

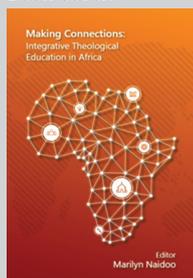
Integrative networking for theological education in Africa



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Making connections:
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education in Africa

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Review Title:

Integrative networking for
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Africa

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Making Connections: Integrative Theological Education in Africa examines Christian theological education's liveliness in an African setting. Preparation to equip ministers with strengthening theological education, is essential for Christian depth and continued vitality in our churches and community. The church in Africa remains highly dependent on ministers with adequate training, spiritual formation, and active involvement through leadership in their local congregations and communities, that meet the holistic needs and challenges of people. Relevant and quality theological education should strengthen a deep, authentic response to the gospel and involve a theology of transformation, to prepare the church as an agent of change that brings the possibility of hope to Africa.

This book characterises high-quality scholarly works and suggests *integration of theological education* as an appropriate practice to enhance the work of theological institutions in their service to the church and society. As stated in the introduction, the integration in theological education 'entails creating movement back and forth between the general and the particular, the historical and the present, the systematic and the ethical to the concrete and local' (p. 2). Well organised and edited, the book is divided into ten chapters and defines the multiple nature of contexts, identities, and challenges associated with theological education in Africa.

The first section involves conceptualising the integration and realities of the context of theological education. In the first chapter, Marilyn Naidoo addresses the 'conceptual understandings of integrative education as an appropriate approach for African theological education'. Naidoo lays the foundations, by providing a conceptual framework of philosophical, curricular, and theological theories about learning and teaching with fundamental pedagogical principles. Naidoo calls attention to the fact that:

[T]he key to enhancing African theological education is the intentional integration of knowing with being and doing, of theory with practice, and of theology with life and ministry. (p. 15)

In the second chapter, Devison T. Banda deals with the challenge of integrative curriculum design from a Zambian case study. Banda states that a training institution rises and falls with its curriculum; therefore, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating a curriculum should be one of the priorities of a Christian seminary, theological college or university. The point is also underscored that the way stakeholders interact, and the healthy relationships of 'trust' that they form, affect the development of institutions.

The second section focuses on the need for relevant content areas, within the curriculum of theological education. The focus of the third chapter by Jeremiah B. Oluwadare, highlights the integration of theological education in the context of national cultures and focuses on a new direction in mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics. To provide a critical reflection on theological education, Oluwadare indicates that teaching biblical hermeneutics in theological seminaries has always been directed by the western influence on biblical studies. Therefore, an integrative approach is needed to incorporate a new methodology into its study. In the fourth chapter, Vhumani Magezi focuses on integrating public issues into an integrated theological education curriculum. To respond to an integrated theological education curriculum, Magezi links public theology and curriculum design, offering several interrelated principles. The fifth chapter by Rudolf K. Gaisie, focuses on indigenous knowledge and integrated formational learning at the Akrofi-Christaller Institute in Ghana. Gaisie emphasises the importance of African indigenous knowledge systems, in helping to understand the nature of Christianity in Africa, and their crucial incorporation in any effort at theological education.

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The third section highlights aspects of the integrated theological education curriculum, that are lived out and are processed in the community, and include the moral formation, gender awareness and the role of the hidden curriculum. In the sixth chapter by Dela Quampah, the focus is on a discussion on the constructive value of appreciating ethics as the integrating factor in Pentecostal ministerial formation in Ghana. Quampah indicates that one aspect of the integrated theological education curriculum, is morality. This unifying factor requires and communicates critical ethical values, in pursuing holistic formation for potential Christian leaders. The seventh chapter by Marike A. Blok-Sijtsma, recaps the challenges of gender inequality and gender injustices in theological education. Blok-Sijtsma points to an integrative approach, that can contribute to the awareness of gender dynamics and encourage inclusion and transformation within and beyond the theological institutions. Chapter eighth by Linzay Rinquest, highlights a journey in integrating the hidden curriculum in a South African seminary. Rinquest emphasises incorporating the 'new hidden curriculum with the formal curriculum and the institutional adjustments within the learning community to bring together "The head, the heart, and the hands".'

The final section deals with two research reports on integrative learning. The ninth chapter by Kruger P. du Preez, focuses on integrated curriculum development in the

Reformed tradition in Sub-Saharan Africa, and discloses contextual challenges of establishing infrastructure for African theological education. Finally in the tenth chapter, Honoré K Bunduki aims to define integrated learning perspectives from the alumni of the Christian University in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Bunduki reveals vital principles of integrated learning, indispensable in shaping learners' personal experiences and building lives and communities.

The added quality to the book, is especially significant through the *lived experiences* of the authors and contributes to the discourse of theological education in Africa as academic work. *Making connections: Integrative theological education in Africa* highlights an educational strategy concerned with connections in human experience, thereby supporting student learning. In this quest, the book offers the opportunity to consider integration as an appropriate pedagogical approach. It could create a balance in making education more meaningful and fulfilling in Africa, revealing humanising education grounded in African philosophy and worldview.

This book brings together relevant and quality theological education voices, and it introduces the reader to academic discourses on integrative theological education grounded in Africa.