

“MY INTEREST IS EDUCATION” UNAM’S ELDEST STUDENT SPEAKS ON HIS JOURNEY THROUGH TERTIARY EDUCATION

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Reverend William Daniel has secured his place in the University of Namibia’s history books. At 81 years of age, he is the most senior enrolled student at the University, according to current records.

But Reverend Daniel’s significance stretches beyond the unique title he holds at UNAM.

UNAM Forum caught up with Reverend Daniel to get an insight on his journey and experience at the University.

A first-year PhD student of Theology, a husband and a father of three, Reverend Daniel’s road to UNAM began many moons ago when he was still an English teacher at Augustineum Secondary School in Windhoek.

Already a passionate, messianic educator, Reverend Daniel came across a lesson in one of his English classes. “We must not steal from our children,” was the message in the lesson. “That prompted me to get a Master’s degree,” recalls Reverend Daniel. An inward desire, perhaps, to add more knowledge to pass on to future generations.

The Master’s degree was attained at the University of Western Cape in the early 90s, where his dissertation focused on the church history in southern Africa, particularly ‘the unification between the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, and the Church in Africa.’

“This thing kept me busy, thinking and thinking,” says Reverend Daniel of his Master’s dissertation. “Someone asked me then, ‘what is the next step?’”. The answer was ‘the church in Namibia’.

“I started to evaluate this situation and started to do my writing,” says Reverend Daniel, leading to his enrollment at the University of Namibia.

His thesis is based on “the evaluation of the United Reformed Church in Kavango, and the Dutch Reformed Church in South West Africa”.

Prof Johannes Henderson Hunter, together with Dr Hendrik Rudolf Tjibeba, both from the University of Namibia Department of Religious/Biblical Studies, Philosophy and Ethics, are earmarked by Reverend Daniel as his motivation to enroll for a PhD.

“They encouraged me to further my studies,” says Reverend Daniel, despite the ineluctable concerns over his advanced age.

At his age, one might wonder what Reverend Daniel’s plans are, after obtaining his PhD. He is adamant, however, that his intention is not to get a job.

“I’m interested in educating people at our church level.”

Education remains Reverend Daniel’s evident passion, and it’s highlighted in his message to younger students.

“Let us make use of the opportunity that we have at an early age to complete our studies. Then, we don’t steal from our children because we must plough back into the community where we live.”

While Reverend Daniel understands the plight of students who are disadvantaged, be it financially or in any other way, he still believes that focusing their attentions on

the positives is a quality that can help struggling University students to persevere.

“You have role models that you look up to. They should inspire you to carry on even in difficult times”, he says.

“I am not worried about the money,” when asked how he is funding his studies, “the money will come – one way or another”, adds Reverend Daniel, who is partially sponsored for his studies himself.



NAMCOR STAFF TRAINED ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY



The University of Namibia Central Consultancy Bureau (UCCB) has recently completed upskill training to the NAMCOR staff, which underlined the importance of the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act 29 of 1998. The Act aims to redress past injustices in the area of employment.

This short course covered subset of “antidiscrimination policies”, without conflating the topic with the

related issue of “multiculturalism”. It draws on sociological, historical, legal, philosophical and economic material, and considers the national experiences of Namibia as well as several countries, including the United States, India, South Africa, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Canada and France.

Speaking to Forum Weekly, UCCB Director, Mr Mapuku Thikusho, applauded NAMCOR for taking this

bold step to upskill its staff members. It shows the entity’s commitment to redress past injustices. “We are hopeful the course served as an eye opener and encourage the members to apply the skills learned for the betterment of the entity. Equal appreciation goes to the facilitators of this course Dr Warikandwa, Dr Zongwe and Dr Asheela,” stated Mr Thikusho.