Clouds With Silver Linings: The Timely Stimulus Toward Online Theological Education Provided by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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Abstract

This article begins by canvassing some of the pedagogical and demographic trends in sub-Saharan Africa over the past several decades, along with demographic projections for the next three decades. Consideration is given to how the prospects for online theological education stood before the advent of COVID-19, including an examination of one particular 'typology' for how institutions move towards online theological education. There follows a brief survey of the 'emergency' online theological education that some Nigerian theological education institutions were forced, with limited preparation time, to conduct during the pandemic restrictions in Nigeria, and an evaluations how these attempts fit within the typology previously discussed. The prospects for online theological education in the wake of the pandemic are also discussed, before some final conclusions are offered regarding the contribution online theological education can make towards the training needs of the 21st Century, especially in the light of the expected population growth in Nigeria and beyond.

Keywords: Online Theological Education, COVID-19 and Education, Distance Learning, Church Leadership Training, Theological Education in Nigeria

Introduction

It is proverbially recognised that 'every cloud has a silver lining.'[1] Whether this is true for *every* 'cloud' (or every problematic set of events) is arguable; nonetheless, the point of the proverb is to remind us that often problematic events also bring unexpected positive opportunities with them. The COVID-19 pandemic has, unquestionably, been a problematic event. This article explores one potential silver lining it may come with, namely the stimulus to develop online theological education faster than might otherwise have been the case.

This article proceeds as follows. First some brief context is acknowledged, specifically the connection between online education and the wider category of distance learning, and also the relevance of population predictions for the future of theological education. Second consideration is given to the prospects for online theological education as they stood before the advent of COVID-19, including an examination of one particular 'typology' for how institutions move towards online theological education. Third, consideration is given to the 'emergency' online theological education conducted during the pandemic restrictions in Nigeria, and to how these forays into online education fit within the typology previously outlined. Fourth, consideration is given to the prospects for online theological education in the wake of the pandemic, before finally some conclusions are offered regarding how online theological education can contribute towards the training needs that the current population projections imply.

Distance Learning and Online Education

Online education is a relatively new phenomenon—since the internet itself is a relatively recent invention—but the wider category of distance learning is not so new. Distance learning can be defined as 'the extension of learning or the delivery of instructional resource opportunities through video, audio, computer, multimedia, communications or some combination of these instead of traditional delivery methods'[2]—and distance learning has been around much longer, since at least the 1890s.[3]

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1 Cf. "Every cloud has a silver lining," Collins Dictionary, accessed 1 November 2021, https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/every-cloud-has-a-silver-lining.

2 Ellen M Enright Eliceiri, 'Nuts and Bolts of Distance Education', ATLA Summary of Proceedings 54 (2000): 34.

3 Eliceiri, 'Distance Education', 33.

The 20th Century saw many varieties of theological education by extension,[4] and the final decade of the century saw the widespread expansion and adoption of the internet and this naturally began to have an impact on distance learning, opening up new possibilities, and expanded distance learning programs.[5] Some of these programs were specifically developed to meet the challenge of training church leaders in situations of rapid church growth, where conventional campus-based courses could not keep pace with the training needs.[6] This reason for needing distance learning has not diminished, and is likely to become even more prominent in the coming decades, based on existing population predictions.

Population predictions for Nigeria

Nigeria continues to see considerable population growth. Nigeria's population took 27 years to double from around 50 million in 1965, to around 100 million in 1992, and it took another 27 years to double again to around 200 million in 2019.[7] The UN anticipates similar grow over the next 20-30 years, so that Nigeria's population will double again, to around 400 million, by about the year 2050.[8] These estimates imply that within the next 30 years the 'Christianised' or 'Christian-affiliated' population of Nigeria is also expected to double, from around 100 million to around 200 million by 2050. That growth has significant implications for the future of church leadership, and theological education. The church may need to double its leadership training capacity within the next 30 years. Or, to put this another way, if it is assumed that one church leader would be needed per 100

4 Cf. e.g. Patricia J Harrison, 'Forty Years on: The Evolution of Theological Education by Extension (TEE)', Evangelical Review of Theology 28, no. 4 (October 2004): 315-28; Irene W Foulkes, 'From the Third World: A New Approach to Theological Education', Evangelical Review of Theology 8, no. 2 (October 1984): 103-7; Carol Mouat, 'The Theological Education By Extension Programme in Southern Africa, With Special Focus on Lesotho', Anglican Theological Review 80, no. 1 (1998): 86-92.

5 Eliceiri, 'Distance Education', 33.

6 E.g. Harrison, 'Forty Years On', 315-16.

7 Figures based on World Bank data, available online. World Bank. "Population, total: Nigeria," accessed 29 October 2021, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=NG, accessed 29/10/2021.

8 Cf. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Nigeria: Total Population (Probabilistic Projections)," United Nations, Population Dynamics, accessed 29 October 2021, https://population.un.org/wpp/Graphs/Probabilistic/POP/TOT/566. Similar growth projections apply to much of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa also.

people, then within the next 30 years Nigeria may need to train an *extra* 1 million church leaders(!)[9]

This level of growth is a very substantial challenge,[10] and to even begin to meet the challenge, many approaches will be needed. Existing theological training institutions will need to increase their capacity, but on its own this is unlikely to be enough. Traditional, campus-based, residential training does not scale easily. To double in capacity, a school would need to double most of its infrastructure (student accommodation, faculty accommodation, lecture/classroom space, library capacity, as well as other amenities). A few institutions might be able to achieve this within the next 30 years; it seems unlikely that all could. Therefore other approaches will also be necessary to train the workers who will be needed.[11] It is possible that online education could make a contribution towards this.

Pre-COVID prospects for online theological education

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, considerable attention was devoted to the growth of online education, including online theological education. John Gresham had argued that a 'central element of the divine pedagogy is the idea of adaptation' and that, in many ways, 'online education can represent such adaptation.'[12] The adaptability and flexibility of online education has been one of its key attractions, since it enables students to learn 'without leaving their geographic location, home and work responsibilities, church communities, and ministry obligations.'[13] This

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9 One pastor per 100 people has been chosen as an approximation to the nearest order of magnitude. If one pastor per 1,000 people was chosen instead (as an underestimate), this would still result in challenging target of training an extra(!) 100,000 church leaders within the next 30 years—and in the knowledge that this is an underestimate.

10 This challenge is further exacerbated by the fact that the Nigeria church is not beginning from a position of stability, but from a position of rapid growth. Already it is recognised that the church in Nigeria has a significant discipleship and leadership challenge, as an inevitable result of the rapid numerical church growth seen in the latter half of the 20th Century. While this is a 'good' problem to have, it is still a problem that needs addressed. The point of considering the projections of another doubling of population between 2020 and 2050 is to underline the fact that Nigeria is not about to enter a period of population-stability, where leadership and training challenges could be addressed and consolidated, but rather Nigeria is likely to face continuing and ongoing challenges of growth.

11 Enrique Ruloff, 'Virtues of Online Education', International Congregational Journal 14, no. 2 (Winter 2015): 40 (point 9).

12 John Leroy Gresham, 'The Divine Pedagogy as a Model for Online Education', Teaching Theology & Religion 9, no. 1 (January 2006): 25.

13 Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 25.

flexibility has other potential benefits, particularly that it allows students to remain rooted in, and contextualised within, their communities of origin.

But there are also problems. Online education, particularly when its implementation is suboptimal, can leave students feeling isolated and disconnected, and questions have been raised about whether it is sufficiently 'incarnational.'[14] Gresham, however, challenges the idea that online theological education must necessarily be non-incarnational: 'The presumption that physical proximity alone makes classroom instruction somehow inherently incarnational and the lack of such physical presence disqualifies online education for use in theological learning must be questioned.'[15] He argues on the one hand that 'online education is embodied in the student's home environment as well as a virtual environment shaped by computer hardware and software' and on the other hand questions whether 'traditional theological education is inherently relational and embodied when it removes learning from the student's lived world to the somewhat artificial and abstract world of the classroom.'[16] His central point is that 'Incarnational or embodied learning involves more than physical proximity.'[17]

Another area of concern for online education is its ability to foster discussions. Face-to-face teaching, at its best, can excel at class discussions (at least for the more vocal students), and it is hard for online learning to match this immediate interactivity. Gresham, however, cautions against assuming that face-to-face teaching automatically achieves this interactivity for all students: 'Within the physical classroom, social and environmental conditions conspire to limit the full involvement of all students in a class discussion'[18]—perhaps especially those who are less socially confident. Gresham comments on his own surprise at how well online discussions functioned, even asynchronously:

> In an online environment such as an asynchronous discussion board, all students have opportunity to participate in discussion …

[14] Rachael Horner Starke, "Internet or Incarnation?" Christianity Today, accessed 01/11/2021, https://www.christianitytoday.com/partners/higher-education/internet-or-incarnation.html

[15] Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 27.

[16] Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 27.

[17] Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 27.

[18] Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 27.

> [which fosters] a rich conversation among students as they share their insights, questions and applications. I was initially surprised, but have now come to expect such discussion to foster a sense of community among the students. Students routinely share words of personal support and appreciation for insights of others. The learning community often takes on aspects of a religious community as students spontaneously share personal religious struggles with the class. At the same time, it is clear that these discussions are facilitating mastery and comprehension of the content and material of the course.[19]

Still another challenge for online learning, which can become either a strength or a weakness, depending on how the challenge is handled, is that online students need to take significant responsibility for their own learning. Such responsibility can, of course, be emphasised in any educational setting, but, as Gresham observes, 'the online environment has been noted for fostering an active role for the student. Rather than the passive absorption of information delivered through a lecture typical of classroom teaching, online learning almost by necessity requires a more active role for the student.'[20] If this need for active responsibility is understood well by online students, then it can make for positive learning outcomes; but if this responsibility is not well understood, then online education performance may be disappointing.

Given these opportunities and challenges inherent in online theological education, the question arises of how theological institutions might begin to navigate them. Fortunately, scholarship has given some attention to how a range of institutions have begun their navigation of this area.

A Typology of Technological Adoption

Steve Delamarter has developed what he calls a 'typology' to describe how the use of technology is adopted by theological educators. His typology arose out of data gathered from 43 seminaries in North America in 2003—seminaries that were

19 Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 27.

20 Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 28.

(relatively) early adopters of some aspects of online education.[21] His typology involves three Stages.

In Stage I, 'theological educators use new technologies to bolster some aspect of the classic model of theological education.'[22] This usage might include things as simple as the adoption of PowerPoint in the classroom, or allowing students to submit assignments by email, through to the use of social media to support what happens in the classroom, or the adoption of interactive whiteboards within the classroom. In the second stage, 'the seminary begins to try its hand with technology for distance education … [often] thinking that the issues will be technological … only to discover that the issues are really pedagogical.'[23] Delamarter subdivides this stage into three further steps.[24] In Stage IIa educators typically try to translate what they do in the physical classroom directly into an online format. This rarely goes well—the problem with this approach, is that it takes ways of teaching that have (hopefully) been optimised for face-to-face contexts, and converts them as closely as possible to an online delivery format, without yet having thought through the relative strengths and weaknesses of face-to-face vis-a-vis online learning.[25] The results of this are unsurprisingly disappointing:[26] few of the potential strengths on online learning are leveraged, and its weaknesses in comparison to face-to-face teaching are exacerbated. Disappointment sometimes becomes disillusionment: theological educators 'give up, turn their back on electronically mediated distance education and write it off as pedagogically unsound.'[27] Alternatively, those who persist will enter Delamarter's Stage IIb, which involves wrestling with a considerable array of pedagogical (or androgogical) issues, such as 'learning styles, constructionist learning theories, student-centered learning, learning communities, collaborative

21 Steve Delamarter, 'A Typology of the Use of Technology in Theological Education', Teaching Theology & Religion 7, no. 3 (July 2004): 134-40; cf. Steve Delamarter and Daniel L Brunner, 'Theological Education and Hybrid Models of Distance Learning', Theological Education 40, no. 2 (2005): 145-48.

22 Delamarter and Brunner, 'Hybrid', 146.

23 Delamarter and Brunner, 'Hybrid', 146-47.

24 Delamarter, 'Typology', 136.

25 Cf. Steve Delamarter et al., 'Teaching Biblical Studies Online', Teaching Theology & Religion 14, no. 3 (2011): 257-58.

26 Cf. Delamarter and Brunner, 'Hybrid', 147.

27 Delamarter, 'Typology', 136.

learning' and more.[28] Stage II, especially Stage IIb, is pivotal in Delamarter's typology; he believes that theological educators go into it thinking they are looking into technology; they come out of the process talking about pedagogy.'[29]

Stage IIc marks the point at which the question moves from the level of how to deliver a *course* online, to how to deliver an entire *curriculum* online. In the seminaries Delamarter researched, none had opted (at that time) for a pure online education experience. All of those that had persevered with online education had opted for some form of online model, asking themselves the question, 'what part of which courses – that is, what learning objectives for the program – need to be handled face-to-face and which can be done online?'[30] Different institutions answered this question in different ways, some involving a larger online component and a smaller face-to-face component, and some reversing the balance. Delamarter's Stage III occurs when theological educators who have been through the pedagogical discoveries of Stage II then use those discoveries to also inform their face-to-face teaching (using technology in the classroom in a more sophisticated way that they did during Stage I), and when schools reach the point of a mature implementation of hybrid models.[31]

In the light of this typology, Delamarter and Brunner identify six essentials features of high-quality hybrid programs—i.e. hybrid programs that reach Stage IIc or Stage III:[32]

1. The theological educator must *facilitate* learning, rather than simply *delivering* content. In other words the theological educator must realise that their role shifts from being a 'lecturer' to being a 'learning facilitator.' It is their job to ensure that a suitable learning environment is created (which might include them doing some degree of 'lecturing', or it might not).
2. Courses must be redesigned from the ground up. Andrew Babyak concurs, arguing that if educators fail to realise that online courses must be designed

28 Delamarter, 'Typology', 137.
29 Delamarter, 'Typology', 138.
30 Delamarter, 'Typology', 138.
31 Delamarter, 'Typology', 138.
32 Delamarter and Brunner, 'Hybrid', 151-52.

'in a totally different manner' from face-to-face courses, then educators 'will start teaching online at a tremendous disadvantage.'[33]

3. Online and face-to-face components must be intentionally integrated. This relates to the previous point, but at the level of the program: there needs to be a deliberate design of how the various components of the program will relate together, and which aspects of the program will be best delivered through which mode.
4. Socialisation must be given priority. Such prioritisation needs to happen in a range of ways. In the author's own experience, even a brief face-to-face component at the beginning of the semester can help students interact with one another better online. Babyak also comments that one educator he worked with 'found that some students simply need to have a short, 10-minute phone conversation every 2 weeks with [the educator] so that they feel like they are really connected [to the educator].'[34]
5. Students must be trained and supported. This training and support is not limited to technical issues. It is recognised that 'online courses require students to assume greater responsibility for their learning'[35] but this recognition has implications for student orientation. To be successful online, students may need to develop higher levels of 'self-regulation, self-discipline, and … [skills in] self-directed learning' and may need to show 'more personal responsibility and motivation, as well as greater time management skills' than is necessarily required in face-to-face courses.[36] Students must be made aware of these requirements, and supported as the work towards achieving them.
6. Educators must be trained and supported. Again this training and support will include technical elements, but also involves realising that online education requires a different paradigm from face-to-face classes. Babyak notes that student and educators are both 'probably best served if they realize that the education medium that occurs online is totally different

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33 Andrew T. Babyak, 'A Teaching Strategy for a Christian Virtual Environment', Journal of Research on Christian Education 24, no. 1 (January 2015): 68.

34 Babyak, 'A Teaching Strategy for a Christian Virtual Environment', 73.

35 Di Xu and Shanna S. Jaggars, 'Performance Gaps Between Online and Face-to-Face Courses: Differences Across Types of Students and Academic Subject Areas', Journal of Higher Education 85, no. 5 (9 October 2014): 634.

36 Di Xu and Jaggars, 'Performance Gaps Between Online and Face-to-Face Courses', 634.

> from the one in the traditional classroom.'[37] Indeed there is the need for educators and students to make the necessary adaptions together: 'Most instructors who have made the transition to teaching online can attest to the mutual process of accommodation in which both teacher and students have to become accustomed to a new form of learning and interaction.'[38]

Having examined the state of online theological education in advance COVID-19, this article will now turn to consider the effect that the pandemic has had on online theological education, and how theological institutions have responded.

COVID-induced emergency online education

At the beginning of January 2020, no one foresaw the impact that COVID-19 was going to have on the world in general, and theological education in particular. In some jurisdictions, schools had very little time in which to respond to lockdown measures—in India, for example, schools only had four hours notice before lockdown restrictions came into effect![39] Nigeria's experience may not have been as extreme as that, but even so schools had nowhere near the time needed to train faculty and/or students that would have been desirable before attempting to launch online theological education at scale. The effectiveness of the theological education that happened online during 2020 was 'mixed'—in some cases, the best that could perhaps be said of it was better than the alternative (which may well have been nothing at all).

Applying Delamarter's Typology to emergency online education

Arguably, as 2020 began, many theological institutions in Nigeria were in Stage I of Delamarter's typology: technology was used in various ways to support face-to-face teaching. Few schools, if any, had imminent plans to launch themselves into Stage II—and yet, by the end of the first quarter of 2020, that is where a number of schools found themselves: propelled by the pandemic into choppy waters of online theological education with little time to prepare themselves, their staff, or their students. Specifically, those schools that were able to embark on

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37 Babyak, 'A Teaching Strategy for a Christian Virtual Environment', 68.

38 Gresham, 'Divine Pedagogy', 25.

39 Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon and Mothy Varkey, 'Teaching Biblical Studies in a Pandemic: India', Journal of Biblical Literature 139, no. 3 (September 2020): 613.

emergency online education for themselves squarely within Delamarter's Stage IIa—since the very suddenness of the transition precluded any extensive time careful pedagogical reflection.

This Stage IIa experience was far from optimal. Delamarter, writing in calmer times before the pandemic, observed that the 'transition point between stage one and stage two experience is really more like a chasm.'[40] Around the world theological institutions (along with many school, businesses, and other institutions), felt like they had been dropped into a technological chasm from a great height. The lack of preparation time meant that often the forms of online education available in 2020 were rudimentary. Delamarter's generic description of Stage IIa description fits well with much of the 2020 experience: educators typically try to translate what they do in the physical classroom directly into an online format.[41] Delamarter predicted that student (and faculty) experience of such online education would not be favourable: 'A program that merely uses technology to deliver lecture materials and receive assignments and essentially leaves students to do an independent study, is still functioning according to the classic paradigm. The consensus among stage two institutions seems to be that this sort of use of the technology is doomed to mediocrity'[42]

Similarly, there was little opportunity to develop any of the six essential features of high-quality online programs identified above—or at least, not beyond a rudimentary level. Institutions may, for example, have done the best to provide at least the minimum of teacher and student training and support, but the pandemic severely constrained any such training and support. These same constraints meant that there was little to no opportunity to redesign courses 'from the ground up.'

However, despite the many suboptimal features of the emergency online education induced by the pandemic, it is also worth noting that, of the seminaries Delamarter researched, '[not] a single one of them [got to Stage III] through faculty initiative. It has taken either institutional crisis or a mandate from a board or an all-powerful leader to get seminaries to move distance technology into the

40 Delamarter, 'Typology', 139.
41 Cf. Delamarter, 'Typology', 136.
42 Delamarter, 'Typology', 140.

mainstream of their mission pursuits.'[43] COVID-19 certainly counts as an 'institutional crisis' and, anecdotally, has propelled a number of Nigerian institutions towards taking online theological education seriously.[44]

Post-COVID prospects for online theological education

The easing of lockdowns in Nigeria, and the return to face-to-face teaching is a prime opportunity for Delamarter's predicted reaction to Stage IIb to come into effect: disappointment with the initial experience of online education morphing into disillusionment, so that institutions 'give up, turn their back on electronically mediated distance education and write it off as pedagogically unsound.'[45]

This rejection of online education may be the conclusion that some institutions draw, but it is not the only conclusion possible—and, given the population predictions for 2050, it is not the only conclusion that is desirable. Delamarter's Stage IIb also beckons: some institutions will begin to investigate seriously the pedagogy of online education, and to explore how 'best practice' might contrast with and improve upon 'emergency use.' The remainder of this article will take some preliminary steps in this pedagogical direction by considering two issues: assessment; and (very briefly) online missionality.

Some initial Post-COVID pedagogical reflections

Assessment, of course, provides important teaching and learning opportunities in any environment (whether online, or face-to-face). However, this is especially true in online teaching, especially asynchronous online teaching. The author's experience of online teaching in 2020 emphasised the importance of feedback,

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43 Delamarter, 'Typology', 140.

44 For example, in the author's experience of Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS) and of ECWA Theological Seminary, Kagoro (ETSK), both had considered online education in advance of COVID-19, but no concrete steps had been taken—and, had the pandemic not happened, it seems likely that concrete steps would still not have been taken. The pandemic forced both institutions to offer 'emergency' online courses; JETS has now launched online (hybrid) courses at MA and PGDT levels, with plans for BA to follow. ETSK is considering its options in this regard. More widely, the author was involved as a Facilitator at training for online education conducted internally at the Nasarawa State University, Department of Philosophy and Religion. NSU also was forced into offering 'emergency' online courses during 2020, and while the institution has for the time being returned to face-to-face teaching only, it has plans to revisit/relaunch online options within the next few years.

45 Delamarter, 'Typology', 136.

especially rapid, specific feedback: often it was possible to give feedback to students the same day (or within 24 hours) of them submitting short assignments, and students responded extremely well to this.[46] Even relatively negative feedback was received with considerably more enthusiasm than the author anticipated, when it was both rapid, and also gave concrete ways for the student to improve their grade the next time. This experience is echoed by others who have been thrown into online teaching during the COVID pandemic:

> I have found that it is while carrying out assessments of student work that my most intense teaching occurs. It is through grading and offering comments on papers and assignments that I am most directly in communication with students as their teacher. When I mark student work, I ask questions of students, I prompt them to consider how our course materials may be placed in conversation with their ideas, I correct specific errors, and I generally aim to help them advance their understandings. I ask myself how my comments might help students advance to a "next step" in their thinking. The answer is specific to each student, and I have found that my assessment methods require me to tailor my feedback. These direct conversations with students about the work they produce are valuable opportunities to guide their learning.[47]

A related issue concerns the form in which assignments and assessments are given. Online assignments often privilege written expression.[48] Not that face-to-face teaching is free from a bias towards written assessment (as the traditional reliance on exams and essays demonstrate). Rather, the point is that an unreflective adoption of online education is likely to make the dependence on written assessment even greater. However, this does not have to be the case, as the

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46 It has to be admitted that traditional face-to-face teaching does not always offer a 'gold standard' when it comes to timely feedback. We will probably all be aware of situations where students hand in a major piece of assessment, but do not receive feedback for many months. This is far from ideal, as by the time the feedback arrives, the student will have forgotten much of what they did in the assignment. Thus, even if the feedback were to be excellent, much of its potential would be wasted by its delayed arrival. It this context it is not surprising that feedback given within 24 hours was received so enthusiastically.

47 Jaime Madden, 'Teaching Online: Issues of Equity and Access in Writing-Centric Formats', Feminist Studies 46, no. 2 (May 2020): 504.

48 Madden, 'Teaching Online', 504-5.

internet makes other assessment options viable: instead of a written essay on an issue, could students record a podcast tackling the same issue, or upload a YouTube video presentation on the issue?[49]

Another issue that needs consideration is the question of to what extent ministry training prepares graduates to participate missionally in online communities.[50] 30 years ago this question did not exist; today, the question is becoming increasing relevant; in 30 years time, by 2050, the question may be even more pertinent. In a recent survey (October 2021), Nigeria was ranked second in the world for the most use of social media for work-related activities—and such usage is still growing.[51] Existing theological education has not yet had to wrestle with this question. Online theological education provides both an increased motivation to wrestle with the issue, and an appropriate medium in which the conversation may happen.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has been disruptive and devastating, but the stimulus it has provided to theological institutions to explore online theological education is a potential silver lining. In Delamarter's typology, COVID has certainly pushed some schools from Stage I into Stage IIa. What remains to be answered now is the question of how many of those schools (and how many of those theological educators) will rebound disillusionedly back into into Stage I, and how many will find time for the pedagogical reflection needed to enter into Stages IIb and beyond. The demographic doubling expected between now and 2050 means that the more institutions (and educators) who can make the jump into Stage IIb in the coming months, the better prepared we may be to meet the challenges ahead.

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49 Madden, 'Teaching Online', 508-9.

50 Cf. Lee Longden, 'Is Online Community Transformative Community?', Journal of Adult Theological Education 10, no. 2 (November 2013): 102-15. For a liturgical-focused discussion of post-pandemic online ministry from a Catholic perspective, see also Leo-Martin Angelo R Ocampo, 'Cybergrace in Cyberspace?: An Argument for Online Liturgies in Light of COVID-19', Landas 33, no. 2 (2020): 1-36. For a discussion of the need for 21st Century education to promote 'cyber-wisdom' and 'cyber-virtues' see Matthew Dennis and Tom Harrison, 'Unique Ethical Challenges for the 21st Century: Online Technology and Virtue Education', Journal of Moral Education 50, no. 3 (September 2021): 251-66.

51 We Are Social and Hootsuite, "Digital Trends 2021, Global Report (Q4 Update)," accessed 1 November 2021, https://www.hootsuite.com/pages/digital-trends-2021#c-274407.

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