

# A Threefold of Lutheran Theological Institutions in the Midst of Theological Education in South Africa: 1960–1993

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## Abstract

This article explores the undocumented history of theological institutions belonging to the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA) which contributed to South African theological education. The establishment of these institutions was initially managed by the mission societies of the LCSA and later the regional leadership. This development created the necessity for centralised theological training since 1910. Due to the political landscape of South Africa, theological education was adversely affected. The LCSA looked at ways to sustain theological education and as a result of the church's passion, Lutheran Theological education was established. However, the LCSA worked in collaboration with other Christian denominations to achieve its ecumenical vision and establish a solid foundation of theological education.

**Keywords:** Oscarsberg Lutheran Theological College; Umphumulo Lutheran Theological College; Marang Lutheran Theological Seminary; theological education; African Independent Churches Association; South African universities

## Introduction

For the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA), Lutheran theological education presented a momentous task of equipping the clergy and laity in order for the church to be relevant to the society it was serving. The LCSA, as God's institution, had to partner with its theological institutions to provide relevant, meaningful, spiritual, political and socio-economic well-being programmes in Southern Africa and Africa. The theological education provided by the LCSA was an anchor for Southern Africa since its commitment was based on values and principles of education from a theological



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perspective. This article revisits the historical transition and replacement of Oscarsberg Lutheran Theological Seminary (OLTS), Bethel Lutheran Seminary, and the newly established Pietermaritzburg Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI). The article further discusses the existing partnership between the LCSA and the theological education offered by South African universities. When necessary, the networking of Lutheran theological institutions in Africa will also be discussed.

## Literature Review

Scriba and Lislerud (1997, 189) state that OLTS was established at Rorke's Drift in the former province of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)) to train indigenous clergy. In 1912, OLTS started to operate with nine students and trained pastors from the LCSA and the Eastern Province of the Moravian Church. They claim that OLTS was moved to Umphumulo in KZN, on land belonging to the Norwegian Mission Society in 1960 and students from all races were accepted by the government, except white students. Lutherans were invited to be part of establishing the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM); however, they declined the invitation in order to concentrate on providing a closer Lutheran theological training at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) at Umphumulo. Nürnberger (2012, 107) discusses a closer cooperation between Marang Lutheran Theological Seminary (MLTS) and LTS at Umphumulo but does not discuss the transition of OLTS to Umphumulo. What is missing is that OLTS was renamed Oscarsberg Lutheran Theological College (OLTC); the government did not allow all races to be trained at one training institution; and there is no discussion of the pre-theological programme at Umphumulo. The current article provides details about the transition of OLTS to the Umphumulo Lutheran Theological College (ULTC).

## ULTC: A Central Theological Institution

The first commission of inquiry into theological training was held at OLTC on 31 August 1960. Johannsmeier (1960, 5) reports as follows:

In the discussions on the various subjects of inquiry, there was unanimity among the members of the commission on all main points. Thus, the commission recommends the following:

- (a) Development of a central theological college on a higher level, discouraging regional or local training.
- (b) Formation of a new College Board and Executive.
- (c) Entrance qualification for the seminary to be raised to matric within the next five years; for the pre-seminary to Junior Certificate accordingly.
- (d) As facilities and opportunities at Umphumulo outweigh those of Oscarsberg, the commission unanimously voted for the transfer of the seminary to

Umphumulo, which, however, does not mean that Umphumulo is considered to be the only and best place for all Lutheran churches of the whole of Southern Africa for all times.

- (e) Lecturers appointed for the seminary should as far as possible represent the different participating churches or synods.

The establishment of a single theological institution brought the tribal differences between Bapedi, vhaVenda, Tswana, Zulu and others and racial differences to bear on unity. Coloured, Indian and black theological students were trained in one college as part of the struggle against the apartheid policy. Coloured and Indian theological students applied for a permit before admission (Nsibande 1992, 8). In April 1962, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner removed the tents off the Oscarsberg farm due to the Group Areas Act of 1950, which hugely affected the church and people. Non-Zulu theological students were not allowed to stay and study at ULTC. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa-South Eastern Region (ELCSA-SER) criticised the Group Areas Act as extremely problematic because the government failed to secure the existence of OLTC (Kistner 1993, 41–42). The formation of Lutheran regional churches called for the establishment of a central Lutheran theological education. The aim was to promote an inclusive lecturers' platform from various Lutheran regional churches thereby creating a theological curriculum that was relevant to the LCSA.

The rights of blacks were violated when they were removed by the government. Coloured, Indian and black theological students had not enjoyed their educational rights at OLTC. It was problematic theologically that the Oscarsberg farm was reserved for whites, while blacks and theological students were not allowed to stay and to own property even though the land was their historical birthplace.

Furthermore, on 2 October 1962, OLTC – which was established by the Cooperating Lutheran Missions (CLM) that was also established in 1910 – was moved from eShiyane, Rorke's Drift, to the former Umphumulo Teachers Training College and renamed Umphumulo Lutheran Theological College (ULTC). ULTC was expected to produce competent pastors who would equip their congregants by providing them with the skills relevant to their context. Lutheran theological education provided an intimate relationship between the LCSA and OLTC to equip pastors, not only to do pastoral work, but also to advocate for social justice during the apartheid period (Nsibande 1992, 9–10; Zulu 1992, 4). Thus, ULTC succeeded OLTC to advance the value and work of Lutheran theological education in Southern Africa with the purpose of continuing to improve the level of the standard of education offered at OLTC. For decades, the LCSA built and improved OLTC for the advancement of Lutheran theological education in order to benefit Lutheran churches and other ecumenical churches. OLTC was advancing itself as a valuable African seminary to care responsibly for the training of pastors.

In 1972, the African Independent Churches Association (AICA) requested ULTC to grant the AICA Theological College a building at ULTC. The AICA paid fees for its theological college, and ULTC applied to donor Lutheran churches from overseas for funds to support African Independent Churches (AICs) theological education in South Africa. The AICs are treated as equals with other ecumenical churches as are AICs theological students who study at other Lutheran theological institutions (Nielsen and Becken 1972, 3–4). In partnering with the AICA, Lutherans found a new theological meaning to what it meant to be Lutheran in South Africa. Thus, the establishment of the AICA advanced the AICs' theological perspective and curriculum, and the AICA maintained its theology in Africa.

### Final Work of the CLM Administration of Lutheran Theological Education

On 1 January 1964, the CLM and churches planned to establish a college board of governors to take over the administration of Lutheran theological education and the financial responsibility under a newly proposed joint constitution (Nsibande 1992, 10). For 52 years (1912–1964) the CLM was responsible for the administration of Lutheran theological education. On 5 February 1964, a meeting was held at ULTC. Delegates from the various Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa, Moravian Church Eastern Province and Lutheran mission societies met to elect the Lutheran Theological College Governing Board (LTCGB). The Church of Sweden Mission (CSM) did not join as a partner as it supported the work of ELCSA-SER and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Rhodesia (ELCSR). A new governing partnership constitution was also critiqued, amended and adopted. In the same year, the CLM continued to be responsible for assisting ULTC to maintain its budget (Beyerhaus 1964, 20–21). The restructured college strengthened partnerships between the Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (LCsSA) towards a wide variety of ecclesiastical spirituality, theological and cultural traditions from regional churches. The CLM administration had greatly provided for the well-being of Lutheran theological education to enable Lutheran witness and unity in Southern African society and Africa. It is necessary to celebrate and embrace the CLM for its outstanding contribution to Lutheran theological education, especially on issues of theological curriculum and social justice transformation.

### The BCM and BTM at ULTC

Throughout the years, ULTC gained world-wide recognition in terms of its theological contribution in Southern Africa. In 1992, the LCSA celebrated the 30th anniversary of ULTC and its extensive contribution to Lutheran theological education in South Africa. ULTC produced theological students and graduates who served in Southern Africa and in the world. Some South African universities continued to train these graduates in their faculties of theology. Lecturers and rectors/principals played an imperative role for the construction and consolidation of ULTC on a management level and in aspects of curriculum and ministerial formation (Kok 1992, 1). As an inclusive theological college,

ULTC has produced theological training and students of high quality for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA), Moravian Church, United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (UELCSA), and other churches in Southern Africa. In South Africa, ULTC fulfilled the role of an ecumenical theological training that worked with other theological institutions and universities (Rohwer 1992, 5). It further provided a theological framework to engage with and address challenges that Lutheran churches and society faced. It was through collective hard work that ULTC was shaped into a higher teaching and learning institution. It was not only a theological institution designed for teaching and learning, but also to respond to the harsh realities in South Africa.

In 1968, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and philosophy took root across existing theological institutions in South Africa, including ULTC. In the same year, Dr Manas Buthelezi returned to South Africa having completed his doctoral degree at Drew University in the United States. He was invited by theological students at ULTC and other theological colleges, seminaries and universities to address them about Black Theology. Buthelezi was the founder of Black Theology in South Africa and John Mbiti was the founder of African Theology. In 1971, senior theological students, such as Simon Sekone Maimela, Johannes M. Ramashapa and T. S. Farisani, were leaders of the BCM. Maimela was its convener at ULTC. The ULTC staff, which was dominated by white missionary lecturers and a few black lecturers, was divided on the issues of the BCM and Black Theology Movement (BTM). In the 1970s, there was a demand that missionaries must return to their countries (Mashabele 2019a; Mashabele and Madise 2016, 87; 89). According to Mashabele (2004, 2; 2014, 5–6):

Along with many others, Buthelezi was an advocate for thousands of voiceless South Africans. He was one of those hot-blooded theologians saying: Missionary, go home and leave the black man; he is mature enough to manage his own affairs.

Black theological students at that stage in the 1970s were not allowed to discuss Black Consciousness and Black Theology at ULTC or any affiliate organisation, which filled the vacuum created by banned political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC). Although the BCM and BTM were more visible at universities, the university authorities were uncomfortable with these movements. Black theological students at seminaries, colleges and universities replaced the Students Christian Movement with the University Christian Movement (UCM) (Mashabele 2019a). Individual theological students, such as Maimela, Ramashapa and Farisani, established the BCM at ULTC as they risked and sacrificed their lives to fight against injustices in South Africa. Because they were considered a threat at ULTC, the institution planned to expel them and deny them their educational rights. The BCM and BTM posed a serious threat at South African theological institutions and universities. These two bodies were established so that blacks would lead and teach at theological institutions and universities; hence, there was a demand for missionaries to return to their countries of origin.

ULTC was not just a theological institution, but also a place of political engagement and awareness of key such as the BCM and BTM which found in them fertile soil to grow their ideas. The apartheid regime's secret police visited ULTC frequently to arrest political activists (Zulu 2009, 5). The Missiological Institute (MI) (1965–1978) held 12 theological conferences and produced a number of papers that were presented at conferences which formed part of the political engagement in South Africa and Southern Africa (Zulu 2011, 2–3). The BCM and BTM were officially discussed and accepted by the LTCGB at its 16th meeting held at ULTC from 10–11 November 1971. At this meeting, the LTCGB resolved that the important question, “What does Christ mean to me as an African?” challenged ULTC to do creative research about all aspects related to the BTM. It was agreed that an MI consultation themed “Black Theology and African Theology” should be held in 1972 (Nielsen and Becken 1971a, 7). At the sixth Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa-General Assembly (ELCSA-GA) held at Umphumulo from 5–9 December 1989, Msomi (1989, 112) challenged the ELCSA-GA as follows: “In rating the activities of ELCSA where do we as a church place theological education?” Furthermore, Serote (1994, 2) critically asked the Lutheran Communion of Southern Africa at its meeting in 1992, “What the church is doing to preserve the Lutheran heritage and standard of theological training?”

The BCM and BTM emerged as political movements in this context to reshape theological institutions and universities. The good news was that in spite of the taboo placed on the BCM and BTM they were finally acknowledged by ULTC as part of fulfilling the black agenda. Thus, the Western missionary theological higher curriculum was no longer relevant to Lutheran congregations in South Africa and society. ULTC allowed the BCM and BTM to advocate theology that was in touch with emerging challenges faced by the LCSA and society. Lutheran theology education was not the only essential identity of Lutheran history and heritage in teaching and learning, but the BCM and BTM were providing a new theological curriculum in South Africa.

### Theological Student Support and Students' Voices

In October 1970, the LTCGB decided that individual ULTC theological students could freely affiliate with any movement as long as it advanced their ministerial calling (Loken and Dlamini 1970, 3–4). In 1971, the South African Students Organisation's (SASO) theological students committee at ULTC held a meeting to draft a letter detailing why SASO should be part of ULTC. This letter, dated 8 March 1971, was written to ULTC authorities with Simon Sekone Maimela as its leader and organiser. Maimela explained that SASO was a teaching and learning organisation on political and Black Consciousness issues and meant to prepare theological students as future pastors to assist congregations in response to apartheid. Furthermore, individual ULTC theological students emphasised that their participation in SASO, which was a liberating fellowship and platform for students to advance basic Christian principles and a conversation of black students and communities in response to the common challenges in South Africa (Maimela 1971, 2), should be allowed. However, the LTCGB meeting

of 10–11 November 1971 declined these theological students' rights and dignity to belong to SASO and the UCM after the LTCGB made a thorough investigation of SASO and the UCM. They were only allowed to belong to the Lutheran Theological College Association, which was a missionary centre association (Nielsen and Becken 1971a, 6; 1971b, 4). ULTC theological students followed the proper procedure to engage its authorities to request to belong to political organisations such as SASO and the UCM. This move of theological students motivated how essential these organisations were in terms of community enhancement. However, this case reveals how theological students' rights and dignity were violated by ULTC authorities by denying them the opportunity to belong to SASO and UCM. Indeed, theological students' voices were critically important in the transformation and decolonisation of ULTC.

### Challenges Faced by Lecturers of Lutheran Theological Education

The early missionary phase was problematic due to missionaries being responsible for the largest part of the teaching, sometimes assisted by an African pastor. Theological education experienced a serious crisis because missionaries were self-centred and denied African pastors the right to become lecturers instead of being assistants. Consequently, African pastors advocated for radical transformation in the field of theological teaching and learning in 1955 by demanding to be equal lecturers with missionaries. However, African pastors only became lecturers at theological institutions in the 1960s (Msomi 1988, 197–199). In 1978, the All-Africa Lutheran Conference noted that the majority of Lutheran seminaries and colleges in Africa lacked more indigenous lecturers. A consultation process was called for African Lutheran seminaries for employment of indigenous lecturers, as well as indigenous pastors and lecturers to be trained in African theological institutions and universities and not overseas (Boreš 1978, 137). African pastors urgently called for the LCSA to improve their working conditions in Lutheran theological education in Southern Africa. The contribution of African lecturers became a significant resource to transform Lutheran theological education in Southern Africa. This was a new dawn for African theologians to Africanise Lutheran theological education in Southern Africa and Africa.

In 1964, the shortage of lecturers at theological institutions led to an overburden of work because they were responsible for academic and church administration (Beyerhaus 1964, 22). In 1966, the LTCGB employed several African lecturers in order to strengthen theological education. Thus, the ULTC structure was changed with the aim of filling vacant lecture positions with qualified pastors as part of Africanisation (Becken 1972, 1–2; Rindahl 1967). Lecturers experienced neglect by the church due to the fact that the ELCSA South Eastern Diocese, Western Diocese, and Northern Diocese did not share the minutes of their meetings with the theological institutions (Msomi 1989, 114–115; Serote 1994, 3). Lecturers faced challenges with their working conditions, which needed an urgent response from the LCSA. The LTCGB was proactive and notified the LCSA about the increased number of lecturers at ULTC. The LCSA was called to form a dialogue partnership with Lutheran theological institutions

to ensure that Southern African Lutheran ministerial formation was prioritised in the academic space.

## Partnership between ULTC and South African Universities on Lutheran Theological Education

The first Ecumenical Theological Staff Institute meeting attended by 15 South African theological institutions at Forest Sanctuary, Stutterheim in Eastern Cape, in January 1963, established the Association of Southern African Theological Institutions (ASATI). This gathering was sponsored by the Theological Education Fund. ASATI was an ecumenical body with the purpose to strengthen and unify theological education in South Africa and to engage with other theological institutions in Africa (Beyerhaus 1964, 1). In 1964, the staff of ULTC initiated a process of establishing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology (BTheol) at ULTC. The ULTC leadership signed a first agreement with the University of South Africa (UNISA) in January 1965 (Beyerhaus 1964, 2; Rindahl 1967, 2). A second arrangement was made between 1969 and 1970 with UNISA and the then University of Natal (UN) (now University of KZN) to introduce a Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) and Bachelor of Divinity degree (BD). The required entrance qualification was a Senior Certificate and also for a new Lutheran Diploma in Theology (DTheol) (Nsibande 1992, 12). The 16th LTCGB meeting critically surveyed the University of Zululand, University of the North, University of Fort Hare, and UNISA as identified South African universities for the care and further theological studies of Lutheran students for a BA degree in preparation for a BD degree taught at ULTC (Nielsen and Becken 1971b, 4). However, another negotiation process was that ULTC needed their theological students to study some theological courses and further their theological studies at UN, Pietermaritzburg. This negotiation failed due to the South African government's educational policy which did not allow black theological students to study at UN.

At a meeting on 1 March 1972, the ULTC delegation commenced new negotiations for starting a correspondence theological education programme, namely, a BTh degree with the Theology Faculty of the University of Zululand (UZ) and sending two of its lecturers to UZ. This ULTC theological education programme would include the ecumenical body ASATI. ULTC and UZ agreed to include the Augsburg Confession in UZ theological curriculum. Yet, due to the government education policy, ULTC had no permanent solution even for its Coloured theological students to study at UZ (Becken 1972, 1–2; Nielsen and Becken 1972, 13). This resulted in the ULTC to withdraw from the UZ project due to the exclusion of ULTC Coloured theological students. On 11 October 1972 the Faculty of Divinity at UNISA decided to revisit its previous decision and changed its theological curriculum according to earlier demands of the ULTC to strengthen its partnership with ULTC. ULTC agreed to renew its partnership with UNISA (Nielsen and Becken 1972, 3). However, it was a challenge to create a relationship between college and university. Introducing a BA Theol degree at ULTC was an important achievement for theological education in South Africa, but not an easy

one. It was a great initiative that the ULTC entered into discussions with South African universities in order for its theological students to further their studies at a university.

### Administration of MLTS, Western Transvaal: 1958–1992

The predecessor of MLTS was Bethel Lutheran Seminary. MLTS was established by the Hermannsburg Mission Society (HMS) and ELCSA-Tswana Region (TR) on 30 November 1958 at Rustenburg which was in the former province of Transvaal (parts of which are included in the now North West). This was achieved after HMS had negotiated with the South African government to find land to build a Lutheran theological seminary, almost three years after the closure of Bethel Lutheran Seminary in 1955 and the struggle to train African evangelists and pastors in a formal institution. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Hanoverian Regional Church, Berlin Mission Society (BMS) and HMS in South Africa, and Tswana Mission (later ELCSA-TR) financed the construction of MLTS. Other LCsSA were disappointed that HMS built a new seminary. However, MLTS worked jointly with Lutheran churches in the former province of Transvaal (now Gauteng) and OLTC (Voges 2000, 83–85). Evangelists were accepted with primary school certificates at MLTS and pastors were accepted with high school certificate level. MLTS was under the administration of the HMS on behalf of ELCSA-TR. In 1968, it trained black theological students from ELCSA-TR, ELCSA-Transvaal Region (TVLR), and ELCSA-Cape Orange Region (COR). Theological classes were held in Tswana. From 1968 theological studies were held in English. From its establishment MLTS was led by white missionaries (Nürnberger 2000, 3–4; Scriba 2014, 95). In 1964, the first application for appointment of an African lecturer was not accepted. It was only in 1971 that a pastor from the ELCSA-TVLR, Rev. Swarishang Makgabo, was appointed as a lecturer and followed by other lecturers who were products of this seminary. LCSA leadership decided to merge ULTC and MLTS in 1974 (Makhathini and Nthuping 1974, 2; Zulu 2009, 5–6). The MLTS was one of the Lutheran theological institutions in South Africa that played a central role in theological training in South Africa. There was a good reason for MLTS to succeed the Bethel Lutheran Seminary for training pastors for developing congregations. The transformation at MLTS, namely the appointment of black lecturers, presented a clear indication to change a teaching environment that was dominated by white lecturers.

### Possible Closer Cooperation between MLTS and ULTC

The 11th meeting of the LTCGB held on 7 March 1969 at the Swedish Hall, Johannesburg, discussed the issue of further Lutheran unity and theological training. Loken and Tarneberg (1969, 1) adopted the following resolutions:

- (a) That the LTCGB request the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (FELCSA) to take initiative for closer cooperation between all Lutheran Theological Institutions in which FELCSA members are engaged or interested.

- (b) That the Governing Board request the Merger Committee of Regional Churches engaged in merger discussions to consider their relationship to existing theological institutions.

The attention of the Merger Committee and FELCSA focussed on the implications of these resolutions in regard to the Joint Committee on Southern Africa (JCSA) and LWF relations.

Furthermore, the 15th meeting of the LTCGB held on 24–25 March 1971 in Johannesburg studied and accepted a paper called “Possible Merger/Closer Co-operation/Unification of Umphumulo and Marang Theol. Inst.” and was endorsed by the Faculty of LTC (Nielsen and Becken 1971a, 7). Nielsen (1972, 2) reports as follows:

A merger has been proposed due to the financial difficulties and with regard to the further development of the theological training programme. A meeting of the two Governing Boards (of Marang and Umphumulo) was held at Johannesburg on the 20th September 1971.

Theological students received the first four years training at ULTC in English. MLTS offered a two-year internship and practical theological training under the department of Practical Theology. A third initiative was to establish a central Lutheran Theological Institution to train all Lutherans including UELCSA at Alice in Eastern Cape, South Africa (Berglund 1970, 1–2).

In summary, the discussion above revealed that the continuous interest of the LCSA was to develop Lutheran unity. It further showed that the merger of theological institutions was forced by a financial crisis. This could be seen as potential for growth in the church and Lutheran theological institutions.

### Unfinished Business: The Closing of MLTS effective from 1992

In 1992, the LCsSA and LWF instructed the LTCGB to do a study on the geographical accessibility of MLTS and ULTC, its surrounding languages, training facilities, lecturers, theological students’ economic status, and financial resources. An enquiry was also made to the FEDSEM in Pietermaritzburg in search of a theological institution with good capacity for ministerial formation. However, FEDSEM was disqualified. After a study and consideration of all aspects needed for a relevant theological institution, in December 1992, ELCSA-GA decided that MLTS would be an education centre for church training seminars and the UN Pietermaritzburg would continue with higher theological education. Due to financial challenges and lack of capacity to accommodate 80 theological students and 12 lecturers, MLTS staff and theological students joined ULTC (MLTS, 1–4). MLTS continued to serve as the church training facility for laity and pastors until it was closed in 1992 as a theological training seminary. Theological students and the library of MLTS were moved to ULTC. From 1 January 1993, MLTS and ULTC operated as one theological institution. All theological

education at diploma level was operational at the ULTC campus. After completion of a DTheol, theological students were transferred to MLTS for practical theological courses. At ULTC the theological curriculum was changed (Mahamba 1992, 1–3; Zulu 2009, 5–6).

The closure of MLTS as a theological institution became a burden to ULTC compared to when the responsibility for theological training and demarcation were shared by MLTS and ULTC. This fourth phase of joint Lutheran institutional learning contributed a lot to the church and Southern African society. Theological students were expected to be trained within a context of a multi-faith, pluralistic Southern African society. The current observed that the closure of MLTS happened due to financial constraints, but it would have been liberating if MLTS could have continued as a theological institution.

### FELCSA Administration of Lutheran Theological Education: 1970–1993

With regard to the establishment of theological training for white theological students of the LCsSA being difficult due to HMS and BMS having political differences, Mashabela (2019a) states as follows:

German Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (GLCSA) of HMS and BMS were in deep conflict about mission work in South Africa because of political differences and backgrounds. Finally, HMS and BMS had to come together to establish a theological training institution for their white theological students only. Black people (African, Coloured, and Indian) were not allowed to study at this white theological institution.

Furthermore, Mashabela (2019b) asserts:

The Lutheran Theological Education [sic] in Pietermaritzburg was established specifically to train white theological students from German congregations. This kind of theological training was later challenged to be an inclusive black and white theological training institution.

The German Lutheran Churches in Southern Africa (GLCSA) prohibited their white theological students from studying together with black theological students which created a problem for training their white Lutheran ministers and missionaries in South Africa. For a second time, a new theological education committee was appointed with delegates from all white Lutheran churches and missionaries in 1964. The committee met on 6 November 1964 to discuss its possibilities and recommendations regarding the formation of a white Lutheran theological institution. It recommended to the GLCSA that ULTC was not a feasible training facility, but that Pietermaritzburg was an ideal place. UNISA was a second choice to train white theological students and establish a Lutheran theological college in Johannesburg. The GLCSA member churches established the UELCSA at their first General Synod held in Cape Town from 4–7 March 1965 (CCLF 1965, 31–32). The point here is that establishing a theological institution for white Lutheran theological students in South Africa was a serious

challenge. The white Lutheran churches wanted their students to be trained at a white institution. The German Lutheran churches' structure was problematic theologically for Lutheran unity and witness in Southern Africa. In the interest of justice, black Lutheran churches were of the opinion that black and white churches should train their theological students in the same space.

Furthermore, the GLCSA failed to establish a partnership with UNISA for its theological students' studies. In 1961, the Board of Trustees for Lutheran Extension Work agreed with the University of Pretoria (UP) to enrol white theological students. UP was a white-dominated university; hence, its acceptance of the GLCSA as part of the already existing Faculty of Theology (Hellberg 1979, 55–57). The LWF delegation was in support of the GLCSA to establish a white Lutheran theological institution in Southern Africa rather than continue the training of white theological students overseas. Yet, the LWF delegation rejected a partnership between the GLCSA and UP due to the Calvinist influence and the apartheid policy (Kistner 1993, 42). It was problematic theologically to support apartheid due to fact that the LWF member churches declared apartheid to be a violation of human rights and dignity. On the one hand, the LWF contradicted itself by allowing the GLCSA to start its white theological institution. On the other hand, the LWF rejected the UP arrangement with the GLCSA as a sign of solidarity with the LCsSA. The vital issue about Lutheran unity and witness in Southern Africa was for the LWF to forcefully engage with the GLCSA to enrol its theological students at MLTS or ULTC which were Lutheran theological institutions in South Africa.

In 1970, white Lutheran churches in South Africa debated the establishment of a joint Lutheran theological institution at a university in Johannesburg to train white theological students who were trained only at South African universities (Mashabela 2019a). UELCSA implemented this process without consulting ULTC and MLTS. This was a profound controversial issue in Lutheran circles in Southern Africa and the LWF (Nielsen and Becken 1971b, 7). In 1971, FELCSA appointed a theological education committee that included Dr Hans Jürgen Becken, the then ULTC rector, to lead and facilitate negotiations with UN to train black and white Lutheran theological students at the university (Nielsen and Becken 1971a, 7). In 1971, UN Pietermaritzburg decided to expand its Department of Divinity to introduce a BTh degree. ELCSA-SER and LWF Council for World Mission agreed to support this idea for UELCSA and ULTC theological students to study at the university (Becken 1972, 4). The FELCSA theological education committee held successful negotiations with UN and tasked the FELCSA theological education committee to sign an academic memorandum of agreement with UN on 24 August 1972. The FELCSA theological education committee appointed and tasked Rev. Dr Wolfram Kistner and Rev. Gunther Wittenberg to establish the Pietermaritzburg LTI. ULTC agreed to work together with the LTI and accepted Kistner and Wittenberg as lecturers at ULTC (Nielsen and Becken 1971b, 7). Kistner (1993, 30) points out:

When I left Pietermaritzburg at the end of 1975, I had the impression that neither the situation at the university nor in South African Lutheran Churches justified the hope that this initiative could be widened into an ecumenical venture. I do not regret the decision I took at that time.

Mashabela (2018) states the following:

Dr Kistner left a project of Lutheran theological training in Pietermaritzburg because white Lutheran churches were not committed to an inclusive theological training of black and white students at the University of Natal. He decided to join the South African Council of Churches because he believed that apartheid will be defeated through an ecumenical environment.

The above information points out that at least UN would be a common theological institution for the enrolment of black and white Lutheran theological students. Again, Lutheran unity was threatened as ULTC and MLTS were not consulted during the formation of the new university project. It seemed problematic that the Moravian Church in South Africa seminary in Cape Town was not incorporated into UELCSA or ELCSA-COR.

In 1982, the LCSA bought land at 27 Golf Road, Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, to establish the Lutheran House of Studies and UELCSA theological students stayed there. Wittenberg (1993, 15) makes the following remark about the reaction of the Scottsville residential area: "A petition was drawn up by Scottsville residents who feared that their property values would drop if black students were housed in the immediate neighbourhood."

Two years later in 1984, a Lutheran theological education committee was established between ELCSA and UELCSA to negotiate with UN. On 17 May 1985, ELCSA, UELCSA, UN and LWF representatives signed another memorandum of agreement to establish a new Bachelor of Theology (BTh) programme (Wittenberg 1993, 14–15). Nürnberger (2012, 107) describes this development as follows:

Generous support from the LWF made it possible to lay foundations of an ecumenical training centre which developed first into a department, then into the School of Theology at the University of Natal. The school was adopted by the LWF as regional centre for its postgraduate scholarship candidates from the African continent.

However, Lutheran theological education at UN was marginalised and not seen to be successful as it struggled to comply with the university requirements, such as the number of theological students (Brown 1989, 41). In 1986, a BTh degree was launched at UN on the Pietermaritzburg campus and permanent staff members were appointed. Black ELCSA theological students stayed at the Denison Residence on the Pietermaritzburg campus. In the same year, black theological students were admitted to the new theological training programme at UN without permission from the South

African government (Wittenberg 1993, 15–16). Hovland and Aaseng (1987, 2) state that the allocation of separate accommodation for students following the Programme on Theological Education created divisions among students.

For the first time in the history of ELCSA and UELCSA a BTh degree was introduced without excluding other ecumenical Lutheran churches. ULTC and MLTS were also part of this development. This establishment was an opportunity to provide contextual and Africanisation of the theological curriculum at UN that was relevant to answer questions raised by Lutheran and other denominational congregations due to their spiritual, socio-economic and political challenges. This Lutheran initiative had also become an ecumenical project in Southern Africa as Lutherans continued to fulfil their principle that to be Lutheran was to be ecumenical.

## Conclusion

The article has discussed the importance of the networking of Lutheran theological education at theological institutions, universities, and other teaching and learning institutions in Southern Africa. The article incorporated an overall view on aspects of the partnership between the LCsSA and Africa and their theological institutions, theological education, theological student support, lecturers, and the clergy's conditions of employment.

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