



"...entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" 2 Tim 2:2

September 2018 Vol. 10 No. 9



In This Issue

The Mentoring
Vision of ACU

The Mentoring Vision of ACU

By Prof. Ken Turnbull, ACU Vice-Chancellor



Paul intimately challenges Timothy, his son in the faith, *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). Rightly handling the word of truth is critical, enabling Timothy to present himself to God as one approved. Timothy had learned from his experience of witnessing Paul do this for years. Now, Paul calls Timothy to lead others in the same way.

Encouraging his young disciple for his work with the church, Paul addresses Timothy with the realities of life. *"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart"* (2 Timothy 2:22). Paul says to *"call on the Lord"* much like Jesus encourages us to be proactive in asking God to *"lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* Paul assures Timothy that if he *"cleanses himself from what is dishonourable, he will be a vessel for honourable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work"* (2 Timothy 2:21). Paul repeatedly reinforces that it is Timothy's character, his behaviour, what he does that will be the example for others to emulate. His character will determine his effectiveness as a worker for the Lord who has no need to be ashamed.

This is true mentoring. Paul has been consistently and intimately involved in Timothy's maturing faith and in his living out that faith in his behaviour.

Paul openly reveals his deepest motivations, the essence of his faith, to Timothy, his child in the faith. He does this so that Timothy might *"be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 2:1). Paul reminds Timothy of the suffering that he has seen Paul endure, *"Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"* (2 Timothy 2:10). And, he assures Timothy that enduring such suffering is not done in his own strength of faith, but by the sustaining power of the source of his faith, *"if we are faithless, he remains faithful -- for he cannot deny himself"* (2 Timothy 2:13). So Timothy's strength to conduct himself in the manner that will render him an approved worker is based fully in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; not in himself, but through the Spirit of God residing in him.

Paul clearly states what he most desires to see as the outcome of his intimate, fatherly relationship with Timothy, *“what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”* (2 Timothy 2:2). This is the goal of every follower of Christ in mentoring into the life of a precious son or daughter in the faith. God burdens us for the propagation of the faith: fulfilment of the cultural mandate, to *“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”* (Genesis 1:28), through the redemptive mandate, to *“go therefore and make disciples of all nations”* (Matthew 28:19).

African Christian University (**ACU**) has been established with such a vision for mentoring through the platform of higher education. In the present stage of church growth in Zambia, education is playing a prominent role. The ACU vision established seeks to mentor students in the faith through all curricular and supra-curricular activities so that God might mature them into approved workers in all aspects of their lives. The mission of ACU calls faculty and staff as mentors to display a Spirit-led faith to students built upon the foundation of rightly handling the word of truth. Students are mentored to call on the Lord from a pure heart so that they can flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness. The mentoring-education experience is intended to provoke students in striving to be vessels for honourable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. Through the mentoring process, students experience that they are strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. They experience faith through the power of Christ who remains faithful -- for he cannot deny himself. In this, they are entrusted with the faith and able to teach others also. Thereby, the cultural and redemptive mandates are being fulfilled.

The Greek word translated as “entrust” where Paul encourages Timothy to entrust what he has heard from Paul to faithful men needs further expounding. It is παρατίθημι [paratithēmi] - to place alongside; that is, to present (such as with food, or truth). By implication, to deposit (as a trust or for protection). The root of that word suggests the action of placing something alongside another in a passive or horizontal posture, such as kneeling or bowing. This clearly implies the necessary humility in mentoring - giving of oneself to advance others.

This envisions well the call to mentor at ACU. Faculty and staff are challenged to humility in giving themselves to advance the faith of students. This challenge to “entrust” through mentoring sharply contrasts the worldly approach to higher education that often results in the “puffing up” of an individual through a perceived superiority in knowledge.

God's providence which led to my personal involvement in assisting the Reformed Baptist Churches of Zambia in establishing ACU was centred on a vision of mentoring students through the avenue of higher education towards maturing in the Christian faith. This vision led to the following mission of ACU, in which students are to be:

- equipped, after being born-again to follow Christ, through biblical grounding in every aspect of learning and experience;
- having minds sharpened through the most proven, semi-classical education methods including intensive reading, studying and research;
- afforded communication skills advanced through continuous practice;
- growing in creativity, innovation and problem-solving enforced through experiencing themselves as image-bearers of God;
- valuing diligent work in understanding the comprehensive breadth of God's cultural mandate;
- serving others as those filled with God's Spirit to accomplish His work; and,

- bringing reconciliation through the cross of Jesus Christ to all aspects of the culture with every sphere of life being gospel-saturated.

The vision and mission of ACU have been established and are functioning well. Implementation requires the intentional size restraint of no more than a 25:1 ratio of students to faculty members. This size allows a 1:1 mentoring relationship to be developed between students and faculty members by the 3rd and 4th years of each student's degree programme. Only into the 2nd year of ACU's degree programmes, the fruit of this mentoring goal is already vividly evident as relayed in the following quotes from some of ACU's 1st year degree programme students (most of whom were in ACU's Scholars Programme).

"Before coming to ACU my faith was something I reserved for Sundays. I was never serious about being a biblical Christian or glorifying God with every fibre of my being. After constantly being bombarded with scriptural-infused education, sermons and observing friends who have centred Christ in their lives, I have been pushed to seek God more fervently. Growing in my faith over the past 2 years has been nothing short of a delight. I have come to learn more about God, and the air of ACU, just the love and passion for Christ that is found here, has really encouraged me." ~ Twasika Moonga ~

"Since coming to ACU I have seen my faith and practical living improve; where once I thought I could only truly live out my faith in my Sunday church activities, I now understand that it is actually in all aspects of my life - from my education now to even my future career. Living out my faith has gone from thoughts divided between the sacred and secular to a much more holistic view." ~ Tamara Nyirenda ~

"ACU has opened my mind to see the world as it really is and how I should live out my faith with that in mind. I have learnt that my faith has to be practical in all areas of life and that it should have an impact on those around me by diligently doing God's will and seeking Him above all things. There is still room for improvement, and by God's grace I am looking to do better." ~ Daniel Munsaka ~



"At ACU I have learnt that I should have a holistic Christian worldview. This has changed how I live out my faith in that I now live knowing that I can glorify God in whatever I do. I am no longer passive when I encounter things that contradict my worldview - when I watch, listen, read and have conversations with people. I am now able to address them and filter them out because they have no value to my faith." ~ Wankumbu Chanda ~

"ACU is one of the best environments; it stimulates my spiritual life. Ever since I came to ACU and learned from a Christian worldview, my understanding of the Christian faith has developed vastly. This is because every day spent at ACU ... strengthens my faith in Christ. I have a better, personal relationship with Christ." ~ Ernest Chiona ~

"Through the mentoring program I've had my mentor challenge me and hold me accountable. Even in the classroom I'm constantly reminded that I have to honour and worship God in every aspect of my life." ~ Twalumba Moonga ~

“My understanding of how I should relate with God has changed. Before, I thought that God was with me when I needed something or wanted to thank Him for something. Now, I realise my relationship with Him is continuous.” ~ Mapalo Bwembya ~

With the vision and mission firmly established, the anticipated, emotionally challenging and necessary step of passing-along the guidance of ACU to the brethren who carry ACU’s established vision is nearly complete. My resignation as Vice Chancellor of ACU, accepted by the Board in February of 2018, to be effective at the end of the academic year (the end of October, 2018), is founded in the full assurance of faith that God has accomplished His purpose. The vision of a fully indigenous university administered by the Zambian churches must be comprehensively embraced. Every aspect of ACU’s establishment has been directed by this purpose through faculty and staff development and church ownership of the ministry. The imperative is that all faith be solely centred upon God to guide the vision and mission of ACU to full maturity.

ACU is not a vision for higher education that others will come to establish on behalf of the churches. Perhaps some have looked to the future, waiting for that day when they might:

- walk onto a beautifully constructed campus;
- into fully equipped classrooms;
- filled with anxiously waiting students;
- handed fully prepared curricula; and
- teach with all the accolades and results of an established institute of higher education!

However, ACU is a work of faith in God, not men, to be completed by the churches that He has chosen as the vessels for honourable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. It's time that everyone’s faith is fully submitted to God accepting, as His chosen vessels, that He will enable completion of the work of ACU.

As the banner has always been raised for the Reformed Baptist Churches of Zambia: ACU is your university that God has brought to this generation, to your churches, in this part of the world. ACU is and will continue to be a vehicle for God to transform the lives of students who will bring transformation in Christ to all aspects of the culture in which they live and serve.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

MATTERS FOR PRAYER

- The students have 4 weeks of lectures to go before their examinations. Pray for them as they prepare to finish the academic year.
- Preparations involved in the 2018 Graduation scheduled to take place on 27 October 2018.
- More applicants and the application process for the 2019 intake.
- Wisdom for the land committee as they deliberate and negotiate over the options.
- The ongoing recruitment process of faculty and other members of staff. ACU requires volunteer lecturers and professionals that are aligned doctrinally.

MATTERS FOR PRAISE

- A Christian brother from Canada offered an annual student scholarship in memorial of his late father.
- We had a number of opportunities to speak to high school leavers about ACU at different high school forums.
- The 2018 Faculty Development Workshops were successfully completed on 15 September 2018.
- The land search committee went to survey the different options of prospective land for the ACU campus.