules are augmented by three modules offered intensively each May term at NTC. Nine modules must be completed by this route.
13. An annual meeting with the respective Board of Ministry is used to assess the student's progress. Students are also interviewed personally and their perspective on the course and their progress is discussed.
14. The Boards of Ministry report to the annual District Assemblies on the progress of each candidate and, if this is satisfactory, the Assemblies vote for a renewal of a district license for the student.

4.2 The purpose of the Case Study.

The Oslo competencies and distance learning methodology have been proposed as having compatible educational and methodological philosophies. They are deemed to demonstrate a legitimate set of competencies agreed by a global body on the one hand, and an accepted and proven methodology compatible with the task of theological education on the other.

Although the Nazarene competencies have been accepted as a legitimate expression of desired outcomes which lie at the heart of this church's global declaration of theological education, it has been argued that it would be beneficial to view these as deferring to the specific global competencies of Oslo. Equally, as the Church of the Nazarene has a track record on forms of distance learning, it would be beneficial to determine whether this stands up to what is considered to be contemporary best practice in distance learning.

With a view to developing a new Nazarene model, the Oslo competencies - coming from an ecumenical debate and best practice in distance learning which has an established educational track record - together with accepted Nazarene competencies, will be brought together in the case study.

Thus, the purpose of this case study is first to *ascertain* whether or not the Oslo competencies are being delivered through best practice of distance learning in theological education for the ordained ministry, within the context of the distance learning programme of the Church of the Nazarene in the UK. As distance learning is

an *educational* programme which occurs in the students' contexts, the *ministerial* experience of the student will also be a legitimate area for the case study research.

Secondly, to *evaluate* this information in order to identify areas where development is needed. Part of this evaluation will include an assessment of any contribution the existing Nazarene programme may be making to the Oslo debate on viable theological education and the role of distance learning within this debate.

Thirdly, to *develop* a new model (an Oslo model) of Nazarene distance learning for the ordained ministry. This model will build on the case study information in a way which recognises the valid contribution of the Oslo competencies and acknowledged best practice distance learning methodology. It will, of necessity, recognise the Nazarene educational requirements for the ordained ministry but will also *incorporate* what may be viewed as positive contributions from the existing Nazarene programme. In this final stage, it is envisaged that each protagonist in the debate - Oslo, distance learning and Nazarene - can contribute constructively towards the thinking and development of the other.

It may be that some competencies being addressed by the existing Nazarene programme are weak educationally (that is, in distance learning terms) but strong in students' ministerial experience. Evidence of applied theology in ministry, for example, may highlight a weakness or strength in the educational programme. A contribution may be made to both the Oslo and Nazarene competencies by the ministerial experience and practice of students who have been through the programme.

In other words, the interviews may illuminate an area or areas of polity or practice within the theological educational endeavour which challenge the content or the working out of the competencies.⁷⁶ Whatever new model arises as a result, will have to take account of these challenges.

⁷⁶ The case study may reveal heretofore unrecognised strengths in the Nazarene programme which may contribute to the Oslo competencies. Additionally, as the competencies concern theological education, the case study may reveal a neglected area or areas of ministerial formation which, if examined closely, may challenge the theological approach to education within the Church of the Nazarene.

The vision is that distance learning can deliver the Oslo competencies. It is not only an established and proven methodology, but its philosophy allows for the full educational process to draw upon the life experience and context of the student and for a flexible methodology to be used. The competencies demand this flexibility for their full implementation.

5. The research method.

Data has been obtained in order to determine the number and type of students who have been “placed on the course of study”. The timescale will include those who have been registered on the course between 1976 and 1999. 1976 was the year when the Evans Commission report was put into effect and different versions of the stipulated *Manual* requirements were begun.

For this research, the Case Study method has been chosen. The process is relevant not only because it is a recognised social research method,⁷⁷ but also because of the flexibility it brings to that method.⁷⁸ A case study is “...the study of the particularity and perplexity of a single case”,⁷⁹ thus it enables this thesis to focus on a particular aspect of the practice of theological education in a defined context.⁸⁰

5.1 Qualitative and quantitative research.

Qualitative rather than quantitative research will apply as what is being sought is a limited number of individuals’ accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviour with regard to the programme of distance learning. Their descriptive reports of their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings as well as the meaning and interpretation they give to events should provide sufficient primary material for certain conclusions to be drawn. Quantitative research offers the bird’s eye view whereas

⁷⁷ Examples of support for this method are found in Graham Allan and Chris Skinner, *Handbook for Research Students in the Social Sciences*, London: The Falmer Press, 1993, 190ff. Also Julian L Simon, *Basic Research Methods in Social Science*, New York: Random House, 1988, 276ff.

⁷⁸ “Case studies are probably the most flexible of all research designs...” Catherine Hakim, *Research Design: Strategies and Choices in the Design of Social Research*. London: Routledge, 1989, 61.

⁷⁹ Robert E Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, London: Sage Publications, 1995, xi.

⁸⁰ “...case studies have in common with other methods that they are only part of a larger enterprise transcending the individual work, and can only be used or evaluated against that background which, whether or not this is explicitly acknowledged, is a component in the research design.” Robert G Burgess, *Studies in Qualitative Methodology*, London: Jai Press, 1998, 20.

qualitative research offers the worm's eye view. It is the latter which is sought through this study.⁸¹

Qualitative research through a case study can concentrate research that seeks to explore what Marshall and Rossman calls "...where and why policy, folk wisdom and practice do not work" and "on real as opposed to stated organisational goals."⁸²

The criticisms usually directed at the case study method relate to its perceived lack of representation of a statistically reliable random sample of those affected by the study. Furthermore, the extrapolation from the sample to the whole, brings the criticism of the method being too general. However, what is being sought here is a "detailed examination of an event...(which) exhibits the operation of some identified theoretical principle."⁸³ The representativeness of this case study lies in the qualitative logic in the selection of the interviewees. It is taking a selected sample of interviewees to examine an identified entity, namely the case study 'subject'.

The quantitative method would argue for representativeness on the basis of taking a statistically reliable sample from a population and to extrapolate with statistical confidence from that sample to the population as a whole. However, even these surveys are frequently taken from localised and not nationalised populations, so even here problems of generality can exist.⁸⁴

The qualitative case study approach is summarised by Yin:

The case study is an empirical enquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context...⁸⁵

⁸¹ "Qualitative methods, which use natural language, are best at gaining access to the life-world of other individuals..." Schwartz and Jacobs define 'life-world' as including "motives, meanings, emotions and other subjective aspects of the lives of individuals and groups." Howard Schwartz and Jerry Jacobs, *Qualitative Sociology*, New York: The Free Press, 1979, 5.

⁸² C. Marshall and G. B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, London: Sage, 46 (Quoted in Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1993, 56.)

⁸³ J.C. Mitchell, "Case and Situation Analysis" in *Sociological Review*, 31, 1983, 192 quoted in Allan, *Research...*, 192.

⁸⁴ Hakim asserts however, that "the bias against non-quantitative studies seems now to be diminishing, with renewed awareness of the unique contribution of rigorous case study research." Catherine Hakim, *Research Design: Successful Designs for Social and Economic Research*, (2nd edition), London: Routledge, 2000, 12.

⁸⁵ R.K Yin, *Case Study Research; Design and Methods*, London: Sage Publications, 1989, 23.

What might be added to this description is the possible longitudinal nature of a case study. In other words, a study may consist of snapshot - where the contemporary context is important - or a longitudinal study which addresses the history of the case as well as any changes which may come about following a particularly limited event studied within the case. In the qualitative case study which will be attempted, the chronological parameters indicate a snapshot case study, yet it is one that will draw on the events that preceded it.⁸⁶

As there will an emphasis on detail and depth of information, the selected sample will be small. This approach is supported by Hakim who states that qualitative research will “normally involve a small number of respondents.”⁸⁷

Catherine Hakim elaborates:

Qualitative research is concerned with individuals' own accounts of their attitudes, motivations and behaviour. It offers richly descriptive reports of individuals' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and feelings...” The great strength of qualitative research is the validity of the data obtained; individuals are interviewed in sufficient detail for the results to be taken as true, correct, incomplete and believable reports of their views and experiences...⁸⁸

Kvale's view is that:

The qualitative interview is a uniquely sensitive and powerful method for capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world. Interviews allow the subjects to convey to others their situation from their own perspective and in their own words.⁸⁹

Graham Allen warns however that:

A core feature of qualitative research methods is that satisfactory explanations of social activities require a substantial appreciation of the perspectives, culture and world views of the actors involved.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Layder states that qualitative methods are undertaken with “a view to filling in gaps in knowledge about social processes, or to confirming and verifying previous findings, or to investigating a social problem.” Derek Layder, *New Strategies in Social Research*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, 47.

⁸⁷ Hakim, *Research Design: Strategies...* 26, 27.

⁸⁸ Hakim, *Research Design: Strategies...* 27.

⁸⁹ Steinar Kvale, *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, London: Sage Publications, 1996, 70.

⁹⁰ Graham Allan and Chris Skinner, *Handbook for Research Students...*, 177-178.

In this case study, a 'substantial appreciation' of the church culture within which the interviewees respond is argued. However, impressionistic responses in qualitative research are a danger that is recognised. As Allen adds "...this is one of its hallmarks."⁹¹ He continues:

...this does not mean that anything goes and that rigour has no part to play in qualitative methods....The researcher will want to keep an open mind and be reflective about the processes and action being observed or discussed, at the same time the collection of data and the testing of ideas need to become as systematic as possible.⁹²

The soundness of the project will be found in the findings themselves. These can be judged by the parameters set for the case study, the quality of the respondents - in this case, ordained ministers - and the theoretical framework in which the case study is operating. The transferability of the study may be problematic however. Educators who are making policy or conducting design research within similar parameters can decide whether or not the case described can be generalised or transferred.

As the project uses defined parameters for its questions and its respondents, it is reasonably certain that the findings could be replicated. This replication would have a time limit, as some respondents are now at retirement age.

The strength of the data should be apparent⁹³ through few key questions being asked together with running prompts from the interviewer. Bias controls must be in place considering the writer's knowledge of the church and the respondents.⁹⁴ However, encouraging frank and open comment with the promise of anonymity (for the student interviewees) should assist in this endeavour.

⁹¹ Allan, *Handbook...*, 178.

⁹² Allan, *Handbook...*, 180-181.

⁹³ "The strength of the qualitative study...will be its validity. It will be embedded with data derived from its setting that it cannot help but be valid." Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, London: Sage Publications, 1989, 145.

⁹⁴ Cautious use of the data is signalled by Matthew B Miles where he uses Sam Sieber's rules for qualitative analysis (Sam Sieber, 'Project on Social Architecture in Education, New York: Center for Polity Research, 1976) and quotes "consider the validity of any particular generalisation. Is there supporting evidence from elsewhere in the data? Does it hold true for several different people, roles, groups or occasions? Is there any negative evidence? Matthew B Miles, 'Qualitative Data as an Attractive Nuisance: The Problem of Analysis' in *Qualitative Methodology*, John Van Maanen (ed), Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983, 127.

5.2 Qualitative interviewing.

The accepted social research method of face to face semi-structured interviews will be used. In this method Tim May states:

Questions are normally specified, but the interviewer is more free to probe beyond the answers...and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee..⁹⁵

Carol Jones supports this by saying:

Qualitative interviews are distinguished from survey interviews in being less structured in their approach and in allowing individuals to expand on their responses to questions.⁹⁶

This type of interview allows the interviewees to respond more in their own terms than would be permitted in a fully structured interview.⁹⁷ Moreover, the interviewer's knowledge of the topic means that the interviewee can be questioned beyond the 'yes', 'no' answer more common to survey interviews. This kind of approach is described by William Foot Whyte as "open ended".⁹⁸ It is not non-directive, but rather through the interviewer maintaining a critical awareness, issues can be explored in greater depth as the interviewer listens beyond the words being said. Also the interviewer must understand beyond the context of the interview. Social and cultural factors may be at work. Evidence for this may lie in the fact that in this case study the interviewee may have been a student of the interviewer. However, if there is awareness of this, it can work to the case study's advantage as the researcher and the respondents are working together for a common goal.

In qualitative research the investigator is taken to be actively involved in the process of data collection and analysis and to be more aware of the flow of the process than the quantitative researcher.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Tim May, *Social research: Issues, Methods and Process*, (2nd Edition) Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997, 111.

⁹⁶ Carol Jones, "Qualitative Interviewing" in Graham Allan and Chris Skinner, *Handbook for Research Students...*, 203.

⁹⁷ See May, *Social...*, 111,112.

⁹⁸ William Foot Whyte, "Interviewing in Field Research" in Burgess, R. (ed), *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, Hemel Hempstead: Allen and Unwin, 1982, 111. Quoted in Allen *Research...*, 204.

⁹⁹ Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 53.

In the search for accuracy and alternative explanations which go beyond mere intuition or good intentions, a protocol will be established to assist in the understanding of the gathered data. Thus, the interviews will be broken down into various categorised components and coded.¹⁰⁰ These will be investigated and scrutinised methodically so that the data can be sorted and conclusions drawn.

5.3 The respondents.

In the past twenty four years, 80 candidates have studied by the distance learning method. This number may appear small, but when placed in the context of 100 Nazarene churches in the UK,¹⁰¹ it is sizeable. Of the 80, 3 have deceased and 39 remain in the British Nazarene ministry today (48.75%,1999). Compared with the 102 who studied in the full-time college course during the same period, 1 has deceased and 73 remain in the Nazarene ministry today (71.56%,1999).¹⁰²

Other than the 39 distance learning students presently in British Nazarene ministry, 8 others, who are not now in the Nazarene ministry, are still contactable either in person or by internet. The remainder are not be traceable. Several lecturers and mentors of the course are contactable as are district church leaders and members of the Boards of Ministry.

By taking a sample from each of the three groups involved in the process, a fuller picture should emerge.

¹⁰⁰ Guidance for this is set out in several books including Udo Kelle, *Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis: Theory, Methods and Practice*, London: Sage, 1995 and Judith Riley, *Getting the Most From Your Data: A Handbook on Practical Ideas on How to Analyse Qualitative Data*, Bristol: Technical and Educational Services Ltd., 1996.

¹⁰¹ Out of a total of 12,134 churches world-wide. *General Board Annual Statistics*, Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1999.

¹⁰² The comparison in the drop-out rate is notable. There may be a variety of reasons for the drop-out from the distance learning course. Holmberg quotes from three German studies done in the 1980's which some up the reasons under four heads: 1. The lack of agreement between personal interest and what the course offers 2. That drop-outs suffer from learning in isolation 3. That professional promotion is not aspired to amongst drop-outs 4. That drop-outs have 'greater problems co-ordinating the requirements of their jobs, families and study...and are less capable of sustaining heavy workloads.' *Theory...*, 185.

5.4 The process.

A representative sample of students, tutors and Board of Ministry members will be selected. Ordinands, presently in the pastoral ministry of the Church of the Nazarene, or those in their ordination year will be chosen as evenly as possible across the twenty four years of the study. This will give a spread in both the educational and ministerial experience they will have. Tutors who represent the widest hands-on experience in the programme and Board members who have longevity in the process will also be used.

As stated earlier, this will be a qualitative rather than a quantitative sample of the possible respondents. The research will be more anthropological than statistical. By allowing the respondents to talk about their experiences of the distance learning programme in the context of the Oslo competencies, it is envisaged that scope will be given for them to give their own insights into learning within and beyond the distance learning programme.

Semi-structured face to face interviews will be used. In order to test the questions for this process, a sample interview will be piloted and then, following corrections, the case study can proceed.

The process will be as follows:

1. Pilot interview: A pilot interview will be set up to test out the questions and the definitions used within them. This will be audio taped and is expected to last around an hour. This will help both the researcher and respondent to be clear about the meanings the questions have and to help the researcher hone certain “running prompts” which should help the discussion stay on track.
2. The interview questions¹⁰³ will be re-formulated as necessary and then used with the test group of those who have been educated through to ordination in the Church of the Nazarene by the distance learning method or who are in their ordination year. The aim is to interview three students who have studied in each decade of the period in question (1976-1999).

In addition, the chairman of the Evans report, and member of the Board of

¹⁰³ The types of questions asked are guided by established practice in social research. See, for example, Tim May, *Social Research*, Buckingham: Open University, 1997.

Ministry, Reverend Leslie Evans, and the Principal of the college when the report was adopted, Reverend Doctor Hugh Rae will be interviewed in order to give comments on the original vision of the programme. Two people currently involved in the programme, viz. the Rev Christopher Cope, and the Dean of the college, Doctor Kent Brower, will be interviewed for a tutor's view.

This should give a qualitative sample of around twelve people who will be interviewed for approximately one to one-and-a-half hours. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed.

3. Leading up to, and continuing throughout the case study, group meetings with those who have been through the college residence and distance learning programme will be organised, using the local and district ministers' fraternal and District Assemblies.¹⁰⁴ These will not form part of the case study, but will act as a sounding board for the eventual model of theological education which will emerge.

5.5 The case study interview.

As the case study will seek to establish whether the Oslo competencies are being met through distance learning in the *Nazarene ministry* context, the case study questions will look at the six areas of ministry expressed by the Oslo competencies.

The text of the interview, which will include the questions, will be given to the interviewee in advance of the meeting. At the time of the interview, the purpose and nature of the interview will be further explained to the interviewee. The following text will be used for the students of the course:

5.5.1 The text of the interview.

“ From 1994 to 1996 a global consultation took place sponsored by the World Council of Churches concerning the viability of theological education. Out of the final meetings in Oslo came six areas of ministerial formation described as “competencies”. It was suggested that if these competencies were present in theological education, then this was the

¹⁰⁴ The first meeting with North West Zone ministers was held in Brooklands, Manchester on 6th April 2000, with a view to subsequent meetings.

essence of viable ministerial formation and theological education. In 1997, the Church of the Nazarene introduced the four C's which, it claimed, should produce the desired outcomes from its Course of Study. These are also listed.

You have completed, or are completing this year, the distance learning programme of theological education for the ordained ministry. A sheet of paper I have given to you will have the competencies listed and each described in a short paragraph. This sheet will also show which modules of the Diploma in Pastoral Studies course may relate in content to these competencies.¹⁰⁵ I would like to explore these competencies with you one

¹⁰⁵ It had been stated in that, in the Nazarene Course of Study:

Content represents the acquisition of the biblical, theological and historical knowledge necessary for the minister. *Competency* involves the acquisition and development of the skills for ministry.

Character refers to the personal qualities of the minister while *Context* deals with the environment. (*International Sourcebook*, paragraph 437.1.)

Four key words or phrases emerge from this definition: knowledge, skills, personal qualities and environment.

Each Course of Study was to include the C's to the minimum level of the agreed percentages with 25% undesignated and allowed to be assigned as suitable to the student and the setting, bringing the total to 100% for each programme. (*International Sourcebook*, 12)

Significantly, the *content* is listed first with a minimum of 30% (max.55%) and the others as; *competency* 25% (max. 50%); *character* 10% (max. 35%) and *context* 10% (max. 35%).

Thus, in order to guide the interviews, modules will be identified which may contribute specifically in *content* to the Oslo competencies. The questions to the interviewees however, will address the *programme* and the *course of study*, using the specific modules as a starting point. It is intended to bring out the interviewees' perception of the programme, not just specific modules.

Therefore, specific modules presently taught under the competencies will be listed. The following description will not be included on the sheet as students will be acquainted with the content of the modules, although this will be accessible to them as needed.

Spiritual competency is addressed through an appraisal of the lives and work of John and Charles Wesley, and the rise of Wesleyan Methodism, its structure and theology. The development of the Wesleyan theological tradition is traced to the present. Other modules survey and analyse insights from both biblical and historical theology on the subject of holiness exemplified by God and demanded of His people. Contemporary perspectives of theology and social sciences are explored in the context of human nature and gender relationships.

Theological competency is addressed through an introductory course in basic exegetical skills followed by courses which apply these skills to the biblical texts as theological documents. A further introductory module makes a preliminary examination of the discipline of Christian theology and this is furthered through Christological, soteriological and pneumatological studies.

Leadership competency is addressed through one module which pertains directly to the administration and leadership skills of the minister within the setting of the Church of the Nazarene.

Pastoral competency is initially explored through developing preaching skills in the Homiletics module. This is followed by a module on the history, nature, form and content of Christian worship and sacraments and the pastoral questions addressed. An introduction to Christian counselling principles and techniques is offered as well as an introduction to the historical, biblical and

by one in the context of your experience of the distance learning programme. Please feel free to ask for clarification at any point.

May I have your permission to tape record our interview and to use the information you give for research purposes? This will be done anonymously.

Is this clear? Do you have any questions at this stage?"

The sheet given to the interviewees is as follows:

The Oslo Competencies in the context of Ministerial Formation

Spiritual competence acknowledges that theological education and ministerial formation are ultimately about *knowing God*. This is at the centre of all the competencies. The competence is not a skill to be learned, but is a commitment to *the personal formative journey of ministry* which should lead to the *development of Christian character*.

The specific modules presently taught under the spiritual competency are: *CH301 Wesley Studies, CH302 Wesleyan Tradition, CT310 Christian Holiness, ST100 Human Image*.

Theological competence is not only to develop a *knowledge* of Christian doctrine but it is to give a *commitment to it, and to a life style that reflects it*. The student must be able to identify and communicate *skills which enable others* to be faithful to their vocation. This includes the ability to

theological basis for involvement in the lives of others through programmes of social transformation. The informing and nurturing of people in the Faith is considered in the contemporary context. **Missionary competency** is addressed through a module on church growth theory, with a focus on the dimension of numerical growth through evangelism and is set in the context of articulating a theology of evangelism. The organisational skills for planning and developing strategies for evangelism and mission are approached through the public ministry of the congregation and the lifestyle of its members.

Ecumenical competency is addressed through historically based modules which not only trace the development of the Christian church, but critically assess the causes and effects of disunity within it. The process of reunion of a divided church is examined through the ecumenical movement. The student is encouraged to enhance his competency in dealing objectively with past and present events in relation to divisions and unity within the Church.

The syllabuses for each module are in the Appendices. See also the *Academic Regulations*, Nazarene Theological College, annual editions, 1976-2000.

see and to act upon the symbols in the community which have become mediations of the gospel. In so doing, the gospel is *contextualised* through the community and may be understood with greater clarity.

The specific modules taught in the theological competency are:

BS110 Introduction to Biblical Studies, NT201 Matthew/Mark, BS120 Introduction to Biblical Backgrounds, OT201 Law, OT202 Prophets, NT203 Paul 1, NT206 John, CT100 Introduction to Theology, CT201 Person and Work of Christ 1, CT202 Person and Work of Christ 2, CT203 The Spirit and Mission.

Leadership competency *enables, equips and discerns* gifts of ministry in oneself and in the community. It includes the ability to *empower* the marginalised in the community and to mediate in conflict situations.

The specific module taught in the leadership competency is: *PT300 Polity and Practice in the Church of the Nazarene 1.*

Pastoral competence is developed in the church context.. This consists of *pastoral skills including communication of the gospel and counselling. Educational skills,* which are required in contemporary ministry and missionary situations, are part of this competence.

The specific modules taught in the pastoral competency are:

PT110 Homiletics, PT201 Worship and Sacraments, PT202 Christian Counselling 1, ST200 Christian and Religious Education, ST202 Christian Social Action.

Missionary competence recognises that the minister has to deal with a society alienated from the church and religious tradition. The *process of making the Gospel relevant* has to be done *under the conditions* of the post-Christian secular culture of individualism and materialism. This means that for this competence to develop, the student must *share consciously* in the everyday life situations of people. In so doing, the church becomes a *faithful witness* to the reign of God.

The specific module taught in the missionary competency is:

PT120 Evangelism and Church Growth.

Ecumenical competence is *inextricably linked* with the church's missionary vocation and includes the ability to *live in dialogue* with other churches in an ecumenical setting. It understands ministry formation as *going beyond* the continuity of one tradition and views ecumenism as *encouraging a formation process* which inspires, liberates, empowers, resources and affirms the ministries present in the whole people of God.

The specific modules which address the ecumenical competency are:

CH100 Church History 1, CH110 Church History 2.

Three open ended questions will be asked in relation to each of the six competencies. This will give a total of eighteen questions.

Question 1: Did the Distance Learning programme help you to develop your ministry in this area?

Question 2: As you were doing the course, what did you learn from your local context about this area of ministry?

Question 3: How would you assess your personal development in this area of ministry: (a) during the course (b) since the course was completed?

The following text will be used for Rev Christopher Cope and Dr Kent Brower two lecturers and administrators of the programme:

“I am researching into theological education and distance learning within the context of the Church of the Nazarene in the UK from 1976 (the Evans Commission) to the present.

The background to my research is a global consultation on the subject of theological education promoted by the WCC. The process culminated in a meeting in Oslo where six competencies necessary for good theological education were identified. The following year the Church of the Nazarene introduced the four C's. Both Oslo and the Church of the Nazarene looked for desired outcomes in theological education.

The second strand in my research is distance learning. This is an educational method which is well established in the UK and around the world. The Church of the Nazarene has used a form of Distance Learning in its Home Study course for the ordained ministry. I would like to ask you about certain aspects of this in relation to your experience of the course.”

The questions will then be:

1. What has been your involvement in the directed studies course?
2. How would you describe the educational methodology of the course?
3. What is the procedure in setting up and delivering a module within the course?
4. Which of the following means of learning and/or assessment have been used in directed studies modules in your experience:
 - reading/researching
 - essays
 - portfolios
 - study journals or workbooks
 - group learning
 - other
5. Does the programme encourage the student to analyse the context in which he/she is studying and to apply theology (i.e. become “reflective practitioners”?)
6. Do you consider that the local congregation and student are sharing in the learning experience?
7. Is a mentor assigned to the student during the course?
8. What part do the intensive residential periods of study (May terms) play in the total educational programme?
9. Considering Oslo’s six competencies, do you think these are the actual outcomes of the directed study programme? Where are the strengths and weaknesses?
10. How can the programme be improved both in content and in methodology?”

The same text will be used and the following questions asked of the initiators of the course, Dr H Rae and Rev L. Evans:

1. The Home Study course has existed in the Church of the Nazarene since 1928. What are your earliest recollections of the programme?
2. Even although Hurlet Nazarene College was begun in 1944, the Home Study course continued. What part did the college play in these days?
3. The Evans Commission of 1976 introduced several important elements into ordination training including the requirement of three terms at the college (one year equivalent). Do you remember how this came about and why?
4. Initial research shows that between 1976 and 1999, the drop-out rate from the church's ministry of those who trained by the Home Study route is significantly higher than that of the college route. Does this surprise you? What might be the reasons?
5. The course offered is the Diploma in Pastoral Studies which consists of 24 modules (9 taught at NTC through three May terms, and 15 done by Directed Study). The WCC through the Oslo Consultation (1996) has come up with six competencies which it considers to be essential for theological education. As you consider this summary sheet setting out these competencies and where they might be taught in the course, do you think they are all being addressed appropriately?
6. The Church of the Nazarene (1997) introduced four C's of ministry ("four major elements identified for the educational preparation of ministers"). How do these compare with the Oslo competencies? Do you think we should use the Oslo competencies as a model for theological education for the Nazarene ministry?
7. The Home Study course (renamed Directed Studies in 1983) is a form of Distance Learning, which is an established educational method. What might be done to improve the content of the course and the method used?
8. The church persists with the "normative route" into ministry (NTC), but also with the Directed Studies route. Do you perceive any difficulties in this?

The interviews will be conducted with minimum intervention from the interviewer. "Running prompts" will be used as necessary to keep the interview going. These will be developed during the pilot interviews.

6. Conclusion.

By allowing course participants to talk about their experience through these structured interviews (which are transcribed and included in the appendices), the Nazarene distance learning programme is inevitably being analysed and assessed. However in light of the vision that distance learning can deliver the Oslo competencies, and that the competencies and the method are both compatible with, and a challenge to Nazarene distance learning, useful information can be gleaned through these guided questions.

In other words, the search for a new distance learning model is being done in the light of the Oslo competencies and the best distance learning practice, but with the purpose of informing and developing the best Nazarene model compatible with its purpose of educating people for the ordained ministry.

It may be that the new model will identify neglected resources in the Nazarene context which have been overlooked because of the restrictions of its distance learning model. On the other hand, there may be contributions which the Nazarene distance learning model can make to best practice and to the understanding of the Oslo competencies. This will be one of the original contributions of this thesis.

Chapter 9

Developing an “Oslo model” of Theological Education by Distance Learning for the Contemporary British Church of the Nazarene.

Three areas of research have been investigated and the case study completed.¹ The thesis is now at a point where further critical reflection can be brought to bear on what has been learned. Other areas remain where further research can be done, and these will be indicated in the conclusion, but an “Oslo model” as an example of constructive practical theology in a contemporary setting will now be undertaken. This model must incorporate a scheme of how it is to be delivered as well as address the implications of implementing such a model within the Church of the Nazarene.

The three research areas lie at the heart of the proposed model. The Oslo competencies (with the TEE debate forming a significant backdrop), the methodology of distance learning and the contemporary Church of the Nazarene. The model is not being proposed in a vacuum, rather, the Church of the Nazarene has had a distance learning programme since 1928. The aim of the programme is clear; to educate men and women for the ordained ministry of the church.

The proposed Oslo model will be constructed under four main heads:

Firstly, the case study will provide contemporary qualitative data on the responses to the six Oslo competencies in the context of the distance learning programme.² Furthermore, this will show whether, in the students’ view, the competencies were evident in their subsequent ministry development and whether their local contexts assisted this advancement. Their own progress during and since the completion of the course in each ministry area should also become evident.

¹ The full transcripts of the case study interviews are to be found in the appendices.

² The students were asked three questions relating to each competence; a) Did the distance learning programme help you to develop your ministry in this area? b) As you were doing the course, what did you learn from your local context about this area of ministry? c) How would you assess your personal development in this area of ministry: during the course; since the course was completed?

Secondly, responses to the competencies will, of necessity, spill over into responses to the methodology being used in the present distance learning programme and how this functions in the students' experience.

Thirdly, reflection on these and the research undertaken in the thesis, will lead to a recommended Oslo model through best practice distance learning for the Church of the Nazarene in the UK. Finally, the implications of this model for the British church will be addressed.

1. The place of the competencies in the present programme assessed.

Having embarked upon the case study, it soon became obvious that, although the church has an on-going distance learning programme, there was some dissatisfaction with its progress. The Rev Leslie Evans, chair of the 1976 Evans Commission, thinks that the church

...has had a rather unenthusiastic approach to the whole area of the Home Study and it has been seen very much as a poor relation... The Home Study course, I think, has suffered from negative attitudes and a very unenthusiastic approach to it. I think this attitude has conveyed itself very often to the people involved in the course and they have probably been made to feel that this is an inferior way...we need to...much more positively promote the Home Study course.³

Furthermore he considers that NTC as the provider of the course is equally culpable:

...I think the problem of the college has always been to identify the needs of ministry. In our 1976 evaluation of things, we did try to identify what a minister is in New Testament terms...It seems to me sometimes, that we've worked in the opposite direction, we've set our courses then tried to make the connections, rather than identifying ministry, the needs of the church, the needs of the people, communication of the gospel and so on, and then tailored college courses.⁴

In the context of these strong views, the consumers' response to the case study questions will now be noted. Oslo is proposing a new vision in theological education

³ Interview with the Rev Leslie Evans, 5.

⁴ Interview with the Rev Leslie Evans, 4. Whether the church or the college drives the content of theological education, and whether the latter should be the servant of the former, has already been raised in the thesis. The conclusion reached was that the college is an arm of the church and both should work together in the task.

which centres on formation of the minister and expresses this through the competencies.

1.1 Spiritual competence.

The thesis has demonstrated that, whereas the Oslo competencies were driven from the core of “spiritual competency” and “ministerial formation”, the Nazarene programme was assessed as being “content driven”. This was shown by the way in which the four C’s were weighted towards content in the *International Sourcebook*.⁵ However, there still is some debate in this area between the students as recipients of the Course of Study and the college as the deliverer. One student commented:

...that it is really Christ being formed within us; the more we get to know of him, this is what it’s all about. I have to say that although I have been challenged, the college course is more about knowledge of things I think, than the being of the person. I think it needs to be geared more towards being than knowing.⁶

Another, stating that the course was “primarily something that would be educative...”, continued:

It would have been much more encouraging to me I think, if they would have said, ‘In order to make you a better minister, we think these courses will actually do you good.’ I think it was a question perhaps not so much of saying, ‘Here’s a hoop, jump through it,’ but, ‘this is stuff that the church requires you to do’. I think it would have been much better if they had said, ‘Here’s some stuff the church thinks you should do in order to make you a better minister than you already are...’

I think we were started from the wrong place anyhow. It seems to me, looking back on it, that the denomination said to me ‘You need to do this to be ordained’, rather than saying to me, ‘Here are things which will help you in your ministry’.

There’s something about ordination which is not just educational, something which is to do with your spirit, who you are, where you are with Christ... Education is about equipment, ordination is about acceptance and the church saying ‘yes’ to your ministry.⁷

An NTC tutor reflected:

⁵ *International Sourcebook*, 12.

⁶ Respondent G, 9.

⁷ Respondent D, 2.

I think that the spiritual competence area is probably more implicit than explicit. The modules (identified in the case study) actually don't address directly the issue of spiritual development, but they provide a background and context for spiritual development...but I don't think it's directly addressed really in any of the modules.⁸

However, the Dean of NTC commented:

...this is what happens all the time in life where you know why people are ordained and why there's education for ordination, because this is the best way to bring this theological Bible coherence to the ministry, but then it becomes shortened, so you miss the reason for it and it simply becomes the method to become a minister...that's a perpetual reminder to the church that education is not simply being given for the sake of jumping through a hoop, it's because we're trying to help people become ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Educational requirements are formative for the ministry...it's the beginning of a lifetime of formation for the ministry...it sets the foundation for everything they're going to do.⁹

The view that the content of the course is foundational for spiritual formation is taken up by some interviewees:

...the course of the modules which I took, showed me an oversight of what was expected of you within the spiritual realm.¹⁰

I think that I grew spiritually during that time...¹¹

...I learned a tremendous amount not only about what ministry was all about, but I learned a great deal about myself...¹²

Referring to the module on Wesley Studies, one interviewee said:

...it helped me to look at myself maybe in the light of what John Wesley was trying to do, but I don't know how valuable that is.¹³

Another commented in this regard:

The Wesley Studies programme was probably the most outstanding...The character and spirituality of John Wesley was an example to try and emulate.¹⁴

⁸ Rev Chris Cope, 9.

⁹ Dr Kent Brower, 6.

¹⁰ Respondent A, 2.

¹¹ Respondent B, 5.

¹² Respondent D, 5.

¹³ Respondent D, 6.

How this was to work in the local context was unclear to at least one respondent who said,

...being the pastor of a church you realised that the congregation had expectations of you; they expected to see a certain degree of spirituality and spiritual development. I'm not sure that there was any real connection between that and the actual Home Study (distance learning) course.¹⁵

This respondent did acknowledge however that "To be honest I find it difficult to measure my own spiritual development."¹⁶

Others were certain that they had continued to develop since the course had ended:

Yes, I think I have progressed and it has given me more of a thirst to go on and complete the degree course...¹⁷

The close link between the course content and ministry requirements seems established in the thinking of most of the respondents. The Dean is anxious to disengage content from particular competencies however:

I think it would be a distortion of the fact to attach any particular module to any particular competency or one of the four C's. Clearly there are some which have a greater emphasis in one aspect than another...we're into theological formation here and that involves all...of the disciplines.

...it is a help for all of us lecturers to be reminded that all of the four C's or six competencies need to be present in some degree or another in each one of our modules.¹⁸

He acknowledges however, that this is not always clear:

Are we delivering the competencies or the four C's that the Church of the Nazarene wants to deliver, properly? I think the jury is still out on that. I suspect that we almost certainly aren't doing it *as well as we would be doing it through the traditional methods of education*. Whether we are doing it at all may be too early to say.¹⁹ (italics mine)

¹⁴ Respondent E, 2.

¹⁵ Respondent E, 2

¹⁶ Respondent E, 3.

¹⁷ Respondent A, 3.

¹⁸ Dr Kent Brower, 19.

¹⁹ Dr Kent Brower, 22.

1.2 Theological competence.

This competence was perceived to be a strong point of the Nazarene distance learning programme.

...the theological competence is undoubtedly the one that stands out strongly.²⁰

...that was another strong point. I felt that my theological understanding was really very low when I came into the church and over the years, particularly when I went to college, it began to broaden out and I could feel the confidence in myself and other people remarked on the difference.²¹

I think that's probably right about all these theological competencies that the more I found in it that I was given to understand and employ in my ministry the better I felt about it. But like every other area of learning there were some things you said, 'I can use this, I'm taking that home with me.' I enjoyed that and do feel that the college helped me on that.²²

In relating the teaching to the context, the perception was equally strong:

I had people remarking 'That was a good message', and just remarking on the difference they felt in my preaching ability during that time....There were things that became clearer, things that I wasn't quite sure of, things that I hadn't really thought an awful lot about, I was made to think about them. They came up in congregational needs; they came up in the study and the two sort of blended together.²³

...the need to gently try and teach the congregation that everything wasn't quite as clear-cut as they thought. Perhaps the congregation's theological focus was a bit narrow and simplistic and I feel through the course I was getting a broader vision.²⁴

There has to be a relationship between what you're doing and what you're learning. If they're completely separate then it means that your learning isn't relevant.²⁵

Not all agreed, however:

...it was often said to me that if you want to get your studies done you should preach some of them, but I never felt it was right to do it and I

²⁰ Dr Hugh Rae, 9.

²¹ Respondent B, 7.

²² Respondent D, 10.

²³ Respondent B, 7.

²⁴ Respondent E, 4.

²⁵ Respondent H, 10.

didn't do it... Certainly I'd take aspects of what I'd learned from them and use them in my preaching.²⁶

The development of the competence following the completion of the course was less clear:

I think it still develops, maybe not to the same extent. You reach a sort of plateau.²⁷

I think so. In some places where I've been there have been people that have had more knowledge and understanding and experience... and I have been able to study further...²⁸

I think it became more connected...²⁹

There was one notable exception:

NTC helped to open my mind up a bit further to explore, and yes in my local context now I'm not afraid to explore and open out and be a bit more thoughtful in how my theology works in dealing with my everyday situation. I no longer see myself as particularly narrow-minded. I feel I've got a fairly broad outlook now and want to look at other people's ideas and other people's views and arguments...³⁰

1.3 Leadership competence.

The responses through the case study to this particular competence were mostly negative of which the following are examples:

Quite honestly, I would say it was a bit weak, because it didn't really deal with leadership...³¹

...there wasn't an awful lot on the course to help you with leadership... The leadership qualities just came by personal experience... you were thrown in at the deep end and had to fend for yourself.³²

I found it was more historically based and I don't think I experienced any benefits as far as Christian leadership is concerned.³³

Two positive responses were made:

²⁶ Respondent G, 11.

²⁷ Respondent B, 8.

²⁸ Respondent C, 5.

²⁹ Respondent H, 10.

³⁰ Respondent D, 11.

³¹ Respondent A, 6.

³² Respondent B, 9.

³³ Respondent E, 5.

Yes, I think it did. It was helpful because we studied various leadership models and books and readings which gave us insights. We could also see how other leadership was being given, not only in the college but by other senior men at the time and you could see what was happening that was going to be useful and helpful.³⁴

Yes, because it taught me things I didn't know before...the course did teach me certain leadership qualities, definitely.³⁵

Most respondents considered that the local context gave a greater learning experience:

...you learned the hard way to deal with anything that arose...³⁶

...that was a big struggle for the first couple of years...to realise what kind of leadership they were expecting of me and what type of leadership should I be giving?³⁷

...I learnt the hard way in my local context...³⁸

The context continued to give the learning base after the course was completed:

Wherever I've been there have always been fresh challenges. With every challenge, it draws you out that bit further and improves your skill by practice.³⁹

...I could almost pinpoint changes, stepping stones, along the way where I knew my leadership competency took off.⁴⁰

1.4 Pastoral competence.

There was some ambivalence in the responses in this area. Some felt that the competence was addressed specifically, but others agreed that it came about through practice in their context.

...you found yourself becoming a pastor with the study that you were doing. It was as if you were studying to be a pastor and then, all of a sudden, you were living to be a pastor. I don't know if that makes sense or not, but the one blended into the other and gave you confidence in the pastoral area... I think the actual turning point was when I went to the

³⁴ Respondent C, 6.

³⁵ Respondent F, 6.

³⁶ Respondent B, 9.

³⁷ Respondent D, 13.

³⁸ Respondent E, 5.

³⁹ Respondent C, 7.

⁴⁰ Respondent D, 14.

May term at college; when I came back from it I felt, 'This is definitely me, I'm definitely a pastor'.⁴¹

I think they really helped me develop my abilities and competence...⁴²

The pastoral competence...is developed in the church context, so that might mean the way in which the student includes their interaction with their own particular local church context rather than simply taking a module called 'Ministry in the Local Church'.⁴³

I think it needs to be upgraded somewhere out on the field. I think we're going to have to develop the time out on the field under supervision much more rigidly than we do for the sake of those going out.⁴⁴

I personally think that it's not just a matter of knowledge, it's a matter more of doing and there's nothing beats 'on the ground' stuff... there's no greater benefit than being face to face with people...I have learnt more that way than I've learnt through methods and programmes.⁴⁵

...I really could not pinpoint (what) I learned (from the programme) in terms of skills.⁴⁶

1.5 Missionary competency.

The views of several respondents were that this competence was not strongly evident in the programme:

...it was a little weak there for me. A lot of it was geared into internal church structure... in terms of providing skills and inspiration to get out there and make the church grow...it didn't awaken any missionary zeal in me to go out and save the lost.⁴⁷

...there wasn't an awful lot in the Home Study course that actually blended into the missionary competence.⁴⁸

I think it could have been better than it was. I think more emphasis on practice, how to take the gospel out to people would have been helpful.⁴⁹

⁴¹ Respondent B, 11.

⁴² Respondent A, 7.

⁴³ Rev Chris Cope, 11.

⁴⁴ Dr Hugh Rae, 9.

⁴⁵ Respondent G, 14.

⁴⁶ Respondent D, 7.

⁴⁷ Respondent D, 17.

⁴⁸ Respondent B, 7.

⁴⁹ Respondent C, 9.

I don't think there was much that I learnt on the course that was particularly relevant to the area of evangelism and making the gospel relevant to our society.⁵⁰

Others found it useful, for example:

Yes it has, because when I took over the church it was like a church planting situation, starting off with only two people and having to go out and having to evangelise, so it has helped my confidence.

When asked what kinds of modules could be added to strengthen the course, the reply of one respondent was:

I think again it's the 'how to' situation. It's okay knowing it theoretically, but having a practical side to it would help a great deal and even maybe being put into a situation where you can practice what you're being taught.⁵¹

At least two respondents spoke of "always being missionary minded"⁵² and having "missionary zeal",⁵³ before beginning the course. The course therefore confirmed and strengthened what was already present.

1.6 Ecumenical competency.

The view of the Church of the Nazarene as insular and parochial was voiced by the Rev. Leslie Evans, chair of the Evans Commission:

I think traditionally, we have been as a denomination (and I personally don't like the term 'we are a holiness church'), as though the rest of Christendom isn't interested in Christian holiness.⁵⁴

This was supported by the former Principal of NTC:

...we're still afraid of too much involvement with other people and I think that's got to be wrong. When you are afraid of that kind of involvement it seems to me that you're exhibiting your own insecurity rather than anything else... I don't think it's the course's fault. I think the Church of the Nazarene in various places has a history of being non-ecumenical or weak ecumenically.⁵⁵

Some students agreed, of which the following comments were typical:

⁵⁰ Respondent E, 7.

⁵¹ Respondent A, 9.

⁵² Respondent C, 9.

⁵³ Respondent D, 17.

⁵⁴ Rev Leslie Evans, 3.

⁵⁵ Dr Hugh Rae, 10.

...it's a very parochial church; by that I don't mean internationally...but in the British Isles it has a tendency to be parochial...and isolationist. It doesn't relate well to men of other churches.⁵⁶

...we...don't see ourselves as a mainstream church...We need to get some recognition as a mainstream church.⁵⁷

...if I mentioned the word 'ecumenical' they would be up in arms. In the context...here, anything ecumenical means that you're sitting down with the Roman Catholic church.⁵⁸

We need to be part of mainstream Christianity and I think we can only do that if we're seen to be alongside other Christian denominations.⁵⁹

The Dean, however, was more positive:

I think there is a narrowness about some parts of our church. I think historically we are more parochial than we are today... the development of the college, where we have a variety of denominations...is very healthy...the Church of the Nazarene (needs) to learn from and appreciate fully the wide contributions that other parts of the Church ...make to it...(and be) very much aware that God also is speaking to other churches.⁶⁰

Some respondents saw evidence of this new awareness in the course:

...it helped, because you are looking at different viewpoints and realising that there are people who hold different viewpoints, so you can relate to those groups of people.⁶¹

I am sure that there are Nazarene pastors who do mix well and enjoy fellowship with other denominations. I was in a Pastors' Fraternal ...and someone said that the Pentecostals have things to teach the Nazarenes and also the Nazarenes have things to teach the Pentecostals⁶²

I certainly remember some things that were opened up to me and I think that, yes, it has broadened my views of things and I would say to some degree, but not a great degree.⁶³

Parochial comments were made by two students, however:

⁵⁶ Respondent, H, 14.

⁵⁷ Respondent, B, 15.

⁵⁸ Respondent A, 10.

⁵⁹ Respondent C, 13.

⁶⁰ Dr Kent Brower, 19.

⁶¹ Respondent A, 9.

⁶² Respondent F, 16.

⁶³ Respondent G, 15.

We don't have to work with other denominations...Because you're called by your own denomination. You're called by the church to serve...that's how I see things.⁶⁴

....(the course) looked at other traditions definitely, although I sometimes wished it was the other way round...we need to develop more our own church tradition...I would...share fellowship with other denominations...I think every denomination has its own distinction and this is the calling of the Church of the Nazarene.⁶⁵

2. Response: the proposed "Oslo model" and the competencies of the programme.

The case study confirms that the Nazarene distance learning programme does not fare particularly well in light of the Oslo model, but there is some correlation between the two. The theological competency seems the strongest and the ecumenical competency the weakest, with others evoking some ambivalent responses. The place of the student's context in the learning process appears significant in the respondents' minds and some speak of being encouraged to continue their own personal development after the course was completed.

These responses indicate that the introduction of an Oslo model in terms of the competencies would not be foreign in a good percentage of the programme. Most of the competencies are recognised as playing a role, although that role could be strengthened considerably in some areas. Furthermore, the overall response from those connected with Nazarene Theological College, who are the deliverers of the programme, view the Nazarene four C's as being compatible with what Oslo is trying to do. Whether NTC is being successful in delivering these, however, is questioned by the Dean:

Are we delivering the competencies or the four C's that the Church of the Nazarene wants to deliver, properly? I think the jury is still out on that. I suspect that we almost certainly aren't doing it as well as we would be doing it through the traditional methods of education. Whether we are doing it at all may be too early to say.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Respondent F, 16.

⁶⁵ Respondent G, 17.

⁶⁶ Dr Kent Brower, 22.

At least the intention is there, and the Oslo model has now been introduced into the thinking of some members of the church. This must be seen as a positive move and one that can be built on.

Two significant competencies, the ecumenical and the spiritual, are not seen to be strong when compared with the theological competence which seems to be quite dominant. Significantly all three are closely linked in the beginnings of the Church of the Nazarene but less so in its contemporary experience.⁶⁷ Promotion of the philosophy of an Oslo model, as well as its key competencies, would not be unrecognised by the church. It may, in fact, be a call back to its roots. Its contemporary experience, however, indicates that it is now much more parochial and may even be over-emphasising its theological distinctives⁶⁸ to the detriment of its stated need for spiritual formation. The emphasis on 'content' over 'formation' identified by some respondents, may also be the result of the path chosen in the early colleges days which set the church on its way towards accredited theological education.

The thesis has demonstrated that, when the early colleges were established, there was a strong desire to build "holy character" in the lives of the students. This was to occur within the task of preparing an educated ministry, but one which was already choosing to be exclusively Nazarene, not ecumenical. Bresee had stated:

It is not our job to turn out worldly men. There are a thousand institutions in the United States that are engaged in that business; it is our business to turn out men and women of God.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ The Church of the Nazarene arose from an amalgamation of various church groups in North America and Europe. The research has already indicated where some of these contacts were made, although it is acknowledged that these were limited ecumenically to like-minded holiness groups. Others, who were part of this amalgamation, are described in a history of the Church of the Nazarene to be found in the Appendices.

⁶⁸ Further research may reveal that a church, like the Church of the Nazarene, which is established by a founder who feels disenfranchised from his own church for whatever reason, and who begins a ministry with particular distinctives which encourage 'separateness' from the world, would be tempted to become more parochial for fear of losing these distinctives.

⁶⁹ E.A. Girvan, *A Prince in Israel*, 439-440.

He insisted that the church must attend to the higher education of its own young people because:

...spiritual religion, and especially that which testified to the grace of heart holiness, was no longer welcome in the nation's centres of learning... (they must live) under the shadow of the Almighty in the classroom, chapel and social life in their college years.⁷⁰

The promotion of Nazarene theological education through "Nazarene scholars" is still prevalent in the thinking of the church.⁷¹ A notable exception to this is the way in which NTC, as the UK distance learning provider, is more ecumenical in its approach than the *International Sourcebook* would seem to promote. A reason for this dichotomy is expressed by the NTC Dean when he notes that the *Sourcebook* came out of Breckenridge, Colorado:

The state, 'Colorado', should immediately raise our alarm bells because we are coming out of a very conservative, almost right wing context...and it would have been difficult for them to deal with words like 'ecumenical' in the grass roots of the Church of the Nazarene. I think they've done as much as they could... to address the Oslo ones, without mentioning them once, as far as I'm aware. I wish we'd have done it differently, but we didn't. If we were a European church predominantly, instead of a North American church predominantly, I think the outcome would have been different.⁷²

As the proposed model is for a UK context, the ecumenical argument is perhaps not quite as strong although certain respondents, with roots in Northern Ireland, did consider the ecumenical competency the most difficult to apply locally.

Ecumenicity is beginning to permeate the thinking of some respondents, particularly through their contacts with local fraternals and meetings of "churches together". The college can help to promote this positive thinking through its approach to the employment of lecturers outside the Nazarene orbit as indicated earlier.⁷³ Although it is unlikely that any movement will take place towards formal ecumenical contacts

⁷⁰ E.A. Girvan, *A Prince in Israel*, 448.

⁷¹ *A Global Strategy for Theological Education*, 16.

⁷² Dr Kent Brower Further comment on ecumenicity: "I think the Oslo (competencies) would have been perfectly good for the Church of the Nazarene, except for the 'e' word which might have been misunderstood out there in Northern Ireland, or somewhere." (Interview with Dr Kent Brower, 20.)

⁷³ The "functional ecumenicity" evident in NTC is explained in chapter 5, page 22.

within the international Church of the Nazarene, the Nazarenes in the UK can continue to make their own moves in fostering local ecumenical arrangements.

Oslo's driving force is ministerial formation and a core competency is the spiritual competency. Ministerial formation is not foreign to the Nazarene theological education ethos, in fact its history shows it is seminal. What is happening in the Nazarene distance learning programme may be something that is common to many providers of theological education, namely the desire for the appropriate balance between the formation and education. Each should include the other, but they often do not.

The perception of the Nazarene programme being content rather than formation driven is evident in the case study. Even where spiritual formation is understood to be part of the programme, how it should be interpreted and applied is not clear to the student. If the programme intends that 'formation' should come through its four C's then this is not clear either. It is early days, however, in which to evaluate the effect of the four C's, but even if they were well established, the sense is that they are part of a programme which is utilitarian and content driven.

2.1 παιδεία or *wissenschaft*?

As stated, this problem may not be unique to the Church of the Nazarene. The thesis has indicated that the historical debate in theological education, of which Oslo was a part, has included such issues in the past. Notable contributions to the debate have been made by Edward Farley, David Kelsey and others who sought to demonstrate how the imbalance between 'formation' and 'educational research' has come about. This could be explained by two distinct models: a model of formation and personal growth from the perspective of the Greek παιδεία through which people grow conceptually in regard to God by way of teaching that communicates indirectly; and a modern conception of education which has rigorous scientific research or *wissenschaft* as its goal.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Greek term for 'schooling', 'culturing' and 'character formation'. This form of schooling had its roots in the Greco-Roman world, and was unquestioned until the eighteenth century. It was the way in which educated Greek-speaking Christians had been schooled from the beginning whether they were from pagan families or Jewish families that had become assimilated into Greek culture. It

The background to these models lies in the historical tradition of the theological institution which, in turn, determines its ethos. What particular traditions have shaped it and what distinctions of the Christian faith it considers to be its own responsibility will be part of that tradition. This will also determine how change should take place concerning the institution. Its relationship with the mother denomination will probably be a dominant factor in determining whether change will take place democratically or autocratically.

The cultural location of the institution will have shaped it and will continue to do so. The social location of the faculty, student and staff will inform the cultural locus. If the cultural location is diverse in its make-up, that diversity may well affect the institution's life and a particular dynamic will be produced. Within this scenario the institution in its teaching, negotiates between παιδεία or *wissenschaft*.

If an institution takes on the former model it may be shaped by a strong religious interest in coming to a better understanding of God. This 'knowledge of God' cannot be imparted directly from teacher to student, rather it comes through a form of conversion of mind and spirit which theological institutions of the παιδεία model would regard as a spiritual task.⁷⁵ In this context the teacher can only attempt to provide a setting in which a student realises that development. Part of this context is what a student reads and practices and performs. This kind of education tends to be individualistic because of its focus on the student and his or her formation (often interpreted as 'spiritual formation').

became an integral part of Christian education. Edward Farley develops this model in *Theologia*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983, xi). "The assumption was that by simultaneously subjecting the bodies of the young to physical discipline and their souls to the traditions and customs of ancient Greece as conveyed by literature, they would emerge deeply shaped by those dispositions or habits, that is, virtues, that make the good citizen." New Testament references: Heb. 12:4-11; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:16. cf. Horst Baltz & Gerhart Schneider (eds), *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol 3, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993. Also: παιδεία: "training up or nurture", "correction": *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Samuel Bagster, nd.

Wissenschaft: "learning, knowledge, scholarship, science", Helmut W Ziesle, *Dictionary of Modern Theological German*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.

⁷⁵ *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983, 152-156. Also David Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Know Press, 1992, 90ff. And, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, 6ff.

The latter model is much more recent and is rooted in the modern research university.⁷⁶ This is where the theological institution adopts the research university as the model of excellence and in taking on board its standards of education also takes on board the goal of the research institution, namely the production of 'professionals'.

The model is marked by four characteristics. First, it is governed by 'professional' interests in that its function is to train leadership for an indispensable practice in society. That 'indispensable practice' in terms of the theological institution is the Church, an institution that bears on society in general. In addition it construes church leadership as a necessary role for the well-being of society - it is a 'professional' role.

Secondly, texts are studied, not primarily as a way of leading to knowledge of God in the *παιδεία* sense, but rather to learn what they can contribute to a better understanding of the essence of the Christian community, and better leadership of that community. No 'divine conversion' is necessary although this may happen or be happening in the life of the student.

Thirdly, this has implications for teachers and students. The subject matter - not the student- becomes the focus of attention. Teachers, along with students join in the research as a team - although admittedly as unequal partners.⁷⁷ This requires freedom - religious, political and academic.

Fourthly, it is public in the way that anyone can access the model if they have the appropriate skills. For this reason it must also be a model which is involved in the

⁷⁶ It was in the founding of the University of Berlin (1810) that the argument was won to include a theological school within a research university. The argument rested on the notion of 'profession' and a 'professional institution'. Schleiermacher, who with von Humbolt is credited with the foundation of the University of Berlin, argued strongly for the inclusion of theology as a research discipline. His three areas of study - 'historical theology' (scripture, dogmatics, church history, 'philosophical theology' (the correlation between Christianity and human consciousness); and 'practical theology' (the rules for carrying out the tasks for ministry) still influence theological education today, but more so his rationale for including theology as a professional school. Here was a critical, orderly and disciplined reflection not on historically and culturally conditioned biblical writings (for example) held to be beyond critical inquiry, but "on the realities of Christian piety as manifested precisely in their historical and cultural facticity and relativity. (David Kelsey, *To Understand God...*, 90, cf.78.) As such it was admissible in a research university. See also Daniel Fallon, *The German University*, Boulder, Colorado: Colorado Associated University Press, 1980, Ch.2.

⁷⁷ The teacher having greater knowledge and more advanced research skills.

issues which confront society. It cannot and must not be an educational process of the 'ivory tower'.

This picture of the nature and purpose of theological education in a research setting has provided a model for many theological institutions. The question pertinent for our model is to ask if the theological education of the Church of the Nazarene is negotiating between the two models of παιδεία on the one hand and *wissenschaft* - 'professional education' on the other, or if it has chosen one intentionally or otherwise.

Any institution is more than its pedagogical method, but when we consider the debate between the 'spiritual formation' and 'professional/academic' models this has not only to do with pedagogy but has to do with the particular social context of the goal of theological education of that institution. Is it aiming to prepare people to fill specific social roles (professional) or to prepare them by making them well informed and able to think critically (academic)? Or is it more intent in developing a person who is primarily more spiritually formed as an individual and secondarily academically or professionally prepared?

This is part of the familiar educational debate⁷⁸ of the virtues of theory over practice. Here the argument is not pedagogical or the consideration of the social context but that which is thought to bring the best understanding of the total purpose of the educational effort. This debate therefore, shows that 'theory' does not always have to line up with 'academic' or 'practice' with 'spiritual formation'. What should be looked for is the connection between theory and practice in both the professional and formational models.

In other words, to speak of theological education as being 'head' or 'heart' (academic or formational, *wissenschaft* or παιδεία) is not in itself enough, as the assessment of any theological institution must include the understanding that the total picture of that institution includes its history, polity, social location, community life and worship and relationship with its host community and culture.

⁷⁸ For example Farley, *Theologia...*, 129ff.

The Church of the Nazarene has chosen to go down the *wissenschaft* route and at the same time try to hold on to a *παιδεία* model. The contemporary educational endeavour of NTC reflects this and in this regard is similar to many theological colleges in the UK. What Oslo reminds the Church of the Nazarene and its college is that not only must the balance be constantly monitored, but the programme should be redressed in favour of the *παιδεία* model. This is a significant challenge for the church in its UK setting as its academic credentials tend to move it down the *wissenschaft* route. An overtly 'formational' rebalance of the programme is called for.

As the church is at the onset of the use of the four C's, it would be advantageous for it to reconsider the balance of the categories in light of the students' (and Dean's) comments. If the C of 'character' were given the lead and the maximum percentage of 35%, then the programme could be rethought and re-driven. A comment of one respondent is worth repeating:

...I think we were started from the wrong place anyhow. It seems to me, looking back on it, that the denomination said to me 'You need to do this to be ordained', rather than saying to me, 'Here are things which will help you in your ministry'.

There's something about ordination which is not just educational, something which is to do with your spirit, who you are, where you are with Christ... Education is about equipment, ordination is about acceptance and the church saying 'yes' to your ministry.⁷⁹

"There is something about ordination which is not just educational, something which is to do with your spirit..." This comment seems totally in harmony with the Oslo model. The consultation mandate was proposed by

encouraging a formation process which inspires, liberates, empowers, resources and affirms the ministries present in the whole people of God...⁸⁰

The path to Oslo's holistic model

...combines and inter-relates spirituality, academic excellence, mission and evangelism, justice and peace, pastoral sensitivity and competence, and the formation of character.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Respondent D, 2.

⁸⁰ "Message to Churches", 4.

It reiterates that there does not need to be a conflict between 'education' and 'formation' as the core of theological education. Modules can be both content and formation driven.

Theology, there is content theology...there must be, but it also affects how we think spiritually about our ministry.⁸²

When asked if there is a place for the Oslo model in the (theological) education of the Church of the Nazarene, the Dean replied:

That's an interesting question. Our education for the ministry is designed specifically to meet the requirements of the Church of the Nazarene...Now I wish we had stuck with the Oslo ones...however, all of the six competencies of Oslo can be incorporated within our four C's...I think there would have been a great advantage for the Church of the Nazarene simply to adapt the Oslo competencies.⁸³

Dr Rae, the former Principal of the college, when asked if the church should use the Oslo competencies, instead of the four C's, replied:

...yes and no, I don't think it's as comprehensive as Oslo's, but I do think it's a vision we can look at and move out from. I would hope the content would be present however.⁸⁴

The Oslo model does give the church "...a vision we can look at and move out from." The challenge is to implement the vision. Historically the Church of the Nazarene has struggled to incorporate both models. Today, most of its colleges world-wide are affiliated to an academic institution for validation purposes. NTC in the UK is affiliated to the University of Manchester.

There may be two simultaneous approaches; the weighting of the percentages in the four C's more towards the C of character, together with a distance learning methodology which confirms what the respondents were saying about the place of the context and community in the grounding of learning in life experiences. The former approach is feasible as flexibility is built into the four C's. However, it will need to be

⁸¹ Pobe, *Towards...*, 1.

⁸² Dr Kent Brower, 17.

⁸³ Dr Kent Brower, 21.

⁸⁴ Dr Hugh Rae, 10.

supported by a vision similar to that of the founding fathers of the Church of the Nazarene; a vision that struggled with both the necessity of ministerial formation together with rigorous academic study. The track record is not good for, as the research has shown, the founding fathers could not agree on the correct balance.

It would seem that a third area which would influence the balance would be the area of course content. However, the Course of Study, which includes subjects to be taught, is determined by the international Church of the Nazarene. Local and regional variations can be made if approved. This raises an issue for further research beyond this thesis and one which has been indicated in the research, namely, who dictates what should be taught in the theological institutions? Should it be an international church, local churches or the institutions themselves? Within this debate it should be remembered that all three should be partners and not contenders. The college, as stated earlier, is an arm of the church not a servant of the church. Oslo would wholly support this.

What may help to deliver an Oslo model is the development of a best practice programme of delivery for the competencies which, at the least, are recognisable in the Course of Study. The research shows strong compatibility between the Oslo competencies and distance learning. The case study on the present distance learning programme asked about the place of the students' context both during the programme and beyond. It was obvious that some contribution to learning was being made here. Additionally, students spoke highly of the time spent in residence at NTC. There is a variety of method in embryo which could now be developed to best practice. In other words, the redressing of the balance towards spiritual formation, desired by the Oslo model, may be helped by the *method* of delivery. As best practice distance learning promotes and encourages mentoring, community and church contact, in college residence as well as outside group activity, the formative element of the competencies may be encouraged to the point where the balance between παιδεία and *wissenschaft* is restored.

To this end, first, the case study responses will be noted, then the model developed.

3. The methodology of the present programme assessed.

Distance learning, which began as 'Home Study' and is presently called Directed Study, is administered by NTC. The full or part-time college route is considered to be the normative route, and requires the student to take all modules at the college.

3.1 The May term.

The residential May term came out of the 1976 Evans Commission. When asked for the rationale behind this, Evans replied:

...we could all see that the Home Study course wasn't very successful and we were wrestling with...how to make it acceptable to people. We felt I think, that there were probably two factors that made it difficult if people were going that route into ministry. One was perhaps the discipline problem of actually staying with the course, because there were so many other distractions, and...the other...was that we often found it difficult to find competent people to act as instructors and examiners...⁸⁵

The success of the May terms is clear in the mind of the Dean:

...the students...see these as a vital part of their educational experience and interestingly enough, there are many of our candidates in the past who have wanted to come back and do more...because I think they find the interaction with their fellows...so beneficial. It is very difficult to capture the living classroom setting in any other form other than the classroom, the sparking of minds one on another, delivers something that's irreplaceable, in my judgement, and that is why the May terms are a vital part of what we're trying to do.⁸⁶

The students seem equally persuaded:

Yes, they were better because you had lecturers as well as a library to resource the information you needed so it stayed fresh in you mind, whereas at home you were only doing it maybe one day a week and by the following week you had lost your track of thought...the college courses were a lot better.⁸⁷

They achieved more for me because I was taking classes, going to the library and studying and had nothing else on my mind, and I seemed to do better. It's a problem trying to run a church and study for home courses at the same time.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Rev Leslie Evans, 1.

⁸⁶ Dr Kent Brower, 17.

⁸⁷ Respondent A, 1.

⁸⁸ Respondent B, 2.

...you have face to face lecturing, so if you did have questions you could ask the tutor, I think that personal feedback is very important; secondly, you're in a class, so you've got a group dynamic going on and that does make a big difference in how you learn; you learn from what you hear from others and the debate that would sometimes go on in class, and I think that's a very important thing; and then of course, you get cross-fertilisation of ideas...It's certainly easier to learn in that atmosphere, rather than having a set of notes, a desk, a few books, and having to plough through it, write a paper and send it back off.⁸⁹

One respondent questioned whether the whole course could be done though May terms:

I wonder if, for some people, just doing the whole thing by May terms might help; particularly some of the competencies which seemed a little weak in Home Studies may be brought out better by the character and the enthusiasm of the tutor at the college.⁹⁰

One student suggested that this be the only way it should be done and that a local theological course be used for the remainder of the course:

...it's going to be hard to beat what comes out of a May term. It's not ideal, but I would still say that there would be great value in, if a pastor was say in Belfast, he could go to a local Baptist College or whatever, and through Queen's University could get a degree on a part-time basis...the things we need to learn from the Nazarene church we could do in one May term.⁹¹

3.2 The other inter-linking elements of the programme.

Whilst the May Term element does not seem to be in doubt as part of the distance learning methodology of the course, the off-site modules, however, come under scrutiny by those interviewed. Evans, whose Commission recommended sweeping changes in the way the course was run, was not convinced that the way it was presented had been effective:

...people who have been doing the Home Study course have often felt they didn't really know where they stood in the whole thing. It wasn't systematically arranged, it wasn't clarified, it wasn't...presented so that they always knew where they were...and what in the future was required

⁸⁹ Respondent H, 4.

⁹⁰ Respondent E, 10.

⁹¹ Respondent D, 25.

of them...It has been very unprofessional...and this may account for some of the drop-out statistics.⁹²

Dr Rae reiterated this:

Home Study needs to be guided and directed. There's very little contact (with Tutors) in the present Home Study...with fax and email it seems to me a great deal more could be done...we need to look at how we can make the extension programme more viable and meaningful.⁹³

Since 1976, the Board of Ministerial Studies (later renamed the Board of Ministry), has assigned the successful applicants to the Selection Panel to the route which it considers to be most appropriate. As previously discussed, the choice of route has often been wrested from the Board by other circumstances, including the personal circumstances or choice of the candidate and the perceived need by the Board of Ministry to keep the candidate in an existing ministry situation.

This is supported by comments made in the case study:

Well it was recommended to me that I come to college, but I didn't feel that was right. I had a family and I couldn't afford it...I often struggled with exams, and I just felt that that wasn't the way for me to go full-time and study year after year and face exams. I couldn't have coped.⁹⁴

...they did tell me I would have to do a course of study and it would require May terms and home study as well...⁹⁵

I can't remember if I was offered the choice, but as a married man with children, it wouldn't have been practical to do the full-time residential course.⁹⁶

I think it depends on personal circumstances...⁹⁷

I have five children. I was in my middle thirties and really couldn't see a way of financing going into college. That would have been totally impossible, but that would have been what I would have preferred...⁹⁸

⁹² Rev Leslie Evans, 7.

⁹³ Dr Hugh Rae, 11.

⁹⁴ Respondent F, 11.

⁹⁵ Respondent G, 1.

⁹⁶ Respondent E, 1.

⁹⁷ Respondent B, 12.

⁹⁸ Respondent C, 14.

The lack of authority of the Board of ministry in allocating students to distance learning may be contributing to the varied perceptions of the programme. When confronted by the statistics which show a greater student drop-out rate from the distance learning programme than from the college, Rae and Evans responded with different reasons:

It doesn't surprise me for the simple reason that I think that when somebody comes in through a system like this (it) makes it relatively easy for them (to drop out).⁹⁹

Evans thought there may be other explanations:

...I suppose that people who go into college and are prepared to give themselves the three or four years of training have some higher level of commitment to the ministry...I don't think it's the whole reason however, and there are other factors, I'm sure, which contribute to it.¹⁰⁰

One element which arises in the case study is the absence of mentors appointed by the Board of Ministry. Although this was promoted as part of the programme in its recent history,¹⁰¹ it rarely happened in the early years, for example: "Nobody was appointed to supervise me..."¹⁰² Yet within the last decade when the mentor's role was in place, one respondent states that "There may have been times for me when it would have been helpful..."¹⁰³ and another replied that "No, there was no local mentor assigned at all."¹⁰⁴

3.3 The local church.

The link between the distance learning programme and the local church context is part of what Evans perceives as a weakness:

...there ought to be a much greater degree of dialogue between the college and the local churches where the ministers are involved...because they will get discouraged undoubtedly, if they don't have people's sympathy and understanding and encouragement of their local churches. On the other hand local churches may feel that if their minister becomes more qualified

⁹⁹ Dr Hugh Rae, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Rev Leslie Evans, 2.

¹⁰¹ *Minutes of the Board of Ministry*, British Isles South District, March, 1998.

¹⁰² Respondent C, 13.

¹⁰³ Respondent E, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Respondent A, 1.

than he is, they could be losing him. There's all sorts of negative attitudes in this area.¹⁰⁵

This is reiterated by Cope, a lecturer in the programme:

...I think that congregations are often scarcely aware of the fact that their minister is undertaking this kind of training...I think that candidates have commented in the past of their intention to make use of what they have learned in their ministry, but...that may not be something that the congregation is particularly conscious of.¹⁰⁶

He continues:

I would...want to move in the direction of having a methodology in teaching that does reflect the specific setting in which the student is engaged, which certainly could require them to reflect on their context...I think that would certainly make much more explicit something at the moment which is only implicit.¹⁰⁷

3.4 The tutor.

An area of confusion lies in the difference between the mentor and the tutor. The programme envisioned that each student would be assigned a mentor for the duration of their studies. Tutors within the college would assist the student academically as each module was taken; mentors would interact with the student through giving encouragement and general support throughout the course.

Cope reflects that this is not functioning as it should:

...I don't know that that is actually working. In practice, I think that the role has been a minimal role, and as far as the college context is concerned, I think the arrangement was made so as not to increase the burden of the college lecturer of needing to be responsible directly for individual students. So, I don't think it works really, in practice. We need to come up with a system that is personalised...therefore I think the role of a personal tutor could play a much more active part...¹⁰⁸

3.5 The College and the programme.

Whether the Board of Ministry is adequately promoting the programme through the college is a moot point. On the other hand, Cope is convinced that the college is not entirely enthusiastic either:

¹⁰⁵ Rev Leslie Evans, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Rev Chris Cope, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Rev Chris Cope, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Rev Chris Cope, 13.

...certainly as a college we wanted to be involved in the training to ensure a good higher academic standard of training, but I think there has been a certain degree of frustration at the fact that the methodology of training is further work for us and we would really prefer it if students came in full-time to the college.¹⁰⁹

Evans concurs, believing that the college could do a lot more:

...one of the great weaknesses in the relationship between the college and the church is that there is not sufficient dialogue...there ought to be an ongoing dialogue between the college and practicing ministers so that there could be some cross-fertilisation of ideas about courses, about content and so on...¹¹⁰

3.6 The student.

The attitude of the student in approaching the distance learning programme was considered important by some respondents:

I think it is the most important thing - attitude. My attitude was, well if it has to be done, then I'm going to set aside time to do it...¹¹¹

Motivation in terms of the end result was also a factor:

...one of the problems with the course was that it was a bit long...but there was something out of it spiritually...professionally...(and) in terms of skills, but on paper, nothing. That's not a good thing. I could have stayed here...(and) gone one day a week to the Baptist Bible College and at the end of it had a degree.¹¹²

The content of the course was significant in compelling the student who is transferring in from another denomination to the Course of Study:

It might not be a bad thing to ask them, which of these modules do you think would really help you? And giving them an invitation...to do the ones they really feel they could benefit from.¹¹³

The fact that the expenses of the distance learning course are covered by the Board of ministry, was an added incentive to the student:

...the District...(gave) me the opportunity to study, dare I say, fee free, I am thankful for that.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Rev Chris Cope, 7.

¹¹⁰ Rev Leslie Evans, 8.

¹¹¹ Respondent B, 4.

¹¹² Respondent D, 8.

¹¹³ Respondent D, 25.

...I got a bill...at the end of the two years...I simply did no more than send the bill to the District Superintendent and told him that I couldn't pay it...I just didn't have resources to pay a sum like that. It was completely out of the question.¹¹⁵

4. Response: the proposed "Oslo model" and the methodology of the programme.

Drawing on the research done in the area of the Oslo competencies, the compatible philosophy of distance learning, and the results of the case study, the *delivery* of the model will now be developed for the contemporary British Church of the Nazarene.

This will be constructed within four interrelated distance learning elements. It is proposed that these be:

1. on-site May term modules offered at NTC,
2. off-site modules under the direction of NTC,
3. on-line modules through the internet from NTC/ENBC,
4. existing off-line education developed to best practice from NTC which may eventually become on-line.

What must be kept in focus is the comparatively small number of students coming through the distance learning route. There is a need for an efficient deployment of scarce college and denominational resources. The proposed model called the *Revised Diploma in Pastoral Studies* is set out with this in mind.¹¹⁶

4.1 The May terms: on-site delivery at NTC.

The May terms were set up by the Evans Commission in 1976. From the comments gleaned through the case study, they appear to be a successful element of the programme. Furthermore, the research has shown that modules done in residence, not only sit well with distance learning methodology, but are a positive help to the student. At present, nine out of the 24 modules in the *Diploma in Pastoral Studies* must be taken through the May terms.

¹¹⁴ Respondent F, 20.

¹¹⁵ Respondent H, 5.

¹¹⁶ The full text of the proposed: *Revised Diploma in Pastoral Studies* is set out in the appendices.

As this thesis has been written, changes have taken place in the minimum curricular requirements for ordination. These began through the Breckenridge meetings and were adopted by the global Church of the Nazarene and incorporated into the *International Sourcebook and Manual*. A *Regional Sourcebook* for the Eurasia region, of which the UK is part, has been written on the basis of the *International Sourcebook* and approved by the international Church of the Nazarene. The approved changes must be brought into effect by September 2001.

For some years, the writer of this thesis has been a member¹¹⁷ of the Academic Development Committee of NTC which has followed the Breckenridge and *International Sourcebook* discussion with interest as well as making significant contributions through its Chair, the college Dean. This committee has the responsibility of putting into effect the *Sourcebook* recommendations.

The research for this thesis has been running parallel to these discussions and has contributed towards the construction of this distance learning programme. Contributions have been made to discussions in this Committee and many formal and informal meetings, including presentations of the debate, made to District Boards and personnel.¹¹⁸ The model presented reflects these discussions, but goes further in its specifics of application.

The Course of Study for the ordained ministry must now be three years full-time education or its equivalent, no matter which route the candidate takes.¹¹⁹ This means that the number of modules has increased from twenty four to thirty and the *Diploma in Pastoral Studies* becomes a 300 credit unit course.

In the new scheme, revised by the NTC Academic Development Committee, the new ordination requirements set out in the Eurasia *Regional Sourcebook*, with the additional background of the Evans Commission Report of 1976 and the McAlister

¹¹⁷ By virtue of being head of the Department of Pastoral and Social Theology in the college.

¹¹⁸ The writer is also a member of the British Isles South District Board of Ministry, the District Advisory Board and the British Isles Administrative Board where Course of Study matters are discussed. In addition, the writer has given lectures in various classes at NTC on this subject and made informal presentations to ministerial groups.

¹¹⁹ *International Sourcebook*, 11.

Commission Report of 1999, are set out for implementation in the UK. Continuity with the old *Diploma in Pastoral Studies* is explicit and the integration of the *Diploma* with the other courses at the college is maintained. The four year full-time BA in Theology and Pastoral Studies done in residence at NTC remains the normative route but the new *Revised Diploma in Pastoral Studies* will be the minimum ordination qualification through NTC either by full or part-time education or distance learning.

Under the old distance learning scheme for the *Diploma in Pastoral Studies*, the candidates, financed by the Board of Ministry, attended three May terms at NTC and took nine designated modules. It is proposed that this number be maintained as the minimum, but that candidates on Scheme A (with no prior higher education), and Scheme B (with a degree, but not in Theology), complete twelve modules (120 credit units) at NTC. This would mean taking the seven designated modules plus five other required modules which would increase the required attendance to four May terms.¹²⁰ NTC would make a wider range of modules available so that the candidate on Schemes A and B would have more choice beyond the seven designated modules. Candidates on Scheme C (with a Diploma in Theology, but not from NTC) and Scheme D (with a degree in Theology, but not from NTC), would complete nine modules over three May terms. The designated modules must be completed through NTC and cannot be completed elsewhere or by other means. These are a means of ensuring that candidates complete key elements of their education “within the context of a Christian holiness perspective in a Wesleyan-Arminian mode.”¹²¹

Changes have been taking place at NTC with regard to the May terms however. In May 2000 a May Inter-Session Term was introduced which consisted of one and two week intensive courses followed by a set number of weeks for further research and submission of modular assignments. This scheme incorporated not only the candidates for the Diploma in Pastoral Studies, but any student who would benefit from taking a

¹²⁰ Candidates who live within commuting distance of the college may elect to take these modules part-time.

¹²¹ *Report of the Academic Development Committee to Faculty*, December 2000, 1.

module in this way. Over eighty students took one or more modules and so this innovation seems set to become the new pattern for the May term.

A challenge for the two Boards of Ministry is the proposed increase in the funding of students who need an additional May Inter-Session Term. The argument for this is strengthened by the new educational requirements for ordination which call for six additional modules. Moreover, the case study research has demonstrated that those questioned preferred the May terms as an element of distance learning, therefore it would be advantageous to propose that three of the six additional modules be required through the May Inter-Session Term.

4.2 Off-site delivery by NTC.

Seven 100 level, foundational entry-level courses are identified for off-site delivery. What is envisaged is intensive courses,¹²² delivered by college tutors in centres around the United Kingdom over three weekends, to give a total of twenty-four hours teaching as required by each module. Module assignments would be given for completion at a later date and thus the full ten credit units per module would be realised. The good practice elements of distance learning must be incorporated in this scheme. The lessons learned through the research which will assist the student in reflecting on ministry practice through situational analysis, portfolios and study journals as well as workbooks, will be considered for appropriate use in this mode. Through these the student may be helped to apply theology to ministry and be encouraged to look to the local context as an essential part of the learning process. The reinstatement of local mentors - an idea of the existing programme which has never properly been fulfilled - and the facility for group learning can become a reality through this re-envisioned distance learning programme. In other words, with the programme agreed,¹²³ appropriate learning tools can be applied from the research to the *Revised Diploma*.

¹²² Not dissimilar to the mode of teaching developed by David Goodbourn in Scotland, as noted earlier in the thesis.

¹²³ Agreement is expected from the Boards of Ministry on 1 March and 17 March 2001.

Weekend presentations of foundational level modules have been chosen for this element of distance learning. This will be appropriate for two reasons. Firstly, an eight hour session could be scheduled from Friday evening until Saturday afternoon over three weekends, thus given the twenty-four hours teaching time required. A local church or suitable building could be found in key centres such as London, Sheffield, Glasgow and Belfast if these were suitable to the candidates. Secondly, for this pattern to be maintained and to use human resources in the best way possible, the college's tutors would teach the seven modules on the first occasion with assigned college graduates as assistants. It is envisaged that graduates will then become the off-site lecturers from the second occasion onwards. The modules would remain the responsibility of the college tutors as approved college/university lecturers, but if the assistants were post-graduates, particularly from the college programme, it would be possible to have them approved by the college and university also.¹²⁴ A pilot scheme should be in place by September 2001.

4.3 On-line delivery through NTC.

Five modules are identified as those which could readily be adopted to on-line presentation with the prospect of others to follow. These are: BS120 Biblical Backgrounds, CH100 Church History 1, CH110 Church History 2, ST103 Religions in Contemporary Britain and ST150 Human Image. The strong content base of these modules together with the added benefit of visual and interactive aids through video clips, maps and diagrams, photographs and linked web-sites would provide a strong impetus to put these on-line.

European Nazarene Bible College (ENBC), a sister college of NTC, has offered to co-operate in the development of on-line modules. Once again, the research is drawn upon. There is now, on the committee's part, an increased awareness of technology and how this can be used. The research has opened up a rich vein of information and discussion on this area and emerging key principles will be applied to the process. A

¹²⁴ A minimum of a Masters degree is required for the person to be registered with the University as an adjunct lecturer.

web site now exists at NTC and local discussions are proceeding on the transfer of material to CD ROM as a supplement to the on-line delivery. The committee is now aware that although technology must be the servant of the programme, it can be a very good servant if its role is properly understood from the outset. Once again, it is expected that the research done for this thesis together with heightened awareness of the possibilities on-line education presents, will drive this endeavour forward.

4.4 Existing distance learning through 'directed study'.

Some modules remain which are not identified by the methods elaborated so far. Whilst the on-line element is being developed, the existing 'distance learning' for these modules must proceed with the view to incorporating them within the on-line method. This is lamentable, but the introduction of a programme of this size is labour intensive and financially demanding. This is reality; but it is tempered by the fact that in the meantime, the existing 'distance learning' mode is now heavily influenced by this research and the impetus to move to best practice distance exists.

4.5 CATS from other institutions.

NTC has always transferred coursework done at other recognised institutions. The Board of Ministry has entrusted the recommendation of substitutions or deletions of modules to the college Dean. After due consideration of transcripts from other institutions, these have been applied and the candidates' routes modified accordingly.¹²⁵ Up until now, this has been done on an *ad hoc* basis. It is proposed that the college develop a form of institution-to-institution understanding with other university-validated evangelical providers of theological education in the United Kingdom, so that the transfer of a limited number of modules under the CATS would be permitted. These would exclude the nine designated modules taught within NTC which are considered to be key elements of Nazarene ordination education.

It is recognised in the thesis that several denominations are represented in the NTC student body and some are preparing for the ordained ministry of their denomination.

¹²⁵ Case study interviews indicate that this is a regular occurrence, e.g. Respondent A.

Moreover it is noted that there are examples within this student group of denominations who will insist on designated modules being done in their colleges or under their auspices.

By allowing a limited transfer of modules from university-validated evangelical providers, the college is pursuing contacts already established. Examples include: Belfast Bible College (Queens University, Belfast validated courses); International Christian College (Open University); London Bible College (Brunel University); Spurgeon's College, London (University of Wales) and Trinity College, Bristol (University of Bristol). Whilst transfers under the CATS frequently take place from a wide variety of other colleges and Universities, the establishment of a formal link with colleges already within the Consortium of Bible Colleges should be an easier first step.

Developing such formal links would strengthen the ecumenical element of the course. It is a careful first step for, as the case study has shown, the diverse constituency of Nazarenes in the UK harbours individuals and groups who would find a formal link with other providers difficult to accept. Perhaps this reflects the 'functional ecumenicity' which NTC practices already and it could act as a strong signal to the rest of the Church of the Nazarene in the UK.

5. Conclusions: The Oslo Model and its implications for the Church of the Nazarene in the UK.

Firstly, the Oslo model and its competencies forces the church to look again at a debate which has been evident throughout its history. Oslo states that viable theological education should be primarily formative through various key competencies which need content and context. Through the introduction of the four C's, the church has the opportunity to weigh the Course of Study more towards the 'formative' goal. Whether it will attain this is still open to question, particularly as the academic demands of the course have increased. However, the equation of 'academic' equals 'theory' and 'practice' equals 'formation' must be resisted. 'Formation' can and must take place through 'academic' pursuits as well as learning for 'practice' through 'theory'. Programmes of theological education, by the nature of the material they

handle, should be educative and formative. However, there is always a danger of an imbalance. 'Formation' may be that which suffers (and the case study indicates this) when it is not overtly anticipated or even planned for. Furthermore, in the minds of some students, there may be the strong separation of 'theory' and 'practice' to the extent that, if practice is not planned for, it is not seen to be happening through the everyday events of life.

In the distance learning mode, with which this thesis is concerned, the opportunity to link 'education' and 'formation' together is greater. As it is remote education and the students are already working in their contexts, reflection on this context for ministry and personal formation must be a keystone of the programme. Mentoring students in their context is another. Reflective writing through workbooks and portfolios is yet another tool which can cause the students to step back and attempt to analyse what is going on in the situation and in their own lives. This takes organisation and time to implement, use and monitor. However, although the module demand has increased, so too has the time - to a minimum of three years full-time equivalent study. The transition must be done with care, as history shows that the church's attempts with CENETA (TEE) have ended up with a very strong emphasis on 'learning in context and on the job' to the drastic curtailment of 'content' for that learning process. On the other hand, the UK distance learning model has shown strong content but few tools to apply to learning in the context. The *Revised Diploma* gives the opportunity, through different distance learning modes, to truly combine ministerial formation and theological education.

Secondly, Oslo is an ecumenical document and strongly promotes church unity and mutual learning. The Church of the Nazarene has weak ecumenical credentials when considered globally, but in the UK there are stronger indications of a willingness to work together. The link up with other colleges, proposed through the *Revised Diploma in Pastoral Studies* is unique to the UK as far as the writer knows. Although this is a restricted list of colleges, it is a beginning and must be built on.

Thirdly, the UK has never had a TEE programme, although the suggestion has been mooted in the past and its sister college in Switzerland (ENBC) has gone down this route. The thesis has shown the weakness of CENETA (TEE) in its Latin American form (which has been promoted world-wide) but also shown the weakness of the distance learning programme in its UK form. The *Revised Diploma in Pastoral Studies* gives the UK an opportunity to promote a programme which fuses best practice in distance learning and Oslo's competencies. With this body of research available, it is anticipated that this programme will be both educative and formative.

Fourthly, the *Revised Diploma* will demand a financial commitment on the part of the church and college. Setting up and maintaining a programme of this nature needs investment in the infrastructure and in people to operate it. The responsibility will fall to the college to provide for this route through its annual budget. A charge for each module may need to be levied. This will be unfamiliar territory to many distance learning students, as they have received their education free up until now. Furthermore, the UK districts and Boards of Ministry will need to support the students through the additional May inter-session which now becomes a viable option in the three year programme.

The Course of Study in the Church of the Nazarene in the UK has much to commend it and, as the church now approaches its centenary, there is now an opportunity to reassess and re-envision the aims and purposes in theological education and ministerial formation for the ordained ministry.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ The author plans to attend an invitation-only Nazarene curriculum conference on the four C's in Grove City, Ohio in June 2001. This is sponsored by The Office of the Ministry, International Board of Education and World Mission which together are engaged in a long-term project to implement the 4-C's abilities defined by the 1997 *Manual*. Six pilot modules are under development and will be available for review at Grove City. The pre-conference literature states, "The instructional purpose of the event is to develop participants' skills in creating instructional programmes and materials to reach defined educational outcomes. Instruction will be provided in curriculum related topics such as, Outcomes-based education, Modular course design, The adult student, Learner styles and preferences, Defining intended learning outcomes, Selecting learning strategies, Creating a syllabus, Assessing Learning, Cultural transferability, Fair-use of copyrighted material, Guiding and facilitating the pastor-teacher, During the consultation sessions, participants will work in teams to create curriculum outlines, syllabi, lesson plans and resource lists for one of the topics in the new Modular Course of Study for ministerial preparation. Team members will include academic specialists, educational facilitators, practitioners and cross-cultural representatives. The modules to be developed during the

6. Suggestions for further research.

To draw an analogy, this thesis has provided 'four wheels and an engine' for this endeavour. The work has just begun and more research is needed. The 'bodywork' now needs to be constructed and vital 'accessories' added.

Further work needs to be pursued on the *παιδεία* and *wissenschaft* approaches to theological education. As noted in the thesis, Western models are heavily influenced by seminal historical developments in this area and a reconsideration may be due.

Ecumenicity in theological education may be both a present and future necessity. Further study may reveal if a lack of ecumenical credentials has limited the Church of the Nazarene in its educational endeavour. The prospect of regional rather than international church governance is being mooted in Nazarene circles. The place for ecumenical contact may become greater and more necessary as the church divides itself into smaller sectors with less authority from the USA.

The methodology of distance learning is constantly developing and on-line theological education may become the norm. The implications of this for residential education raises interesting questions. Furthermore, the demand for ordained ministers in the UK is not being met through the college and indications are that more lay people who are taking early retirement, or second career people, are being proposed in some circles as the solution to the shortage. If this transpires, the implications for theological colleges would be enormous. Research is needed in this area.

Course content has been raised as an issue during the thesis. It was argued that the theological college should not be seen as the 'servant of the church' but as the 'arm of the church'. How much input should local churches have to theological education

consultation are Church History, History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene, Hermeneutics, Systematic Theology, Doctrine of Holiness, Theology of John Wesley, Communicating the Gospel in a Pluralistic World, Cross-cultural Communication, Biblical Theology, Homiletics, Evangelism, Pastoral Care, Ethics, Stewardship of Church Management, Leading the People of God and Worship." The author hopes to be able to contribute to this debate on the basis of the research done for this thesis.

programmes? Some interesting material has been written in this area¹²⁷ and further work needs to be done.

The thesis has undertaken to develop an Oslo model within the context of best practice in distance learning. It has considered that the Oslo model is a legitimate starting point from which to refocus and develop ministerial formation and theological education for the ordained ministry of the Church of the Nazarene in Britain. Moreover, Oslo's recommendations to encourage the development of programmes of distance learning not only suit this refocus but encourage a methodology which the Church of the Nazarene in the UK should seriously consider for the delivery of its Course of Study.

The thesis has brought the process thus far and essential groundwork has been done. However, the thesis has also shown that the integration of different philosophies of learning and different methodologies of delivery do not come about easily. Although common ground has been discovered, there have been times in the thesis where full reconciliation has not been possible, or even anticipated. It has been difficult to bring together such diverse thinking on both philosophy and methodology and the results have been modest.

Important questions remain, not least those relating to the implementation of such a model in the church context. A significant next step, therefore, will be in initiating further research, particularly in the area of spiritual formation using distance learning methods. The development of tools for use in the areas of mentoring and journaling may be an initial step to be considered in order to implement and measure this process. Also, further work must be done in the areas of the Nazarene and Oslo competencies and the expected learning outcomes. In this quest, we are reminded of the ecumenical context of the Oslo Consultation and Pobee's words that, "the truth is only found in dialogue with others."¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Johannes A. van der Ven's book *Education for Reflective Ministry* (Louvain: St. Peter's Press, 1998) is an excellent contribution to the debate.

¹²⁸ Pobee, "The First Gospel...", 5.

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