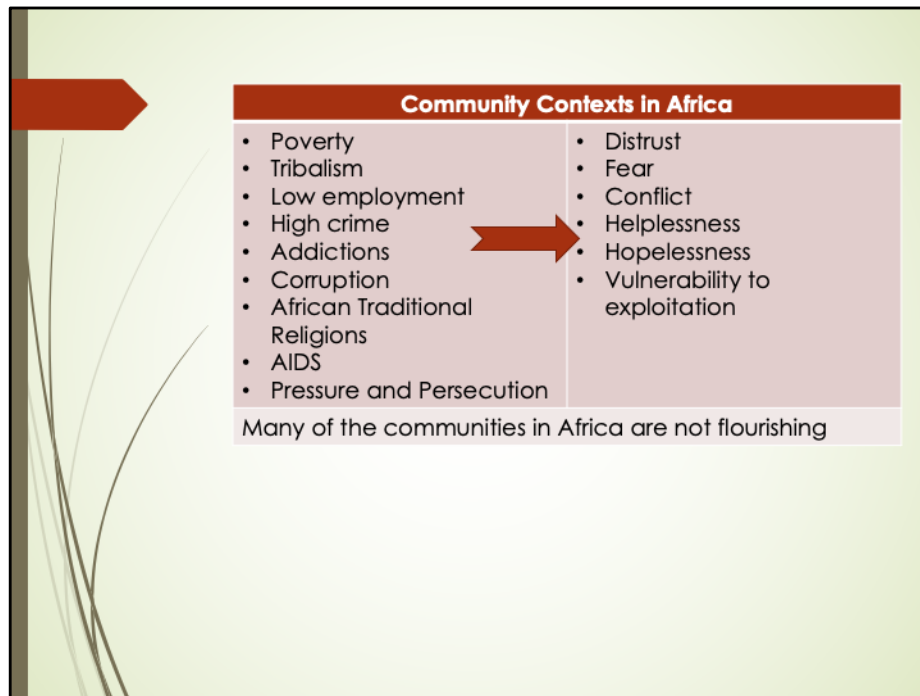




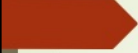
Rethinking Ministry Training



The church around the world is investing in a massive amount of resources in training pastors and church leaders. But it is becoming increasingly more difficult to create and maintain these training enterprises whether they be Bible schools and seminaries or non-formal modes. Schools continue to close down at an alarming rate because of the lack of resources and qualified teachers to run the programs. New church groups struggle to build the training programs necessary for their growing congregations. But there is another issue that is challenging work of these training institutions. And that is the growing dissatisfaction with what these institutions are producing as graduates. The focus of this slides set is to examine whether we need to rethink the entire process of ministry training..




Let's begin by looking at the communities in Africa within which the church operates. What is the condition of these communities? Many African communities face the situations listed and often many more besides. Clearly these situations are not true in every community, but they are true in most countries and in many areas. These situations are often interconnected and result in the community being far from experiencing any kind of flourishing life.



Activity

- Reflect on the situation in your community
- What from the following list applies to your situation?
Start making a list
- Add unique issues to the list
- Now let's look at the state of the church



Church Contexts in Africa	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated • Insulated • Not active in ministry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside • Outside • Poverty mindset • Suspicious of outsiders • Not givers • Nepotism 	Theological Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love of neighbor • Priesthood of believers • Image of God in all • Giving • Unity of body • Prosperity doctrine • Priority of the weak
The Church is weak and vulnerable	

The church is God's tool to transform the world. Volf-- the grand goal of God: shape each human and the entire world into God's home and which will be our true home as well.

What is life like in the home of God? It can and should be a flourishing life even in the context of many obstacles and struggles.

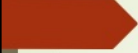
A flourishing life is one that is going well, that is lead well, and is feeling as it should. Volf

The invitation to become part of the home of God in the gospel is an invitation toward a flourishing life.

For the world to see and experience the gospel the flourishing life needs to be evidenced in the church.


This needs to happen even in a prototypical form for the words of the gospel to have any power and meaning.

Is the church flourishing in Africa?



Activity


- Reflect on the situation in your church
- What from the following list applies to your situation?
Start making a list
- Add unique issues to the list
- Now let's look at the state of church pastors



Pastor			
In Relation to Self and Family			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of sustaining income Neglects self care and family Wife not educated Struggle for children to be educated 			
In the Pastoral Roles			
Preaching	Discipling	Counseling	Leading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal Bible study skills Ineffective preaching Focus on personal morality Doesn't connect with oral learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never disciplined Thinks preaching is discipling Focuses on evangelism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor listener Narrow range of responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tries to do every thing Cannot manage resources Fearful of aspiring leaders Does not mentor others
Rural Pastors have low literacy, primary school education, limited ministry training			
Urban Pastors have higher literacy, maybe secondary school education, more ministry training			
Pastors are faithful but have limited effectiveness			

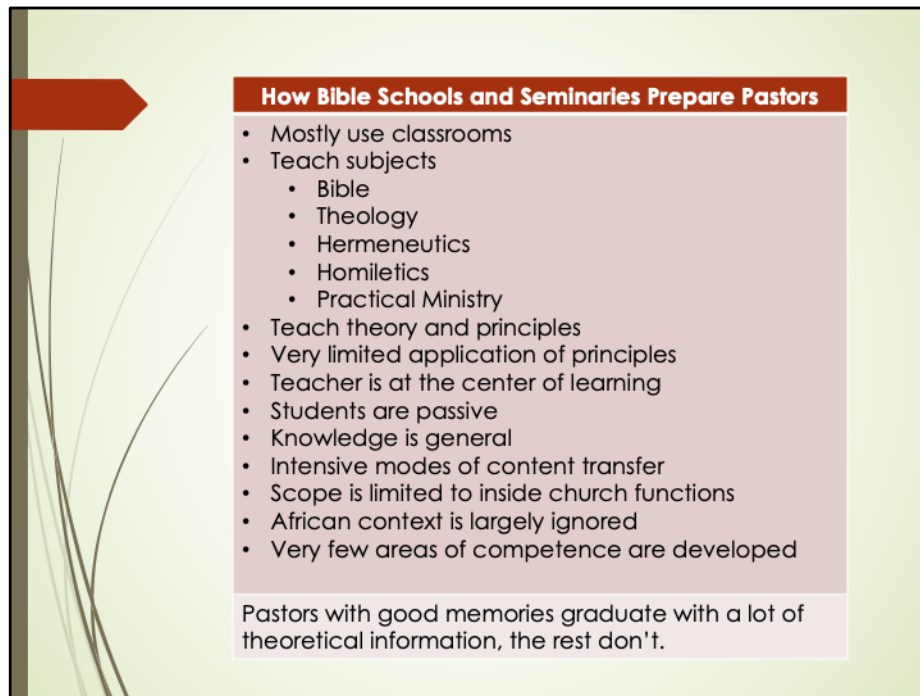
The pastor plays a critical role in leading the church toward that flourishing life so that it will be a sweet aroma to the world around it.

In order for the pastor to lead the church effectively they must also be experiencing a flourishing life which they can demonstrate to the church as an example.



Activity

- Reflect on the situation of the pastors in your area
- What from the following list applies to these pastors?
Start making a list
- Add unique issues to the list
- Now let's look at how pastors are prepared for ministry?



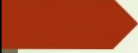
How Bible Schools and Seminaries Prepare Pastors

- Mostly use classrooms
- Teach subjects
 - Bible
 - Theology
 - Hermeneutics
 - Homiletics
 - Practical Ministry
- Teach theory and principles
- Very limited application of principles
- Teacher is at the center of learning
- Students are passive
- Knowledge is general
- Intensive modes of content transfer
- Scope is limited to inside church functions
- African context is largely ignored
- Very few areas of competence are developed

Pastors with good memories graduate with a lot of theoretical information, the rest don't.


“Theological education and all Christian education has the goal of “forming human beings according the pattern of Christ, such that each person and community is able to improvise the way of Christ in the flow of time in anticipation of becoming, along with the entire creation, the home of God.” Volf

How is that training being done? Whether it be in formal settings like Bible schools and seminaries or non-formal settings with workshops and seminars.



Activity

- Reflect on how are you and pastors in your area are trained
- How much training have these pastors received?
- How similar is it to the list I provided? How is it different?
- Now let's look at how pastors are prepared for ministry?



Challenging the Current Modes of Training Delivery		
Biblically	Educationally	Scientifically
Image of God implies that we are co-creators of meaning not just receivers of packaged truth	Adult learning theory emphasizes learning that is relevant to real situations and can be used now.	What the brain stores that is most readily accessible and useful is knowledge that has come from an experience.
Jesus used situations and stories as his primary teaching method	Learners are deemed to have prior knowledge which can be changed or built upon.	Curiosity is crucial to learner engagement and flows from the emotional part of us in addition to the cognitive part.
Jesus assumes prior knowledge but seeks to reform it using mental disturbance.	Cognitive dissonance is essential to much of our learning.	Most people can learn what is necessary for life if it is accomplished experientially. Only a few can achieve useful learning through memorization.
Learning must restructure existing beliefs, attitudes, and values.	"Knowing is inseparable from doing because it is situated in activity bound to social, cultural, and physical contexts"	Reflection on actions taken is essential for new learning to take hold and affect deeply held beliefs, attitudes and values.
All of the epistles address real life situations, not generalized subjects		

The results of traditional training of pastors it's increasingly showing that we are not achieving the desired outcome.

The methods being used in traditional training of pastors can be challenged at three levels. They can be challenged biblically, they can be challenged on the basis of educational theory, and they can be challenged by what we are increasingly discovering through research into how God designed the human brain.



What needs to be transformed?

The community needs a transformation toward a life that is flourishing

- Life going well in all aspects
- Life led well
- Life feeling as it should

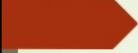
The church has the answer and needs to be equipped to become agents of transformation in the community. To do that it also needs to experience a flourishing life.

Pastors need to be prepared so that they are modelling the flourishing life and can equip others to experience it.

A shift is needed in the process of preparing pastors

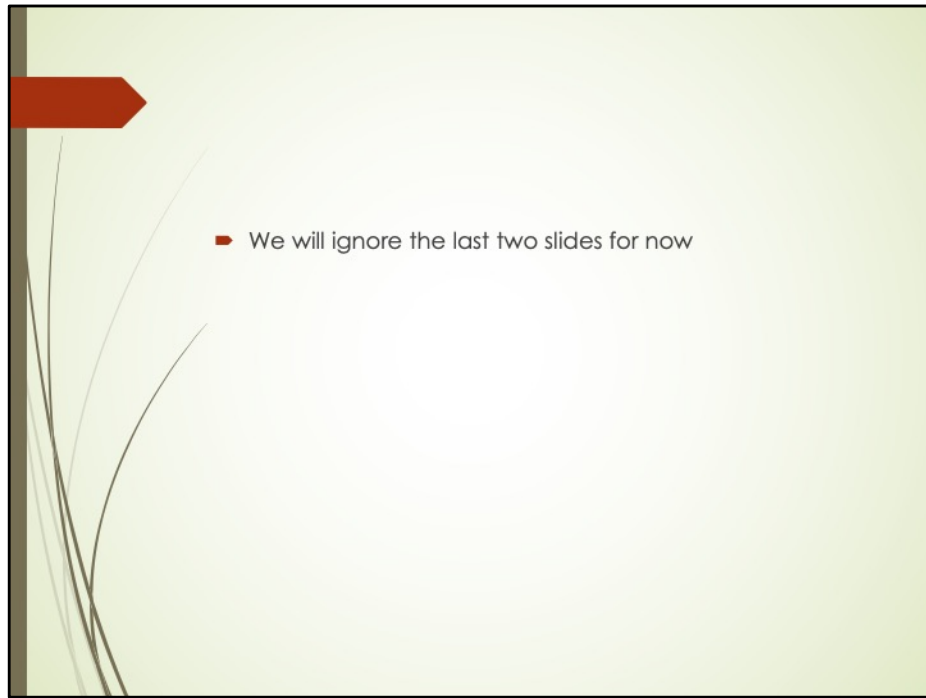
From	To
• Knowledge	• Competence
• Theoretical	• Practical
• General	• Situational
• Content	• Experiential
• Passive	• Participatory
• Assumptions	• Investigation
• Information	• Life change
• Monologue	• Dialogue
• Static	• Dynamic
• Uniformity	• Uniqueness
• Lecture	• Eclectic
• Numbers	• Impact

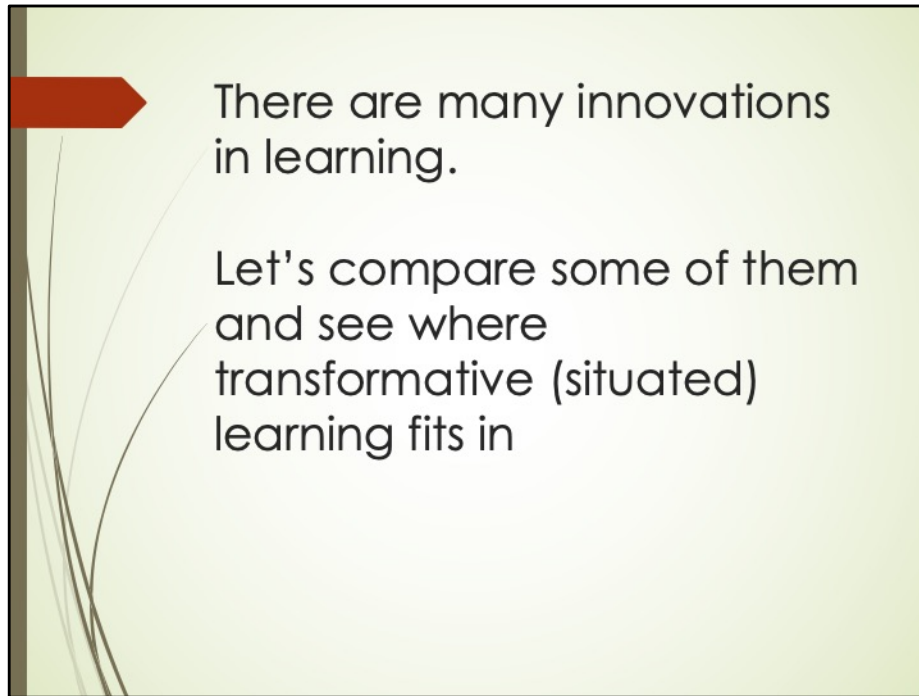
A closing activity that I use with groups that have been trained and coached in transformative learning principles and practice is to have them reflect on traditional training, which has been their experience for most of their life, and contrast it with what they have discovered from their experience of using transformative learning. They are required to contrast these two main modes in terms of a shift from something to something else. The list in the slide came from a group that I have been working with in East Africa over the past three years and was the final activity in a workshop in 2019.



Activity

- Reflect on what we have discussed in this module
- Reflect on your own situation in ministry
- What would you like to change in the way pastors and church leaders are trained?
- What part do you want to play in making changes in training so that fosters are better able to equip the churches who intern will be able to have a greater impact in their communities?





There have been many innovations in learning over the past 30 years and each have brought benefits to those who have experienced these new practices. I would argue that the majority of these innovations are still focused around what is done in the classroom and, at best, increase a learners understanding of concepts and information. But they don't move us closer toward building the competence is that a graduate needs to address the pressing problems of ministry today.

PRESENTATION	INTERACTIVE	DIALOGIC	PARTICIPATORY	SITUATED
Goal:				
Understanding	Understanding	Understanding	Understanding	Transformation
Focus:				
Effective Explanation	Increased Learner Engagement with Content	Learning in Community	Connecting more closely with Context	Learning Placed in Context
Learning Strategies				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals • Video • Story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions • Inductive study • Chunked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Work • Sharing of Experience • Facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role Play • Simulations • Scenarios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners Solve Real Problems • Achievement based Objectives • Content comes in Reflection

This chart summarizes some of the main innovations in learning practice. They are all helpful but only situated learning can bring the kind of transformation needed in our learners so that they can become agents of transformation in the church and community.