Theological Research Philosophy and Research Proposal

Global institute of theology

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# GLOBAL INSTUTITE OF THEOLOGY

# THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

# PHILOSOPHY AND

# PROPOSAL

## Introduction

Global Institute of Theology (GIT) mainly teaches biblical and theological Courses. Teachers and students alike, are expected to be involved in biblical research. This is true for those that are involved in MQF levels 5 upwards, whether teachers or students. Some teachers and students, in Malta are not yet familiar with need of biblical research. Therefore, this paper will lay down a brief philosophy of research. It will be the ground work of further writing on the subject to guide GIT instructors and students in research in relation to study.

### Note

It is important to note that GIT is not a different entity than Global University (GU). Both are the same. The reason for the different names is because at the time when GU was in the process being recognized as an educational institution, the Maltese law did not allow the term “university” to be included in the name of the school. Therefore, GIT was name chosen to be synonymous to GU.

## What Research Is

Research can be defined as a process of study that, through careful inquiry of all evidence bearing on a defined problem, concludes a proposed solution. “To research a topic is to collect, organize, evaluate, and present data” (Vyhmeister et al 2014, 1.). This process includes the activities of analysis and evaluating and creating. This is true because research is not a matter of compiling information. The researcher must demonstrate, in a concise and clear presentation that if one follows the same procedures correctly will arrive to the same conclusions. However, depending there is research that may not provide such a process, especially if its qualitative research based such as analyzing the forces that caused factors such as in historical events as described subjectively by living or written sources.

## THE EXTENT FOR RESEARCH

Higher education must include not only the transfer of knowledge but the nurturing of research skill. Higher education students must be not only introduced to the breadth of academic literature in relevant fields, but must also be tutored in how to engage the literature in meaningful ways. Advanced programs must produce students who can not only engage the literature of the academy, but actually contribute to it.

## Active studying

Studying is an active experience. The days of instructors attending class to give a sermon-like teaching, with students as the audience are over. Like in other academics, learning is an active experience of interaction between instructors and learners. It is an approach where both learners and instructors learn from one another. Furthermore, astute students and teachers are not satisfied, until they made their own personal research to personally interact with new materials. Kibbe states that that the guiding principle at any point in your research process is new knowledge for the researcher. Emphatically he concludes “You, and you only. No one else” (2016, 24). The goal is to create new knowledge for oneself for the benefit of the Kingdom of God.

## Secular Research Like Theological Research

Theological research is no way for form inferior to secular research, in fact the process is very similar. For example, in secular research asks the question: “Is there a relationship between milk produce and fertilizer?” The researcher may the narrows his research by investigating the effect of sodium fertilizers on milk production and how it effects the mammary health of dairy cows. In the same way, in theology, the researcher will ask a question such as “Is there a relationship between suffering and spiritual growth? He may then investigate the subject by for example studying the concept of suffering from the book of Hebrews in Christ’s precedence. Every theology research, like any other secular research process has a “preparation component, a field component and an analysis component” (Kibbe, 20). However, for the believer, there is one major difference in the subject matter.

## Theological Research is not Like any Secular Research

Whatever subject that secular researcher is researching, is a subject created by God. Knowingly or not, whatever the finding, is knowingly or unknowingly attempting to find something new about creation. On the other hand, in theological research, the research is purposefully researching God’s Word to learn something about the Creator. In its nature, theology refers to the study of God. Therefore, the nature of the difference between the two camps of research is that the theological researcher is purposefully searching to learn more about God through the study of His Word. There are other points that need to be mentioned are the following:

* The subject of theological research is in Himself subject to now higher authority. After finding out what God said, we have no right to disagree, but instead to humbly conform to out lives according to His knowledge.
* The findings in theological research are consequential. This means that believers are then responsible to adapt to the new revelation or dissimilate behaviors.
* Created subjects of study are bound to change properties as time pass.
* God does not change. His Word is eternal. He said what He meant his original audience would understand. However, applications are several according to several contexts.

## Research for Effective Delivery and Learning

Research has many applications. Students of the Bible need to have research skills to be an effective in their theological studies, both students and teachers. In further and higher education, research is essential. It is in fact a responsible thing to do (Kumar 2014, 31). It is assumed that believers are people that seeks excellence in all they do. The study of theology, by nature demands astute study and delivery (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14). Consequently, seeking excellence (professionality) requites knowledge on God, as the subject matter, and research skills which the instructors and students need to learn. These include objectives, mode if inquiry and application. The application of research in the Christian terminology is godly living as the result of knowing God more.

Kumar states that “Pure research is academic in nature and is undertaken in order to gain knowledge about phenomena that may or may not have applications in the near future, and to develop new techniques and procedures that form the body of research methodology” (21). In theology we are nearly always sure that new knowledge about God’s grace, leads the researcher into a deeper relationship with God, others and self.

## Four Objectives to Research

A research study can be carried out with four objectives: descriptive research, correlational research, explanatory research, exploratory research. From the point of view of the mode of enquiry, there are three types of research: quantitative (structured approach), qualitative (unstructured approach) and mixed or multiple methods (structured and/or unstructured approach (Kummar 22). Any of these objectives can be used in theological research. However, there must be a special attitude towards the approach.

First, the researcher is interacting with God. It is assumed that believers in general admit that they cannot know the infinity of God. He is omniscient, and humans are not. Therefore, they cannot know him completely. However, in Scriptures He invites humans to know Him better. Second, the prayerful researcher, has the presence of the Holy Spirit that guides the students into all truth. He is the One that gives the revelation of God to the researcher. Therefore, careful attention must be given to the spiritual testimony of any source (the true primary source is the Bible). Knowing about this will allow us to measure the source with the Scripture, which never changes.

## Kinds of Theological Educational Research

Global Institute of Theology delivers courses that have resulted from a researched academic process by Global University. However, there were instances that GIT presented its own home-grown courses to expand the number of courses on its license and anticipate needs that the evangelical may need in the future. This is especially when more pastors and laity discover the importance of Christian education. Up to 2018, the school used materials from Global University which was not accredited and adapted that material to be presented to the NCFHE for accreditation according to European standards.

When needs arise, and home-grown curriculum will become necessary, the author/s of the course will basically need to research one of the following areas to write a course or program according to the EQF/MQF level and number of credits. Different EQF/MQF levels require different number of credits for a qualification. Any number less than the threshold will be considered as an award. However, for the purpose of this paper, EQF/MQF levels will not be taken in considered in the brief explanation for the kinds of theological education research below. These are just to refer to the different kind of expertise one may require for the said research.

In order to this research GIT is currently adopting guidelines from Vyhmeister et al for the different steps for the different following four areas of research.

* Biblical Exegesis and Interpretation
* Descriptive Research
* Program Development as Research
* Case Study research

### Research in Biblical Exegesis and Interpretation

1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Passage selected
   2. Reasons for choosing this passage
   3. Setting of the passage
   4. Author
   5. Date
   6. Audience
   7. Literary interrelations
   8. Historical/ geographical/ socio-economic context
2. THE TEXT
   1. Translation of the passage
   2. Information on
      1. Textual problems
      2. Grammar and syntax
      3. Important words
3. INTERPRETATION
   1. Meaning for original readers
   2. Application for today’s Christians
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Descriptive Research

1. INTRODUCTION
2. DEFINE THE OBJECTIVES
   1. Define the framework of the purpose of the study
   2. Define the information to be obtained
   3. State where the information can be obtained.
   4. State what facts and characteristics are to be uncovered.
3. DESIGN THE APPRAOCH
4. COLLECTING THE DATA
   1. Interviews
   2. Surveys
   3. Case studies
   4. Personal observation
5. WRITING THE DATA
6. SUMMARY

### Program Development as Research

1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Explanation for the need
   2. Personnel involved
   3. Qualification for involvement
   4. Stating reasons for EQF/MQF levels
2. DEFINE THE PROBLEM
3. DESCRIBE THE POPLUATION
4. SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
5. REVIEW LITERATURE
6. DESIGN PROGRAM
7. EVALUATE PROGRAM
8. WRITING THE PAPER

### Historical Research

1. INTRODUCTION
2. DEFINE THE OBJECTIVES
   1. Define the framework of the purpose of the study
   2. Define the information to be obtained
   3. State where the information can be obtained.
   4. State what facts and characteristics are to be uncovered.
3. DESIGN THE APPRAOCH
4. COLLECTING THE DATA
   1. Literature
      1. Newsletters
      2. Correspondence
      3. Dairies
   2. Interviews
   3. Surveys
   4. Personal observation
5. WRITING THE DATA
6. SUMMARY

## PROPOSED RESEARCH

### Maltese Evangelical Church History

Global University curriculums have several courses in church history in all academic levels. For example, in the Berean School of the Bible’s Ministerial Studies (BSB), the university has courses in church history that mostly is dedicated to the Assemblies of God in the United States. However, several countries that use this program, has written the church history of their country to replace the American history course. This is important because the students are ministering in that national setting.

Maltese Evangelicalism is quite new. In fact, it started in the early seventeens. Consequently, GIT, will be doing the research for the Maltese history which we plan that in the next five years (2023), at least one BSB course will be completed and available for the Maltese Church. The person leading the project has been identified and informal discussions already took place between the Dean of the BSB and the director of GIT.

The person writing the course has been identified. Literature such as newsletters, and correspondence are being collected. Reference books are limited since there is not yet available an academic historical writing on the Maltese Evangelical. Pilot interviews already took place.

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