Abstract

The issue this study attempted to address was the perceived role of the Holy Spirit by principals at two Evangelical Christian schools in South Africa. The rationale was that, since such schools submitted to the Bible and Scripture recognizes the preeminence of the Holy Spirit, these schools would seek to comply with this position. The literature review provided an understanding of the Spirit’s role from the perspective of Scripture and a wide range of Christian theologians and writers. This range extended from the Reformed to the Pentecostal/Charismatic positions. In this review, I also resourced those Christian educational writers, though few in number, who paid particular attention to the purpose and importance of the Spirit for Christian education. In Chapter 3, I illustrated that the employment of semi-structured interviewing in a qualitative, cross-case research design suited the study in hand. I sought to encapsulate the in-depth experience of two principals, one from a Reformed and the other from a Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian school. Through a within-case analysis of each interview, important themes were identified. In the subsequent cross-case comparative analysis, the most important themes included the importance to interviewees of their personal
philosophies, guidance by authority, transmission of truth, the Bible as ultimate authority, emphasis upon curriculum, the relationship between the learner and the Holy Spirit, the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Bible, the challenge of turning theory into praxis, staff concerns, and goals and objectives. Next, a number of suggestions for future study were provided. Conclusions reached were that in their pursuit of biblical theory and praxis, Christian educators needed accurately to identify the source from which they were to draw, moving beyond theological interpretations to knowing what the Bible actually says. The core issue for the recommendations made in the final chapter was the need to address the same grassroots problem. This problem was the need to abandon untrustworthy theory to develop biblical theory and praxis. Since the importance of the Spirit’s role had been established beyond doubt, the challenge became the development of theory and praxis that recognized the ascendancy of the messenger over the message but also followed the Spirit’s example in the employment of the message.