ABSTRACT
This article provides a discussion of ethics and corporate social responsibility within the institutional framework of the Methodist University of Angola. In her position as rector of the university and president of the Association of Private Higher Educational institutions in Angola, the author provides her view of the challenges encountered in preparing students and building institutions that are committed to ethical principles. She begins by defining ethics within the context of the Methodist commitment to education and the development of university courses in Angola. She provides historical background of Methodist principles and education in Angola and describes the process of founding the Methodist University of Angola and integrating theological instruction in each course. Finally she highlights some achievements of the University.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, business ethics, Methodist education, Angola, University education

Introduction

The topic of this paper will be addressed within an institutional vision (the University). Thus, we take the time to share the experience of the Methodist University of Angola (UMA) as another Methodist institution of higher education in the world and in the African continent,
which focuses on the challenge of preparing students for leadership, who will accept with determination the commitment to work in light of social responsibility.

To begin this dialogue, I would say, as several authors have stated, that we are moral beings and human communities have always created value systems and standards to enable social interaction, because we are beings that are neither determined by nature nor by God. And in the process of realizing our freedom and our being, we find the difference between the ‘to be’ and the ‘should be’ and the desire to build a future that is different and better than the present.

The difference of business ethics and social responsibility is that it is not guided only by principles, but also by the context, the effects that are caused and also by the mission by which we propose to work. Business ethics and social responsibility have received much attention from the UMA administration, because they have provided and allowed for the monitoring of the academic performance of students. The very ethical business conduct and social responsibility within the area that is cultivated on a daily basis have helped to discern the ethical dimensions of human activity.

**Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility adopted by the Methodist University of Angola**

Ethics is for us a dimension that questions practices, attitudes, rules and human actions. In order for these questions to have answers, it has been necessary to know what criteria we are using to evaluate and to evaluate ourselves. The criterion is human life itself. We assume that companies exist to ensure the survival of humans, and more than that, a dignified life with access to everything necessary for its full development. The social function of ethics is exactly to help achieve this objective and normalize relations among human beings themselves, as well as between human beings and the community and the nature. Therefore, life must be the criterion to assess the attitudes of society and individuals.

Beyond this criterion, we must consider that ethics requires changes in attitudes. Today more than ever, humanity realizes that we live in a globalized world where the actions of one have a direct impact on the lives of others. This finding is most apparent when we think about ecological problems, racism, and war, which are all problems that individual or group responses are not able to solve. The only possibility would be to create a response with the participation of all groups involved. This requires the construction of an ethics with principles and values accepted by all and valid for all, despite all the differences.
The business issues presuppose profit. However, since we, in our institution, do not concern ourselves with profits, we adopt an ethical stance without discarding social responsibility and without simply looking to a business idea that revolves around profit. Faced with the war reality that this country has experienced and the complete peace reality it has been living now for about eight years, and the fact that the Church is a partner of the government, which has been opening space for the development of good practices, committed to the message of peace and the preservation of life, we feel an obligation to convey the message of God, which values the preservation of human life.

In this way, the issue of business ethics and social responsibility within the institution was crafted differently. Although our situation is still brand new, we have not come up short to the requirements of teaching at a higher level. We are aware that we made a great commitment to one of the most important areas for the development of any society. Thus, we adopted, as a first step, the creation of secular courses where we started providing training to both teachers and students on the issues of preserving moral and civic values, ethical and cultural values, in which we give more emphasis on providing guidance about the doctrine of the Methodist Church and the preservation of native culture. We have made efforts to empower everyone so that the culture of social responsibility leads students to understand what will be our life today and what future we wish for our country.

If we hold to the history of theological education as oriented by the missionaries, we realize that they had then a solid vision for education. This is due to the fact that they all had a college education and were endowed with great experiences resulting from their origin and context. I think it is important to point out that the missionaries who came to Angola were characterized by their investment in the education of native children by giving them a solid theological training. For example, in 1923, the missionary Mrs. Shields, concerned with the higher theological education of the Methodist Angolans in Luanda (Loanda), showed the need to open a school of higher education. The only school of reference in secondary education that Angola had was Quéssua college. So the idea of creating a school of higher education has been contemplated since the year 1923.

As to theological education, our institution begins “timidly” today, but with social responsibility, thanks to the initiative of Bishop Gaspar Joao Domingos, who took advantage of one of the visits of Brazilian professors Paulo Roberto Garcia and Blanches de Paula, who had the responsibility to implement the Sol (Sun) Africa project. The organization of a curricular grid was completed, which subsequently formed the basis for the organization of the syllabus for the course in
Theology. It was not easy to organize the course grid within a context of being pioneers in training students in theology at an institution of national higher education. The purpose was to provide continuity in the education of students trained at the Bishop Emilio de Carvalho high school and other schools of basic education in Angola. Bishop Gaspar Joao Domingos was aware that the university offered conditions for the instruction of theology and that it would help raise the intellectual capacity of the students. On the other hand, the purpose was also to educate students so that they could help respond specifically to social issues that have been emerging in society (witch children), where many have been accused and abused innocently.

As we said, the business aspect is not the goal of the institution, but rather the careful education of citizens who will be the future leaders of the country. Professors who teach in the theology course have all been trained abroad, especially in Brazil, Zimbabwe, and the United States of America, among others. All these Angolans and pastors had the opportunity to enjoy high quality training and theological education in countries where theological education is a reference worldwide. The great social responsibility from the pastoral aspects of ethics to the education of students lies on it. It is noteworthy that the theology course is the only course supported by the other courses that are provided by the institution.

Therefore, the course in theology began at the Methodist University of Angola in 2008, one year after the other courses had begun, for the reasons we have aforementioned. Initially we thought of organizing the course in a very specific way with a College of Theology separated from the other courses, but the following year we decided to offer the course within the College of Humanities as a matter of internal organization of the institution itself. We have a course director who is responsible for organizing and obtaining books so that the education of the students is solid. One factor that created impact in our first experience was the organization of the Week for Theological Renewal, in which the seminars were directed to the historical importance of John Wesley. In our course we do not have just Methodist students. The idea is to see Wesley as a missionary without keeping him as the sole property of the Methodists. Our challenge now concerns the question of working together with the Ministry of Guardianship (Tutela) to guarantee the de facto recognition of the course.

Consolidation of the University Project

Within the context of Angola, the nineteenth century saw the largest geographical expansion of Christianity. During this period, Africa became the scene of disputes for the great colonial powers. In this way,
Christianity, which was considered an occidental religion, entered Africa. The Methodist missions had a unique character and their philosophy of sustainability was focused on self-maintenance. The self-maintenance missions established by Bishop William Taylor provided the basis for everything. It was from this project that a major force and “model” were triggered for many other missions of the Methodist Church in Angola.

By reflecting on the theme of business ethics and corporate social responsibility while demonstrating the course of Church history, we can see that the Methodist Church of Angola has a history grounded in strong and significant experiences, which allows the path the Church takes today to be based on the vision and practice of the missionaries. Education has always been in the basis of their mission. Ethics and social responsibility was also one of the major objectives that drove the forerunners of Methodism. If we do a retrospective evaluation of the rise of Methodism, which had its beginning in the eighteenth century in England, we see that preaching and teaching have always been part of the program of Methodism. When, in the eighteenth century, John Wesley and his brother started the Methodist movement in England, they began with a group of students at Oxford University. With its crib in the university, Methodism, since its dawn, has assimilated the role of education as an instrument for the transformation of human beings, viewing the change and improvement of their quality of life. Education has been a force that drives society to a true horizon. The Methodist commitment to education led John Wesley to inaugurate the Kingswood School in 1748, known as the first Methodist educational institution for children.

The Methodism arrived in Angola more than a century ago, bringing with it the mark of integration between Christianity and the development of social practices in Angola as a proposal of God for His Church in this country. The Methodist University of Angola is the product of a Methodist culture for the involvement of all of society with issues of education, research and extension in order to develop concrete actions to transform men and women and the world around them.

An important milestone is indeed how the “audacious” idea to create and form the Methodist University of Angola has emerged. It dawned from the fact that Angolans had believed in their Methodist culture. I emphasize once more the “audacity” of the Bishop Gaspar Joao Domingos, the layman Mr. Pedro Sebastião, as well as the Portuguese Vasco Duarte and Maria Helena Doria, who allied themselves to the project of the Bishop of the Church, by whom they were invited to take part. Despite having never known the Doctrine of the Methodist Church, they accepted the invitation and came only to share experiences, but they spared no effort to materialize the project of the Church that had been sought for so long.
The UMA was approved in 2007 and started its academic activities with 511 students in the first year, offering courses only in Management and Business Administration, Architecture and Urban Planning, Civil Engineering, Mechatronics Engineering, Industrial and Electronic Systems Engineering and Law. In the second year the number of students increased from 511 to 2,706 enrolled in degree programs and 2,179 enrolled in an introductory year, making a total of 4,895 students. At that year, UMA had the support of 112 faculty members, out of which 51 had a licentiate degree, 37 masters and 24 doctorates. In the last three years, the growth has been characterized with the continued increase of the student body, infrastructure increasingly equipped with technological resources and faculty carefully selected.

To better respond to the challenges of higher education, more infrastructure is gradually being built such as classrooms, faculty rooms, lecture halls, laboratories for the Colleges of Health, Engineering and Auto CAD (these are also used by students in the courses of Architecture and Urbanism, Environment and Land Management and other courses that teach computer science). We have a library that still does not meet the needs of our students and a cyber room for quick searches on the Internet. By the year 2011, we had 6,873 students distributed in three shifts. The number of employees also increased and guaranteed jobs for many families. Many students have had their first work experience at the university, according to the criteria of best students selection. Also some employees both in teaching and in other areas have had their first job experience at UMA. Entrepreneurship has been combined with ethical issues and social responsibility, above all.

Concern for business ethics and social responsibility has allowed us to work in partnership with various ministries (Health and Environment) within each college, to strive toward the organization of awareness campaigns such as blood donation, HIV-AIDS prevention, malaria prevention among other diseases and the preservation of the environment. This is also done with private companies located in Angola which have worked with educational institutions and see in them the place to recruit employees. With this project, we are committed to continue running the project of UMA as a path to success, educating students who are capable of ensuring the stability and development of our country with ethics and social responsibility.

In conclusion, I emphasize here that the Methodist University of Angola has sought to meet all of the challenges it set out for itself early in the project. We have made great strides and visual changes have occurred. We have been able to hire professors who accept and identify with our project, have valued the work and emphasize ethics and social responsibility. At this moment we are constructing a building for the
University press, to provide service and give value to education and research by publishing our own bibliography.

I draw attention to another large expansion project of a new space which will be inaugurated, and in this school year we will start new courses in Education and Health, which we now denominate the University campus for Health and Sports in Cacuaco (northern Luanda). Seven courses will be taught there: Economics, Cardiology, Physical and Psycho-Social Rehabilitation, Agricultural and Livestock Engineering, Tourism and Hospitality Management and Recreation, Biology and Sports Science and Physical Education. These courses are innovative both technically and within the context of their own country. Finally, it was with great effort that we made innovative changes in the course curricula. Since we have completed the first educational cycle, we were allowed to change the class offerings of all courses. The Theology course was changed to add one more semester so that students are able to finish the course without problems. The course grids have been changed without making major changes in the curricular structure. We made a point to include classes that we found important in the educational process such as Christian Ethics and Social Doctrine, that are included in all courses.

One of our greatest challenges since the year 2009 has been to read and adapt Wesley to pastoral practice in Angola. Our experience is brand new, more challenging, and we have tried to find partners in various international institutions. Those which have responded are those which are participating in the project and which I highlight here such as the Public University of Évora, the University of Porto, Coimbra University, all of which are Portuguese. With the first university we have worked on the theme of business ethics and social responsibility, the training of our professors by providing master’s degrees in various technical areas of science. We have been working at our Center for Studies and Scientific Research, on various projects that meet the needs for scientific research in this country as well as support both public and private institutions through these studies.