



Executive Director's Communique August 2022

Are we adequately preparing the next generation of pastors?

Our schools have the God-given responsibility to prepare the next generation of pastors, missionaries, evangelists, prophets, and educators for relevant, biblical, Pentecostal ministry. Is your school addressing the spiritual and character formation of your students along with biblical, theological, and practical ministry training? As a result of attending your school, are your graduates more like Jesus in all aspects of their lives and ministries?

Many today are looking at ministry as a vocation and profession. Being a “Reverend” or even better, “Reverend Doctor,” brings respect and status. In many cases, one is given position and power as a pastor, evangelist, teacher, prophet, and missionary. Does the leader’s character and spiritual development match the position and the responsibilities required of that role?

Remember the admonition of Paul to his spiritual son, Timothy: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim 4:16 NIV). Paul addressed both the character and content dimensions of life and ministry. This challenge was addressed to Timothy after Paul had already modeled a godly life and sound doctrine before his beloved apprentice: “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:13). Further, Paul said, “You know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings. . . . Continue in what you have learned” (2 Tim 3:10-14). Knowing his time on earth was short and the apostolic leadership mantle would soon be passed to another, Paul was committed to investing in the next generation.

Spiritual and character development involve an intentional process parallel to academic training. Our schools must be committed to quality on both tracks. While students grapple with doctrine and develop skills in hermeneutics and homiletics, they must work at character and spiritual growth. The maturing of the inner person comes as character, spirituality, and integrity are modeled by the faculty and administration. Chapel services where the Holy Spirit is active through conviction and the manifestation of charismatic gifts are needed. Regular small group and discipleship gatherings, where students study Scripture together and honestly address and pray about areas of their lives that need growth and discipline, are essential. School-wide times of prayer and fasting allow the school’s community to seek God and hear from him. In these corporate gatherings, the Spirit can speak to individuals and the entire school body about repentance, worship, holiness, and missions. The importance of private, daily devotions spent reading Scripture and listening to the voice of God must be learned in our schools and become an integral part of the minister’s life. Humble, servant leadership must be displayed as students engage in manual labor on campus, cleaning their dormitory rooms, picking up garbage around the buildings and in the classroom, and assisting with maintenance projects. Academic rigor without character development is a recipe for ministerial disaster. Be sure that your school is committed to both.

Please set aside the dates of Monday – Thursday, 13-17 February 2023, to gather for our 5th triennial APTEA conference in Nairobi at the Desmond Tutu Conference Center. For details and registration, contact Todd Churchill at Africa’s Hope: <tchurchill@africashope.org>.