Equipping the Saints Without a Theological Seminary

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There has been a dawning realisation among Danish free churches that we need future pastors and pioneers, and yet we do not have a seminary any more. Added to this, the next generation of young people have a hard time identifying themselves in the traditional image of a pastor. These, among other developments, initiated a reflection among Baptist and other free churches in Denmark almost ten years ago. Today the situation has changed, and a growing number of young people study theology and prepare for ministry within the synergy between local free church practice and academic theology at the university. This article provides a practitioner perspective on the theological formation of new pastors and pioneers within this context. It concludes that the Millennial, studying academic theology, could potentially be a great advantage for the free church movement, but at the same time challenge free churches to engage with academic work as a practice at the centre of the calling of the church.

Keywords

Denmark; theological education; ministry formation; Millennials; free church

Introduction

The intention of this paper[1] is to enquire, from a reflective practitioner's perspective, into how Danish free churches equip theological students to become future pastors, pioneers, and theologians within the context of theological training without a free church seminary.

This article begins with a summary of the background and historical development of theological education among Danish Baptists and the present collaboration of equipping new pastors across Danish free churches. Thereafter, it will discuss the 'Millennials', the new generation of theological students and potential pioneers of the reflective practices of the church. Last, this article will bring a perspective on how to engage the theological formation of Millennials between the local church and the academy without a seminary.

[1] This article is based on and reworked from the presentation *'*Equipping the saints – theologically forming new pastors and pioneers with a synergy between academia and the local church*',* which was presented and discussed at The Consortium of European Baptist Theological Schools (CEBTS) conference, June 2018 in Vienna.

Free Church Theological Education in Denmark

The Danish free churches are a minority in Denmark. Across the wide range of 300 Baptist- and Pentecostal-oriented Danish free churches, there are an estimated 20,000 members in all.[2] The Baptists are the only free church denomination in Denmark which has a lengthy tradition of academic theological education.[3] This summary is by no means comprehensive but serves to illustrate the general reflections about ministry formation and the hesitation towards academic theological education among Danish free churches. It also serves as a background for the contemporary theological collaborations.

1. The Danish Baptist Theological Seminary

The National Union of Danish Baptists was established in January 1849 at the Baptist Conference in Hamburg. The question of how to equip missionaries was discussed and a decision was made that every Union should be free to decide the issue for themselves.[4] Thus, the question about theological education has been central from the beginning of the Danish Baptist Union.

The Danish Baptists did not use the term 'pastors' at the beginning but preferred the terms 'elders' (*forstander*), 'teachers', 'deacons', and 'missionaries'. These different ministers were at the beginning 'self-made men', educated in the 'school of life' and formed within different revival groups (*Gudelige forsamlinger*).[5] One of the first Baptist congregations, established by Ole Nielsen Føltved in Aalborg, decided on training preachers in the 1840s who would be able to travel around as missionaries. This initiative developed into a small mission school in Oppelstrup outside Aalborg.[6]

At the Baptist Union Conference in Hamburg in 1851, the topic of the education of preachers was once again on the agenda. The outcome of this made the Danish Baptists decide to establish a Union treasury for educating missionaries in 1852.[7] The Danish Baptists did not follow the example of the German and Swedish Baptists who established 'Missionary Schools', because of the lack of both funding and vision. Missionaries were primarily

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[2] An estimate suggested by the Danish Free Church Network (*FrikirkeNet*) <https://frikirkenet.dk/side/hvad-er-en-frikirke> [accessed 18 February 2019]

[3] In more recent times the Danish Pentecostal Church has established a theological programme at the Pentecostal Bible College in Mariager in collaboration with the Australian Harvest Bible College and lately the Australian College 'Alphacrucis' <http://en.mariagerbiblecollege.com/> [accessed 18 February 2019]

[4] Bent Hylleberg and Bjarne Møller Jørgensen, eds., *Et kirkesamfund bliver til - Danske baptisters historie gennem 150 år*, (Føltveds Forlag, 1989), p. 36.

[5] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 60.

[6] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 61.

[7] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 60.

trained in Germany, Britain, and later from 1884 in Chicago, but minor Danish courses were attempted with less success.[8] The Danish Baptists continuously discussed the issue of urgency, vision, and finances in relation to training. During the 1890s the scepticism and criticism of theological education of preachers seems to have waned and the discussion moved instead toward the question of 'whom should we educate?' The choice was between equipping young men for new potential ministry or investing more in men already preaching and strengthening their skills. The latter suggestion was chosen, based on three main convictions: no Baptist becomes a preacher from only attending a school; good preaching presupposes good practice and experience of ministry; and further education sharpens the foundation of practice.[9]

The questions about the location of the school and the lack of candidates was a recurring issue. In 1893 it was decided to establish a training school in Copenhagen. The level of education in the general Danish population was now raised and made new demands on the education of preachers, who needed a thorough primary school education. The 'Grundtvigian' movement[10] contributed further to this development. They encouraged education of all common men – the improvement of the education of children and 'folk high school' of farmers and labourers – with the aim of making the common man more literary and empowered. It was not enough to be a zealous preacher to catch the ears and hearts of listeners. There was a need for logical arguments to meet critical opponents.[11] There was a growing need for both providing a 'higher exam' from the primary school (*realeksamen*), even a further education and exams (*gymnasium*), 'folk high school', and a school for preachers. The challenge was to find a location which could accommodate this need and keep everything under one roof.[12] For ten years the discussion went back and forth: should the school stay at the 'folk high school' at Gistrup near Aalborg or should it move to Copenhagen? Tølløse was chosen in 1928, outside of Copenhagen, and the requirements for the acceptance of new students at the school were sharpened. A one-year practical testing period with missionary work was necessary before acceptance into the preaching school.[13]

The work of equipping new pastors and missionaries continued, and in 1966 The Danish Baptist Seminary was established. The seminary continued to educate Baptist ministers, but the ongoing struggle for funding, among

[8] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 146.
[9] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 185.
[10] N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) was a Danish pastor, theologian, politician, and prolific poet and writer. He is relatively unknown internationally but one of the most influential thinkers in Danish educational and theological history. <https://grundtvig.dk/grundtvig/who-is-grundtvig/> [accessed 18 February 2019]
[11] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 140.
[12] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 260.
[13] Hylleberg, *kirkesamfund*, p. 262.

other things, forced a transition into a Scandinavian ecumenical collaboration. The 'Scandinavian Academy of Leadership and Theology' (SALT) was established in 2000.

2. Free Church Collaboration

SALT was a theological education grounded in congregational and missional practices, where students trained for both ministry and leadership as part of the theological education, with the goal of formation of missional reflective practitioners.[14] SALT was connected through a broad range of free church partners and participants across Scandinavia with theological credential recognition by Sweden, via The Swedish Baptist Seminary in Örebro and by Norway, through SALT Oslo. SALT never obtained credential recognition in the Danish educational system and thereby the right for SU[15]. SALT was a visionary project, educating upcoming theologians, pastors, and leaders for churches which did not yet exist. Because of this SALT received some criticism; the vision and scope of SALT was not consistent with the current state of Danish free churches.[16] This challenge, combined with funding mainly by the Baptist Union, the lack of approval by the Danish government and thereby the right to SU, and lack of students forced the collaboration to end in 2009.[17]

The end of SALT left a vacuum regarding what to do about equipping new pastors and pioneers. In 2010 the Free Church Education Forum (FFU) was established by a group of free church denominations[18] to discuss possibilities and strategies to engage the challenges of a growing number of pastors retiring in the near future. The different denominations had very diverse traditions and strategies for education. The Pentecostals had their Bible College, which at the time had started cooperation with Harvest Bible College, Australia.[19] Other denominations had no strategies and still others invested in education outside of Denmark. The after-effect of SALT made it clear that the time for a new free church theological seminary had not yet come. In the meantime, other possibilities for theological education had

[14] Studiehåndbogen SALT 2008-09: med kursus beskrivelser (Unpublished), pp. 3-4.
[15] SU is the Danish Students' Grants and Loans Scheme. Every Dane over the age of eighteen is entitled to public support for his or her further education – regardless of social standing. http://www.su.dk/english/
[16] Personal correspondence with different partners and churches involved.
[17] Some of the staff and resources from SALT were invested in the development of a new BA in Christianity, Culture, and Communication (3K) at Diakon Højskolen in Aarhus and Diakonissestiftelsen in Copenhagen. <https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/kirke-tro/danmark-f%C3%A5r-ny-uddannelse-i-kristendom-og-kultur> [accessed 18 February 2019]
[18] FFU was established by the Danish Free Church Network (*FrikirkeNet*) and consisted of Apostolsk Kirke, Baptistkirken, Missionsforbundet, Pinsekirken, Mariager Højskole and Kolding International Højskole.
[19] Harvest Bible College is now a part of Alphacrucis <https://www.eternitynews.com.au/australia/colleges-plan-to-grow-stronger-together/> [accessed 18 February 2019]

emerged.[20] The agreement was to create a more visible 'road to becoming a pastor' and to point the incoming student in the direction of different educational opportunities, providing supervision, practice in a local church, and mentoring.

Millennials: Builders and Minecrafters

What are the characteristics of the present generation of young people considering becoming pastors, leaders, and theologians? The challenge of describing 'Millennials' is that they are a generation that is still being shaped and formed. Researchers disagree about how to divide the generational cohorts,[21] but there is somehow a consensus about including the generation of the 1980s and 1990s.[22] Consequently, Millennials as a generational cohort would now be between nineteen and thirty-nine years of age. In the following section, I will rely on a sociological description and my cultural observations to paint an image of this generation. One of the formative experiences which could be expressed as a symbol for this generation is the terror attack in New York on 9/11, 2001 – a symbol which illustrated the fact of growing up in a world of falling institutions, with the need for rebuilding a broken and uncertain world.[23] Millennials are also characterised as the children of the 'baby boomers', with both the benefits of the relatively economically successful generation and the relational outcome and complexity of rising divorce rates. Other more general factors which add to the complexity include globalisation, ever increasing numbers of women in the workforce, and accelerating technological and socio-economic change.[24]

The median age of this generation is twenty-seven, and often the description of this generation is made by the older generation researching the Millennials. For some people, Millennials can be experienced as apathetic, disinterested and selfish, characterised as the 'me-generation'.[25] However, there are a few studies conducted by Millennials which explore their

[20] Menighedsfakultetet in Aarhus developed a BA in theology in cooperation with The University of Wales in 2005. Dansk Bibel Institut in Copenhagen did something similar in 2001. Both places are private Lutheran Seminaries.

[21] 'The Whys and Hows of Generations Research', *Pew Research Center* (3 September 2015) <http://www.people-press.org/2015/09/03/the-whys-and-hows-of-generations-research/> [accessed 18 February 2019]

[22] Ronald J. Burke, Cary L. Cooper and Alexander-Stamatios G. Antoniou, eds., *The Multi-Generational and Aging Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities* (New Horizons in Management. Cheltenham, UK/ Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015), p. 121.

[23] Michael Dimock, 'Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins', *Pew Research Center* (17 January 2019) <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/> [accessed 18 February 2019]

[24] Ronald J. Burke, *The Multi-Generational and Aging Workforce*, p. 123.

[25] Joel Stein, 'Millennials: the Me Me Me generation', *Time Magazine* (20 May 2013) <http://time.com/247/millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/> [accessed 18 February 2019]

strengths and weaknesses. For this summarisation, I am indebted to U-Wen Low's discussions about Millennials.[26]

1. **Diverse, Inclusive, and Individual:** Millennials are used to, and embrace, diversity and have grown up with a high value of accepting others. This extends both to ethnic, racial, gender, religious, and socio-economic boundaries. This celebration of diversity is contributing to a strong sense of individualism.

2. **Expectancy and Purpose:** Millennials are self-conscious and have a great expectancy of life and opportunities for education, jobs, and the future. Throughout their upbringing, interaction with media and education, Millennials have been encouraged to discover their purpose and to participate in changing the world. They feel a sense of urgency to rally around causes which connect with their values.

3. **Adapters and Thinkers:** Millennials are quick to adapt, flexible, and used to rapid change both with technology and appropriating new information. Millennials are educated to question the status quo, not as contrarians but to understand before complying. They seek to understand and are motivated by the underlying reasoning.

4. **Tribal Collaborators:** Millennials prefer identification with others who share their interests or passions. The internet makes this easier for individuals and creates extended networks and tribes. Tribes make Millennials experience participation in causes which are more significant than themselves. Collaboration with others has high value, and it is important to make space for others to contribute and speak up. Feedback processes are important for communication and help to develop and achieve something great together. Millennials can come across as respectful of older generations unlike, for example, Generation X. They are able to come along with others in an egalitarian way and keep an open-mindedness to generations different from themselves.[27]

It is my observation that Millennials to a greater extent seek to create, compared to the former 'Generation X' which had a great need for deconstructing. It is fascinating how we see something like this reflected in, for example, the gaming industry and toys. 'Minecraft' has been one of the

[26] U-Wen Low, 'A Millennial Talks Back: Practical Theology as a potential strategy for engaging Australian Millennials in churches?', *Journal of Contemporary Ministry*, No. 4 (2018), 91-101.
[27] Although the author is Australian and quoting from an American context, this summarisation is applicable for reflecting on a Danish context.

most popular computer games among Millennials.[28] Minecraft is a game about building and creating cities, roads, and houses – with no end of what it is possible to build. With the arrival of 'Millennials', Lego has made a huge turnaround and begun to profit after re-focusing on the Lego narrative of creation.[29] This generation has grown up with tablets, smartphones, and apps, and anyone who has access to these technologies can make a music video, publish a book, or create a movie. Millennials are creators and settlers. They have come to a world where Generation X has deconstructed everything, and now there is time for building and creating.[30]

In the context of Danish theological students with free church background, we know from a survey that more than fifty per cent of this next generation of theology students have a goal of being pastors or church planters in the future.[31] This growing number of Millennials studying theology, characterised as a generation of 'builders', could be beneficial for academic work as a practice at the centre of the calling of the church. The essential task could be to provide this generation with tools and resources for developing the world and church as a building site.

Theological Formation for Ministry

More than 170 years of equipping preachers, pastors, and leaders in Danish free churches have come and gone, and yet some of the same issues continue to surface. For example, a lack of resources seems to be a continuing battle, though denominational cooperation could be the onward solution. The lack of people willing to engage with training to become pastors has also been a continuing challenge. With the coordinated work of FFU this challenge seems to have slowed, and maybe the tides have changed with the growing number of young people studying theology.

The conviction that theological education sharpens the foundation of practices is still the most distinctive mark of theological formation within Danish free churches, compared to the classic ideals of theological education which are the case when studying theology at a Danish university.[32] The

[28] Clive Thompson, 'The Minecraft Generation', *New York Times* (14 April 2016) <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/magazine/the-minecraft-generation.html> [accessed 18 February 2019]

[29] Jonathan Ringen, 'How Lego became the Apple of toys', *Fast Company* (1 August 2015) <https://www.fastcompany.com/3040223/when-it-clicks-it-clicks> [accessed 18 February 2019]

[30] Thomas Willer, Generation Z – den næste generation, *Teologik*, 5 (Marts 2016), p. 4. <https://www.kristent.dk/upload/101195/doc/22899-019-Generation-Z.pdf> [accessed 15 February 2019]

[31] Unpublished survey of Free Church Education Forum (FFU).

[32] The formational aspect of academic education is more or less toned down. The 'Humboldt vision' of research, education, and formation as a union has been taken over by other ideals of more efficiencies of resources. Jens Erik Kristensen (ed.) *Ideer om et universitet* (Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2007).

importance of incorporating the local church as an actor is underlined, as is the key role of practices of theological formation.

1. Equipping Millennials

The Millennial cohort is a well-educated, competent, and courageous generation with the ability to creatively build. They move away from the more traditional role of the solo pastor, preferring teamwork and co-learning. They gather around and strive for meaningful communities and put themselves into living out their convictions and purpose.

Another challenge, which I have observed personally, is that free church students seem to leave their 'free church luggage' at the door on their way into the theological faculty. There is no harm done in studying theology at a Danish theological faculty with a leaning towards Lutheran theology. The problem begins when the student neglects or doubts that the free church tradition is robust enough to survive or is relevant for academic theological work.

Lutheran theology in itself is not the problem, rather the lack of consideration of the free church tradition within the academy is the problem. It leaves this generation without tools and resources for reflecting and transforming their tradition and practices.

The Danish free churches could potentially be missing out on a new generation of upcoming scholars who could work theologically, communicate the gospel, equip the saints, and develop ecclesiology. The potential of a growing group of students can be missed if they do not take up the theological tradition of the 'gathering community' and the distinctive way of doing theology within this tradition.[33] The responsibility for the exposure to free church theological reflections and methods rests with the free church.

2. Free Church Study Centre

To engage these challenges and accommodate the potential of the present generation, a new study centre has been established in cooperation between different Danish free church denominations.[34] The study centre is not a new theological educational centre in the classical sense – with buildings, staff, curriculums, and exams. The initiative has been grown from local church experience, initiated in 2011 with cooperation between churches as training grounds for theological students, mentoring, and apprenticeship. There is

[33] This task is further discussed by Parush R. Parushev, 'Carrying out the Theological Task in a Baptistic Way', *Baptistic Theologies*, Vol. 6: 1 (Spring 2014), 53-71.
[34] The Apostolic Church (Pentecostals), The Baptist Union, and The Vineyard Churches in Denmark.

also a mandatory monthly regional learning community with special emphasis on reflection on theology, leadership practices, personal life, and developing a sense of call for ministry. The model seems fit because of the low budget, low maintenance, and high impact in both local churches and within the process of theological formation for ministry. The experiment has developed into a full national programme, which in 2019 will be expanded to four different areas of Denmark, as cooperation between local free churches, as a training ground for theology students studying at the university. The inclusion of local church leaders and free church scholars will provide additional teaching and supervision. In some ways, this amounts to a continuation of the SALT vision of theological education but within the 'gathering community'. Strategically it is much more lightweight because the formal theological education is provided by the university. However, the headlines of the SALT vision are still maintained in the following:[35]

1. Theological leaders are generalists rather than experts and have the congregation, its life and development in focus.

2. Missional leaders with the competencies to live into the biblical narrative within the contemporary world of life and create a meaningful missional vision in a dialogue with the faith community.

3. Theological leaders who understand and accept the premises that the 'location' or 'where' of theology includes the community of faith.

4. Theological leaders who understand that the 'what' of theology is not primarily formal, consistent theological systems or theories, but the living and life-giving faith as it continually unfolds, is created and exercised in the 'gathering community' around the Bible and the experience of the kingdom of God.

5. Leaders who can lead and motivate the community of faith in 'theologisation' and towards the creation of meaning formed by the gripping images of the future of God's eschatological hope.

The theological formation for ministry does not have its centre within a free church theological school. This could appear as a disadvantage because the formal theological education is out of reach. On the other hand it keeps the model's budget low and keeps the main focus on personal learning and ministry formation. The SALT model is transformed into the synergy between local church practice, learning community, free church scholar-

[35] These statements are reworked from the former SALT description and scope of theological education. Bent Hylleberg and Ib Sørensen, 'Menighedsbaseret og -praktiseret teologi og teologisk lederuddannelse', *Ny Mission* 14 (2008), 33-44.

network, and formal theological education at the university. Each denomination has its national gatherings for students, which can provide specifics and distinctive tradition. The local church focus brings close attention to each student's daily work, study, and practice.

With the rise of a new generation of theologically trained pastors, there is potential for changing the thinking and responsibility of the local church as a training ground. One of the existing ideas is that the national church association should 'create' and supply the local churches with new pastors. But the fact remains: the local church is the birthplace, and the local church has a responsibility in this process of calling and equipping. The primary place of learning the skills and identity of being a pastor or a pioneer is within the local church. No one becomes a good pastor without following a pastor and so the combination of theological education and apprenticeship is advantageous.

To develop and strengthen this theological formation process, a four-stranded strategy has been suggested by the new study centre, with the goal of equipping new pastors and pioneers and keeping the 'both and' of the role of local church and academia at the university in mind.

1. **Local church:** The students are anchored in practice and 'apprenticeship' in local congregations on a weekly basis, following the conviction that *you only become a good pastor/leader by following a pastor/leader.*
2. **Regional learning community:** The students gather in regional learning networks on a monthly basis. The focus is on the development of calling and skills as 'reflective practitioners' in theology and leadership.
3. **A network of 'free church scholars':** There is a need for establishing a national 'scholar' network for 'gathering community'-based theology. The focus of this network is to develop, equip, and contribute with knowledge, supervision, and additional teaching for students at BA and MA level.
4. **Re-establishing the relationship and collaboration** with the Scandinavian free church theological education network to win momentum for the study centre and scholar network.

Learning Community

The last part of this article will focus on the 'operating system' for the learning community. It is a practical theological process of reflecting on the experience of being an apprentice and a theologian. The process of

developing and identifying a 'calling' is introduced, and the notion of 'self-differentiation' is suggested as a conceptual language for this process.

1. Practical Theological Reflection

The learning community is functioning as a 'lab' for theological reflection, with the aim of a convictional discovery practice. It comes from the experience of a number of students, who sometimes find it difficult to reflect externally on both theological and personal issues with pastors who do not have sufficient theological knowledge or appraisal for any 'half baked' theological suggestion which needs to be ventilated and tested. Hopefully, the new generation of students can change this environment of learning within the church community when they become mentors for the generations after them. In this situation, the learning community becomes the 'lab' needed for testing and developing both theological knowledge and reflective skills.

The practical theological reflection within the learning community often follows a model similar to the pastoral cycle, which Richard Osmer argues involves the tasks of reflecting on four questions:[36]

- *What is going on*? – the descriptive-empirical task
- *Why is this happening*? – the interpretive task
- *What ought to be going on*? – the normative task
- *How might we respond*? – the pragmatic-strategic task of new practices

This becomes a simple but important tool for a consistent developmental process, which first of all is a personal reflection on practice and participating in the 'gathering community' and is also related to the role of pastor-theologian, reflecting theologically about practices and leadership.

2. Self-Differentiation

The 'lab' also challenges each student to personally engage with their own and shared convictions. The personal aspect of the process could be characterised as something similar to the notion of 'self-differentiation'.[37] Edwin Friedman describes the process of 'self-differentiation' as the lifelong process of keeping balance to one's self and being through a process of self-definition and self-regulation. To differentiate is knowing where one ends and another begins, and being clear about one's values and convictions.[38]

[36] Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), p. 4.
[37] Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve, Revised Edition: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, 2017), p. 194.
[38] Friedman, *Failure*, p. 195.

This is an emotional concept which is different from the often overly focused relying on the right data of knowledge and skill in ministry.

It is a personal process of developing a sense of calling and 'self' in regard to leadership experience and practical theological reasoning. The conceptual language of 'self-differentiation' makes sense for the convictional development of the individual pastor, pioneer, and theologian.[39] Friedman describes leaders who are poorly differentiated in their leadership as often:[40]

- Lacking distance to think out their vision clearly;
- Reactive and led by crisis after crisis;
- Reluctant to take well-defined stands;
- Developing blame displacement instead of taking responsibility;
- Having a hard time dealing with sabotage in the organisation.

This is contrasted with the well-differentiated leader who is characterised by the ability to both separate and self-regulate from surrounding emotional processes, to maintain convictional clarity and stand by his/her principles and vision. The well-differentiated leader will also demonstrate the ability to be both courageous and vulnerable – setting boundaries without disconnecting from the relationship with others, despite disagreement. According to Friedman, all this will be challenging in an organisational culture formed by anxiety, and the short-term temptation is for reactivity, a quick fix for more complicated problems.[41]

The learning community is not a therapeutic community and the notion of 'self-differentiation' functions as a conceptual language to describe the processes and challenge of leadership. Through conversation and fellowship with other theology students and apprenticeship throughout the five years of studying, the goal is that students develop skills which help to identify the challenges, avoid the temptation of being reactive, and engage with integrity.

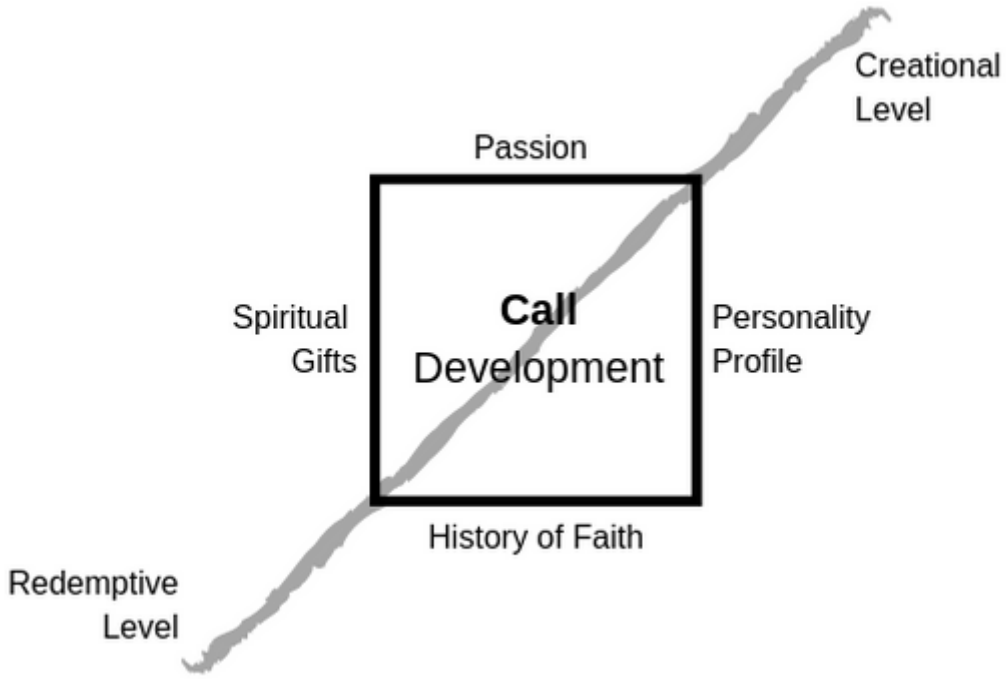
3. Developing a Sense of 'Calling'

The integration of knowledge, skills, theological reflection, and 'self-differentiation' can be summarised in this model, which illustrates different

[39] Friedman has developed his model of self-differentiation from the systemic family therapy theorist Murray Bowen. The systemic approach to leadership provides a more holistic view on the leader and the organisation. Decisions and solutions are not necessarily in direct relation to the symptoms of e.g. a problem, but focus on the forces within the system of relationships and how the leader operates.
Edwin H. Friedman, Gary Emanuel and Mickie Crimone, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, 1st edn (New York: The Guilford Press, 2011), p. 27.
[40] Friedman, *Failure*, p. 60.
[41] Friedman, *Failure*, pp. 33ff; pp. 60; 96.

aspects of the concept of developing 'calling'. Sometimes the idea of 'getting a call' is trivialised as the Christian way to become something when you grow up. This model is based on the conviction that God has a purpose with his creation and re-creates through the redemptive work of Christ through the Spirit. In this way, the word 'calling' could be further qualified from the root of the word vocation – being called and named by someone; receiving and discovering identity. In Christ, every disciple gets a sense of *telos* – a direction and purpose. The development of this 'call' is an identity process. It is both an internal process within the apprentice and an external process through the community: identifying, encouraging, and challenging the calling.

To simplify the complex process of differentiation, the process can be illustrated as a square with four different aspects, which as a whole takes part in the developing process of self-knowledge. These four aspects are in no way a comprehensive list but serve as an illustration of some of the considerations for the process of identification and self-differentiation.



The first aspect is 'history of faith' or the history of faith and self. This is not in the fashion of the traditional testimony but a holistic reflection on the history of self and faith. The aim is self-examination, and the process of telling and listening to the story of others facilitates this process of identification.[42] The second aspect is a 'personality profile', which provides

[42] A constructive way to self-examination could be by reflecting, writing, and sharing a story of faith and self by responding to these questions:

language for the understanding of who one is – skills and preferences, among other things. Further, it provides language for the understanding of other people, whose differences will provide skills for accepting and differentiation.[43] The third aspect is the language of spiritual gifting and is based on the conviction that God, through the redemptive work of Christ through the Spirit, empowers people by gifts of grace. A spiritual gift is understood as God communicating his grace through one person to others in the community. Gifts of grace are discovered, identified, and recognised by the community and the functioning of the gift is strengthened by the freedom to participate and contribute. Last, the aspect of 'passion' is important. Passion has a dual meaning: it is both affections for a cause and the willingness to bear suffering for the cause. Passion functions in this model as an identification marker of what drives a person in a way that affects other people positively.

The square is defined by two primary sides of God's work through creation and re-creation. God gives something to a person through the creation of life, but there is also something which is re-created. The model helps to simplify a complex process and functions as a part of the operating system within the practices of the learning community.

Conclusion

The content of this article originates from a presentation and conversation about 'What is theological about theological education?' presented at the CEBTS conference in Vienna in June 2018. My ambition was to bring a practitioner's perspective on equipping pastors and pioneers for ministry without a seminary, but within the synergy between local church and academia. The original presentation has been extended with a historical summary of the Baptist seminary, which points to the fact that theological education within Danish free churches is still a challenge in relation to resources and demands. The growing number of Millennials with a free church background who are studying theology is a significant change for Danish free churches. At the same time this brings great potential for

- How did you find faith?
- What characterised the environment where you grew up? What characterised the environment where your faith developed?
- Who were your role models in faith? Why? What characterised them?
- To what degree is your story characterised by safety, doubt, crisis, change, growth, or stagnation?
- Which events have been formative for your faith?
- How would you describe your life of faith right now?
- Which people are a part of your journey today and what characterises these people?
- What are you longing for? What expectations do you have for the future?

[43] A personality profile can never be comprehensive, and it is important to note that it is an analysis and not a test. It provides language for a typology and is only helpful as long as a person identifies with this language and the description of themselves.

developing the practices of theological reflection at the heart of local free churches. The educational situation of being without a free church seminary, set alongside the potential of the Millennial generation, has pushed Danish free churches to act differently in regard to theological formation for ministry. This article brings a perspective on a model which is both low-budget and low-maintenance but at the same time brings a significant impact on students and local communities of faith.

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