

# Giving theological education a missional heart: A South African perspective<sup>1</sup>

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**Revd Michael McCoy, a South African working in ecumenical theological education in Africa, argues that for theological education to be transformational, the study of mission needs to be at its very heart. This article is based on a talk given to an Anglican Communion Working Party on Theological Education (TEAC), meeting in South Africa in January 2006. Though written from an Anglican perspective, the vision it expresses has a much wider application.**

In an influential article written more than twenty years ago, South African missiologist David Bosch lamented that little attention was given to missiology – the formal study of mission – in traditional programmes of theological education. (Bosch 1982).

The theological curriculum in Western Europe, Bosch noted, was typically arranged into four ‘streams’: biblical, historical, systematic, and practical. This pattern was canonised ‘when the church in Europe was completely introverted’ (Bosch 1982:26). If mission was studied at all, it was usually as part of practical theology, as if it were largely a matter of technique or practical application; or it was offered as a totally separate subject, as if

it had little to do with the other ‘streams’; or it was an optional subject, competing with preaching, pastoral counselling, or liturgics for the student’s attention (:17-19).

This pattern of theological education was exported to the rest of the world in the wake of the missionary expansion of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and uncritically adopted and implemented in the formation of generations of local Christian leaders in what is now the Majority World.<sup>2</sup> Even the occasional critical analysis of this pattern – such as Bosch’s article, or the 1985 Latin American consultation on new alternatives in theological education (Padilla 1986) – made little impression on the way missiology was

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regarded in seminaries and colleges around the world.

This was particularly true in Anglican institutions, where, for various reasons to do with our distinctive history and ethos, missiology was not really taken seriously at all – except, perhaps, for practical courses in evangelism in colleges and bible schools in the evangelical tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Thankfully, the situation of neglect is changing – not everywhere, and not consistently, but theologians of many persuasions increasingly agree that mission lies at the heart of the theological task, and therefore at the heart of theological education. Martin Kähler's oft-quoted saying that 'mission is the mother of theology' (written in 1908) has won wide acceptance.<sup>4</sup> From a few lone voices at the end of the nineteenth century, to the wide ecumenical consensus that had emerged a hundred years later, a sense of the foundational nature of God's mission

for all theological work has grown.

Bosch's proposal in 1982 was not that missiology should be incorporated into the familiar theological streams as simply a dimension of each (though it certainly needs to be seen as integral to all other theological disciplines); nor was it that missiology should be a quite separate subject (though it deserves to be taken seriously as a discipline in its own right). Instead, he argued, missiology needed to be both *dimensional* (that is, integrated into, and in close dialogue with, biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology) and *intentional* (maintaining a critical distance from the other disciplines, bringing its own distinctive perspectives to bear on the theological task).

Latin American theologians at the CLADE III meeting in the early 1990s went further. They called for 'a drastic revision of the curriculum of theological institutions patterned after the Anglo-Saxon system', allowing it to be shaped by 'a rediscovery of the missionary nature of the church'.

**This is much more than simply adding a missiology course to the curriculum. It means a reformulation of the disciplines by placing the mission of the church at the center of their object of study. (Samuel Escobar, in Woodberry *et al* 1996:108)**

In the late 1990s, Robert Banks offered a thorough critique of Western patterns of theological education (Banks 1999). Like the Latin Americans, he proposed a missional model in their place. After a review of the strengths and weaknesses of what he called the classical, vocational, dialectical, and confessional models of theological education (which, in broad terms, he accused of being too heavily focused on teaching cognitive skills), Banks called for a model of theological education that was wholly or partly field-based, and that involved some measure of *doing* what was being studied. This he based on the teaching praxis of the Old Testament prophets, of Jesus, and of Paul. We need, he argued, to reconceive theological teaching as *missional practice*, in which there is a sharing of life as well as knowledge, and in which the practice of theology is active as well as reflective.

Against the background of such critiques in various parts of the world, profound changes in the national educational system in South Africa since the mid-1990s have forced theological educators to redesign the curriculum. They have been given the opportunity to restore a missional focus to theological education.

Here I focus on how one institution, the Theological Education by Extension College of Southern Africa, has developed its new Diploma in Theology

and Ministry and the Bachelor of Theology degree in order to put missional perspectives at the centre of its curriculum.<sup>5</sup>

### **South Africa's educational revolution**

I cannot give a full account here of the changes that have swept through the South African educational system since the first democratically-elected government began to transform the educational system it had inherited from apartheid in 1994. In one sentence: the discriminatory educational framework that had been in place for more than fifty years was replaced with a vision for a system that offers equal opportunity to all, fosters critical learning, and focuses on a style of learning that integrates knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes – widely known as Outcomes Based Education (OBE).<sup>6</sup>

These far-reaching changes to education in South Africa have forced virtually every educational service provider, from primary schools to universities, to undertake a whole-scale revision of their curricula. All learning in South African educational institutions *must* now be based on the principles of Outcomes Based Education.

### **Reinventing theological education in South Africa**

Theological educators in the region have had to come to terms with this

fundamental shift. For a century or more, we and our predecessors have mostly offered content-based courses built on the inherited Western model of cognitive (knowledge-centred) education.

This model asked: *What must students know and understand in order to gain this qualification?* The required knowledge was delivered through lectures and written texts; it was assessed through assignments and exams; and it was validated with a degree, diploma or other qualification. In theory (and too often in practice) a student could complete a theology diploma or degree, and satisfy the requirements for ordination, with little or no direct personal experience of ministry and mission, and few demonstrable skills in Christian leadership.<sup>7</sup> That the system has in fact produced many outstanding pastors and theologians is a cause for deep gratitude; but it has often happened *despite* the formal educational process, rather than because of it. I am reminded of Mark Twain's definition of education as that which you must acquire without interference from your schooling.

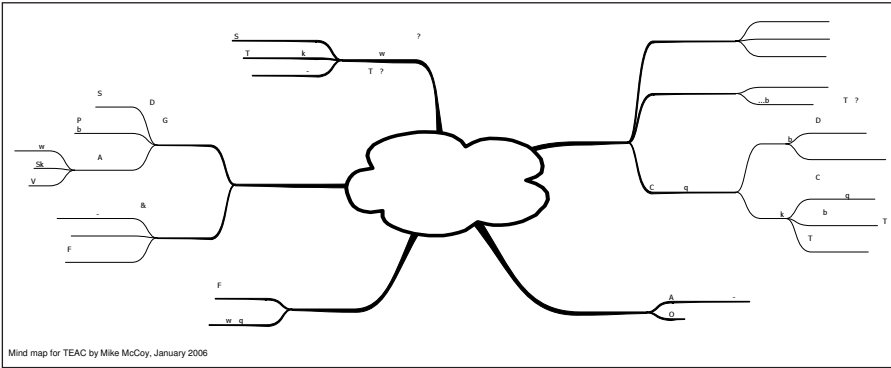
The challenge of OBE is quite different. The question that now has to be answered is: *What competence does the student need to gain in order to be able to fulfil this or that task / job / vocation?* The competence is gained through an integrated process of learning that addresses the head (knowledge), hands (skill), and heart (values); it is formally

assessed through a range of tools that include written work, practical projects, field research, workshops, and the like; and it is validated when the student is able to demonstrate her/his capacity to carry out the required tasks, using all the intellectual, practical, and attitudinal resources that have been acquired.<sup>8</sup> But who defines the tasks in which competence must be shown? And how is the competence demonstrated and measured?

There must be many possible ways to define the required standards. In South Africa, it has been done by the field-specific Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs), whose chief work has been to write the Unit Standards that make up their respective qualifications.

The Theology and Ministry SGB was genuinely creative in designing the new qualifications. We don't have to focus here on the detail of the qualifications they designed – for example, the 'titles matrix' that gave them their structure.<sup>9</sup> The key thing is the fact that, in deciding what outcomes they sought in properly-equipped students of theology and ministry, *they made a missional focus foundational to the qualifications.*

They did this by requiring every student to complete a number of compulsory core Unit Standards, including one that equips new students with a missional perspective for all theology and ministry.



Changes in South African theological education illustrated diagrammatically'

## Getting to grips with mission in theological education

### 1. Mission as foundational

Long before the new qualifications came into existence, I enjoyed provoking my colleagues at TEE College by insisting that mission was – or should be – the touchstone of all theology. As a relatively late convert to the discipline of missiology, I enthusiastically repeated Martin Kähler’s dictum. I believed that it needed to be heard by biblical scholars, church historians, systematians, and pastoral theologians, even if this sounded to them like theological imperialism. After all, the Joint Board Diploma in Theology,<sup>10</sup> as offered by TEE College for nearly thirty years, was structured in the classic non-missional Western way, with two courses in Missiology included as electives in the Practical Theology cluster of subjects.

TEEC offered only Missiology 1, and relatively small numbers of TEEC’s students ever took it. As a discipline, missiology was marginalised. As a theological framework, the *missio Dei* (the mission of God) was largely ignored.

Thankfully I was not a lone voice in lamenting this state of affairs. My colleagues at TEE College, and several educators from other institutions that participated in the Joint Board for the Diploma in Theology, also had a vision for a model of theological education that was genuinely transformational, equipping people in our subcontinent for forms of ministry that make real the good news of God’s reign, the *basileia* that Jesus proclaimed and fulfilled. We wished to offer educational materials that would enable students to bear faithful witness to the mission of God in our world.

And so we worked long and hard to understand how this new educational

framework would impact our lives and those of our students, and what it would demand of us to make it work well. And as we worked together at TEEC to shape courses for the new Diploma and Degree, the missional vision was written into the course materials. To revisit the terms used by David Bosch: we sought to build the mission *dimension* into the qualification, in large measure by placing a course rich in mission *intention* at its point of entry.<sup>11</sup>

A closer look at the mission Unit Standard may help both to clarify some of the terms used in this new approach to education, and to illustrate how theology is being renewed as a missional enterprise.

The Unit Standard is entitled *Demonstrate understanding of mission throughout church history and define personal mission*. The title states the competence that this Unit Standard offers. When students have successfully completed it, they will be able to demonstrate an understanding of mission throughout church history, and define their personal sense of mission in relation to it. It has three specific outcomes:

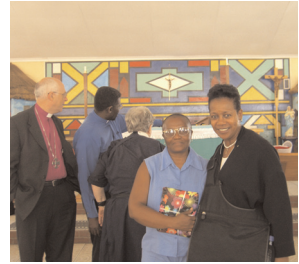
1. Outline the changing understanding of mission in church history.
2. Describe and evaluate mission-focused churches.

3. Define personal mission in relation to the mission of Jesus.

Each specific outcome describes an area of knowledge, skills, and/or values that the student demonstrates as a dimension of the overall outcome (expressed in the title of the Unit Standard) before the credits can be awarded. Each specific outcome also has its own range statements and assessment criteria. The first, for example, is assessed according to these ranges and criteria:

**Specific outcome 1:** Outline the changing understanding of mission in church history  
*Range:* from Biblical times to the present day.  
*Assessment criteria:*  
1.1 Key historical mission events are described in sequence.  
1.2 Models of mission are compared in context. The comparison highlights key differences in the understanding of mission in church history as revealed within the various models. *Range:* At least three models in two different periods and two different contexts.  
1.3 Descriptions are provided of key shifts in understanding of mission over church history.

Notice that the emphasis is not on *content*. Nowhere does the Unit Standard specify, for example, that students must analyse mission in the letters of St Paul, or study the evangelization of Central Africa in the fifteenth century. The content of any course that is built on this Unit Standard is determined by the institution that offers it. An Anglican



Members of the TEAC working party, meeting in South Africa, in discussion and visiting HIV/AIDS projects sponsored by the local Anglican Church

college is free to spend time on Anglican models of mission, just as Pentecostals, Methodists, Catholics, and others can emphasise their own historical and theological models – as long as they fulfil the requirements of the range statements and assessment criteria. The important thing is that students gain the *competencies* – the combination of knowledge, skills, and values – that they need in order to achieve the outcomes.

The mission Unit Standard is not particularly original. It covers the basic missiological ground that one might expect to see included in a rounded course of study. It requires the student to give attention to a range of biblical material, to mission history, to aspects of mission theology, to the life and witness of local churches, and to the student’s own context and personal engagement with it.

The notable thing is that it is a *compulsory core part* of the new qualifications. In earlier versions of the

SGB’s titles matrix, this Unit Standard was called *Recognise mission as basic to theology and ministry*, and it was located on the titles matrix as an entry level course on which rested the four ‘pillars’ – **Sources in Context, Faith for Life, Ministries in the Church, and Faith into Community** – that the SGB had thought should make up the qualifications.<sup>12</sup> The title of the Unit Standard and the layout of the titles matrix have changed since then, but the original intention has been preserved. And in that spirit, TEE College has turned the Unit Standards into teachable courses in distance education mode.

## **2. Mission as transformational**

Unit Standards are not courses. They are statements of outcomes that students need to achieve. They are the starting point for course design. They are, so to speak, the frame around the canvas on which theological educators must create their work of art.

At TEE College, along with other members of the Joint Board, we realised that the eight credits assigned to the mission Unit Standard made it too small to be turned into a stand-alone course for our purposes. So we joined it with a larger Unit Standard, also from the compulsory core, called *Implement transformation in a community using Christian principles*, worth 18 credits.<sup>13</sup> Together the two Unit Standards make up a substantial 26-credit introductory course that focuses on the missional nature of transformational ministry in context. We called it 'Doing Ministry for a Change', and I was contracted to write the course materials during 2004.<sup>14</sup> In 2005 nearly 600 Diploma or Degree distance students around Southern Africa registered for this course.<sup>15</sup>

The result of this marrying of two Unit Standards was the creation of a course that emphasises a view and practice of mission that is *transformational*. Students are required, as a substantial part of their course work, to engage in transformative action in a local community that is experiencing or perpetrating injustice in some way. This extended project requires missional reflection on the transformative action. Thus the course seeks to give students cognitive, practical, and attitudinal skills that help them to do ministry that is integrative, engaged, and contextual – ministry that

makes a change. In Robert Banks' terms, it has reconceived theological teaching as *missional practice*.

### **Our roots are in the future**

The new courses have been in place for just a year, overlapping with some of the older elective courses that a few students needed in order to complete the old Diploma in Theology before it is phased out. Those who have registered for the new qualifications are still trying to get to grips with this new way of studying, in which the familiar subjects of the old curriculum – Old and New Testament, Church History, Ethics, Systematic Theology, and so on – have apparently disappeared, and in which 'what you know' (and therefore, passing exams) is less important than *achieving competence* in a range of important outcomes. For them, and for us who oversee the courses, this is uncharted territory. It is often scary. It is sometimes tempting to turn back and return to the safe and the familiar.

But the old way of studying theology – or the way it used to be done through TEE College, at least – is dying or already dead. It is being raised to new life in an integrated, cross-disciplinary approach, one that stands or falls on the conviction that it is the mission of God that gives coherence, direction, and purpose to all Christian theology and ministry.



I am fond of an image used by the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, who pictures the church as a tree with its branches in the present and its roots in the future.<sup>16</sup> It accurately captures the current state of theological education too. Even as we deal with the day-to-day realities of designing courses and learning new skills and serving our students, we must keep our vision fixed on what is yet to come – and be ready for it. We must be rooted in God’s future: as we equip God’s people to serve God’s mission in the world, and as we seek the fulfilment of the *basileia* that Jesus proclaimed and embodied and inaugurated, we need to be nourished by the life-giving Spirit who invites us into that future, and who journeys with us into it.

The transformation of theological education in South Africa has happened relatively quickly. It has been driven, in part, by the national agenda of ridding itself of an outdated, ineffective, and discriminatory educational system; and, in part, by the growing conviction among key players in theological education that we *had* to change. Good theological education will not be satisfied merely with ‘banking’ education (Freire 1972). It will seek to *form* people in effective, faithful mission and ministry. The times and the tasks demand that we teach and learn in new ways.<sup>17</sup>

That is the context for the rediscovery of the missional core of theological education in South Africa. There is no reason why it should not happen elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury’s concern for theological education, embodied in this group (‘Theological Education for the Anglican Communion’ = TEAC, for whom the original paper was written), gives us a clear mandate to seek a thorough transformation of Anglican institutions and programmes.

### **The renewal of Anglicanism?**

Call me naïve, but I cherish a hope that the recovery of a mission-centred approach to theological education will make a significant contribution to rebuilding our rather tattered ‘bonds of affection’. Before the tensions over human sexuality became so acute at Lambeth 1998, I wrote an article called ‘Going in peace, or breaking in pieces? Anglican unity and the mission of God’. In it I argued that we needed to recover a shared vision for mission if our Communion was to find genuine unity. I won’t repeat the whole argument here; I’ll just quote its closing remarks.

*We need to recognise that our commitment to the universal *missio Dei* through the community of*

God's local people will lead to great diversity in mission models, strategies and practices. This will test our self-image as a diverse Communion. I think it may well reveal just how nervous we are of genuine diversity. But it's the only way in which mission will be faithfully done in the third millennium, enabling us to 'go in peace' – that is, to do God's mission differently from one another, yet with a common mind...

All of this assumes that, far from breaking into pieces, the Anglican Communion needs to hold together; that it can hold together; and that the only viable source of unity will be a full-blooded commitment to the *missio Dei* as the basis for our life together as a Communion. I subscribe to those three assumptions with all my heart. I hope that others in the Anglican Communion – what Desmond Tutu once described as 'this messy but lovable family' – will agree, and that we can continue to journey together in the peace-making mission of God. (McCoy 1998:31-32)

In its response to the Windsor Report (Lambeth Commission on Communion 2004), ANITEPAM noted how important it was that African

Anglican programmes of theological education got to grips with all the issues that the human sexuality debate has thrown up – including those relating to Anglican history, theology and identity – if the Church in Africa is to contribute to the enrichment of the Communion rather than to its fragmentation.

Theological education is one of the keys to the renewal of Anglicanism.<sup>18</sup> If it is to be an agent of such renewal, Anglican theological education needs to be rooted in the *missio Dei*, and to be made accessible to any of God's people who wish to grow in the faith, not just to ordinands and clergy (compare McGrath 1993:149-150).

Of course, being Anglicans, we shall find diverse ways to put this into practice. But diversity is not a problem, even though we sometimes make it one.<sup>19</sup> The real issue is the discovery of a common purpose in theological education. And that, I suggest, is to equip all God's (Anglican) people faithfully and courageously to embody, enact, and announce the good news of God's realm of peace – the long-awaited reign of God made present in Jesus Christ.

That's why we need to rediscover a passion for serving God's transforming mission, and give it its rightful place at the heart of our endeavours in theological education.

**Footnotes:**

<sup>1</sup>This paper is a revised version of an article published in the *ANITEPAM Journal*, November 2005.

<sup>2</sup>See Esther Mombo's essay in Wheeler 2002: 127-133 for an African view on this.

<sup>3</sup>This was my experience as a student at an evangelical college in England in the late 1970s, where practical workshops on evangelism were offered in the week or two between the end of exams and the start of the summer vacation.

<sup>4</sup>See Bosch 1991: 16, and Orlando Costas' essay in Padilla 1986, especially pages 5-6. Costas has suggested that theological education is a dimension of mission, rather than the other way round (in Padilla 1986: 5-24). Andrew Kirk (1997) discusses the interplay of mission and theology in greater depth.

<sup>5</sup>TEE College, an ecumenical distance education institution founded in 1977, is a major player in the delivery of theological education in Southern Africa. In 2005 it had 2,768 students registered for 5,877 courses. Of those students, 219 were taking the BTh Degree, 681 the Diploma, and 1,114 the Certificate in Theology. The rest were registered for Award-level courses.

<sup>6</sup>A fuller account of some of the changes in educational policy and structure in South Africa is given in the Appendix to the version of this paper delivered to TEAC in January 2006.

<sup>7</sup>I recognised only some years later that I was largely lacking such experience when I was accepted (in the early 1970s) as a candidate for ordination!

<sup>8</sup>TEE College's principal maintains that it had adopted the principles of outcomes-based education long before OBE was formally required.

<sup>9</sup>An early version of the matrix can be seen on the SACTE web site, [www.sacte.co.za](http://www.sacte.co.za). The matrix eventually registered with SAQA is different in several respects from the one still on the SACTE web site. The earlier version is nevertheless worth a look. The senior academic staff of TEE College played a key role in drafting the Unit Standards for the new Diploma in Theology and Ministry and the Bachelor of Theology degree.

<sup>10</sup>The role of the Joint Board is also described in the Appendix to the TEAC version of this paper.

<sup>11</sup>The mission *intention* is found in the course I describe more fully below; the mission *dimension* is present in other new courses. For example, Chapter 2 of the core half-course called "Practising Christian Leadership and Management" locates management and leadership issues within the context of the church's role in mission.

**Footnotes (contd.):**

<sup>12</sup>See [www.sacte.co.za/TitlesMatrix\(Mar2003\).htm](http://www.sacte.co.za/TitlesMatrix(Mar2003).htm). See also the previous footnote. TEE College has adapted the ‘pillars’ idea for its own qualifications, arranging elective courses into three streams called ‘Working with Sources’, ‘Engaging with the Christian Faith’, and ‘Applying Theology in Ministry’.

<sup>13</sup>Each credit represents 10 notional hours of work on the part of the student.

<sup>14</sup>See Tony Moodie’s article in the *ANITEPAM Journal*, November 2005, for more on the course itself.

<sup>15</sup>TEE College is willing to sell copies of its course materials to non-students, provided that copyright is strictly observed. Contact the Registrar at <[admin@tee.co.za](mailto:admin@tee.co.za)> for more information.

<sup>16</sup>John D. Zizioulas, *Being as communion* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), page 59, quoted in Dieterich *et al* 1998: 2.8. I have often used this image in workshops with theological educators to emphasise the eschatological, *basileia*-centred focus of the church as sign, foretaste, and instrument of God’s mission. (Note that Zizioulas’ surname is also sometimes spelt Zizoulas.)

<sup>17</sup>See Andrew Wingate’s study of theological education in India and Britain over two decades or more (Wingate 1999) for his assessment of its effectiveness.

<sup>18</sup>See McGrath (1993), especially chapter 7, for a discussion of this theme. I feel that McGrath pins too much hope on the role of the traditional seminary.

<sup>19</sup>Bevans and Schroeder (2004) remind us that diversity has always been a feature of Christian theology. While there are clearly ‘constants’, each context demands that they be addressed appropriately.

**References:**

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- <sup>16</sup>Wingate, Andrew. 1999. *Does theological education make a difference? Global lessons in mission and ministry from India and Britain*. Geneva: WCC Publications.
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# Appendix

**In the early part of the paper there was reference to the educational revolution that South Africa has experienced in the first decade of democracy. This Appendix gives a more detailed description of this process.**

## **The National Qualifications Framework**

To give shape to the transformation of the entire educational system, a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was designed that would guide the lifelong learning experience from the preschool phase to postgraduate qualifications.

One of the next steps was to define the range of competencies that learners, from pre-primary toddlers to doctoral candidates, would gain as they made their way through the Bands and Levels of the NQF.

The NQF defines three broad bands of education and training, each with differentiated levels (EIC/IEB 1996):

► **Band 1: General Education and Training** (Level 1). This is the basic, compulsory band for all school-age children, taking them to Grade 9 (around age 14 or 15).

► **Band 2: Further Education and Training** (Levels 2-4). This

band takes learners to the Level 4 school-leaving certificate in Grade 12 (equivalent to the old 'matriculation', usually around the age of 18).

► **Band 3: Higher Education and Training** (Levels 5-8). This is the band occupied by tertiary education in its various forms, from vocational colleges to technikons,<sup>1</sup> universities and research institutes. It is where most theological colleges and programmes find themselves.

Not only were the structure and philosophy of education being reshaped, but its management was also placed under much stricter control. The staff and governing bodies of South African theological colleges – left to their own devices for decades – now had to comply with an array of new laws and regulations, many of them complex and strictly enforced, if they were to remain open. Colleges had to register with the national Department of Education (DoE), be accredited by the Council for Higher Education (CHE), have their courses accepted and registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) – and learn a whole new language of technical jargon and

acronyms. These processes were often lengthy, rigorous, and expensive. Those that failed to meet the new requirements had no option but to close or to fold themselves into another institution that had made it through the hoops.

Until 2004, many theological colleges and programmes in Southern Africa – not just in South Africa itself, but also in Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana – were united under the banner of the Joint Board for the Diploma in Theology (Southern Africa), a broadly ecumenical body set up by the Southern African Council for Theological Education (SACTE). The Joint Board was the accrediting body for SACTE's member churches. It defined the curriculum of the Diploma in Theology, which most member churches required as a minimum qualification for ordination; it set the externally-moderated common assignments and exams; it maintained quality control; and it awarded the Diploma in Theology to successful learners. This enabled a number of less well-resourced colleges to offer a Diploma that, by themselves, they were unable to do.

That era has ended. Now each institution located in South Africa must register and be accredited in its own right with the national education structures, or cease to operate. Those outside South Africa, beyond the ambit

of its legislation, have been largely left to their own devices – though many of their learners who take distance education courses such as those offered by TEE College will benefit from the new system. The Joint Board will continue in some form, probably only as an advisory and consultative body. Legally it cannot offer a theological qualification after 2005.

### **Standards Generating Bodies**

The qualifications are now nationally-defined. To create them, the national education authorities created field-specific *Standards Generating Bodies* (SGBs) to come up with the building blocks of the new qualifications, called *Unit Standards* (see below). The SGBs were composed of people who knew their field, whether it be flower-arranging or neurosurgery.

SACTE was asked to constitute the SGB for the sub-field 'Christian theology and ministry'. The people making up this SGB represented every Christian tradition and all the major theological education stakeholders, from denominational colleges to university theology faculties. Over several years they constructed new qualifications – mainly the Diploma in Theology and Ministry (DipThMin) and the Bachelor of Theology (BTh) degree, both in the Higher Education & Training band of Levels 5 and 6.<sup>2</sup> These

were finalised and registered with SAQA in 2004.<sup>3</sup>

### Unit Standards

A Unit Standard (US) defines a single *competence*, made up of several *specific outcomes*, each with its own *assessment criteria*. These criteria may be further refined through *range statements*. Each US is allocated a number of credits, based on the notional time the learner will need to take to complete it; and those credits help the learner to accumulate

enough to complete the qualification.

The Diploma in Theology and Ministry, for example, requires a minimum of 240 credits, and is completed by fulfilling a range of Unit Standards, most of them worth 12 credits each. The Bachelor of Theology degree requires a minimum of 360 credits. Learners can register for either, depending on their prior learning; and Diploma graduates can go on to complete the Bachelor of Theology by gaining an additional 120 credits.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>‘Technikons’ or technical colleges have largely become technical universities in recent years.

<sup>2</sup>While both qualifications include some Level 5 Unit Standards, these are mainly in the foundational and core phases. The majority of the required credits come from Level 6 Unit Standards.

<sup>3</sup>See the SAQA web site – <http://www.saqa.co.za> – for more information about the DipThMin and the BTh.