

REPOSITIONING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR A WHOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

It is of a paramount importance that theological education in a third world country like Nigeria should not be limited within the confines of the scripture or be dichotomized for any reason. Before now, theological has been looked up as a restricted field that deals only with the scripture and soul related issues. The mount of priest or a theologian should utter wisdom for an unrestricted and integral development of the community he is to serve. Like in the Old Testament, the New testament theologian in preaching theologically revealed truth should put into consideration the peoples worldviews and cultural context, consciousness and sensibility through orthodoxy and orthopraxis. The responsibility of the theologians involves taking into serious account the global situation in which the people live, therefore, a theologian should not by the virtue of his own field of education or work checkmate his ideas only to the scripture, and remain narrow minded and non versatile.

Introduction

Theological education in the Old Testament is all embracing and inclusive. This is because right from the cradle, an average Israelites was exposed to this pattern of education, and also, the people's worldview about reality was as a unified whole. In the development of education in the Old Testament Preiswerk, as found in Dad (2007:43), identified what he called two constants; these are theological constant and the sociological constant. The theological constant is the God is considered to be the principal and authentic educator however, we can believe this in a famous example in Ex 12:25-27. god instructed that the significance and meaning of the Passover should be transmitted from one epoch to the other. Hence he said:

When you enter the land the Lord will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, what does this ceremony mean to you? Then tell them, it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the housed of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our home when he struck down the Egyptians.

The sociological constant is that the family is the essential absolutely basic education institution in ancient Israel. Besides, using Preiswerk's conclusion, we can simply say that in the Old Testament, the family constitute the basic pedestal for theological education. Against this background Preiswerk (1987:51), opines that various educational model arise successively or simultaneously along with their respective secondary education agents.

Religious specialists like the Priest, Prophets, the wise and the scribes played important role as instructors in theological education in the Old Testament. According to Tidwell (1996) the teachers of the first importance in the Old Testament were Parents, Priest, Sages and Poets. Apart from ritual functions the Priest in the Old Testament were teacher. For the prophets, theological education includes not only transmission of truth gotten from tradition, but the giving of impetus to serve Yahweh. The prophets often remain the people according to Dada (2007), there is a dire consequence for rejecting Yahweh and following other gods, in addition to this, the Pharisees, Sadducees and the Essences were carriers of theological education in the Old Testament Hebrew. This paper makes a clarion call to the trained theologians to demur and decry the idea that the work of a theologian is within the boundaries of the scripture of sacred practices in the church. However, the popular saying : this is not my responsibility as often used by theologians in relation to secular issues should not be allowed. Theological education should be for a holistic development that knows no boundaries. In view of this, Luke 2: 52 said about Jesus that he grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. He was an all rounder. His teaching bears witness to the fact that he knew about agriculture, he taught about the seed dying in order to germinate- His knowledge of business is not in doubt because he talked about the three persons who were given different talent for investment. He was not ignorant about politics, so he cautioned about counting the eggs before it's hatched. He was a scientist to have know how people interpret the weather, he came that we might have life in full (John 10; 10) more often, people want to look for advice and guidance from a man who understands their struggles of life. They want to discuss their success and failure with a man who can give them fitting comments and suggestions.

If a theologian possesses some technical knowledge regarding the basic areas of life in which his people are interested and can advice them in this areas, this will surely make the people very happy. In

this regard this paper is divided into the following subheadings: theological education for a wholistic development, Effective theological education though orthodoxy and orthopraxis, theological education in Nigeria, repositioning theological education in Nigeria for meeting global challenges, the theologians as light and salt of the world., recommendation and conclusion.

Theological Education for a Wholistic Development

Two key words are very important to be defined; they are "Theology" and "education" because why both form the fulcrum of the discussion. Etymologically, the word theology is derived from the two Greek words: "Theo" meaning "God" "Logos"- study. Therefore, theology means the study of God. According to Ferguson, Sinclair, Wright, and David (1988:680), Theology is derived from the two Greek. Theologies comparing of two words, meaning basically on account of, or discourse about, gods or God., in the modern world theology is often used in a comprehensive sense embracing all the discipline involved in a university course or in the training for church ministers (i.e. including the Biblical Languages, Church history, homiletics etc.) more precisely, the world denotes teaching about God in relation to world from creation to the consummation, particularly as it is set forth in an ordered coherent manner.

The word theology can be described to mean the science of God. It can possibly mean the study of the divine revealed truth; or in a layman's language, it is the discourse about God.

Education on the other hand, has been described by the New Penguin dictionary as the art of developing (somebody) mentally or morally, especially by instruction (2001: 444) through the right orthodoxy (right teachings) and orthopraxis (right practice).

According to Dada (2007), it also means to train or improve a person's faculties, judgments and skill etcetera. To Dewey, as found in Oduolowu (1999:2), education is the means of social continuity. On the other hand, Chucham, asserted that Education is the shaping of behavior or modification of an individual's behavior for adequate adjustment in the society". Ukeje (1973), opined that education occurs whenever any individual produces a change in the physical or mental behavior. Also, education is used to refer the product of the above process, and to the academic discipline studying the nature of a process and its outcome. Education is a means for preserving the way of life on which a society reacts to issues. Bmenogu (1996:10), in agreement, postulated that education is a process of transmitting the culture, knowledge and skill of a people to their young ones

However, Ukeje (1976), citing Harbison and Meyers, believed that education is the key that unlocks the door to Modernization. In another sense, Ukeje (1973), stressed that education occurs when any influence produces a change in a physical or mental behavior. Omolulu and Melama, in National education Research Council, (NERC) 1976 saw education as an act of training a person intellectually, Morally, and Physically, in essence therefore, theological education can be described as an effort to train and improve a person's faculties. Judgment, skill and competence through exposure to the revealed truth of God's systematically outlined principles in the Bible, nature, history and other areas of human experience.

Theological education then would mean that form or formal or organized education that is God-centered with a strong affinity to His relationship to the world and to the church. Theological education must imbibe the idea that all men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights and should therefore, take on the concepts like democracy, consensus, majority and minority mandates for effective theological break through. Theological education is supposed not to be limited in any regard, it should include right, to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Here, liberty includes the rights to worship God in freedom without hindrance from anyone. In the same vein, theological education should be channeled towards embracing issues or matters from other fields of life, redemption without development is empty just as Jesus without development is useless. Therefore, theological education require also to embrace practical matters like healing the sick, feeding the widows, rescuing refugees, clothing the poor and contributing to famine relief (act 3:6, 6: 1., 9: 25, 39, 11: 29, 30). Current theological education it to self-guild itself, and it does not need to buy the Greek world-view that the world is divided into two in which, the spiritual and the material are at enmity. Since matter is evil, Christians should not participate or commit themselves to anything worldly against this background Monlini (1960:643), stated that

Religion, the worship of God, is the beacon which lights up all our human knowledge; our power of knowing is a reflection of the Divine Word- Religion is the ally of reason, of its very nature, it is on the side of intellect; it has a predilection for philosophy- that is for disciplined thinking. It demands honesty, insists that the mind should not function in an artificial capricious, for vacillating fashion; but generously, deservingly, penetratingly. In other regard, theological education should not

dichotomize or be segregated.

Effective Theological Education through Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

Besides, theological education in the Old Testament has helped in the creation of indigenous awareness, which accounted for the survival and resilience of Israelites religion and heritage, under severe and unpleasant conditions. Nozario (1973:23), described indigenous awareness as the process by which inherent values are brought into conscious awareness. Many theologian and priests have complained that the seminary training did not equip them for problems facing contemporary Nigeria. This is evidence, since the questions and problems they face in the parish or in the world are not the one's the find in their seminary text books and manuals. The context is what we have, theology in Africa has been inherited from Europe and North America. They were formulated in the context of the first world. When imported into the context of third world, they are perceived as something foreign and irrelevant and so it is. First world theology is couched in the language, idiom and culture of Europe, also answers questions and problems that arise in the context of Europe and North America. No one would suggest that orthodoxy is not necessary, but assimilation without expression leads to frustration. This is to say that orthodoxy without orthopraxis leads to frustration. However, the divorce between theory and practice in the community today is one of our greatest problems.

Orthodoxy (right doctrines) means thinking the truth believing the doctrine of our -faith, subscribing to the teaching of the church. Orthopraxis on the other hand, means right practice. It stands for doing the truth, practicing the faith, living a genuine Christian spiritual life.

Effective Theological Education Through Orthopraxis and Orthodoxy

Again, Bruce (1971: 3), citing Aleshire (1981), stated that that Evangelism is the way in which the church becomes caring distributors of good news. Bruce (1971:31) in support of this said: Proclamation and witnessing comprises another basic function of a church. It is the work of the church to preach to preach the gospel to every creature (Matt, 28:19-20)

Our theological books have been written in such a way so as to enable students have the right doctrine about God (Theology proper) Holy Spirit (Pneumatology), Christ (Christology), sin (Harmatology). In some instance, some students are known to have been shown out of seminary because they do not subscribe to the minute's point regarding our doctrine or doctrine statements. Hardly, is anytime given to the teaching of orthopraxis (right practice) and praxis. Because of this, in most cases, theologians are ill-prepared to handle other secular issues, since it has no direct influence on the scripture

Theologians should be agents of positive social change that requires no gap line, hence, should be well equipped on issues regarding the human environments and economic inequality, Human rights, strikes and Racism, Abortion and child, debts and prostitution. Faith is not primarily a way of thinking, it is a way of living. Our real beliefs are not the ideas that we play around in our heads but the beliefs and doctrine that are implicit in what we actually do or don't do. This calls for proper theological education in Nigeria.

Theological Education in Nigeria

Theological Education in Nigeria despite its effects in training today's priests, theologians pastors, bishops, archbishops and cardinals and General overseers, Christian religions educators at universities, superintendents of various denominational groups in the country, still has not been fantastic in the sense that some dividing gaps can be found between the theological and the people in their local congregation.

However, trained theologians in the country are yet to make a useful connection between their area of specialization and the day to day lives of the people. This to an extent has given theological education a one sided shape. In most cases, people see the trained theologians as people who have spiritual messages to pass and impose themselves on the people through biblical injunctions. Even most times, the so called theologians contribute immensely to whatever negative labels they receive from the people. In some cases, they emphasized more on the vertical aspect of their work, relegating the horizontal one, (secular activities) as ungodly and worldly. In this regard, some theologians shun political talks, large scale economical talks, social and industrial activities, prostitution and occultism etc and prefers to dwell on praying, fasting, hazarding all for the sake of God, thereby seeing the present world as a temporary and an evil place to indulge in. They often preach to their congregation to disregard budget planning since they believe that their God supplies all their needs according to his riches and glory.

Most time theological end up in academic debate that are unproductive to the society. Buy even God before the fall of man gave him the right to increase, subdue, conquer, dominate and

permeate the world to force the whole earth to obey the wished and directives of man and theologies are in better position to utilize this and browse into our areas of knowledge to utter wisdom. With Nigeria theologies in mind prophet Jeremiah 12: 4 asserted

How long will the land He parched and the grass in every field is withered?
Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished.

In addition to this, the bible makes it clear that all things were created by him reconcile everything to God. And therefore theological education needs repositioning in a country like Nigeria.

Repositioning Theological Education for Meeting Global Challenges in Nigeria

Like the Nigeria economic, social and political sector that needs repositioning, theological education in Nigeria needs an urgent reformation to effectively withstand emotional equilibrium it faces in the society to meet effective global challenges and struggles. In this regard, it will be wise to reject the idea of a universal theology. Nigeria, Africa should do her theology in her own way to adequately combat her own style of problems in her internal issues and challenges. Just as the Logo "look flesh" had entered into the culture of the first century Palestine, so must the Christian faith take on the culture of each group that receives the Gospel. It should be preached in terms familiar to the people, less the people perceive Christianity as something foreign and irrelevant to their way of life. Liturgy must 'think' "speak and ritualize according to the local cultural pattern. The theological education should not be narrowed down by theology as spiritual work, limited to salvation of individuals for self reformation

Theological education should be contextual. It must be performed in a way that brings the peoples consciousness and sensibilities, worldview and cultural context, theological education which forces African theologians only to respond to stimulus put in place by western system is horrible adventures that suppose not to be welcomed. Besides, the post Colonial situation of our nation must be accorded a place if theological education in Nigeria must meet local and global challenges. Accordingly Sugirtharajah an Indian biblical scholar 1998:17 (-8), articulates the relevance of post colonial discourse in education:

Post colonial discourse is not about the territorial rejection of imperial powers or about learning caliban- like the out of cursing the evils of empire.... It Is a discursive resistance to imperialism, imperial ideologies and imperial ideologies and imperial ideologies and imperial attitudes and to their continual reincarnation in such evil field as politics, economics, history and theological can biblical studies. Resistance in not simply a reaction to colonial practices, but a alternative way of perceiving and reconstruction society.

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Our theological education must be God's judgment on the world and after alternative way to humanity. It may properly equip the people to respond to the structural and unjust social conditions and elements that are making life difficult in a contemporary Nigeria society.

Theological education in Nigeria suppose to favour people-centered development, relief system, conflict resolution, poverty relief system, poverty relief system, conflict resolution, poverty alleviation, adult literacy and education, disaster preparedness, right to life, freedom of religion, the dignity of persons as created in the image of God. It also includes the right to vote and be voted for the right to freedom of assembly and association, the right of fair hearing and trail, the right of gainful-employment and general security of persons, the right at the physical and mentally disabled. The rule of law, and should tell the people of the place of the military the right to freedom of assembly and association, the right of fair hearing and trail, the right of gainful employment and general security persons, the right at the physical and mentally disabled. The place of women in the

society, the handicapped, capacity building, through seminars and symposia on all political matters including I advocacy, lobbying political leadership development and research. This could be done through seminars and publications.

Theologian as Light and Salt of the World

According to Nolan (1989: 19), for theology today to continue using Greek philosophical concepts and Greek ways of understanding to give people the answer to question they do not ask, in terminology they don't understand, using methods of thinking that are completely alien to them the Greek world view has crept into our understanding of the Bible to the extent that we hardly appreciate the world and the things God has made. Songs have been sang which indicate that the world belong to Satan. This is blatantly wrong. Psalm 24 attests that the- world and the fullness I thereof belong to God. Of course, through the mystery of incarnation, it is obvious that this world belongs to God. God chooses to enter into the world any how his divine well design, to accomplish any activity that suits his ultimate divine purpose. (Luke 1 : 13, 2: 6- 7).

On becoming a Christian, William Wilberforce and his Colleagues were conceived that their new life should make a difference to their society, and it was this idea of inspiring a difference that: I your birth to a group known as the Ciapham sect that became largely responsible for the urgent transformation that took place and saw to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 in England and 183 in British Colonies. The incarnation role of the theologians in the society is that theologians should remain salt and light of the world (Matt 5: 13- 16), This is known as a "Transformation" as proposed by Jokonda and it involves are aspects of human endeavor, the spiritual, physical, mental and the environment.

The theologian has an up hill task to continue to formulate a theology of praxis for development programmers, audits, audits that are holistic in nature and relevant to the society from where they operate. In being salt, the theologian should permeate the society and influence it as its flavor. Since salt is a purifier, a preservative, hence a theological should try to preserve the culture of the community he is to serve. Just like the early missionaries to Africa were advised to lead to the instruction of the sacred congregation of the faith, now the sacred congregation for Evangelization of people of 1695, To respect the ways of life of those people being evangelized unless these were apposed to true religion and morals.

Or the Summi Pontificates given by Pope Pius XII of the happy memory in his Encyclical Anything in the national Customs that is not indissolubly bound up with superstitious and false doctrine is always carefully, considered if possible preserved intact. As a salt, a theology should be an antiseptic and productive quality that makes it to have good influence on the world as it brings healing to the wounded. In being the sat, the theologian is to be meek, merciful, forgiving and a seeker of righteousness, justice through fair play and due. process even with the use of legal procedures. However, the salt loses its saltiness when it does not perform its function. The salt does not exist for its own sake, therefore, a theologian should exist for the sake of others in different field and walks of life. Besides, in being the light of the world, the theologian should illuminated all facets of lives. He is to shine in the darkness to seen; to show people the way, in politics learning, trading, and agriculture etc. "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven (Matt: 5:16). Light cannot be hidden as it is not affected by the darkness surrounding it. A theologian is to be lamp lighted and placed on the hill for all to see.

Being light and salts of the world, therefore, means that the Christian theologians are to the totally visible and transforming in the impact on societies. They must therefore, work with the. delegated power of Jesus to heal, to cast out demons, and to declare victory over death (Matt 10:8; Matt 16:18). We need theologians who can make these people understand about God's large family, which needs food, clothes housing and can obtain them in sufficient amount if each members of the Lord's family does his task well and lo remain that there is harmony in their efforts and worship.

Annie (2003:87) in support of that view opined that "theologies should follow the model of Jesus, the master in teaching, preaching healing and serving. He should learn to humble himself, and conduct himself honorably as servant leader. -

Recommendation and Conclusion

According to Niebuhr (1956 :31), no substitute can be found for the definition of the goal of the

church as the increase among men, of the love of God and neighbor. In addition, the role of the church includes the overall love of the society to effect positive and dynamic changes in all areas concerned.

Vieth (1956), in agreement with Niebuhr, wrote that: the purpose of the church then in to the society of fellowship of them who have responded to God's call through Christ for mutual support and up building seeking to increase the love God and neighbors through witness and service not only in their own fellowship but also throughout the community and world, carrying the gospel of Christ with all human relation.

Theological education in Nigeria requires a more wholistic approach for a wholistic development. Theologies as the salt and light of the world, needs to a ct like God. Created and fashioned something out of nothing or form a chaotic mess to something. There are two ways of answering question that arise about anything at all, which are deductive and reductive methods. It is possible to combine the two. The deductive methods start from ideas, principles or doctrine and then deduce or draws conclusion from these about the world around us. In other words, it answers question by appealing to first principles or established ideas or doctrines. The inductive method, on the other hand, starts from experience and develops ideas and principles from our experience of life in the world.

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