

Naidoo, Marily (Ed.)

*Between the real and the ideal. Ministerial formation
in South African churches*

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This book, under the editorship of Prof. Marily Naidoo, is the result of a research project on “spiritual formation and theological education” in South Africa. The co-authors write from various church denominations’ perspectives on theological training: Dutch Reformed churches, Uniting Reformed church, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, South African Presbyterian tradition, Baptist tradition, Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Lutheran tradition, Roman Catholic tradition, Charismatic context, and African Spiritual Churches.

In the foreword, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu underscores the important role of theological training by stating “... this is what will determine the quality of ministerial leadership which in turn has important repercussions for the kind of churches that evolve and the calibre of Christian disciples that will be nurtured”.

The aim of the book is to contribute to discussions on ministerial training and how formation fits into theological training. A general overview of ministerial training aims and models are given. Furthermore, the authors from specific denominations give valuable insight into ministerial training in different traditions, an important contribution of this book. There is a widespread concern about the state of theological education. Regarding the three major dimensions of ministerial training, namely theological knowledge, the development of ministry skills and spiritual formation, there is dissatisfaction among theological institutions as well as other stakeholders.

In the last chapter, the way forward for ministerial formation is sketched. The South African context of theological education includes the changing landscape of higher education, as well as the changing models of theological education, among other reasons for this being the growth of the church in Africa. The recurring theme of other contributors to the book is the need for more formational content as well as integration and methodology changes within the curriculum. Curriculum challenges impacting formation are highlighted: contextualisation, Africanisation, formation programmes and integration of learning.

This book makes a contribution on various levels. First, it presents information from various church denominations regarding their theological training. Secondly, this information is combined and tendencies on theological education in South Africa are sketched. Finally, a way forward for

Resensies/Reviews

ministerial information in South Africa is suggested. The book gives valuable information to higher education institutions as well as church denominations, and makes an important contribution to the ongoing debate on ministerial formation and theological education.

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