

## **INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: TOWARDS A NEW FUTURE FOR FACULTIES OF THEOLOGY AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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### **Abstract**

*This article is a first attempt in beating a new conceptual path for future and ongoing reflection and action in transforming faculties of theology at higher education institutions in South Africa. The following outline should guide us on our journey of discovery, reflection and participation. Firstly, the background and contextual picture of current transformational attempts at the University of the Free State (UFS) will be noted. Secondly, a local theoretical framework for intercultural theological formation is presented. Thirdly, an international theoretical framework for intercultural practices is provided. Fourthly, intercultural education will be viewed in the light of multicultural educational model. Fifthly, new methods of intercultural theological education will be proposed. The article will conclude with a few suggestions for future theological education.*

**Key Words:** Higher Education, Theology Education, Transformation, Interculturality

### **Introduction**

This article presents a case study for the transformation of theological education. The objective is to seek a conceptual framework for essentially intercultural and ultimately multicultural education praxis. The hypothesis of this article is that South Africa is a natural multicultural society, but struggle with meaningful intercultural communities/dialogue. We argue for an intercultural praxis as an ‘intermediary’ to foster new educational praxes. The concept ‘interculturality’, in this article, serves as a ‘visionary intermediary’ (Kritzinger & Saayman 2011:20) construct in realizing a meaningful multicultural praxis. Various reflective spaces were recently created at the UFS to highlight current transformational practices (<http://www.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?id=97>).<sup>1</sup> The now infamous Reitz incident led to the formation of the *International Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice* (the Institute or IISRRSJ) (<http://www.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?id=97>). The Institute offers “a critical space where engaged scholarship, public discussion, community engagement and teaching are innovatively integrated towards exploring and finding solutions to the complex and challenging work of social transformation in South Africa” (<http://www.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?id=97>).

The Institute has inspired cooperation and deliberations with key national and international exponents, amongst others the *Anti-Racism Network in Higher Education*

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(ARNHE). A number of seminars, consultations and the ARNHE Colloquium introduced the Institute's formal launch. For instance, Prof Daryl Smith, a Fullbright Fellow argued that "deep institutional change will be required if the mission of reconciliation and social justice is to occur" (Smith 2010:2). Smith (2010:4) proposed that its intellectual focus should be on transformation, social vision, intellectual courage, active participation, public dialogue and scholarship. We concur that the Institute's work should be acknowledged and integrated into theological education institutions. The next paragraph offers guidelines for a conceptual framework regarding the creation of intercultural theological education to build on the Institute's vision and mission.

### **Towards an Intercultural Framework**

Systematic theologians brought on a renewed interest in the important role of culture through constructive reflection: Tanner [1997] defines culture as a 'new agenda'; Grenz and Franke [2001] refer to the 'embedding context' of theology; and Schreiter [1997] links globalisation with an intercultural theological hermeneutic (in Venter 2008:543-544). Rian Venter (2008), professor in Systematic Theology at the UFS, offers valuable insights for a *localised theology of interculturality*. Some of his insights provide this article with important theoretical indicators. Particularly, in the light of the fact that global multicultural societies today are in search of intercultural public space for authentic community/dialogue praxes (DeYoung 1995). Cultural diversity is a significant characteristic and challenge in a globalised society. Venter (2008:542), however, points to the disappointing failure of the church and theology to respond appropriately to the complexity and diversity of cultures. Suffice it to state that the complexity of cultural diversity and the conception of the 'other' could result in exclusion, discrimination and conflict. The infamous Reitz incident at UFS serves as an example (Case-Winters 2006:43 in Venter 2008:542; <http://www.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?id=97>). Therefore, Venter ponders whether this is not a direct result of the absence of in-depth theological reflection on cultural diversity *and* interpersonal contact within the postcolonial milieu of globalisation. Three phases of development are relevant here, namely the missionary movement that led to cross-cultural dynamics; the postcolonial phase, with a new appreciation for the 'other', which coined multiculturalism; and the globalised world, which engenders the current intercultural phase by influencing cultures and forming the theological agenda (Venter 2008:543). Venter (2008:545) adopts Schreiter's [1997] theory of interculturality (for the South African context); and argues that a theology of interculturality is primarily concerned with the creation of community amongst people, instead of focussing on effective communication:

An intercultural approach is a shift toward a multicultural engagement that facilitates the possibility of various cultures sharing the same social configuration and therefore the possibility of negotiating values, practices, and even identities in order to live a more sustainable shared [teaching and learning] life. The intercultural experience is transformative in that power is first disclosed, analysed, shared, and constantly renegotiated among the diverse cultural groups in [faculties of theology] (Esterline & Kalu 2006:30).

The differentiation between cultural approaches is critical in choosing an appropriate cultural philosophy for faculties of theology. A cross-cultural approach refers to the movement of one culture into the space of another culture in giving and receiving from the exchange and in resorting back to the initial cultural space (Esterline & Kalu 2006:30). Multiculturalism refers to diversity and plurality. De Young, Emerson, Yancey and Kim (2003:74) concur that the 21<sup>st</sup> century "holds potential to be the century of multiracial congregations". They contend that the progressive emergence of multiculturalism is at the

cutting edge of ministry and growth. However, other theological and anthropological theorists are raising the question whether multiculturalism is not just sustaining the *status quo* that ignores the realities of race, power and privilege (Esterline 2006:7; Powel & Sze 2004:2 in Venter 2008:547). Suffice to argue that the 21<sup>st</sup> century offers multiple multicultural and intercultural challenges to theological education. Interculturality, however, is a preferred option and a critical and dynamic theory indicating interaction and communication between cultures; and attending to the reality of power balance (Venter 2008:547-548). It espouses the creation of new meaning forming communities. Venter (2008:546) elucidates the shift from modernistic perceptions about culture in terms of multiculturalism to a more postmodern understanding of culture as interculturality. Grenz and Franke (2001:138 in Venter 2008:547) argue from a postmodern perspective towards a *meaning forming* role of culture that is constructive and engenders *identity formation*. The reciprocal relationship between knowledge formation, socio-political power and the representation of the 'other' challenges the academy today. It poses not only new sets of research questions, but changes the 'we-versus-the-other' position to an intersubjective and cooperative approach (Wildburger 2004:107 in Venter 2008:547). Notions of intersubjectivity and cooperativeness engender a reciprocal intercultural formational environment for students and lecturers. It seeks the emancipation of mono-cultural praxes with its objectification of the 'other' (Habermas 2001:vii-x).

In the light of Venter's (2008) research we can concur, that intentional engagement with intercultural faculties of theology as 'transformational spaces' becomes critical (Mook 2005:40 in Venter 2008:554). Such an understanding of faculties of theology as new communities fosters relevance for a multicultural society. It fosters meaningful intermediary space for a new kind of humanity (Furet 1968:259; Habermas 2001:ix-x). Faculties of theology can thus become alternative spaces where all the pathologies of cultural diversity are transformed (Venter 2008:554). The role of transformative communities in the formation of identity is crucial. Communities with constitutive narratives become determining frameworks for people to develop their identity (Grenz 2003:253-260 in Venter 2008:554). Intercultural faculties of theology are beacons of hope and of resistance within a fragmented society. An identity of resistance against the *status quo* within monocultural practices/policies of theological education is called for (Smith 2010:6).

### **Towards Transformational Theological Education**

Theological education will progress if it creates an intercultural space for re-evaluation or re-interpretation and re-habitation in transformation processes in higher education (Kraft 2005:270). We need a reorientation and reconceptualisation of how we do education. Creative spaces need to be created for an equitable society that will be able to address different inequalities (Duncan 2010). Theology should not be a privilege of the upper social classes for the acquirement of philosophic and cultural competencies. Transformative education is critical in this regard. It engenders potential in students/lecturers "to transcend their *distinctive ideological immersion* made up of political, social, socio-economic and cultural contexts; ... and add a prophetic edge to ministerial training" (Leslie 2004 in Nichols & Dewerse 2010:47; own accentuation). A culture of transformation in theological education therefore is an "integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance" (Hoebel 1972:2 in Kraft 2005:38; own accentuation). Shefer (2010) raises the question in regard to how race interacts with other marginalised identities. She links the

dynamics of race interaction with traditions/cultures; curriculum practices; gender; student intervention; etcetera). She calls for a public (theological) interpretation in forming an integral part of higher education regarding a critical race theory, race/gender methodology, student involvement, and antiracial higher education residence communities. Smith (2010:2) proposes that an institutional context to foster equity and excellence and engender racial reconciliation and dialogue.

### ***Whose Worldview and for what Purpose?***

Higher education institutions mirror society's worldviews (Shefer 2010). Worldviews are usually constructed through culture, and defined as a non-biological reality of human life (Taylor in Kraft 2005:37-38). A non-biological worldview is crucial for theological education in its broader social transformation context. It will help to redress three crucial factors: (1) the role and influence of hegemonic sociocultural role players. "Which calls for a critical analysis of its effects on contemporary educational practices"; (2) the need to understand how an emerging intercultural/multicultural or even unicultural student culture affects students and lecturers; and (3) the manner in which a Trinitarian theological epistemology relates to the contemporary culture of students *and* lecturers (Kraft 2005:38). Venter (2008:542) argues for a Trinitarian approach that addresses these factors through "transformation which reflects the virtues of the triune God in the relationship with the culturally Other".

In exploring the implications of intercultural education practices it is essential to be mindful of how we perceive and approach other cultures. Awareness of the meaning and implications of the dominant culture(s), is essential. Kraft's (2005:37-38) socio-cultural adequacy submodel is helpful in this regard. It refers to the non-absoluteness of any given cultural or linguistic form. Different socio-cultural structures affect students'/lecturers' formation, especially in combating the "ethnocentric tendency to evaluate other people's behaviour to their disadvantage by always focussing on areas of life in which the evaluator's society has specialized [preference]" (Kraft 2005:40). Tendencies that perceive the 'other'/students as un-intellectual or primitive are unfeasible. The perception that students or lecturers from different cultures do not possess an acceptable level of scientific knowledge or technological skills should be challenged. Such worldviews call for redress. Worldviews form the core of various cultural entities (lectures, academic disciplines, social classes as well as religious, political, economic institutions, etcetera) with distinctive value systems. Worldviews are the central systematisation of conceptions of reality. Lecturers/students of educational societies/institutions adhere and ascribe consciously and unconsciously to their own value systems. "A worldview is imposed upon the young of a society by means of familiar processes of teaching and learning" (Kraft 2005:43). Student reasoning is thus basically the same irrespective of their culture. However, the starting point of their reasoning differs with reference to the assumptions they make (Kraft 2005:47). Society imposes a complex culture with regard to life and learning on students and conditions them linguistically, socially and personally. Students and lecturers, as a result, cannot function without their primal orientation of preconditioning (Kraft 2005:50-51). This calls for a particular cultural sensitivity to counter the preconditioning or indoctrination of rigidly monocultural students (Freire 1973:59).

***From Monocultural Surface Teaching and Learning towards Deep Intercultural Formation***

Faculties of theology in predominantly denominational institutions that have not adapted to postmodern challenges are caught in form-based educational practices that foster monocultural education (Roxburgh 2005; Keifert 2006; McLaren 2006). Kegan (in Nichols & Dewerse 2010:45) distinguishes between informative teaching that merely changes *what* we know, and transformative education that changes *how* we know. This pedagogical shift differentiates between *instrumental* and *communicative* learning [Habermas 1984]. The former is concerned with ‘task-oriented problem-solving to improve performance’ [Mezirow 2000:8], and the latter with ‘a critical assessment of assumptions supporting the justification of norms’ [ibid. 9] (in Nichols & Dewerse 2010:45). We concur that a lack of diversity may exist between the worldviews of students and lecturers. This reality can change if students/lecturers express themselves creatively through their own traditions or customs (Kraft 2005:71; Duncan 2010; Shefer 2010). Without appropriate anthropological insights Western theological interpretations will produce Western cultural teaching forms that are irrelevant to other societies (Kraft 2005:52).

Intercultural education requires a new perspective and not the continuation of the dichotomisation of theological or anthropological perspectives (Kraft 2005:92). Mezirow (in Nichols & Dewerse 2010:46) refers to perspective transformation as transformative learning: “through critical self-reflection in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one’s [inter-cultural] experience”. Diverse cultural forms of formation are essential to engender teaching and research excellence and community engagement (Kraft 2005:92). Learning and teaching and epistemologies behind theological education must be informed by anthropology, and not according to a set of prescribed doctrinal or even hegemonic behavioural practices (Kraft 2005:93). The reason for such an approach is because different sociocultural contexts create different perceptions and interpretations. We learn, as part of our cultural conditioning, through *interpretative reflexivity* (Osmer 2008:6-8;240). In accordance with our teaching/learning habits, we automatically interpret whatever happens in, with and around us. We need to develop hermeneutical techniques to get beyond these silo, reflexive interpretations to honour and engage the unique and original perceptions of students/lecturers (Kraft 2005:102). However, transformational theological education is essentially a process of cultural change (Nichols & Dewerse 2010:46). It starts with ‘inner’ cultural changes in the worldview of students and lecturers (Kraft 2005:270,272). Intercultural formation is crucial in the transformation and redesign of mono-cultural/hegemonic conceptualisations about the culture of the ‘other’.

***Constructive, Aligned and Transformative Formation Practices of Re-evaluation, Re-interpretation and Re-habituating***

A constructionist theory of intercultural learning in theological education is sought (Biggs in Shake Seigel 2004:1). It means that intercultural learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks are aligned with each other (Biggs & Tang 2007:50). In this way, institutional teaching and learning climates are changed (Biggs in Shake Seigel 2004:2). Pedagogies of engagement that engender multifaceted cultural change that align students’ learning with complex social experiences will improve their academic and professional competencies, respectively. Constructive monocultural change occurs at the level of a non-biological worldview (Kraft 2005:272). This calls for conceptual and operational transformational change. The lecturer/student’s traditional worldview

should change towards a new creative worldview. The formation of new attitudinal and behavioural habits through academic re-evaluation and re-interpretation towards the re-habitation of theological education, are required (Kraft 2005:273). The task of theological intercultural education is basically to transform the conceptual and operational system (worldview) of any given culture towards meaningful, transformational and hopeful living. Scripture does not prescribe a specific Christian blueprint with regard to culture or worldview. There is no need for students or lecturers to abandon their own culture and/or worldview entirely (Kraft 2005:273; McLaren 2006): “The great African theologian, Lamin Sanneh, points out that Christianity is unique among world religions for its amazing translatability ... each time it enters a new culture” (McLaren 2006:96). The notion of ‘leaving without departing’ enables creative hermeneutical aesthetic space in developing ‘hermeneutical hospitality’ communities (Cilliers 2009; Volf 2011:1521,2217). Faculties of theology are instrumental to transform their traditional/conservative conceptual and operational frameworks in the light of current transformational processes in higher education (Kraft 2005:273). Transformational change in theological education requires the appropriation of potential different cultural patterns and interpersonal dynamics (Kraft 2005:276). Sociocultural dynamics in education are critical in order to achieve genuine interculturality. The personal attributes, background and learning approaches of students should also be acknowledged. Transformative theological education holds a potential threat to students/lecturers and should be guided by an ethical and/or missional approach to build mutual trust between student and lecturer (Trelstad 2008 in Nichols & Dewerse 2010:48).

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Missional Intercultural Faculties of Theology**

Venter (2008:555) defines intercultural faculties of theology as missional beacons of hope, helping to heal a fragmented society. Intercultural contexts are essentially mission fields into which the gospel can be translated (Guder 2000:94). Theological education can develop culturally bilingual communities (Lesslie Newbigin in Guder 2000:94). Cultural formational practices must never become normative entities in and of themselves. Ongoing change or their own continuing conversion is required (Guder 2000:96). Ultimately, “a missional hermeneutic begins with the assumption that the mode in which God is present among the faithful is irreducibly multicultural” (James Brownson in Guder 2000:86). Can we teach and learn these principles in our student bodies and our faculties? It is a given that our own interpretative lenses shape the content of our teaching and learning. However, according to Jung Young Lee (in Hines & DeYoung 2000:112) our teaching is “a form of giving recognizable shape to the divine presence”. Cultural and ethnic contexts are, therefore, critical for authentic teaching and learning.

### **New Ways of Theological Education**

Interpretation does not only function within our own cultural and ethnic contexts. Teaching also relates to diverse contexts and practices with reference to gender, race, economic status, social class, geographical location, etcetera (Hines & DeYoung 2000:112). The conceptualization of *positionality* and *situatedness* is instrumental to determine their respective cultures in order to come to self-understanding in their respective teaching contexts (Zimmerman, McQueen & Guy 2011:16). Cultural positionality is multi-dimensional in terms of gender, race, class, and other social factors (Maher & Tetreault 1994:16 in Zimmerman *et al.* 2011:16). Theological education in a postmodern era requires a pedagogy of cultural hermeneutics (Hines & DeYoung 2000:114). Authentic teachers’

teaching style, enhance transformation, and create and recreate new content informed by multiple interpretations (Hines & DeYoung 2000:116). Inappropriate teaching styles engender linear presentations of content material as unrelated facts and ideas (Keifert 2006). Linear education styles foster passive participation in students and the maintenance of outdated institutional systems. This calls for a remedy, at least in the coordination of course work, and in a communal teaching approach (Palmer 2007:55). Creative intercultural communities of lecturers engender multicultural or intercultural circular, interactive and dynamic teaching and learning environments (Palmer 2007:106).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the century of intercultural formational communities (DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey & Kim 2003:2). Diversity is emerging as the most crucial issue of the 21st century due to changing migration patterns and the resultant population shifts around the world (DeYoung 1995:xvii). The book, *Coming together* (DeYoung 1995), is a helpful tool in addressing the complexity of diversity in teaching and learning from a biblical perspective (DeYoung 1995:xix). Research on both multiracial and uniracial faculties has shown that, during a transitional period, not more than 80% of faculty should be made up of any one racial group (DeYoung *et al.* 2003:3). Suffice to say that “the apostles described how the first-century church moved from an ethnocentric congregation in Jerusalem to a multiethnic congregation in Antioch” (Acts 2-13) (DeYoung 1995:10). Faculties aspiring to become interracial/-cultural must prioritise becoming multiracial in order to retain their racial diversity (DeYoung *et al.* 2003:178). Roman Catholic papal documents such as *Evangelii Nuntiandi* encourage “theological [educational] expression which takes account of differing cultural, social and even racial milieux”. However, they also caution that the content of teaching and learning “must be neither impaired nor mutilated” (Bevans 2005:22). South Africans share a collective memory of the dangers of a cultural theology in the form of apartheid. “Theology is the creation of the whole [inter-] multicultural [faculty], and when the [faculty] as a whole seems to accept a particular theological teaching, one can trust that the *sensus fidelium* [reliable view or observation] is in operation and that this expression is a genuine one” (Bevans 2005:23). Cultural captivity pose a danger in reshaping the identity of faculties of theology or the broader church and society, especially in terms of the integrity of teaching and learning (Crist 2001:55; Kuperus 2011). “Cultures come and go, but principles for relating cross-culturally remain effective in every generation” (Crist 2001:175). Two critical aspects in communicating cross-culturally is at stake, namely to “*speak the other person’s language*, in order to relate to him or her, and *understand his epistemology*” (Crist 2001:177). Teaching and learning practices can improve if students could apply their first language in education. A pedagogy of engagement for multifaceted change in students’ learning and complex social experiences is called for (Biggs & Tang 2007:50,52). The next paragraph provides perspectives of how theological intercultural formation could be realised and practised in reality based on the results of a multicultural model.

### **Multicultural Education: The McCormick Theological Seminary**

In the light of the hypothesis that we struggle in South Africa to engage with intercultural intent and meaningful inter- and intrapersonal and -communal relationships/dialogue in multicultural praxes, we seek to learn from the following case study. The McCormick Theological Seminary has engaged in a soul-searching journey since the 1970s. The collective findings of their search are presented in the book: *Shaping beloved community; Multicultural theological education* (Esterline & Kalu 2006). This work offers a frame of reference in moving away from monocultural towards intercultural faculties of theology.

McCormick strived to determine its place, space, engagement and particular institutional concerns within a multicultural framework of theological education. Factors such as an increase in ethnic enrolment, a change in gender profile and an increase in the percentage of interracial/ethnic faculties motivated seminaries across the USA to develop and maintain diverse learning/teaching practices and even communities of faculty and students. The intent was to transform formation systems and practices beyond diversity in order to shape communities and new ways of teaching and learning (Esterline & Kalu 2006:1). The Language Resource and Writing Centre (LRWC) at McCormick played a leading transformational role in this formerly monocultural institution of theology. LRWC has now become a centre of hospitality, openness, care and cross-cultural understanding. It helps students understand cultural differences and the values informing those differences (Esterline & Kalu 2006:2). The University of Fort Hare in South Africa introduced a similar initiative through its Life Learning Project to foster social cohesion – a pedagogy of engagement towards diversity of languages and new epistemologies (Duncan 2010). McCormick succeeded in realising multicultural theological educational practices towards “equity and equal opportunity for academic success” (Esterline & Kalu 2006:3). Diverse and complex South African cultural challenges require intercultural and ultimately multicultural educational practices to drive authentic and sustainable transformation in tertiary education and ultimately in society.

### **Misconception of Intercultural Theological Education**

Educational policies, systems and practices form the basis for modern multicultural and postmodern intercultural theological education (Esterline & Kalu 2006:3). The misconception exists that multicultural theological education is intended for students from minority groups. However, it aims to create an awareness of and nurturing of respect for diversity (Zimmerman *et al.* 2011:16). It is for this reason that the postmodern quest for intersubjective community connection through intercultural praxis is of significance. Intercultural theological education requires a sensitive approach to the complexity of the understandings, commitments, and behaviours of students, lecturers and administrators; teaching and learning styles and practices; and the objectives, policies, norms and culture of faculties of theology (Esterline & Kalu 2006:3). The realising of the following values: everyone is essentially the same; all differences are equally important; nation of origin or ethnicity is very important; race is central; and oppressed and oppressor are the most important categories, is crucial in transforming theological education (Esterline & Kalu 2006:4-5).

Elizondo’s (in Esterline & Kalu 2006:16) vision of ‘the new church’ (faculty of theology) having “a truly [inter]cultural face and heart” resonates with what ought to become the vision and mission of theological education. Special attention to the ways we listen, learn and teach, is required (Esterline & Kalu 2006:17). Such pedagogy attends consciously and actively to issues of race and ethnicity. Theology educators should address and redress race and ethnicity issues. This is at the core of any intercultural definition, because race refers to issues of privilege, power and prejudice, and ethnicity to issues of blood and belonging (Esterline & Kalu 2006:17). Boesak (2010) calls for a more human face for (theology) education in South Africa and asks: “what forms of racism informs tertiary education, racism as oppression”? He refers to prejudice as an element of racism that fails to address issues of power and leads to continuous re/construction of racism. He argues that the internalisation of racism messages adopted by the oppressed is an acceptance of a low self-esteem. Paulo Freire (1973) described it as the oppressor playing



host to the oppressed. Oppression does not occur only in terms of race; but also in terms of sex and gender or hidden experiences (Francis 2010). Concurrency between a specific South African identity in relation to plurality, is sought. The operationalisation of one's whiteness/blackness, for example, could either mean that one has forgotten the past or that you deny the existence of interculturalism. Steve Biko (in Francis 2010; Mampela 2010) argued that African religious practices taught that blackness was about how to live humanly as an African - towards human equality. Being conscious of whiteness/blackness means turning the mirror or critical lens on oneself. In the deconstruction of racism, we ought to search anew for what it means to be South African. Race does matter – it is the intersectionality of identities (Francis 2010). These perspectives raise critical educational questions: Does current curriculum embody these values; and how should we integrate them into research, community engagement, and teaching and learning practices? McCormick found that the institutional climate and culture, commitments and attitudes of its faculty and administrators either fostered or hindered learning (Esterline & Kalu 2006:19). Transformation that address these issues is crucial if we want to progress in creating a social environment for a new humanity.

### **Social Interaction as Formational Environment**

Vygotsky (in Esterline & Kalu 2006:19) contends that social interaction plays a fundamental role in critical cognitive development. Zimmerman *et al.* (2011:16) argues for critical pedagogy that seeks to transform the relationship between education and society. This is instrumental in the creation of 'hermeneutical hospitality' connections with and among their students. Especially, where lived experiences of students at universities are characterised as either a culture of fear or a culture of silence (Duncan 2010). It is therefore critical that societal challenges reflect in curricula (Duncan 2010). Failure to learn becomes rather a systemic failure rather than a failure of student competency. Students also differ in their learning capacities and may have difficulty in participating in certain prescribed/institutionalised non-social teaching activities. Instead of enhancing their learning, the intended teaching and learning outcomes will consequently not be met. The teaching environment may as a result cultivate surface learning instead of deep learning (Briggs & Tang 2007:17). "We make education an exclusively outward [objective] enterprise, forcing students to memorize and repeat facts without ever appealing to their inner [cultural] truth" (Palmer 2007:32). Information is viewed as isolated and unconnected facts: "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. [They are]... able to weave a complex web of [cultural] connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a [inter/multicultural] world for themselves" (Palmer 2007:11). We are challenged to accept and validate the diverse cultures and languages of students in creating a climate of acceptance and constructive conditions for learning. The identities of students and lecturers ought to be affirmed rather than valued through summative assessment activities only (Esterline & Kalu 2006:19). Intercultural formation in every aspect of theological education, even within the hidden curriculum, is sought (Esterline & Kalu 2006:20). Intercultural formation is essentially about transformation and constructive learning – it is not about 'banking knowledge' and methodologies (Freire 1973:59). Constructive, properly aligned teaching systematises the planning of intercultural formation activities. It results in open-ended assessment tasks, which allow for unintended, but desirable outcomes (Biggs & Tang 2007:53). Constructive learning is essentially about discovering and developing 'habits of mind' towards a pedagogy of the development of a new racial identity (Meier in Esterline & Kalu 2006:21).

### Intercultural Curriculum Practices

Theology curricula have to embody intercultural perspectives - diverse voices from diverse racial, cultural, language and gender groups (Esterline & Kalu 2006:23). Higher education is the academic mirror of the “inescapable social condition of cultural pluralism” (Esterline & Kalu 2006:29). This article therefore argues for *intercultural* theological education, implying that it foster an active pedagogic engagement and aesthetic ‘hermeneutical hospitality’ space among complex diverse cultures (Esterline & Kalu 2006:29) to engender social and institutional transformation (Venter 2008:542; Esterline & Kalu 2006:30). An intercultural approach to theological education facilitates new, adaptive leadership in enabling the church to fulfil its vocation in the midst of a pluralistic postmodern society (Esterline & Kalu 2006:31). If faculties of theology are about forming leaders for ecclesiastic and public communities and seeking to foster *comm(on)union* in a diversified world, the question remains whether the current values, curriculum, and academic commitments of faculties are adequate means to that formative end (Esterline & Kalu 2006:31). A monocultural understanding of the mission of faculties of theology does not suffice (Esterline & Kalu 2006:36). The Institute (2011) holds “the potential to make a significant contribution to the research base on the important issues of race, racial reconciliation, and justice while also serving as a resource and partner in the changes in transformation that will be necessary if [sic] the UFS is to achieve its ambitious goals. In so doing, it can indeed be a model for higher education in South Africa and for nation-building more generally”.

### Conclusion

Faculties of theology in the rest of South Africa need to create and enhance *aesthetic space* in building a new culture out of diversity (Esterline & Kalu 2006:38). We need to enter into a shared learning space as pilgrims, as people constituting a new community – postulating an open transformative agenda in relation to power and culture. The need to change the power dynamics in aesthetic space is a precondition for deep learning and growth (Esterline & Kalu 2006:39). Intercultural space engenders transformative and healthy space and time for identity formation (Esterline & Kalu 2006:40). Future faculties of theology can develop intercultural institutions with ‘a theology of difference’– in learning to do difference differently (Esterline & Kalu 2006:43-44).

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