Continuing Education in the Ministerial Profession

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ABSTRACT—Education is an issue taken seriously by virtually all nations of the world because it is considered the bedrock of development. Just as it is within the larger society, so also it is within the ministerial profession. For the church, it has led to the founding of many formal ministerial training institutions. However, it is observed that while the church is pulling its weight in the area of formal training through the many theological institutions, it is deficient in the area of continuing education otherwise referred to as lifelong education. Most of the time, church ministers are left to weather the storm with their formal seminary education, which often proved inadequate at some future times or in times of emergency, due to many factors, among which are the changing nature of ministry. This paper therefore discusses the need for lifelong education among church ministers, emphasizing its benefits and the contributions which the church should be making in this direction.
Keywords: Continuing Education, Ministerial Profession

I. Introduction

Education has been described as the bedrock of development. Its importance as a tool for human development and nation-building cannot be over-emphasized. It is universally accepted

as one of the catalysts for social, economic and technological developments (Ukeje, 1986, p.102). It involves giving citizens the opportunities, which equip them for proper adjustment in their environment. Education serves as a stimulant to development by encouraging and sustaining individual survival, growth and overall development and efficiency ((Uwaubani, 2000, p.14). It is a process of developing the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of individuals in order to make them acquire skills and knowledge that are relevant to them and to the society in which they live (Adeogun, 2000, p.34). Intellectuals in their various persuasions have come up with diverse aims and objectives of education for both the individual and the society at large. Socrates was of the opinion that education should probe into the environment. In the views of Aristotle, it should shape the politics of the society and the moral values of individuals. Confucius believed that decent behavior on the part of the individual was the key to an orderly world and peaceful life. According to him, education should help an individual first to put his thoughts in order – purifying his thoughts and actions - when his thoughts are clear, sincere and comprehensive, then it should be communicated to the members of the family, from the family to the community, and from the community to the country. And when the country is well governed, the whole world will live in peace and contentment (Adetoro, 1975, p.25).

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, an ardent proponent and practitioner of free education in Nigeria, while making a case for an enlightened citizenry emphasized that "to educate the masses is to lay a solid foundation not only for the future social and economic progress but also for political stability, and a truly educated citizenry is one of the most powerful deterrents to dictatorship, oligarchy and feudal autocracy (Awolowo 1960, p.268). Thus no nation, institution or community which aspires to greatness can afford to toy with the necessity and urgency of providing education for its citizens. Nations or communities who wish to raise the living standard of its people can only do so through education on a continuous basis. It is against this

background that education at all levels is seen to serve both the individuals and the society as a whole.

In pursuance of this time-honoured faith in education, nations, communities, corporate bodies and social institutions have over the centuries made worthwhile contributions to the education of their members. The Church is not left out in this regard as the training of Church ministers had engaged the attention of the Church since inception. Its effort in this direction could be observed in the founding of such institutions as the Catechetical School of Alexandria in North Africa in 180 AD and the Fourah Bay Institution in Sierra Leone in 1827. In Nigeria, it gave birth to many theological institutions which had over the period taken on the responsibilities of training ministers for the church. Prominent among these are the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso in 1898; the Catholic Training College in 1922; Igbaja Theological Seminary, Igbaja, Kwara State in 1941; the Trinity College, Umuahia 1947; Methodist Theological Institute, Shagamu in 1952; the Theological College of Northern Nigeria(TCNN), Bukuru in 1957; and the Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan in 1958 and the Adventist College of West Africa, Ilisan-Remo in1959. All these institutions have contributed in a great measure to the training of church ministers for several decades now.

However, it is observed that while the church is pulling its weight in the area of formal training through these institutions, it is deficient in the area of continuing education, otherwise referred to as lifelong education. Most of the time, church ministers are left to weather the storm with their formal seminary education which they acquired before entering into the ministry. This often proves inadequate at some future times or in times of emergency, due to many factors, among which are the changing nature of ministry. This paper therefore discusses the need for lifelong education among church ministers, emphasizing the contributions the church can make to the life and ministry of its ministers through continuing

education. The term lifelong education and continuing education is used interchangeably in the paper.

II. Definition and Scope of Continuing Education

Continuing Education, professional development and lifelong learning are all terms used to describe an educational or training process that is a key component for successful organizations. The term Continuing Education often attracts several definitions. Liveright and Haygood's 1969 version, as cited by Courtenay (1990, p.10) defines it as "a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular full-time basis … undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge undertaking, skill appreciation and attitudes or for the purpose of identifying or solving personal or community problems."

According to Farrant (1980, pp.45-46), lifelong education is the provision at appropriate times in the lifetime of each individual of various learning experiences and activities, both formal and non-formal, which aim to enhance the individual quality of life, and enable him to contribute more effectively to the development of society. It aims to provide people of all ages with the means of receiving instruction in whatever they need to know at such times as that knowledge is necessary to them. Ibeh (1987, pp.232-233) describes it as a total system of education which implies a comprehensive, coherent and integrated system designed to meet the educational and cultural aspirations of every person according to his abilities. Speaking further, he states that this system of education emphasizes a learning process by which an individual acquires knowledge and skill throughout his or her life span, in order to maintain or improve occupation, academic, or personal development. Basically, its goal is to enable everyone throughout his life-time, whether through his work or through his leisure activities, to develop his personality.

In the words of Putnam (1982, p.85), lifelong education component includes, but is not limited to, adult basic education, continuing education, remedial education, agricultural education, business education, labor education, occupational education and job training programs, parent education, post-secondary education, special educational programs for groups or for individuals with special needs, and also educational activities designed to upgrade occupational and professional skills, to assist agencies and other organizations in the use of innovation and research results, and to serve family needs and personal development. Lifelong learning therefore encompasses all levels of educational acquisition and in an infinite number of subjects. It includes skill training, credential requirements, as well as social interests. This education may be in the form of formal education or training that is offered in a variety of venues. It also occurs through non-formal means such as libraries, museums, manuals and mentors.

In the context of western education, education *per se* refers to the activities that take place in the school classroom involving the study of series of lessons on subject areas, evaluated at intervals through examinations with the aim of acquiring a specific qualification or certificate at the end of a given period, after which the student is considered educated and therefore qualified for a certain job. In this regard, anyone who hasn't passed through school is regarded as not having received education and thereby considered non-literate.

However, before the advent of western education, traditional education practiced within the context of lifelong learning system was an integral part of life within many West African societies, including Nigeria. The purpose of this form of education was to make the average African child a functional member of his or her community. Although he may not be able to read or write in his local language much less of being able to write or speak the Queen's English, he has acquired a form of education which under normal circumstances is able to take him through life. As informal as this form of education is, many African nations were able to survive on it before the advent of

western education. Even today, it is still the predominant form of education in some typical traditional environments in Africa (Bown & Tomori, 1980, pp.18-19).

III. Need for Continuing Education

A. In the Secular

The notion of learning through life is hardly new as a glance through Plato's *Republic* reveals. However, the idea of continuing education and the adult education movement began within the twentieth century, through the efforts of Basil Yeaxlee and Eduard Lindeman (Smith: www.infed.org/lifelonglearning/b-life.htm.) Throughout the last decades the concept has continued to gain popularity. As the world moved to an industrialized economy the need for continued education and improved access for adults challenged formal educational venues and created opportunities for both professional and personal skill enhancement and enrichment has grown. Several environmental factors are necessitating the demand for this form of learning in the twenty-first century. This include abundant access to information, rapid technological changes, increased global interactions, industry shifts, as well as increasing entry level credentials and skill requirements. Invariably today, continuing education is recognized as a common human need within contemporary human communities.

In the world in which we live, there is scarcely a vocation that is not requiring continuing education in one form or the other to meet the demands of changing technology and complex demands of the current workplace. In industry, offices, farming, schools and other settings, staff is expected and encouraged to stay current by means of continuing opportunities for training. Lifelong education has therefore been recognized as a common human need because of the speed with which knowledge grows in society.

In the recent past, it was possible for the education acquired in school to take a person through life satisfactorily. Presently, it is observed that due to some factors, such education has become inadequate within a few years. Collins submits that continuing education is a necessity in the day in which we live. It is important in virtually all professions because of scientific and technological changes which have assailed professions from day to day (Collins, 1972, p.56). Hence it is the practice of corporate bodies to train and retrain their staff through one form of lifelong education procedure or the other. This usually include full scale training for their nature of operations, short term courses at intervals as a sort of on-the-job training; and regular seminars which enables them to keep abreast of the changes and challenges which the job presents at any point in time.

From the perspectives of the employers of labor, offering employees continuing education opportunities has several benefits for both employer and employee. Employers depend on continuing education as a tool for ensuring a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Individuals use continuing education for upward career mobility, job enhancement and personal enrichment. A well-trained work force is an important productivity enhancement mechanism. Employees greatly value education benefits, because they are aware that such benefits enhance their self-development and professional prospects and make them more marketable. Educating the employees shows that a company truly values its employees and their future and therefore provided them with a sense of belonging.

In a study conducted by Spherion Atlantic Enterprises LLC, - a staffing and employment-services firm - 61 percent of respondent who received training or mentoring said they were very likely to remain with their current employer for the next five years or more (Hakala, 2010, www.hrworld.com/features /employee-continuous-education-0188008). Such is the power of empowering with education. Of course, making the employees more valuable to the company also makes them more valuable to its competitors, for it is an unavoidable fact

that better-educated employees are also more desirable targets of recruiting efforts. But as the Spherion survey cited above reveals, employees tend to be much more loyal to companies who support their self development through education.

The teaching profession presents a classic example for the need of lifelong learning. Speaking from the perspective of teacher education, Ogunsanya (1988, p.42) gave some reasons why it is needful to train teachers on a continuous basis. He says that first; teachers may have to be retrained when they are promoted to a position of higher responsibility, because the pre-service qualification may fail to meet the requirements of the new position. Second, retraining of teachers may be necessary when they assume new responsibilities, which may be administrative, academic or technical. The third reason for continuing education is to check declining productivity among teachers. Fourth, there may be the necessity for specialization of staff; hence it is mandatory on school authority to boost staff development. Fifth, an academic staff may also need to acquire higher academic or professional qualification as a minimum requirement for the job, probably because the earlier minimum requirement has been raised. Lastly, at other times, retraining of teachers may be necessary as a result of government's determination to sanitize the system and improve the quality of education.

B. Need for life long Training in the Ministry

The Christian ministry is not immune from the dynamics of society and the need for continuous training. The church minister as a member of the workforce also needs to be provided with relevant training which will enhance his work at every point in time. The twenty-first century is a time of many complexities and so presents the minister with many challenges. We are living in an era of rapid changes, some of them often negative. It is often emphasized from time to time that the only thing that is permanent in our world is change. Societies all over the world are in upheaval - pedophilia, incest, pornography, homosexuality, adulterous acts and terrorism are pervasive.

Divorce and separation are common. The environment is saturated with changes from day to day. This poses a great challenge to ministry itself. Governmental regulations, sociological changes, migration to cities, economic crises, and health conditions also affect the ministry.

As societies are changing, expectations for church ministers are also changing. There is therefore the need for them to update and improve their knowledge and skill. If the gears of the ministry are not shifted to keep up with social change, God-given opportunities for evangelism, conversion and missionary work may be lost. The challenges lie in how to keep the ministers up-to-date, broaden their outlook and ensure that the people they serve benefit from their services. They must be equipped so as to be able to carry out their ministries efficiently in the face of diverse circumstances. These include the world's increasing religious diversities; the dynamic nature of the ministry environment; and the many unexpected challenges that confront contemporary ministers. Soultau (1965, p.135) also highlights some of these challenges, which includes government, its officials and their occasional or perpetual hostility to the church; customs, culture and religion of the people; attitudes of ministers from other denominations; their marriages and children up-bringing; and their personal lives. All these challenges put additional responsibilities on church leaders and require that they fortify themselves with new knowledge on a continuous basis.

While it is to be appreciated today that the rate of acquisition of formal training is high among church ministers as virtually all denominations strive to educate their ministers, White (1952, p.13) contends that "true education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is, rather it has to do with the whole being and with the whole period of existence possible to man", and in the words of Gibbs (1939, p.75), there is no such thing as a finished education, for education is endless. Alford (1968, p.15) in his contribution states that "as viewed from the world of business, what was studied in college is yesterday's

knowledge, but what will be needed for a future career is tomorrow's knowledge and unless one devotes time and energy to continuing his education he will become an educational dropout."

Knowles and Klevins (1976, p.9) in their own view cited the opinion of many experts in the field of education and economics, who emphasized that it will be necessary for every adult, after acquiring formal education, to return for re-education and retraining from three to five times during his lifetime, in order to maintain his working status. According to them, this will be required to prevent obsolescence and upgrade their knowledge in the face of technological changes that constantly occur in the labor market. They concluded that it should be required that all persons, professional and nonprofessional, follow this pattern in order to keep abreast of developments within their field of endeavor. In the same vein, Kane (1973, p.89) speaking from the missionary point of view observes that fifty years ago missionaries with a Bible school education were able to do a commendable job, and in some primitive areas of the mission field they still have a contribution to make. But with the rising standard of education all over the world, a three-year Bible course is hardly sufficient to meet the demands of the new day. Today's missionary must therefore be able to hold his own with the new class of intellectual elite found in all the large cities of the world.

The value of Continuing Education from the religious perspective can further be deduced from the Bible. First in the Old Testament, with regards to the law committed to Israel, it is observed that implicit instruction was given concerning continuity in the process. While the Lord revealed himself to Moses at Sinai and gave him the law, He enjoined that the principles embodied in it were to be taught to succeeding generations of Israel on a continuous basis. Parents were instructed first to assimilate the laws and later taught them to their children from day to day. They were to teach them diligently to their children, and talk of them when they sit in the

house, when they walk by the way, when they lie down and when they rise up (Deut 6:6-9).

In the same vein, there is an element of continuity in the instruction given to Joshua before he was saddled with the leadership of the Jewish community. The instruction to him was "this book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success (Jos 1:8 (NIV). In other words, if Joshua desired success, he had no choice, but to continually educate himself in the word of God.

Another biblical scenario which tends to authenticate the significance of Continuing Education can be found in the Acts of the Apostles 18:24-26 (NIV). It reads thus:

> Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

Here the man Apollos was described as a zealous teacher of the word of God; however, his knowledge of the Gospel at the time was inadequate. Apollos had known only about the ministry of John the Baptist, but had not yet heard the full Gospel as it pertains to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is to say that he had been equipped with a certain level of education, which however proved inadequate at this point in time. It took the observance and maturity of Priscilla and Aquila (a couple at Ephesus) to correct the situation. They invited him home, and explained the Gospel to him "more adequately." This timely intervention on the part of this Ephesians' couple no doubt saved the church a great deal of trauma, because had Apollos been left with his inadequate knowledge, he would have passed the same to his audience and his message would not have

achieved the expected result. Similarly, ministers may meet with certain inadequacies in the course of their ministry due to recent changes, either within the environment or in the nature of the ministry. Continuing education takes charge of such situations.

Clement(2005, p.18) are of the opinion that lack of continuity in the education of ministers was one major factor responsible for the excesses of some of the early western missionaries in Africa. According to them, the early missionaries came with zeal and preached the gospel from the heart. Many of them died during their missionary endeavor as the West African coast of the time was often referred to as the 'white man's grave'. Yet there were certain mistakes committed by them out of ignorance because they were not trained in certain areas of missions, especially cross-cultural communication skills and the effects are still with us today.

What Clement and his team are saying here is that although the missionaries came with zeal for the work, they never envisaged some of the situations which they met on the ground and their inexperience in the handling of such situations culminated in errors which put the church at great disadvantage. However, had the sending missions realized the fact that their missionaries needed additional education to cope with the situations and provided them with the necessary tools; some negative consequences would have been prevented.

Observed inadequacies such as highlighted above necessitated the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program in the 60s. This program grew out of an existential situation in Latin America where, it was discovered that because of rapid church growth, the then existing seminaries were not doing an adequate job, with the result that sixty thousand pastors were without any formal training in Bible or theology, and something had to be done to assist them (Kane 1982, p.109). According to Cairns (1981, p.456) this program was first developed in 1962 by Presbyterian missionaries in Guatemala. Speaking further, he emphasized that this program permitted lay pastors to study the Bible and related subjects

from programmed materials, supplemented by occasional visits from trained teachers, while still having the opportunity of earning their living through some other vocations, and at the same time retaining their pastoral work in the local church. The method has now been applied in countries all over the world and has proved successful. Basically, this programme (TEE) met two needs. First was the need for clergy to be trained without taking them out of society for long periods of formal theological training, while the other was that by it, lay people were able to receive theological training (Pirouet, 2005, p.120), and in all, both the church and the individual missionary benefit.

IV. Identifying Areas of Ministers' Need for Continuing Education

Two factors could be employed to determine when continuing ministers' education is necessary. These are the minister's need and the ministry's demand. To identify the minister's need, information must be sought on his duties, how these duties must be performed, the skill he possesses, the skills needed for the job and the new skills he must acquire. The need of the ministry can be analyzed considering the areas where the ministry is deficient in meeting the need of the people within the environment it is expected to cover. It is equally possible that certain services cannot be provided because of lack of personnel or that new skills are required because of innovations that have been introduced into the ministry; continuing education could assist in rectifying such situation.

One principal purpose why continuing education is needed in the ministry is to arrest burnout and dropout. Burnout is defined as the demand of the ministry exceeding the ability of the minister to cope or exceeding his willingness to commit the work to His Lord (Proctor, 2005, p.20). It is overloading the pastors' system. As a caregiver, he sometimes keeps giving even though he is exhausted physically, mentally and spiritually. While burnout results in ineffectiveness in the ministry, dropout leads to a total boycott of it. According to Wayne (2007, p.17)

the George Barna's statistics state that within five years of graduation 25% of pastors leave the ministry. They dropped out never again to return. He observes that a quarter of seminary graduates leaving the ministry within this short period are a great loss, which has grave consequences for the church. From the secular perspective, no one will be happy with a 25% loss of income, family investment or of anything; neither will an organization be happy to lose this percentage of its trained workforce every five years. One way of arresting this to further the continuing education of church ministers, because it is needed to build on the knowledge gained previously. Continuing means to go on or add to.

Specifically, certain areas of the life of the minister might need updating. First is the marital life. For instance, he might have entered the ministry as a single, and getting married in the process, there is the need from time to time to sensitize him of the practicality of the marital life. No marriage seminar which he had attended in the past can make up for this. As a spiritual guide to others within the ministry, he would need to continually update his knowledge of family life, especially with regards to marriage counseling and child rearing techniques so as to be able to adequately cater for his family and also provide guidance for the married people within his domain. Also, as he serves as pastor to some people, he is also in need of the services of a chaplain, whose duty would be to counsel him on some crucial issues on which decision has to be made for the progress of the work.

Another challenge as highlighted above is the challenging and dynamic nature of the environment and that of the ministry. Such changes might necessitate the acquisition of additional or new knowledge as the case may be. If the minister fails to handle the situation with all the seriousness it deserves, it might put him behind schedule or render him irrelevant in the ministry. Tarr (1997, p.179) states that we are in the days where there is an explosion of knowledge. According to him, it is the assumption in traditional society that learning stops at adolescence. Traditional societies believe that what one learned

by age twenty-one would apply, unchanged, the rest of one's life. However, he observes that such a belief cannot be sustained in this technological age. Consequently, individuals today should expect to continue learning well into adulthood, as what one learned at age twenty-one may well be obsolete in five to ten years and will either have to be replaced or updated with new skills and knowledge. Education in this contemporary time has a shorter life span. While the content of biblical knowledge is stable, one's personal understanding of the Word of God should always be growing. Therefore, the skill required for staying relevant in this age of exploding knowledge represent the greatest need among today's ministers, hence they must constantly grow, intellectually as well as spiritually.

Next, there is the need for the minister to update his knowledge so as to be able to cope in times of emergency. Africa has become a conflict-ridden continent. Civil wars, arm struggle, religious crises, communal unrest, and terrorism are the order of the day in many African nations. The *Boko Haram* insurgency in Northern Nigeria and the *Al Shabab* phenomenon in Somalia are classic examples. This volatile nature of the African environment also affects church ministers. We have come to a point in Africa that there may be the need to expose ministers to some technique of conflict management and self-defense. Self-defense here may not necessarily mean a situation whereby they take up arms to defend themselves. It suggests an idea whereby they learn how to protect themselves, their families and converts or even learn to retreat in the face of hostilities, whether political, tribal or religious.

At intervals, certain epidemics suddenly surfaced within communities, resulting in the death of many and wrecking serious havoc on others. Considering the fact that many churches and mission fields in Africa lies within remote areas of developing countries, where there is little or no access to functional health delivery institutions, it is incumbent on the minister to be conversant with the latest techniques in first aid administration, so as to be able to assist the people in the face of such epidemics or other sicknesses. Other areas of emergency

which need to be addressed at intervals might even be the death or transfer of a colleague which inescapably thrust additional and fresh responsibility on the minister.

Another area is that of inadequacies such as discussed in the case of Apollos. He was recognized as a zealous preacher of God's word, but it came to a time that his knowledge of the work proved inadequate for the enormous task before him. What Priscilla and Aquila did to assist him was to update his knowledge with regards to the new development within the Christian faith and this no doubt built him up into a valuable asset for the work of the mission. In the same vein, a minister might face certain knowledge inadequacies or gaps in the ministry. This may be as a result of certain course of study, which was either not taken serious during training or was not available at the institution of training, but now proved relevant to certain aspect of operations in the ministry. We are in a time when the objective study of the religions of others is a necessity for every minister who desires success. This probably explains why courses on world religions and comparative study of religions form part of the curriculum in many of our theological institutions. However, new religions are continually surfacing in many parts of the world. In this regard, it becomes imperative for the minister to develop himself so as to be able to keep up with these challenges.

The area of personal spiritual development is also crucial. Continuing education does not only mean the acquisition of intellectual knowledge, but also includes the spiritual. This is the responsibility of the individual minster and the church. The minister will do himself a lot of good by making his spiritual welfare a matter of top priority. If the minister does not grow, he will become an increasingly narrower and weaker man. He ought to discipline himself. Nothing will overcome the temptation to dissipate his life but a profound conviction that study -- persistent, regular and lifelong -- is the first duty of the man who seeks to stand before God in the pulpit as an instructor of the people. The most imperative duty of him who teaches others is to first teach himself. The church too must

show great concern for the spiritual development of its ministers. It is the spiritual development that would build them into people of sound character and integrity, without which the mission they represent could be dragged into the mud at any time and the work marred. Continual growth and development of ministers will better prepare them for ministry, increase their effectiveness, and prolong their service to the Lord.

Bridges (1978, p.102) says pastors are gifted by God and trained to teach the whole counsel of God; however, to prevent stagnation and apathy the pastor must continue to train and to grow. Since growth produces maturity, the pastor must grow to be the best equipped servant possible to deal with the needs of ministry. According to Wayne (2007, p.32) although Timothy had the best theologian of his day as his personal tutor; he still needed to be reminded to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15). Pastors are to be students of the Word of God continually. In an earlier letter Paul told Timothy "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (I Tim. 4: 13, 16).

V. Conclusion

It will be necessary at this point to suggest ways by which new knowledge could be acquired or disseminated. First, the minister owes it a duty to himself, his church and people to keep abreast of events around the world through reading of newspapers, listening to the electronic media, having access to the internet, and reading of books on various subjects and new techniques in church developments. The internet is an information rich resource. Because the internet contains more information than any individual could ever process, it is important that individuals and organizations develop

knowledge and management strategies to sort, categorize and maximize the benefits of the internet's wealth of information.

Online learning or e-learning is another component of knowledge management within the information technology environment. Online learning content ranges from one-hour courses to complete bachelor, master or doctorate degree programs from recognized and accredited institutions. Internet delivered courses have the benefits of serving multiple groups at multiple locations without the expense of equipment infrastructure at each location, and the course material can be delivered either synchronously or asynchronously which affords multinational operations the opportunity to connect individuals regardless of time zone or geographical location (Gaymer, 2010).

If the opportunity presents itself, the church minister might attend seminars or short term courses within the areas of his jurisdiction. He must strive to update himself on a continuous basis. This he should take as part of his schedule of duty. As a minister, people will naturally look up to him for explanations on all occurrences and solutions to virtually all the problems of life. He will be confronted with questions on politics, economics, geography, education and religion to mention a few. There is therefore the need for him to be versatile in knowledge.

As indicated above, the church has significant roles to play in this regard. It is like a nation that sent an army to the battle field. If victory is to be achieved, the nation must ensure that the army is duly and adequately reinforced. They are to be continually equipped to face the challenges in today's world. The ministers' education cum spiritual development should not be relegated to the background, because this might be disastrous to the growth of the church.

Churches could go the extra mile to be involved in the education of their ministers in such courses as are relevant to their intellectual and spiritual development. We are in the days of computer technology and this has made access to knowledge and information relatively easier. Ownership of laptops and

internet facilities or modems can no longer be considered a luxury, but a necessity.

Finally, with regards to Africa, it will be of great advantage if our seminaries or Bible Colleges or Schools of Ministries could take the time to develop courses or programs along with the unfolding changes around the world, which are relevant to church development. This could be placed on the internet for downloading, by any interested individual or group of people either free of charge or for a fee. Also, some of them could initiate on-line programs, which could be accessed by all. This will go a long way to assist the misters to be able to cope with contemporary challenges. By the time they have done these, they would have taken theological training a step further from training for ministry into training in ministry.

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