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Mission as theological education: Is Christian mission history coming full circle?

A German-South African case study

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Abstract

The author suggests that theological education should be considered as mission in itself: mission as theological education. This is important because of his understanding of the development of mission history, which he regards as coming full circle. He illustrates his argument with reference to a case study of ecumenical co-operation in missiological education between the University of South Africa (Unisa) and the Gesellschaft für Bildung und Forschung (GBFE) in Germany.

Introduction

There seems to be a clear trend towards ecumenical theological education in the Global South (specifically Africa) and in many previously Second World countries in Central and Eastern Europe. This is a much generalised statement and I am not going to argue it here, as the phenomenon of ecumenical theological education as such is not the focus of my paper. What can be stated as a matter of fact, though, is that the International Mission Council (IMC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) started a Theological Education Fund for Third World Churches already at a meeting in Ghana in 1957-1958 (Pobee 1990:vii). This fund was later transformed into the (ecumenical) Programme on Theological Education (PTE) of the WCC. From the beginning, this effort was, in Pobee's words (ibid.) "a massive exercise in ecumenical co-operation, moral and financial". This trend was also carried further through the All-Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) with its emphasis on ecumenical "centres of excellence" for theological education. This latter concept revealed the reality that no single African denominational church had the financial or human resources strong enough to build a confessionally exclusive "centre of excellence" in theological education – the only realistic way forward was through ecumenical co-operation. Ecumenical co-operation in theological education was therefore a benefit and a necessity which was embraced by various African churches with various degrees of enthusiasm.

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Moving to Southern Africa at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, it has become clear that ecumenical theological education is the only viable option, especially in terms of postgraduate studies. Many churches still maintain some sort of denominational undergraduate education, but all of them realise that such education has to be accredited by government (as is the case in SA), or by generally accepted accrediting agencies such as the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) in many South-Central African countries. Such accreditation enables students to continue their studies on a postgraduate level at a university; and for many African students, especially students from the SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries, the university of choice is Unisa (the University of South Africa) in Pretoria, SA. In some respects this is not surprising: South Africa has advanced infrastructure, also in terms of education, far superior to what is available in other SADC countries. What is remarkable, though, is that structures to enable ecumenical co-operation in theological education between Unisa and a First World country such as Germany have also been established – and it is this development I wish to use as a case study. Before I can do that, though, I first have to argue the validity of my understanding of mission as theological education, as well as my contention that Christian mission may be coming full circle. To this I now turn my attention.

Describing the concept: mission as theological education

It is necessary that I explain my understanding of Christian mission at the outset, otherwise the rest of my paper does not follow logically. I wish to describe[2] mission broadly as the over-arching dimension of Christian life in the world, what is widely known as *missio Dei*. I base this understanding on the description of the messianic vocation of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded in Luke 4:14-21. He understood his vocation as the introduction of the Reign of God in "the last days". In order to fulfil his calling, he had been anointed by and with the Holy Spirit, and he understood this calling to be multi-dimensional: evangelising, healing, working for social justice, and announcing the Year of the Jubilee. Whether the Year of the Jubilee ever functioned properly in Israel is, in fact, of no definitive importance: the intention was very clear, namely that in God's Reign a totally new political economy was intended (Saayman 1983; 2007:5; Kritzinger 2009:2-3). Add to this Jesus's first words and actions when he met with his disciples at their gathering on the night after his resurrection (John 20:19-25), when he endowed them with the Holy Spirit and transferred his vocation to them, and we can understand why Hendrikus Berkhof could state (1965:33) that "mission is the first and fundamental act of the risen Christ". For this

[2] I use the term "describe" rather than "define"; the reasons will become clearer in what I write below.

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reason, mission has a logical, if not chronological, priority in the sequence of the Spirit of Christ's actions. It is for all these reasons that I understand mission the way I do.[3]

This presents one with a dilemma if one prefers a neat univocal definition of mission. But it is, indeed not a new phenomenon. As Bosch pointed out (1991:1), by the 1950s the meaning of the term "mission" was still fairly circumscribed, although it was no longer univocal. One could already distinguish at least eight differing general understandings of "mission" at the time, but a generally accepted synopsis of the term "mission" was still possible. During the 1960s and 1970s the use of the term multiplied exponentially, and it also came to be a strongly contested area of meaning with the growth of the Ecumenical-Evangelical controversy following on the merging of the International Missionary Council (IMC) with the World Council of Churches (WCC) at New Delhi in 1961. By the time that Bosch was writing *Transforming Mission* in the late 1980s, it had become very difficult, indeed, well-nigh impossible to come up with any generally accepted synopsis of the meaning of "mission". So Bosch proposed that we study history very carefully, analysing every era for its times of danger and opportunity[4] (:2-3), and establish as much as we can about the process of paradigm shift. Having done that, he concluded that a return to a romanticised era of simplicity and unanimity was useless. We have rather to deal with our own period of danger and opportunity, the era of a shifting paradigm, by imagining a new vision for mission. To do this, he argued (:7-8) with Soares-Prabu, we have to recognise that we are dealing today with "a pluriverse of missiology in a universe of mission" Mission is still one, still *missio Dei*, still the eternal outreach of Creator, Liberator and Sustainer to the created cosmos in which we can participate – therefore "a universe of mission". But Missiology is so complex, incarnated in such diverse contexts, calling for such diverse approaches, that we can only work in and with "a pluriverse of Missiology".[5] Yet we have to communicate with each other as God's people about the *missio Dei* from within our diverse contexts, we have to nourish each other as members of one body despite our distinctions and disparities, and we have to remind each other about the saving word once delivered to the apostles; therefore

[3] I should refer here also to Bosch's description (1991:15-16) of "mission as the mother of theology", and Haacker's analysis (2005), based on his study of Romans, that the books of the New Testament were not written in the first place to establish orthodox doctrine, but as missionary documents to enable contextualisation and inculturation of the good news of Jesus of Nazareth in the diverse early congregations.

[4] Bosch referred to danger and opportunity in this regard since he worked with the concept of paradigm shift; and every era of paradigm shift was, according to him, a time of both danger as well as opportunity.

[5] I understand Missiology as the systematic theological reflection on the practice of mission. Practice and reflection together form our missionary praxis.

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we must develop a mutually understandable language and lexicon. This we can do, suggested Bosch, by taking as point of departure the "universe of mission", and therefore speaking to each other about "mission as….". Then we deal with the reality of the "pluriverse of Missiology" by completing the phrase with the "action-word" required by our distinct and disparate contexts. That is how he then built his elements of an emerging ecumenical (=belonging to the whole inhabited earth) paradigm: Mission as the church-with-others, mission as *Missio Dei*, mission as inculturation, etc. It is in the light of this analysis that I wish to propose adding another element to Bosch's emerging ecumenical paradigm: mission as theological education.

This is in fact not an astonishingly new proposal: one of my doctoral students wrote his doctoral thesis at the Unisa already in 1997 on *Theologische Ausbildung: eine verpflichtende Mission* (Penner 1997).[6] Penner convincingly argued the case for regarding theological education as a binding missionary vocation for the Christian community (:9-84), indicating a clear line running through the Old Testament and rabbinic teaching, to reach its culmination in the New Testament (:85). I am not going to repeat the exercise, but would rather just quote from his conclusions in this regard:

> The concept *mathetēs* is very important for the understanding of theological education as mission. Here the Judaic tradition and the Christian tradition overlap....It is prescribed in the Great Commission in Matt 28:18-20 in such a way that *didaskō* is included in our understanding of the concept....An outstanding example of comprehensive theological education [in this sense] we find in the student of Gamaliel, the first theologian, apostle to the pagans, and missionary, Paul....He not only educated the congregations, but left us a practical example for future generations of educators. His great value can be found in his formulation of a [missionary] theology for the young churches, also a theology of education and formation (:85-89; my translation).[7]

Much more can and indeed should be added to my argument above. As this is not the main focus of my paper, I ask you to provisionally accept my formulation for the sake of my argument that we have entered an era where mission as theological education is an important element of the new emerging ecumenical paradigm. I now wish to turn my attention to my case study.

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[6] "Theological Education as binding missionary vocation". Peter Penner is a Russian-born ethnic German, one of the first Eastern European Bapto-Mennonites who did doctoral studies at Unisa. At present he is a theological educator in Eastern Europe.

[7] Penner stated that he was writing his thesis specifically to provide evangelical seminaries in the erstwhile Soviet Union with the tools to understand what the mission of Jesus required of them in their post-communist context (:90-91).

http://missionalia.journals.ac.za DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/41-2-10

Describing the concept: Christian mission coming full circle

By stating that mission might be "coming full circle", I am referring to a historical process. The modern (since the sixteenth century) Western mission movement to Sub-Saharan Africa originated in Western Europe. Ordained and (trained) lay missionaries were sent to unevangelised countries in Africa, such as South Africa, to evangelise and plant churches. In the beginning all the skills and expertise needed for these processes had to be supplied by the sending countries in Europe. By the second half of the nineteenth century many of the mission societies or sending churches realised that trained indigenous workers were necessary in order to complete the immense task. This generally happened through individual missionaries providing very elementary theological training for an outstanding indigenous helper during the 19th century – but this can be better described as mentorship than structured theological education (cf De Villiers 1972:206-293). As a result of the contemporary views about white colonialists being the wards of "childlike" and "uncivilised" indigenous people (also church members) this mentorship was pitched at a very elementary level and also totally paternalistic in nature. As time went by, though, and African churches grew in maturity and strength, eventually specialised theological training was instituted.[8] Slowly but surely during the course of the twentieth century structured theological education was introduced and South African churches started producing adequately trained pastors and theologians. The number of foreign missionaries engaged in pastoral and church planting projects diminished, until finally most foreign mission personnel left were involved mainly in the established theological training institutions. Since the final decade of the twentieth century this situation started changing dramatically; at present South African churches provide their own theological educators.

This historical development is basic to my understanding of "mission history coming full circle". In his well-known instruction to his disciples recorded in Acts 1:7-8 Jesus metaphorically described mission as a journey from Jerusalem to Judea, on to Samaria, and eventually to the ends of the earth.

> Throughout the history of Christian mission it seems to me that we generally understood this relationship in terms of strictly linear progression: from Jerusalem to Judea and then on to Samaria and ultimately on to the ends of the earth. I would suggest that one should rather understand it in

[8] The great South African mission historian, Du Plessis (1911:406-407) states that by the beginning of the twentieth century there was an urgent need for "a larger and better qualified native ministry". He was convinced that "native" pastors and evangelists could do a better job in mission in SA than white missionaries, and for this reason he described "better staffed training schools and theological colleges" as "the great desideratum in South Africa" at that time (:407).

http://missionalia.journals.ac.za DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/41-2-10

> terms of the progression of a never-ending [ascending] spiral, where involvement in Jerusalem spirals on through Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth and back to Jerusalem, on through….etc. (Saayman 2007:122-123).

This is the context within which I understand the ecumenical slogans, "Mission in six continents" and "Mission from everywhere to everywhere". Mission as theological education in Southern Africa originated in Europe, spiralled on through various geographical locations, and now is spiralling back to Europe, from where it will again have to spiral on to… In other words, mission as theological education seemingly has completed its first spiral and to confirm this contention I now wish to turn my attention to a specific case study.

Ecumenical co-operation in theological education between Unisa and GBFE

Historical background: Unisa

Unisa (the University of South Africa) is the mother institution of all universities in SA. It has its roots in the period of British colonial rule in the early nineteenth century, as an institution linked to the University of Cambridge. South African students could register for degree studies at Cambridge, and in the typical British fashion of the time the students "read for their degrees" on their own in SA. When they considered themselves ready for examinations, they would present themselves to the South African college in order to write exam papers set by Cambridge, which was also the degree granting body. As demand grew over time, this South African body instituted some university colleges where students could study on a full-time basis, being tutored for Cambridge degrees. These colleges eventually developed into fully-fledged universities. After the Second World War, many returning soldiers wanted to register for tertiary studies, but as they were older than normal and sometimes already had families, they could not afford full-time studies. Unisa then (in 1947) became a correspondence university which supplied study material by post and set up exam centres around the country where exams could be written in the normal way. As it was a non-residential university, this often provided the only opportunity in apartheid SA for black students to register as students.[9] By the early 1990s the profile of students registering at Unisa started changing very rapidly, as many young black students wanted to register for full-time study, both for financial reasons (it was less expensive), as well as on account of Unisa's international academic credibility. Unisa then turned into what is today

[9] The first black South African to obtain a BA degree in SA (in 1924), Prof ZK Matthews, studied at Unisa (Saayman 1996). Later on many political prisoners, such as Pres Nelson Mandela, studied at Unisa while imprisoned on Robben Island.

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internationally known as an Open Distance Learning Institution. It provides study material in a wide variety of formats, such as video tapes, video conferencing, tutorial centres, the internet, etc. Today Unisa has more than 250,000 students from all six continents and is one of the best known of the ten mega-universities in the world.

The Theological Faculty at Unisa was instituted in 1959 as a typically British "open" (non-denominational) academic faculty. It was therefore ecumenical in character from its very beginning. Towards the mid-1990s the faculty entered into accrediting agreements with most of the denominational theological seminaries in SA and other Southern African countries. Unisa thus became a kind of accreditation agency, mainly as a result of its high academic standard and the acceptance of its degrees all over the world. At this stage we were registering the first Russian-born ethnic German students from the previous Soviet Union for study in Missiology. As members of Evangelical Free Churches (mainly of Bapto-Mennonite origin) they did not see their way open to study at the denominationally controlled state universities in Russia and Germany. An added attraction was that many South African theologians from that generation could teach and examine them in German, as a result of the close affinity between Afrikaans theologians and their German counterparts.[10] So soon (in 1999) Unisa also entered into a contractual agreement with GBFE (Gesellschaft für Bildung und Forschung in Germany).[11]

Historical background: GBFE

The pre-history of GBFE is an extraordinary story on its own (Saayman 2009). It came into being mainly as the result of the international stature of the first Head of the Department of Missiology at Unisa, Prof David Bosch. He spent a sabbatical year in 1978 teaching at the Mennonite Theological Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, where he met the theological "godfather" of many ex-Russian Mennonites, Prof Hans Kasdorf. Kasdorf completed his doctoral studies at Unisa in the late 1980s and started referring Eastern European as well as Latin American Bapto-Mennonites for postgraduate studies to Unisa. The demand grew so rapidly that it became clear that we needed an European institution to help with administration, arranging seminars, providing European co-promoters, etc. Out of this process grew GBFE, the first European institution to enter into a contractual teaching agreement with Unisa.[12] Postgraduate students register with Unisa through

[10] When I studied postgraduate Theology in the late 1970s at Stellenbosch, the DRC still required that a postgraduate student in Theology had to complete at least German II (two years of studying German at university).

[11] Reference must be made of the critical role played in this process by the then Head of the Department of Missiology at Unisa, Prof NA Botha.

[12] More information is available on GBFE's website. GBFE has also produced its first yearbook, which contains some information (Ebeling & Meier eds 2009).

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GBFE, are tutored by Unisa and accredited GBFE tutors, are examined by Unisa and submit their dissertations and theses to Unisa, who confers the degrees. So South Africa, in a so-called "Third World" backwater, provides a much sought after academic export product to students in Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Austria, Russia, etc.[13] At present these students are no longer only from Free Churches; they include students from the state churches in Germany and Switzerland, for example, who choose to study with Unisa rather than with their own European institutions. In the ten years of its existence, 108 GBFE students have obtained Masters and doctoral degrees from Unisa. Many (indeed, most) of the theses are eventually published in languages such as Russian, German and English. So at this stage we can truly consider this to be a success story.[14]

Theological Reflection

So far I have described the everyday practical course of events which brought GBFE into being. I have also briefly described my own understanding of mission as theological education. Some more extensive theological reflection on the whole process is obviously called for. To this I now turn my attention.

- The passage in Eph. 3:14-21 is extremely important in the missiological praxis of the Dept of Missiology at Unisa, and is also very important in an understanding of what the relationship with GBFE is about. It is especially the wish verbalised in verse 18 which is extremely important: the reality that Christians can only know the full scope of God's love for us in Christ together with all God's people. David Bosch identified this as the central heresy of racially separated churches in SA: that the racial separation denied this very truth that we need to be together with all God's people in order really to acquire depth of spiritual understanding. He also identified this as the central failing of the political policy of apartheid which Afrikaners supported: that such separation, such denial of black people's humanity, demonstrated a defective understanding of anthropology.[15] It is interesting that those of us involved in the

[13] One can best explain the process by comparing it to a very popular and well-regarded German export product: luxury motor cars. Mercedes Benz and BMW cars are very popular in SA as a result of their proven reliability. So today they are produced on contract in SA, but they remain German in conception and design. In the relationship between Unisa and GBFE, the roles are reversed. Unisa provides the much-sought after quality export product, which is produced on contract in Germany, but remains South African in conception and design. The quality control is done by Unisa.

[14] The Unisa management indeed considers GBFE as one of Unisa's 4 or 5 strategic partners in Europe at present (Unisa 2009).

[15] This statement is argued in a biography of Bosch which will be published in 2010: W Saayman & K Kritzinger (eds): *Prophetic integrity: the mission praxis of David Bosch*. It

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creation of GBFE after his death incarnated this belief in what we are doing. South African Christians, many of them the fruit of German mission and missiological work, need the fellowship of their German brothers and sisters to understand the riches of Christian Missiology in the post-apartheid era; and German Christians, many of them the spiritual descendants of German Missiologists and missionaries who taught us in South Africa, were humble enough to realise that they now needed us to fully understand the riches of Christian Missiology in an age of a Christian community adapting to globalisation.

- It is interesting, actually incredible, that Reformed and Anabaptist Missiologists have become comfortable bedfellows. I was taught the central Reformed tenet in its South African (Dutch Reformed) incarnation at theological school: that Anabaptists are schismatics, and therefore outside the fold. This was the widespread conviction of Reformed Christians, probably inherited from hotheads such as Ulrych Zwingli in Zürich. Today still there are many Reformed Christians who do not regard Bapto-Mennonites as fully-fledged brothers and sisters in Christ. And in the same way there are many Bapto-Mennonites who regard Reformed theologians (and their students!) as unbelievers, objects of conversion. Yet the early days of GBFE required exactly this, that these two had to become one as Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition. In the process we could work as brothers and sisters in Christ, together getting to know the length and breadth and depth and height of the Love of God in Christ. In the process we found that actually we are close to each other also in theological terms.
- Contextual factors in the early days played a very important role in the developing relationship. Bosch, (and with him many DRC members) were very interested in mission in the Second World (the countries of Eastern Europe under Soviet control). It is very important to note an aspect which is today generally accepted, and which indicates the entanglement of South African and Russian history: that the death knell sounded for apartheid SA in February 1990, partly as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which sounded the death knell for Soviet Russia. Since I first could understand what I was taught by teachers and ministers, I knew that Soviet Russia was South Africa's greatest and deadliest enemy. Indeed, since Stalin incarnated the Antichrist, Soviet Russia was the arch-enemy of all Christians. So I only had one duty: to pray for the persecuted and tortured Russian Christians and for the destruction of this "evil empire". I never read anything about Russian and Eastern

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European Christianity, so I was thoroughly uninformed about the real state of affairs. In any case, nothing in my background (or the background of other South Africans) prepared us for meeting Christians from Russia and Eastern Europe in the flesh. It suddenly struck us that there were actually quite remarkable similarities about life under a Soviet regime in the Second World and life under apartheid in the Third World. When I visited St Petersburg and Moscow in 1995 I realised the incredible contextual similarities in the two societies previously (before the Berlin Wall fell and before apartheid crumbled). Of course, it should have been expected: fascist regimes are the same in many instances, whether Russian or Afrikaans. This helped us early on to understand some of the contextual peculiarities of Christian life under Communist rule, so that we could also give good advice and leadership to our students. And on the other hand it helped us understand why our students' faith was formed in certain ways.

- My final theological comment is specifically in honour of our great South African human ancestor, David Bosch – a confirmation of the role of the personal in this story again. In 1978 he read a paper in the USA which was published as: "Towards true mutuality: exchanging the same commodities or supplementing each other's needs?" (Missiology VI:3, July 1978). The reason why I refer to this article is as follows: In 1963 the Mexico City Assembly of the Commission for Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches coined the slogan "Mission in six continents". It was meant to emphasise the truth that mission was not done only by Europeans and Americans in Asia, Africa and Latin America, not only done by the rich to the poor, not only done by whites for blacks; mission was done by everyone for everyone, from everywhere to everywhere. Mission is not like traffic in a one-way street, travelling in one direction only. Mission is two-way traffic, sending and receiving. So the fact that the modern mission movement was mainly from Europe to Africa, for example, did not mean that this was how God meant it to be for all time. Those who at one time sent out missionaries, had to realise that they ultimately also had to receive missionaries from their previous mission fields. But this was not easy. Very often Christians could not think creatively on how to do this, because the sending countries in the First World considered themselves more civilised and better developed than the mission fields in the Third World, considered primitive and uncivilised. So very often it ended up being simply a limited and brief exchange of the same commodities, and not really mission: Europeans sent us evangelists a hundred years ago, so now Africans have to send some evangelists

http://missionalia.journals.ac.za DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/41-2-10

for a brief campaign there. Europe sent us money for a hundred years so now we in Africa have to send some gifts back (the problem, of course, being that Africans do not have enough money to send worthwhile material gifts to Europe!). So Christians generally thought mission as two-way traffic meant trade in the same commodities. This was what David Bosch pointed out, and then he reminded us: that is not how God meant it to be – God does not want us to exchange commodities, but serve each other with gifts (charismata). In 1 Peter 4:10 Peter tells us that every Christian and every Christian community received special gifts (charismata), a special gift of the Holy Spirit, to utilise. But that gift was not meant to be utilised and enjoyed privately in isolation, it was meant to be utilised in community, to build up the whole body of Christ in all the world. So what we have to do is not exchange the same old historical missionary commodities: we have to serve the body of Christ by serving each other with our unique and special gifts. Why? Because the Holy Spirit has given us that gift for the simple reason that the body of Christ needed it – not for our pride or private enjoyment, nor because we are better or more educated. That is how two-way traffic in mission is supposed to function. And that is what is happening in the interaction between Unisa and GBFE. At this moment the body of Christ in Central and Eastern Europe needs proper missiological education (mission as theological education); and members of the body of Christ in South Africa can provide this gift. They can do so not because they are very clever, or very holy, or very special. They can do so because God knew that in the final years of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first century his body in Central and Eastern Europe would need it. So he did all those things which to many look like coincidences, and to some look like his providence, so that GBFE can exist today to facilitate the two-way traffic which is needed today. So in this way we are working according to the understanding of our great ancestor, David Bosch, not exchanging commodities, but supplementing each other's needs in the power of the Spirit.

Reflexion

I hope that I have given some ideas and at least provided some rudimentary tools to work with. Many First World churches have a long and honourable mission history in my part of the world (South-Central Africa). They now have partner churches in some of the countries in this part of the world to which they are still related. Maybe the story of Unisa and GBFE makes them see "through a glass darkly" a new possibility for mission in the emerging global and ecumenical context. Our world at present changes so

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incredibly quickly that even the best futurologists can do little more than guess about the future; nobody can predict it with any certainty. In the eighteen years that I have been involved with what eventually became GBFE, we have formed a partnership and a fellowship which is probably unique in the world. I say this not with any sense of pride or boastfulness, but rather with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and astonishment at what God can do through his *missio Dei*. God surprised us very often along the way in the unexpected directions the road took. When I studied Theology in Stellenbosch in the early 1970s, speakers such as Brother Andrew and Richard Wurmbrand came to warn us that Russia was going to conquer South Africa, and that we Christians had to be prepared to seal our witness with our blood. This call was taken up very seriously by church leaders in SA, also in the Dutch Reformed Church. So we were taught tricks in the lecture halls of the Theological Faculty at Stellenbosch, tricks to survive which were developed by Russian Christians, on how to survive in future possibly as an underground church. Yet today missionaries and theologians who studied with us in SA are instead witnessing publicly and freely in various places in Russia and the former Soviet bloc. So if such a great reversal can take place, that the walls of apartheid and the Berlin Wall could fall, enabling the growth of GBFE, I expect some even greater surprises as the Holy Spirit leads us on the next step of our common missionary journey into the world which God loves very much.

Conclusion

I set out in this article to establish a new understanding of theological education, namely that theological education can in itself be mission: mission as theological education. I also raised the possibility that this can be a sign that Christian mission history is coming full circle according to my understanding of the never-ending ascending spiral described in Acts 1:7-8. Then I briefly described and analysed a case study: the relationship between the Faculty/School of Theology at Unisa and the GBFE organisation in Germany. I did this in the hope that it will inspire discussion about the possibility of seeing mission as theological education today. The emphasis is often still on other dimensions of mission such as evangelisation, healing, church planting, etc. I wish to recommend that we consider that at this stage of the development of Christian mission history that mission as theological education may quite possibly be the most important need.

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