

“The Role of the Accreditation Agency in the Task of Global Pastoral Training”

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SUMMARY:

Chairperson Ashish Chrispal begins the conversation with three questions: (I) How can theological education become more missional in focus? (II) How can accreditation agencies recognize pastoral training which occurs in areas of the world where emerging churches are undergoing persecution? (III) In what ways can certain qualities of formal and non-formal theological education be blended to equip church leaders in these areas (4)? The goal of this conference dialogue is to discuss ways in which accreditation can be provided for both formal theological education and non-formal pastoral training, so that the needs of the global church may be served (2).

Church growth is occurring in parts of the world that do not allow for pastoral training (3). While the church leaders in these areas are concerned about what training and discipleship they can provide new believers in emerging churches, they might not do well in a formal educational setting (3). A concern is that students of formal theological schools are more academic and less missional. In contrast, grassroots church leaders are seeing much fruit in church multiplication (4). Ultimately, there is a growing need for a partnership between formal and non-formal accreditation (69, 71).

This dialogue emphasizes the importance of defining what is meant by “accreditation” (10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 30–37). Examples of proposed definitions include: (I) A currency that is valued both in the Christian sphere and the global marketplace (13, 18, 19, 36); (II) A recognized institution that grants credit to its students, even credit for non-traditional and non-formal training (15); (III) A recognition of ministerial competency, as demonstrated by its outcome, that is provided by both formal and non-formal institutions (69). There might be different ways to define and regulate accreditation, depending upon the context (33, 35, 63). While several participants express their support for many-to-many articulation agreements, the interface of such an agreement is yet to be figured out (10, 41, 47–48, 65).

Andrew Sears shares his insights regarding the dramatic growth worldwide in nontraditional (but creditable) Christian education (5–6). Examples of this type of education include Bible institutes, ministry experience, discipleship programs, and professional experience. He identifies three reasons for this growth in alternative Christian education: (I) An increase of bi-vocational pastors is increasing the importance of government recognition of education credentials in second vocations; (II) An increase in accreditation systems for vocational qualifications; (III) Increasing opportunities for combining national and transnational education into globally-recognized credentials (7). Sears recommends seven policy changes for the participants to consider (10).

Brad Smith describes how accreditation from a Western perspective might detract from the mission of pastoral training (24). His four key points are: (I) Accreditation is especially helpful for local leaders who write contextualized training curriculum or lead church multiplication movements (25), local bi-vocational leaders and pastors (26), and local pastoral training organizations (26); (II) Accreditation and licensing in the US adds a significant expense, yet that

expense does not have to be passed on in non-degree or certificate programs (26); (III) Non-degree programs and certificates sponsored by an accredited university adds a great deal of value (26); (IV) The greatest obstacles at universities and seminaries to facilitate widespread pastoral training may not be accreditation, but the insularity of academic committees (27, 28).

At the conclusion of the dialogue, participants agreed that an actionable next step is to create a working group which seeks to develop standards for translation between formal and non-formal institutions and accreditation (74, 76).

TRANSCRIPT:

[1] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you, friends, for joining. We are from one end of the earth to the other, because I am connecting this from Adelaide, Australia. We are two ends of the earth coming together to think together and ask the Lord for guidance. As we know, the role of accrediting agencies in fostering global pastoral training is what we are going to think together and talk together about. We have requested Ramesh to share with us as well, and we are very happy to do that. But all of us have to participate in order to think together.

[2] Ramesh Richard: So many good things are happening right now all across the world. Perhaps the best thing is seeing all my friends—seeing their faces and hearing their voices—coming from great experience and depth. Seeing you brings deep joy to my soul. Riad, brother, it's nice to see you as well. I am grateful for the privilege of setting the context for this morning's meeting again. As all of you are aware, this came from a spontaneous, divine eruption in Thailand last June. By the way, tomorrow makes ten months since the GPro Congress for Pastoral Trainers concluded. In the last ten months, so many things have happened including additional GPro Congresses in micro-units and national versions. One of the matters of longevity is what we are addressing right now. As I've said before, we have a conviction at RReach that every event begins the day after, otherwise we'd just have coffee. I'm grateful for our brother Jonathan Armstrong's stalwart leadership driving this conversation of bridge-building between theological education and pastoral training. Even though they are distinct, they are not divided. We are fully aware that we need them both, like two sides of a reversible jacket. Because of the need worldwide, the whole pastoral training industry has risen. Because quality still exists in formal training, we need both sides of this particular conversation, and a strategic partnership all towards implementation and action. That's how we began in Bangkok last June. Every month, many of you have participated in these online conference meetings, and each one has had a specific subject. The last one was led by Dr. Jason Tann, which was simply outstanding, especially in terms of non-formal pastoral training and its uniqueness. Today, I am grateful for our dear brother Ashish Chrispal, who is going to serve as coordinator and chair of this meeting. Riad and David Baer had invited Ashish and myself to do a little presentation a couple of years ago in Brazil. Ashish is well-versed and exposed to this whole realm that he's going to share. So, I'm grateful and thankful to see you. I myself am going into two days of very intense board meetings—all of you have been in board meetings—about the same kind of matters in terms of the future that faces us in the ministry of RReach. I am in a recuperation process, and I'm glad God has reclaimed my soul after the intensity of the last four years. So, let's continue. Thank you, my brother Ashish, for leading this, and thank you, Jonathan, for facilitating it on your team as well.

[3] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you, thank you. And thank you, Jonathan, for making this possible. You and Chase Baxter worked very hard and we are grateful for that. Let me start out by basically saying—rather, pouring my heart out—this is my experience with what is happening with the emerging churches and being part of Overseas Council, with the whole gamut of what we are seeing God doing in China with the non-registered churches. Just recently, in January, I was able to be in Hanoi with the Hanoi Bible College, which God allowed to open only in 2013.

They have been growing churches. They said they have 1,200 churches in the hills of North Vietnam, the church is growing by 300 new believers every year, but they don't have pastors—the government is not allowing them to start anything in that part of the world. One doesn't even have to say that the need for pastoral training is in great demand. At the same time, how do we really help to see that the training which we give is recognized—not just formal, but very much non-formal—primarily because the main concern of these grassroots workers, many times, is what they can bring to the new believers in the emerging churches, and how they can disciple them. At the same time, they may not do well in formal education, which requires them to pursue three- or four-year theological training. In that sense, it raises the whole question of how we can recognize the need, and at the same time, how we can have these trainings recognized. I'm very grateful to Chase and also to Jonathan for getting Stephen Kemp here. Stephen Kemp has been a longstanding friend. He heads the BILD program, and several missions agencies in India are using the BILD program.

Brad Smith [Chat]: A BGU doctoral student is doing a series of city-wide consultations in Hanoi, sponsored by the government to see how churches are guiding major advances in serving the poor and increasing health in society.

[4] This has been recognized, as I understand—I'll let Steve talk about it a little later—but I find that there is this great need. How do we really help the pastoral training? I find that one of my aims, one of my focuses of my ministry in the past several years has been: How do we make our theological education missional? I still remember 2012 when Chris Wright, who was my neighbor at Union Biblical Seminary, spoke at the ICETE triennial. He said that there is no other church, but church is missional; there is no other kind. Therefore, theological education has to be missional. If we think from that perspective, then today's theological education, to a large extent, has become so academic that students go out with very little missional vision. I don't want to generalize, but I wanted to pose that to say, that is where the mission agencies are finding their grassroots workers to be very fruitful—the Lord is using them to plant churches, to share the gospel, and having new believers come in. In what way can we look at our own accrediting parameters that will recognize the ministry that is happening in the emerging churches, which are growing in the context of severe persecution in many parts of the world? In what way are we going to sustain the pastoral training of these grassroots workers, using a blend of formal and non-formal education, so that we can serve the Lord and His Kingdom concerns better? I would like to request Dr. Andrew Sears to share his thoughts, and then we can all contribute to the discussion.

[5] Andrew Sears: Thank you, Ashish. Let's go ahead and get started. I'm the president of City Vision University, and have been involved in a number of initiatives—focusing on innovation—that I think might be of interest to this group. I did some of my doctoral work at Brock University. I always start my talks with a loaded question: Is education more secular or Christian globally? Any academic is going to ask me the question: How do you define education? If you define it according to secular terms, then the vast majority of education—of the 150 million people, especially in higher education—are going to be secular. But if you define it in Christian terms, then you have almost 1.6 billion believers, so the vast majority of education is Christian. It all depends on how you frame the question. Whenever we look at education, primarily what

we're looking at is the tip of the iceberg—we're looking at Bible colleges, Christian universities, seminaries, and Christian liberal arts colleges. There's this second category that is starting to become really important that is non-traditional but accreditable education. This domain is growing dramatically, and many of you have been involved in this space for decades—Bible institutes, correspondence, continuing education—where there is some formality and some informality. It's kind of in a grey zone. Then there's the nontraditional and non-accreditable type that I'd love to be able to get a second or a third PhD based on all the sermons I've listened to, but I don't think there's ever going to be accreditable.

[6] What's interesting is this middle space, and there are things that have changed. One of the main drivers of this change is technology. What it's doing is it's enabling a centralized recordkeeping system that's needed to document this alternative education. There have been other examples of this phenomenon happening globally. For those of you who have read Hernando de Soto, he has this concept of dead capital where his argument is basically that the poor, globally, have access to over 9.3 trillion dollars' worth of assets, but it's not documented. They can't use that to interact with the banking system, so all you need to do is document that. He's made some good inroads for that. There are huge implications of that. India is another huge example: you have 400 million people without identification, and all of a sudden, they were shut out of a bunch of services because of that, and then technology is enabling that identification to happen. Then there's another category, and I would call this "undocumented alternative education." I believe that there's trillions of dollars of lost value and lives changed in that. That's one way to frame it.

[7] I think the other thing of looking at this is what's driving this opportunity. One is the increase in bi-vocational pastors globally as you move into the Majority world. You get a lot more pastors that are going to be working in ministry and doing something else. It becomes increasingly important to get government recognition of educational credentials in that second location. I was just meeting with YWAM in Geneva, and they have thousands of ministry staff that are operating at least a master's level, yet they have no recognized credentials. Whenever they start working bi-vocationally, they are working minimum wage jobs, but if they had it credentialed, they could be making a lot more money than that. The second thing is that there's been a growth of accreditation systems for vocational qualifications. These are basically systems that are designed for the masses in the Majority world. Right now, there are 150 countries around the world that have these national qualification frameworks. The third thing is the growth of unbundled education and accreditation. It used to be that if you got your degree, you'd have to get the whole thing from one place. Now you can take your degree in a developing country and you can get part of it credentialed in the UK and part of it accredited in the United States. I've written a lot about that and I have some articles I wrote for the Clayton Christensen Institute. Also, you can actually download this whole presentation off our SlideShare in the links. You'll find this if you just go to SlideShare and search for City Vision University.

[8] Let me talk about what we've done with the Global Christian College Credit Consortium (GC4). The idea at GC4 is that we're trying to create a framework for alternative accreditation

and to use that to build affordable paths to fully-credited U.S. degrees. Right now, we're using the Ofqual system (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation)—it's a vocational system. What we've done is we've partnered with a number of institutions: Vision International, Saylor Academy, Third Millennium, YWAM's University of the Nations, and a group called Trinity Education. For each of these partners, we've basically changed the pricing model for accreditation. Instead of paying a big lump sum to these organizations that are capital-poor—if you look at how the pricing is done for the poor pretty much across the world—it is pay-as-you-go. We're charging them \$100 a student per year initially. We'll be able to drive that down pretty quickly. I think the average tuition for most of our partners is around \$400 or \$500. You're talking about U.S. \$400–\$500. Third Millennium invested 34 million dollars in building a world class seminary. It's in 7 or 8 languages now and they're offering it for free. Now, we need to get some faculty to do the grading, and that's probably going to cost another \$100 or \$200. You're talking about a year of creditable college for about \$200–\$300. City Vision is accredited in the United States, and we can basically take that as transfer credit into the U.S. and then they get a U.S. degree.

[9] To give an overview of the key requirements for the GC4 accreditation, there are really two main things, though there's more to it than this. You have to have a centralized system for transcript evaluation. At the end of the day, accreditors are like accountants. They basically want to see a document for everything and that's where the technology comes into play. YWAM couldn't have considered this five years ago, but now they have all their record keeping globally in one location. That has just happened in the past year. The other thing is—this is actually the most significant point I think that accreditors need to think about—we're only requiring the instructors doing the grading to have completed the program they're teaching or have a bachelor's degree. This is what Ofqual's standard is. The instructors don't need to be a level above, and they don't need to have a master's. Also, it makes it easy, if you have people locally that might be coaches that aren't credentialed, then you can use online graders. For YWAM, the guy who does the online school of the Bible, his name is Phil Leage. He's been teaching the Bible for 40 years. He is a brilliant Bible scholar but doesn't have any degrees at all. We can do a validating letter for him so that he's credentialed in the U.K. and then we can have him teach.

Brad Smith [Chat]: US and UK traditional accreditation allows students to be accepted into master's degrees without a BA degree IF the school enrolling them can prove they are a viable student (likely to graduate) by developing a portfolio of their learning and leadership experience that would demonstrate that. Traditional accreditation allows a professor to teach at the same level of their degree IF they can demonstrate that they have unusual experience in the field they are teaching.

[10] The summary is these seven policy recommendations: (I) Only require that faculty have the same level of education that they are teaching, not one level above; (II) Develop an international network of radically affordable accredited vocational education institutions that can delegate their accreditation to institutions within other countries and top up degree universities; (III) Provide accreditation pricing on a per student basis with minimal up front cost to accommodate capital-poor institutions; (IV) Develop radically affordable accredited programs to train Majority world leaders in online and blended education; (V) Develop

accredited global courseware platforms for online and blended education which is translated and culturally contextualized for the Majority world; (VI) Use online or remote faculty and courseware to enable a wider base of local coaches or tutors with limited training to teach and contextualize; (VII) Develop a Christian consortium to enable articulation agreements to happen on a many-to-many basis rather than one-to-one, possibly with tiers. One is the faculty thing I said. Instead of requiring a level above, follow the model that people call, "See one, do one, teach one." That, instead of the traditional academia model where you see one, see one, see one, maybe do one, but then you teach one after you've gotten eight degrees. The other thing is I think there needs to be a push to develop an international network, not just GC4, but I think there needs to be a network of dozens of organizations. If one country decides to unaccredit this path, then you'd get other pathways. I already mentioned the pricing models. One of the things we're doing is developing a program that will train Majority world leaders in online and blended education, and developing Christian MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and courseware that can be culturally contextualized and translated. A big part is this: one of the things that's happening in technology is the trend to put everything into the cloud. What that does is it allows you to deskill the local faculty so that you can have local faculty that don't have to have as much skill; the higher skill person might be online. This is something churches have done globally with Christian small group and Bible study curriculum, using DVDs, and there's this www.rightnowmedia.com and that is kind of this Netflix for small group and Bible study material. The last thing is an articulation agreement consortium. There's a group like this in the United States called CASE. Right now, with articulation agreements, you have a thousand Christian institutions that want to connect with a thousand institutions. That's a million articulation agreements, and that's not scalable. We need to find ways that we can create tiers of articulation agreements. I don't know if that's GC4 or ICETE or who does that, but there should be ways that we do that.

Stephen Kemp [Chat]: What is our working definition of "accreditation?" Earning academic credit (even for non-formal learning)? Or being recognized as an institution that grants credit and degrees?

[11] Let me just finish by showing you a couple things. We have an MBA program we're going to roll off hopefully this year—it's under review—where we'll have an education management track and we'll teach a lot of this focusing on developing countries. It will cost \$4,800 for developing countries, or if they take the first half under this GC4 system, it costs \$2,400. We've got a proposal working right now for a Christian MOOC that's a part of this higher education. It's called the Imagination Summit on Global Christian Higher Education, where there's about 20 people and several billionaires looking at: How do we remove these barriers? A part of that would be: How do we create a mobile vision where you can provide accredited mobile courses to millions of people? With that, if you want to get more information on this, the website is <http://cheia.org/> and you can access a course that I've developed: Part One is on the Christian, and Part Two is the MOOC that is not necessarily Christian but would provide more material. Hopefully that is helpful, and I will turn it back over to whoever.

Stephen Kemp [Chat]: Again, what do you mean by "accreditation?" I hear you referring to "accredited mobile courses," but not "accredited non-formal pastoral training institutions."

Riad Kassis [Chat]: Stephen, does it need to be either/or?

Jay Gary [Chat]: Yes, needs to be both/and.

[12] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you very much, Dr. Andrew. We really appreciate it. The floor is open. Brad has sent several comments. Brad, do you want to pick up your comments and help us grasp what you are putting here? Okay, would anyone else like to interact with Dr. Andrew's presentation and my opening remarks? Dr. Andrew, I think there is one question, if you would like to refer to that. Also, Stephen has raised this question: What is a working definition of accreditation? Is it academic credit earned from non-formal learning, or being recognized as an institution that grants credit and degrees?

[13] Andrew Sears: Well, I think that what you're talking about is, who is the audience? I think there's two main audiences: the Christian audience, and then there is the global marketplace audience. What we've done is we've said, "Okay, we're shut out of the government and the marketplace in a lot of countries, so we're just going to do the Christian accreditation." That's fine if all the people are pastors, but then the problem is, if you have someone who is bi-vocational, their credentials don't really translate in the marketplace. What I would say is that it should be a credential that is valued either by the Christian space or by the general, overall marketplace. I think both are becoming increasingly important for bi-vocational ministry. That would be the question that I would put.

Brad Smith [Chat]: What Andrew is working on is innovative and has captured a widespread movement of supporters.

[14] Ashish Chrispal: Dr. Stephen, do you want to voice what you have put down here so we can then begin to dialogue?

[15] Stephen Kemp: Yes. I just think we need to be clear with our definitions. Generally speaking, I use the term accreditation—with, I think, Ralph Enlow and the ICETE definition of accreditation—as being a recognized institution. Now, a recognized institution is granting credit for its students, and the question is, "How widely can that go?" I love the phrase Andrew used: undocumented creditable education. I love that because it's not that it can't be documented, and it's creditable. There's all sorts of things that could be credit-worthy. So often, the accreditation systems that our institutions have been following have made it very difficult for us to give credit in those areas. I think what Andrew is encouraging us very well is there's all sorts of things that are creditable—not creditable—I would call is creditable. There's all sorts of things that could bear credit if our accrediting agencies would be able to help traditional formal institutions, as well as non-formal pastoral training organizations, to do it in a way that is trustworthy and transferable. I think it's good for us to use the word accreditation for the recognition of institutions—whether they're formal academic institutions or non-formal pastoral training institutions—that are doing things in a manner that allows the students to earn legitimate credit often for very non-traditional, non-formal ways of getting it. Of course, I have vested interest in certain things that that, but right now my point is that I think a conversation like this needs to have a clear definition of accreditation, and I wasn't sure we had one there.

Brad Smith [Chat]: The definition of “accreditation” is quite fluid now in N. America and worldwide.

Ramesh Richard [Chat]: Non-formal pastoral training is looking for credibility outside/beyond accreditation? A hybrid model is being proposed for credibility at some level. Glad for this intellectual and strategic heft in this conversation.

Brad Smith [Chat]: Department of Education says that regional and national accreditation has the exact standards and the same value. There are a few holdouts that are fighting that but the Dept. of Ed. Is trying to force regional accreditors to accept US national accreditation. Most larger and state schools who are regionally accredited fully accept national accreditation. Most non-US national accreditation systems accept US national accreditation at the same level as US regional accreditation. Most of the regional holdouts against this pressure is smaller schools and surprisingly Christian schools! BGU is both US accredited and an associate member of ICETE. Both are important.

[16] Ralph Enlow: Ashish, could I ask a question?

[17] Ashish Chrispal: Yes, of course.

[18] Ralph Enlow: To go back to try to help answer Steve’s question, and if I’ve listened to Andrew correctly—functionally, accreditation is a form of currency. The question is: What marketplace values that currency? Andrew is suggesting that there’s two different marketplaces. There’s the marketplace of the church, which would have a tendency to value a certain kind of currency. We could probably deliver real currency value to that constituency that’s not part of the so-called higher education mainstream. One of our challenges, even in North America, is that regional accreditation is the coin of the realm when it comes to higher education accreditation. We can say all we want to and do all we want to in terms of the actual value of what we do, and the comparability and all those other things, but in the end, it’s marketplace currency. In some places, that currency will, and you can buy things with it, and other places you can’t. I think, Andrew, if I understand you correctly, you are making that differentiation.

[19] Andrew Sears: I think that’s correct. I think that there’s both a marketplace and, I would say, a policy place. There’s international trade agreements and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) that require countries to accept each others’ credits. It would be a trade barrier if we said, “We are not going to accept credit from Russia or something.” Actually, Russia does do this to people; they are violating GATT. What multinational companies do is they relocate the part that they need to do to the country that provides the biggest advantage. Part of what we are doing with GC4 is saying, “Okay, the UK has a very flexible system of vocational qualifications that then can be transferrable globally because there are a hundred or so commonwealth countries that are going to be able to accept that kind of credit.” So, with DEAC (Distance Education Accrediting Commission) I’ve worked with our accreditors, and its transferrable. Though, what happens is, you know, there are these tiers. Vocational qualification is generally considered a lower tier. But, if you are able to get good partners that give you high quality students, then you can take them into their senior year and then you can give them a US degree. Now, if they aren’t ready then you can’t give them a US degree. But, I think that, increasingly, the regional accreditation is not going to matter globally, because whenever I go globally, what they care about is brand USA. They actually prefer national accreditation over regional, because they think that regional means it’s smaller.

[20] Ralph Enlow: Right, right. Well, as you know, there's a lot of political pressure on regional accreditation these days because they are sort of trade obstructionists, if you will—a marketplace for higher education currency. But in reality, in the realm of North American post-secondary education, regional accreditation is the coin of the realm. I think you are right globally.

[21] Ashish Chrispal: I would like to request Riad to also come in.

[22] Riad Kassis: Hi everybody. Thank you for your good question. In fact, as you know, ICETE is focusing on accrediting formal institutions, but some ICETE members, in fact, are accrediting non-formal institutions. I hope that would be the case, and I hope that would be a more influential practice globally. For the part of finding academic credit for courses, I'm sure Ramesh is aware that within ICETE, we are now experimenting on a project called ICETE Academy. This project is geared towards accrediting quality non-formal courses. For the time being, it's a private project focusing on courses in the area of theological education. Hopefully in the future, ICETE Academy would be a platform for institutions and organizations to bring in their non-formal modules or courses or seminars where ICETE Academy can give these courses sort of an accreditation by giving it an ICETE badge and saying, "This course is a high-quality course that ICETE would be happy to recognize and accredit as a course of high equality." We are still at an early stage but this private project is starting now with our ICETE member in Europe, and hopefully it would be global, maybe in two-to-four years. I think that, from my perspective, and from ICETE's perspective as an accrediting agency, we should be working on these three methods: accrediting formal institutions, accrediting non-formal institutions, and accrediting courses, modules or seminars in one way or another.

[23] Ashish Chrispal: Brad, would you like to say what you have written?

[24] Brad Smith: Well, thank you. I'm sorry, we are just used to using Zoom a lot. What we do is we have chat conversations that allow a variety of things to happen. But I agree with Andrew. Andrew has been my mentor in technology. I deeply value what Andrew has shared. Do you mind if I share a screen? I know, from talking to Ramesh for several years—and Ramesh has also been a mentor for years—really, our topic is pastoral training. I thought about a couple things. I'm going to share my screen briefly, if that's okay. First of all, we have an assumption, and it's arguable, so it's not necessarily an assumption everyone has to agree with. It's that the church in the areas of the world where the church is growing the fastest is very different than what the church looks like in the West. A high priority is to actually empower local leaders to develop, contextualize, and control. That word "control" is very important, and that it is controlled locally. I think that's going to be important. That's an assumption behind what we do; I think that's an assumption behind most people on this call. I just gave a couple examples of why, and I don't need to get into that. We could have a whole session on the problems of

how the West sees the church and how other people see the church. We're training pastors often in the Western mindset, and I think that is hurting what God is doing.¹

[25] So, with that assumption—and again, it's arguable—I'll give you our background. We were originally formed to serve a group of advanced leaders that were put together by Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. When we asked them what they want, they said, "We do not want a seminary. We've got enough of those. Plenty." They said, "What we're having trouble with is how to help Christians engage mass globalization that's affecting cities—mass urbanization. We're not trained in that. There's a different theology that forces us not to be separatists. We've got to steward power, money, and human sexuality in ways we haven't been trained. So, something about helping us engage urban centers. Secondly, something that helps us engage economics and business. That's happening all over the world. Global maps are being redefined, rather than by political ideology, it's by economics—you know, by undeveloped, non-developed, developing." They said accreditation is especially helpful. What happened is we developed a university as a college of business, a college of theology, and a college of urban studies, responding to that need so we wouldn't be in any way competing with seminaries. What we've found is that they wanted accreditation. The reason why is that they said because the people need it. This would be accreditation defined as something recognized nationally, so their nation would recognize it. That doesn't necessarily knock out what Andrew is talking about, because accreditation is in flux. At the time we started, it had to be US or UK accreditation, which is internationally accepted almost everywhere. The local leaders who oversee the denominations—bishops, seminary leaders, and others—are the ones writing contextualized pastoral training curriculum, or leading national-based pastoral training for church multiplication. We felt like the people we were hoping to take over pastoral training in their local settings were the ones that were saying, "We need accreditation. Not everybody that we train does, but we do." By the way, I'm not prone toward academics. I could go into that story but you don't need to hear it. I had one conversation where, what ended up happening is I was saying, "Why do we need to be academic? Why do we need to be accredited?" This was repeated several ways, but this is probably the most articulate. This is a person in a large international NGO. They said, "We used to be able to get an accredited training program inside of our NGO, but the people that graduated with the US degree were often leaving to go to another NGO or they were being entrepreneurial and starting their own organizations inside their own nation. The minute they had an accredited degree, when setting up a new NGO, their ability to navigate their own government's system had, all of the sudden, 90% of those obstacles removed by having their own degree. All of the sudden, this large NGO said, "No more degrees. Training, but no more degrees, because we don't want to lose our brain train." This person said, "It feels like a new type of colonialism which we are controlled to be forced to stay inside of the organization, because all of this training we're doing doesn't have a

¹Assumption: What 'church' looks like in the areas of the world where the church is growing the fastest is very different than what 'church' looks like in the West. A high priority is to empower local leaders to develop, contextualize, and control local-based pastoral training to free up God's global church multiplication movements from seeing the Bible and leading their churches with Western viewpoints. *(taken from PowerPoint)*

transferable way for us to control it.” When I heard that in multiple ways, I said, “Okay, we’ve got to do this accreditation for our purposes given when we were started.”

[26] The other people they needed were basically local pastoral training organizations that are seeking local authorization. There’s something about the accreditation that is recognized that gives them authorization abilities inside their government. Also, for local leaders—as Andrew has already said, bi-vocational leaders and pastors who are in business or other things trying to build a bi-vocational career—often that degree, especially in business, frankly, is very helpful to them. That’s one of our assumptions Another quick assumption is: accreditation and licensing in the US adds a significant expense. We have 23 regulators. We’re constantly filing papers, and you can kind of see my list on the screen here. However, that expense does not have to be passed on to non-degree or certificate programs. They really are not controlled by accreditation. That’s something that is surprising to people, that if a US accredited university is trying to give a certificate that in no way would ever be contributing toward a degree, accreditation doesn’t want to know about it. So, we can put our name on it, we can authorize it, and we don’t have to pass on the expenses. The other thing is we have some pretty extensive online systems for mentoring and for connecting. Obviously, we’re in 60 nations so we’ve got some pretty extensive ways to do online training. That can be used for non-formal training without adding a significant expense. That can be used by other organizations beside us without adding a whole lot of expense to it. That’s the value of technology. Once you get it set up, the incremental cost is pretty minor, which opens up the door for ongoing mentoring in asynchronous and synchronous environments, which I think increases the quality of pastoral training. That’s if a pastor has access to internet, and that is often limited by urban areas, and so we do recognize that’s a huge limiter. Another thing is non-degree programs or certificates that are sponsored by an accredited university add a great deal of value. People love to get a piece of paper that has the name of whatever organization gave them the training, but also the name of the university. For some reason, that piece of paper carried to a government office is a big deal—more than we understand in the United States, and we’ve certainly gotten that back and forth.

[27] Then finally, my final point. This is very controversial, so I understand this could create an argument. We have found the greatest obstacle at universities and seminaries to facilitate widespread pastoral training may not actually be accreditation. Accreditation standards, from our standpoint, are often sane and reasonable, yet how they are interpreted by academic committees made up of people with likeminded gifts and callings are often not sane and reasonable. Two stories. This could happen anywhere, I think, where you have similar people of similar gifts and callings and are talking amongst each other and are not exposed to variety. First of all, when I was an undergraduate, I got involved in my student government and got on the board of regents. It was the first time a student was ever put on it at Texas A&M University, which at that point was a school of about fifty-thousand students. I advocated for a dual tenure track in our academic systems so that professors who are great at teaching could also get tenure, because at that point, the tenure track heavily emphasized research. The amount of pushback we got, not only from professors at that university, but professors from around the United States, from the fact that any state school would allow dual tenure track to reward

teaching excellence and not just research excellence, was phenomenal. I've never seen anything like it, and it just made no sense whatsoever. I was on the board, and our board of regents was saying, "This just makes no sense." It was just not sane. That was my first exposure to, "Okay, something's not going right when you get a whole lot of people who are teaching gifted, academically gifted, trying to make decision in an area of leadership, entrepreneur, and building leaders." There's just too much conversation that's groupthink.

[28] The second thing. I was at an unnamed seminary. I was on their SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accreditation committee. I was advocating, based upon alumni research, that local churches should be more involved in the character development and skill development of pastoral training. I was told in this accreditation committee, as we're preparing for a visit, that SACS would not allow that. I did not know. I was stupid. I was young. I wrote SACS a letter. The letter came back saying, "We like your idea, if you can prove that the involvement of the local church would be consistent with the mission of the institution." They gave me six different standards we had to look at to make sure that those are being held. They were very reasonable standards and could be easily done in the local church. So, I came back with my letter and said, "Look, SACS is excited by it, they want this to happen. They've given me the six standards, and I can figure out very easily how we can fit these six standards. This is something we can do." They were appalled that the young guy, who didn't know, wrote SACS, that I had put us all in jeopardy—which I didn't—and all of the sudden SACS was very interested that we might do a very innovative program, which of course was shut down. What I find is, you know, some people say, "Well, professors are PhD union and they're protecting their jobs." Maybe. But I think it's moral people that are gifted as teachers, they love to teach, that's what they do, but they all hang out with each other, and are often becoming an obstacle for avoiding academic creed and really expanding the wonderful gifts they have in a venue that trains pastor at the level Ramesh and other have talked about, And so, sometimes when we say accreditation is the obstacle, I would argue it's maybe not the biggest obstacle. Those are my quick points.

Stephen Kemp [Chat]: We need to define what "it" is. If we don't have a working definition (or working definitions) of "accreditation," then we can't really have a conversation. I would like to propose that we use "accreditation" as the recognition of institutions (by government or accrediting agencies) to grant credit according to standards established by the agency. And not use the term to refer to institutions (formal Bible colleges or non-formal pastoral agencies) as they grant credit or degrees. If a non-degree program or non-credit courses bears the name of an accredited institution, particularly on its certificate document, then most accrediting agencies will care about it. If nothing else, they will want to make sure that you are clearly presenting it as non-degree or non-credit, and not as credit or degree-bearing.

[29] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you very much, Brad. Anybody else want to join in? I think Stephen is still raising the question that we need to be very clear as to what we are talking about. Stephen, you want to direct with that one? Particularly, you put down that most accrediting agencies will care about it. The whole question of if they want to make sure that you are clearly presenting it as non-degree or non-credit, and non-accredited degree. Can you just clarify?

[30] Stephen Kemp: Well, again I think you can use many different definitions for accreditation. I think it would be helpful in this conversation to list off which ones we mean, and then every time we use “accreditation,” let’s say if we’re referring to definition 1, 2, 3, or 4. Because I have trouble having conversations if I don’t actually know what the words mean. I think we have jumped back and forth between two definitions quite a bit. I find that to be a difficult conversation, because there are things that are true if you use one definition, but aren’t true if you use another. Now, my statement about the certificates was that with accrediting institutions, most of them are accrediting academic institutions. Whatever that institution does, even its athletic program, is something that an accrediting agency of Texas A&M is paying attention to these days. In fact, the cost of accreditation for an institution has to be spread across that institution somehow. You can choose to pass it on to the credit bearing students who are paying tuition, you can choose to pass it on to the non-credit bearing students in the executive institutes, or you can pass it on to the athletic program. Anyway, my biggest point is that I want us to have good definitions to start with.

[31] Ashish Chrispal: Okay, would anybody like to have a go at it?

[32] Stephen Kemp: I’m not trying to dictate that and whether we have to do that or not. It seems to me as though people want to have a different conversation than that. I just find at the end of the day, we’ve talked a lot about innovation and what we ought to do better in education, and those are all good conversations, but to me, it’s not necessarily an accreditation conversation. Or, is it accreditation, but it’s only one of those definitions of accreditations?

[33] Andrew Sears: I’ll try to respond to Stephen. I think to get a good answer would take a really long time, because I think that it’s going to be different in different jurisdictions. It’s going to be different. I actually think the answer of accreditation is modular. Sometimes it is institutional, sometimes it’s course level. If you look at the vocational system, there’s 150 countries. These are considered accredited by their government. It’s globally covered according to trade agreements. That is one category. I think each jurisdiction is going to be different. I’ve seen a number of Christian institutions go and get DEAC accredited. Olivet University recently just got DEAC accreditation even though they were already accredited, because they wanted to increase their global portability. There are some countries—and the trade agreements don’t cover this—there are some countries like United Arab Emirates and a few others, probably like 10-to-20 others, where an online degree will be shut down. Now, there’s ways to address that, potentially through blended, but there’s the question of how each government will interpret the blended. The reason why I’m saying it’s complicated is that the definition of accreditation is going to vary, but I think that what we’re saying is that there’s a currency that it has in various audiences. How it’s defined actually depends on the audience. I mean, I could probably list 150 different parameters that you might change how that’s defined in different contexts, but I’m not sure that we want to go through all that. I think at the high level, that’s what I would argue. I sat in some places like ATA where you can’t get government recommendation in a lot of the places. It primarily has value within the churches themselves, but not necessarily out in the greater marketplace, but it’s going to vary. I don’t want us to get hung up on that, but that’s the

best I can answer that question. Steve, I could write you five pages titled, “Here’s the parameters I’m thinking of,” on that if it would be helpful.

Ralph Enlow [Chat]: I tend to agree with Andrew that accreditation’s meaning is instrumental and varies according to context. The instrumental question is, what is the actual and exchange value of the work completed or credential offered relative to the context or constituency in which it is offered. Just like monetary currency, whether a currency is regarded as valid and what it will purchase varies with the context.

[34] Stephen Kemp: I think if you can’t give me a definition in one sentence, you can’t give it to me in five pages. Of course there are five pages. I’ve written many things on the implications of various definitions.

[35] Andrew Sears: It changes depending on your context globally is what I’m saying.

[36] Stephen Kemp: I think I’ve offered a definition that actually does fit, and I think that there’s two that we’ve used all day today: the recognition by institutions, or the granting of credit. Those are the two definitions. Of course, there’s a thousand parameters for how each of those things can be done.

[37] Ashish Chrispal: Somebody else want to put in?

[38] Paul Cornelius: I’m speaking from the context of India and Asia Theological Association. The way I’ve begun to understand accreditation as we’ve gone about doing it—and I’m currently in Nepal, by the way—in a sense, we’re really on the ground here in Nepal. As much as we’re engaged in evaluating institutions for accreditation, it seems to me also that accreditation must take into account assessing whether an institution has set out to fulfill its objectives in terms of the training. While we do have the sense of academic environment and parameters that are set out by an accrediting agency, I think we’re also looking at what’s happening on the ground—whether a program is fulfilling its mission in terms of the final product. The question is, what else do you take into account when looking at the assessment of a certain program? Ministry experience of the pastors? The backgrounds they come from? As much as we look at education, I wonder if we need to be looking seriously at the type of experience that people bring into courses studied in their undertaking. How do we assess that in order to recognize that?

Andrew Sears [Chat]: Paul, most countries have Prior Learning Assessment Standards for evaluating experience. See CAEL standards in the US. Is there an equivalent in your context?

Paul Cornelius [Chat]: We are only beginning to understand and appreciate Prior Learning Assessment Standards here and how to determine equivalencies and the like.

[39] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you, Paul.

[40] Ralph Enlow: May I go back to the larger question? I think that, if I understand part of our discussion, it’s about accrediting agencies globally. Is there any role that we can play? Is there any involvement we should have in pastoral education, for which we all acknowledge that there

is a staggering global need that will not be met by the apparatus of formal higher education in any of our regions of the world, including, I should say, North America? That's a question with which ABHE (Association for Biblical Higher Education) has been grappling for some time. Our present strategic discussions are basically saying accreditation is something that we do, but it's not a business for it. I guess the referent for what ABHE is doing is mission of God and the church. Higher education is the space within which we have been operating for 70 years now, but we have to make sure that we can serve the needs of the church and the mission of God. Therefore, we're thinking much more actively and strategically about a membership set that transcends our—well, historically, to be a member of ABHE required that you be accredited by ABHE. In fact, those definitions were coterminous. If you're accredited by ABHE, you're a member of ABHE. But our strategic discussions at this point are saying, "Wait a minute, why does membership in ABHE have to require conventional higher education accreditation? What if our membership set goes beyond accredited post-secondary institutions to include non-formal providers who serve the same ends to which we're committed but don't do it in the conventional higher education space?" That's an active conversation within ABHE. I expect in the next year or so that we're going to actually formalize that our membership set exceeds our accreditation set, so that's only a subset of our entire membership.

[41] Andrew Sears: Ralph, I'd love to talk to you more about that. This is Andrew. I think DEAC has been looking at that. They have something called the Approved Quality Curriculum. I'm not sure it's the right framework because it's still too heavyweight. What they've essentially done is said that they'll do course-level accreditation. I really think that the opportunity and what's really needed is the many-to-many articulation agreements. Having some lightweight standards. You have to have standards because, if you say that all money is equal, then no money is worth anything, right? But, you have to have some standards. There might be ways you can say, "You know, this is gold, silver, and bronze," or something else on the standards. I think it would be incredibly valuable if there were some standards, and I could use this even being a DEAC institution, but we're an ABHE affiliate. Obviously, it's going to be up to each institution, but you could do 80% of the legwork for the institutions so that whenever they have to do that evaluation, it's not each institution having to go do that evaluation. You would have the material that they would need. I would imagine that part of education is going to have a problem with you doing a group articulation agreement, but you could make it easier for your institutions to look at that and meet the standards.

[42] Ralph Enlow: Just to respond briefly to you, Andrew. Two things I would say. First of all, if the "we" becomes a broader membership set than strictly our accredited post-secondary institutions, then people like Ramesh and Steve and you, and everybody else, can be part of that conversation, and we can find a way forward. The second thing would be to say that what the US Department of Education recognizes and has purview over is our commission and accreditation. They don't actually have purview over our association. In fact, they've made it clear that the commission has to be functionally independent of the association. We actually have a vehicle by which to allow the commission to continue its work in the domain of post-secondary accreditation, but we can do our work as an association in a way that transcends all the limitations of that domain. We can also negotiate, I guess you might say, liminal space

between the two things so that we can advance the real mission for which we exist, and that's leadership development. Sometimes we call it Bible-centered leader development and Bible engagement for mobilizing people into God's mission in the world.

Stephen Kemp [Chat]: Here are some really good comments by an esteemed member of our panel:

"1.) In our coming together as an international network of theological educators, I observed that our focus gravitated more toward the theological nature and aspects of our task than the educational nature and aspects of our task. 2.) If Western Christianity and, more precisely, Western theological education, could not perpetuate (and is now desperately striving to recover) the cultural penetration and expansion of Christianity in its own setting, what does this say about the true task of theological education? 3.) I have been provoked by this consultation to wonder anew whether the very modality of theological schooling as we practice it is irreparably laden with enlightenment baggage promoting the compartmentalization of reason and detaching our individual speculations about truth from the biblical call to becoming formed by and conformed to truth in biblical community? 4.) The previous concern is elevated in light of the trends toward universalization of educational taxonomies." It was Ralph Enlow... in 2006.

Riad Kassis [Chat]: I agree with what Ralph is saying. In fact, ICETE and nine members are coming together to work on a Benchmark for Standard Global Evangelical Accreditation. The question of including non-formal institutions/programs needs to be addressed seriously.

[43] Andrew Sears: Yeah, that sounds great. I think the only other thing I would say is: you know, DEAC allows three quarters of transfer credits if it's government-recognized, but only one quarter transfer credit if it's not government-recognized. Thinking through those types of standards, I don't know if you guys have the same type of requirement. That's another thing of, how do you build the interface? I'm not going to get into the technical aspects, but the whole idea behind disruptive innovation is that you move to a modular system and then you have really defined interfaces so that allows the maximum interaction between the components. So, we need to have this Majority world-based accreditation system, which, right now, is primarily the system of vocational qualifications in 150 countries. We need to have those that interface with the Western university systems, but we need to have well-defined interfaces.

[44] Ralph Enlow: Agreed.

Riad Kassis [Chat]: Ramesh, if ICETE addresses the above question, is it by doing so taking over TOPIC's role?

[45] Ashish Chrispal: Ramesh, Riad has posed a question for you.

[46] Ramesh Richard: Broadly speaking, we're looking at ICETE addressing formal theological institutions and TOPIC addressing non-formal training and organizations. So, broadly speaking, that's the best distinction. I'm sure that it cannot be neatly maintained. It's only a distinction, not a division. If ICETE wants to take over TOPIC's initiative, too, then Riad, brother, we would welcome you into the equation. But you've got to raise money for it!

[47] Andrew Sears: Ramesh, let me just say, the big thing I think that's needed is: What's the interface so that people from your group could actually have a many-to-many articulation agreement with ICETE? There is a well-established interface between the two because that, to me, is the critical component.

[48] Ramesh Richard: Andrew, I don't know if we've met before, but your contribution is just outstanding. The next-action strategy, strategically and tactically, might just be what you're mentioning. I'm going to assign that to another group. I'd rather stay at the vision and facilitation and encouragement levels. There is a group—Jonathan is also part of it—which met in mid-February. I've seen a few from there—Brad, I know was at the last conference, as well as Jonathan. That group was addressing this particular issue, and it was defined as a many-to-many. That might be an agenda, I think, Jonathan, that can be brought to a larger body. Chad, you were there as well. I remember you. Chad, your thoughts might be welcome at this point, too. Chad, might you want to say something here? You think so strategically.

[49] Chad Causey: I appreciate the invitation. I appreciate this conversation, and I very much appreciate the discussion of currency—that metaphor. I do think that, as we look for models to expand education, that will have value in the context in which it's being completed. That question is a complex question rather than a straightforward one. I think that the whole tenor of the conversation is moving in the right direction. I'm excited by it.

[50] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you. Thank you, Chad. Ramesh are you leaving now?

[51] Ramesh Richard: Yes, my brothers.

[52] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you for this opportunity, but we'll continue.

[53] Ramesh Richard: Ashish, my brother, thank you so much. You've been very critical, and I think you have a terrific role in this because you bridge both sides of the spectrum.

[54] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you. I would like to jump in the discussion, though it may come from a totally different perspective. As I have travelled the last ten years through Asia, one of the things that is very clear with the governments is that we live in a pluralistic society. The only country we challenge accreditation, in a way, is Indonesia, which made nearly 200 schools just close down within one year in 2012. They did not have what the Indonesian government considered a standardized accreditation. Other schools had to continue, but the government gave them the kind of framework within which the accreditation would be granted. One of the challenges that the schools faced was how to keep the evangelical task going while the government was advising very much on the whole curriculum with requirements by very liberal persuasion, as well as from very strong Muslim clerics. We have found this also at the University of Mysore in India, with which I was involved for several years with the department of Christian Studies, where, again, it had to be pluralistic in its nature. But at the same time, to me, the challenge is that the governments are not going to accredit anything that has a Christian nametag. Therefore, in what way can pastoral training be recognized by something like ICETE? I'm really happy that Riad said that they're going to look at this question. Also, Paul has mentioned about it. I find that one of the real needs is, on one hand, grassroot workers—people who are working with non-registered churches. They have abilities, but their main concern is their spiritual formation, their ministry formation, their involvement in the ministry,

and church planting. Therefore, there needs to be some kind of balance of who they are, what they are doing in ministry, how we can give them biblical wisdom rather than just academia, and then recognize that as well, primarily because of countries like India where the churches want some kind of credentialing by someone. I accept that there is to be standards in all of that, but in what way can we really — as what Stephen was saying — in what way is accreditation an availability for pastoral ministry of people without going into academia? Without going too long, I would like to continue the discussion.

[55] Brad Smith: I'll answer just one part of it because, Ashish, I think you'd know the answers better than I would. We looked at Matthew 10:16: "Be shrewd as a serpent, innocent as a dove." And so, when we formed our name, we made sure it wasn't an overt Christian name. Our website is overtly Christian, but Bakke is actually named after four individuals that are siblings. One is a business leader, Dennis Bakke, who put in the first seven coal fire plants in modern plants in China. When we're in China, we get in because of Dennis. He's a hero for them. Ray Bakke, who most of you know through Lausanne, helps us within the Christian world. Lowell Bakke is an innovative pastor. Marilyn Bakke is a woman Bible teacher. When I'm in China, as a university, I get access in ways that a seminary does not, even into seminaries. When I'm teaching in China on the theology of business at Nanjing, I'm not competing with their faculty. There's a certain shrewdness to being a university. Then also, they're looking at us under the Bureau of Industry and Commerce because we have an MBA and we're not a seminary. We're just navigating all of that.

[56] The same thing in Indonesia. Indonesia is just as pluralistic. Coming in as a university from the United States is seen as an asset to them. Coming in as a seminary is not. We've done courses sponsored by the mayor of Banda Aceh as global doctoral students of urban studies. They can look on our website and see that we are Christian, but the fact that we are not embarrassing their face by saying we're doctoral students doing urban studies looking at the relief efforts after the tsunami allows them to sponsor us and to support us. Some of it is how you position yourself, but not to hide. That helps us through some of that stuff. A university helps more than a seminary, but you knew that. You know the story of why we did that. In terms of pastoral training, that holistic part of pastoral training is so essential. You know Gwen Dewey. We haven't had a woman speak. Dr. Gwen Dewey was the president of BGU before me. She's talked to you a lot. Gwen, do you have any comments? Gwen was the president. She's been our academic dean, and she's now the director of our largest program. She's served everywhere. Gwen, do you have any comments?

[57] Gwen Dewey: Thank you, Brad, and welcome greetings to the rest of you. This has been a fascinating conversation. I really tend to come down more on the side of currency, and currency is really what it can buy. Context is very different and in different places. This is fascinating. I have really enjoyed it and you are a great group. Thanks for all your thoughts and what you've been teaching me. Welcome. Thank you, Brad.

[58] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you. Is there anybody else?

[59] Andrew Sears: I was just going to comment. If you look at how multinational corporations handle these things, they unbottle their product, they create supply chains, they basically do whatever component is optimal at each part of the world, what is optimal for that supply chain. I think increasingly that is how we need to think about it. Part of what you're saying is there are countries where the accreditation component is not going to be effectively done in that country. What you can do is local training and maybe some blended training in that country because that is how it needs to be done. Then you get the accreditation in the UK, and you might get the degree in the US, and then in the end you have a product that Indonesia accepts. I think that that's part of what Brad is doing, and part of what I'm thinking about is: How do you systematize it? I was a doctoral student under Brad, and a lot of what I'm thinking about is how you get that and use technology to enable what Brad has been doing widely. I think that it's part of the thought. All of these groups that are so missional. Honestly, I'm missional and I'm entrepreneurial, but I don't like counting beans and doing this stuff for the accreditors. That doesn't get me up in the morning. It does interfere with the character of the institution whenever you got to have a bunch of people that are essentially academic accountants. If the accountants are leading the organization—my wife is an accountant, and she's awesome. She doesn't get called out to do a keynote speech on accounting that is going to get people inspired. At least not for the average Christian. I think that's the key thing. You can't have the accountants running the ship, and that is what is happening in a lot of accreditation agencies. You have the accountant temperament instead of the missionally-oriented people.

[60] Ashish Chrispal: Sometimes it is accounting, sometimes it even feels like it is a policeman trying to inspect your place and catch you on the wrong foot, rather than the ministry which is so essential to the Kingdom concept. Anybody else? Fregy, you have joined us. Are you there?

[61] Fregy John: I am still part of the discussion. I am going through several Asian countries where accreditation is a challenge. All of these conversations are important, but I am not seeing any conclusion of the whole conversation. I am looking for an answer. I am a new person in the whole conversation of accreditation. I am looking for an answer, but it seems that we are going around and around. Stephen Kemp's question about the definition of accreditation: we had a lot of conversation on this earlier. I agree with him about the accreditation as a form of currency, but some currency is not accepted in every country. So, there is no one way to say that this particular accreditation will be accepted by a global audience. Every country has differences. Even in India—I was in India for most of my life—in India, there are several accrediting institutes. One won't accept the other. In some cases, they accept each other, but in most cases, they won't accept each other. Now the bigger question about non-formal institutions or formal institutions. The question is whether they accept one another or not, formal and non-formal.

[62] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you, Fregy.

[63] Jonathan Armstrong: Dr. Chrispal, I was just wondering, I think what I hear is that there are multiple communities represented in this conversation, and because there's an emerging space, perhaps we assume that there might be one solution that can develop all of that emerging

space, and that is probably not the case. Probably there will be multiple communities that make sense of the emerging space. Would it be possible for us to begin to articulate what those different missions are? Is there a group that is most focused on non-governmental church accreditation, and is there another group that is forming with another strategy that is more interested in bi-vocational work, etcetera? Could we at least articulate what the different positions may be?

[64] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you.

[65] Andrew Sears: I'm going to make a quick idea. Let me share the screen that I was sharing before, and as we've been talking about, I've been trying to translate some of my recommendations into the organizations represented here. I'm not done yet, but since we're talking I figured let's go ahead and talk about this. I have seven recommendations, and part of what I've been doing is I've talked with groups, and I've heard people's comments. There's seven potential action items that can come out and this is just off the top of my head. There's revising factor requirements that could be like ABHE or ICETE. There's government recognized transnational accreditation. I think GC4 and TOPIC could handle that. Majority world price, and I think we're all trying to do that. There's the indigenous leadership development, with these new models like BGU, City Vision, and Overseas Council. There is this Christian MOOCs and courseware. That's actually a group that I'm a part of—and Chad's a part of this group—called the Imagination Summit that is working on this. Then the many-to-many articulation agreements, which honestly, I think might be the most actionable of all the items here that make the biggest difference. I think that's probably ABHE and ICETE possibly building an interface to groups like TOPIC.

[66] Ashish Chrispal: Thank you very much, Andrew. I very much appreciate that last one, primarily because of what I have seen in Asia and the challenges which we are facing more and more, particularly as we also see the growing persecution of the church in Asia. There are going to be several challenges for theological education, but also particularly the pastoral training of people who are at the most receiving end of that kind of onslaught on the Christian faith. We have seven minutes with us. Seven more minutes. Anyone who would like to contribute is most welcome.

[67] Stephen Kemp: Ashish, can I give a couple of suggestions there?

[68] Ashish Chrispal: Yes, please.

[69] Stephen Kemp: We've had a lot of these formal/non-formal conversations over the years that often turn into debates, and I'm one of those people who gets accused of being inflammatory on one side of that. Let me suggest two general principles which I think that, if we all embrace, we can all help ourselves move forward. One is, if formal traditional institutions—those who are in that sector—commit themselves to being open to the possibility that legitimate creditable learning outcomes can take place in lots of other forms, and are open to the opportunity of credit being granted for that, that will help. On the other side, those of us

who are so bold about what can be done in non-formal pastoral training types of contexts, we have to work a lot harder at the validation of those things, the evidence of those things, and that we don't just say, "Give me a degree because I've been preaching for 20 years," when in fact they've been preaching two sermons over and over again for 20 years. I think in both cases, it pushes us to be outcome-oriented. It pushes us to be competency-oriented, and the competencies aren't just giving back to a professor what he's done in class, or being active in ministry for a couple years. In both cases, those need to be connected to some real outcome. Dan Aleshire gave a great statement once. He said, "I've never been able to figure out the difference between a bachelor's level funeral and a master's level funeral." Some things just don't always fit well into some of the definitions that we give. The fact is, whether you go to a formal Bible college or seminary, or you're just an apprentice in a church, both of them need to learn how to do a funeral. Can we come together and say, "What are the standards that help us to know whether someone actually knows how to conduct a funeral or not? Regardless of how they learned it, can we give credit for that competency or recognition for that competency?" I think that sort of thinking creates a middle that pulls both of us toward what we really care about the most: effective ministers.

[70] Ashish Chrispal: Our focus remains the Kingdom concerns of the Lord. The missional dimension, rather than just one side or the other. Thank you, Stephen.

[71] Andrew Sears: I was going to say, Steve, that's a great way to frame it. I think it's ironic that we all specialize in cross-cultural ministry, and then we deal with our own cross-cultural issues in our own Christian family. I think this is largely cross-cultural across social class. I think you're right in saying, one: we need to have that spirit that we teach across these different groups. The other is: we do need to have standards that meet in the middle, and we don't just say, "Sorry, you have to be on Western terms." I like the way you framed that, Steve.

[72] Jonathan Armstrong: Dr. Chrispal, one of the things that has been very useful in previous dialogues is if the chair would attempt a summary. I know that's never possible to do perfectly, but if you would attempt a summary or if we could call for action steps, those would be valuable things to have in the transcripts. Thank you.

[73] Ashish Chrispal: Sure. Thank you very much. I would like to call for action steps, and then summarize at the end. In the action steps, I like something which Stephen has proposed, accepting those two principles and then working from that perspective. Also, what Andrew and Brad have proposed: several different agencies against those seven formations which Andrew has given us. Are there any action steps we would like to propose for GPro or RReach ministry to carry on from that point on?

[74] Andrew Sears: I think the one thing that's come out—there might be seven, there might be fifteen items we could do—the one thing that's come out is a working group that works on standards for translation between the non-formal and formal. It might involve people from ICETE, ABHE, GC4, TOPIC, other people, where we talk about those standards. These conversations are happening in the rest of the accreditation world because MOOCs and other

players are forcing this conversation, and we can learn from those. I sent links to my bibliography on that. I think if there's any one item, it would be to create a working group where we can actually talk through these things. That would be my suggestion.

[75] Ashish Chrispal: Okay, thank you very much. That will be the first one, the working group. Riad, we see you're on. Yes, please go ahead. Would you like to announce any new action you have to put forward?

[76] Riad Kassis: I would echo what Andrew has just suggested, but I think we must be aware that there are several conversations going on in this regard. There was one initiated by ICETE that met years ago in Chicago, met again in Turkey, and will meet soon hopefully in Thailand, and another conversation that Ramesh and Jonathan are involved in. I think there are several conversations that are going on, and I think this is really healthy that there should not be just one working group, but perhaps many working groups all over the place thinking. I think the task is really huge and needs more than just one working group to focus on it.

[77] Ashish Chrispal: Once again, when you are meeting in Rome for these global standards, it'll be very crucial—we would like to plead with you that you do consider it in some way. I mean, you and Brad would have talked about CHEIA. Also, consider in what way Majority world pastoral training in a non-formal way can be in some way recognized. Or, as Stephen has put it, in what way we can make what they are doing recognized or given credibility? I will be very grateful if this can be taken up in your agenda when you meet in Rome. Is that possible, Riad?

[78] Riad Kassis: In fact, the focus of our meeting in Rome is to come up with a benchmark for a global standard for evangelical theological education for ICETE and nine regional associations. That'll be the first phase. The second phase is to bring this benchmark to churches and church leaders, and then connect with them on how to improve this benchmark. Of course, we'll be discussing the whole issue of the involvement of the non-formal, but as you know and Ramesh has just said, I think TOPIC—and this is my hope—TOPIC would be revived again and take care of the whole area of non-formal training. I think without having an agency like TOPIC working in this area, it's really hard how to manage the whole formal/non-formal conversation.

[79] Ashish Chrispal: Okay, thank you. Thank you. I would like to thank each one of you for joining us this evening. I think we had a very fruitful discussion, and I wish that we would move on from discussion toward some kind of agreement and recognition in what ways we can train people who are in the forefront of missions at this point in time. Particularly, those who are barefoot soldiers, I would say, or barefoot counselors who really know the language of people and are working for the Kingdom concerns. My plea to each one of us would be that we continue to work, to join hands together in a way that will recognize pastoral training with certain kinds of standards which we need. Also, that we recognize that standards are not governed by our academia, but that standards are better governed by our missional focus and missional calling, which God has given to all of us—that we are discipling the disciplers. If that can become part of our thinking in the days to come, then we can really build up the ministry. I thank each one of you for your contribution: Ralph and Brad and Jay and Gwen. And Andrew,

particularly your excellent presentation. Stephen, we are really grateful that you were able to join. Riad, thank you very much for being with us. Also, I'm grateful to Fregy and Paul and any other friends who are there. Especially, our thanks are to Jonathan for making this possible, and Chase Baxter for working with all of us. Thank you very much!

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