



Review Article

The Importance of Theological Education to the Changing World

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Abstract

This paper is on the importance of theological education to the changing world. Theological education is the training of men and women to know and serve God. It has the potential to be the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries, mission, commitment to Christian unity and the changing world. Christian Education is Christ-Centered which puts salvation first, teaches the claims of Christ upon one's life and in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. In this paper, the history, values, impacts, effects of theological education to the changing world were discussed.

Key words: School, society, education, world, churches, Christ, bible

Received: 27 May 2017

Accepted: 30 September 2017

Introduction

School is an important part of our society. For many, the purpose of education is to simply prepare a person for a career. Theological education is vital for the future of the World. Theological education has the potential to be the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries, mission, commitment to Christian unity and the changing world. If theological education is neglected by church or world leaders, the consequences are far reaching; they might not be visible immediately, but they will certainly become manifest over time in the theological competence of church leadership, the holistic nature of

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ISSN: 2141 - 4181 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

mission, and the capacities for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and the interaction between church and society. Investment in theological education is investment of hope in the future and mission of our world. The transmission of Christian memory, the education for God's peace and justice, and the formation for church and community leadership therefore should be priorities in all churches; however, in many places theological education is far from secure or even in crisis at the present time.

Definition of Terms

Education

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits (Dewey, 1997) Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves. Education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. The methodology of teaching is called pedagogy.

Education is commonly divided formally into such stages as preschool or kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and then college, university, or apprenticeship. A right to education has been recognized by some governments, including at the global level: Article 13 of the United Nations' 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes a universal right to education. In most regions education is compulsory up to a certain age.

Christian Education

Often when the question "*What is Christian Education*" is asked, various answers are given such as having a Christian faculty, having rules and dress codes, having the Bible in the curriculum or just having the name, *Christian*. Christian education is far more than the above.

Christian education "*is that education which is Bible Based, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit controlled, pupil related, socially applied with the Scriptures being the authority in all things* (Ban, 1988).

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Christian Education is Bible Based:

a. Why Bible based?

If the Word of God isn't the foundation for all that is done, taught, etc., then believers are on very shaky ground. If believers can't prove a God given mandate for the Christian school then it could well be asked why they should have it. If there isn't a Bible reason for the Christian Home School movement, then it should also cease to exist. Therefore, Christian education must have the Word of God as its foundation, the teaching must emphasise the Word of God.

b. Why are the Scriptures so important?

Believers live in a day when many saved adults do not make the Word of God the authority in their lives. Hence, to them many things are relative, and it all just depends on what an individual wants to accept or believe. In many cases these Christians reject certain things strongly taught in the Word of God as 1) either not for today, or 2) for a culture from which they are far removed, or 3) it just doesn't fit their feelings, 4) or it isn't what their peers say, or 5) what is convenient to them.

If the Word of God is not the authority-- then what is? And if every man's idea is as good as anyone else's, then we are at sea at best, and we are disobedient to the clear revelation of God. *Let God be true and every man a liar.* The Word of God has many strong statements as to its veracity, is infallibility, it's divine origin, it's power and authority for every aspect of life. (II Tim. 3:15-17).

Christian Education is Christ-Centered

a. Christ-centered education puts salvation first. (Col. 1:18)

Christ is the center of life and the message of Christian education. The first emphasis is that Christians be in right relationship with Jesus Christ. This comes when they are born again for until the child is saved, the teacher is limited in his ability to teach him.

Christ-centered education recognizes that the child is basically evil. That may sound like a strong statement, but a study of God's Word makes it very clear as to the condition of the human heart. (Jer. 17:9; Eph. 2:1-3). It is not the environment that causes the discipline problems in the child, it is the sin nature.

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People sin because they are sinners. They practice sin and live in self-will and self-centeredness. The heart needs a drastic change that takes place through salvation by faith in Christ's death on the cross (I Tim. 1:15; Prov. 22:15; Psa. 51:5; Psa. 53; 58:3; Eph. 2:1-3). Only the child that is rightly related to Jesus Christ can receive the full benefits of a Christian education (Rom. 6:16-20).

b. Christ-centered education teaches the claims of Christ upon one's life.

The secular, public education is thoroughly pupil-centered. Self-esteem is often the basis of much false teaching in many schools, where the student is taught directly and indirectly to be selfish, self-centered. Instead of Christ-esteem, it is worship of self, the deifying of man. Christ-centered education teaches Christ and His claims upon the lives of the students. The student ought not to have selfish rights of his own for once he is saved he belongs to Jesus. We are bought with a price, we are not our own (I Cor. 6:19-20). We are to yield our bodies to Christ. (Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2)

c. Christ-centered education states that the content for Christian education must be in harmony with the teachings of the Bible.

(II Tim. 3:16-17; Psa. 119:128; Psa. 119)

This provides the basis for the integration and correlation of all subject matter. Every subject is taught with Christ as the center. Instruction takes on new meaning when the subjects are interpreted in the light of the Word of God. What does God say? *History* becomes the story of God's dealing with mankind.

Theology education

Theological Education is the training of men and women to know and serve God. It is distinguished from Christian Education in that it is usually done in preparation for special service or leadership in the Christian church or mission. Christian Education is generally seen as for all and takes place generally in the church. Theological Education is not for all, usually results in special service and leadership and usually takes place in a college or in a Theological Education programme centred beyond the church. Sunday School teaching, Bible study evening meetings and so on are Christian Education. Bible Colleges, Ministry Training Colleges.

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Changing World

A progressing virtual **world** of global computers having networks of interdependent information technology infrastructures, telecommunications networks and computer processing systems, in which online interaction takes place. Human or machine conduct socially acceptable in the cyber world

HISTORY

History of EDUCATION

Education began in prehistory, as adults trained the young in the knowledge and skills deemed necessary in their society. In pre-literate societies this was achieved orally and through imitation. Story-telling passed knowledge, values, and skills from one generation to the next. As cultures began to extend their knowledge beyond skills that could be readily learned through imitation, formal education developed. Schools existed in Egypt at the time of the Middle Kingdom (Berry *et al.*, 2002).

Plato founded the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in Europe. The city of Alexandria in Egypt, established in 330 BCE, became the successor to Athens as the intellectual cradle of Ancient Greece. There, the great Library of Alexandria was built in the 3rd century BCE. European civilizations suffered a collapse of literacy and organization following the fall of Rome in CE 476 (Ibid).

In China, Confucius (551-479 BCE), of the State of Lu, was the country's most influential ancient philosopher, whose educational outlook continues to influence the societies of China and neighbours like Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Confucius gathered disciples and searched in vain for a ruler who would adopt his ideals for good governance, but his Analects were written down by followers and have continued to influence education in East Asia into the modern era (Ibid).

After the Fall of Rome, the Catholic Church became the sole preserver of literate scholarship in Western Europe. The church established cathedral schools in the Early Middle Ages as centres of advanced education. Some of these establishments ultimately evolved into medieval universities and forebears of many of Europe's modern universities. During the High Middle Ages, Chartres Cathedral operated the famous and influential Chartres Cathedral School. The medieval universities of Western Christendom

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were well-integrated across all of Western Europe, encouraged freedom of inquiry, and produced a great variety of fine scholars and natural philosophers, including Thomas Aquinas of the University of Naples, Robert Grosseteste of the University of Oxford, an early expositor of a systematic method of scientific experimentation, and Saint Albert the Great, a pioneer of biological field research (Cheesman, 2005). Founded in 1088, the University of Bologna is considered the first, and the oldest continually operating university.

Elsewhere during the Middle Ages, Islamic science and mathematics flourished under the Islamic caliphate which was established across the Middle East, extending from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to the Indus in the east and to the Almoravid Dynasty and Mali Empire in the south. The Renaissance in Europe ushered in a new age of scientific and intellectual inquiry and appreciation of ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. Around 1450, Johannes Gutenberg developed a printing press, which allowed works of literature to spread more quickly. The European Age of Empires saw European ideas of education in philosophy, religion, arts and sciences spread out across the globe. Missionaries and scholars also brought back new ideas from other civilizations – as with the Jesuit China missions who played a significant role in the transmission of knowledge, science, and culture between China and Europe, translating works from Europe like Euclid's Elements for Chinese scholars and the thoughts of Confucius for European audiences (Cheesman, 1993). The Enlightenment saw the emergence of a more secular educational outlook in Europe.

In most countries today, full-time education, whether at school or otherwise, is compulsory for all children up to a certain age. Due to this the proliferation of compulsory education, combined with population growth, UNESCO has calculated that in the next 30 years more people will receive formal education than in all of human history thus far (Developing Critical Thinkers, 1987).

History of Christian Education

The historical development of Christian Education in the Old Testament

In the research, the researchers will have preferred to use "*Religious education*" instead of Christian education in this instance because it is only in the New Testament that people begin to talk of Christian education. In the Old Testament it is more of religious education or Jewish Religious Education than anything else. It is against this Jewish religious

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background that Christian education came into being centuries later in the New Testament. The New Testament is only new to the extent that Jesus Christ appears on the scene as a new mediator between God and people (I Tim. 2:5) as opposed to the Old Testament where the blood of animals featured predominantly.

The link between religious education in the Old Testament and Christian education in the New Testament is noticeable among others, in the way in which Old Testament prophets pointed to the coming of Christ, the Messiah. Already, they taught about Him in the Old Testament, so that His coming in the New Testament was a confirmation and fulfillment of what was taught in the Old Testament. It should come as no surprise therefore when Peter alludes to the prophets' yearning to understand and to see what they prophesied about. He argues that it was for us in this age that these things were made manifest; the prophets were serving us, not themselves (I Peter 1:10-12).

In another instance Christians are referred to as being the new Israel, the people of God, a peculiar nation, a kingdom of priests, etc, titles that were used to refer to Jews as God's nation in the Old Testament (I Pet. 2:9). Further, the link between the Old and New Testament religious education can be deduced from the fact that New Testament writers as well as Jesus Himself, used the Old Testament to teach about the way of salvation. They interpreted the Old Testament in the light of the new covenant as embodied in Jesus Christ. The two Testaments are clearly inseparable.

Briefly, Christian education is rooted in Judaism, for it arises from the Judaeo religious history. It is not possible to understand Christian education fully without going back to its Jewish roots in the Old Testament. J. Ottis Sayes (1978:35) argues that any study of Christian education should begin with Jewish education, especially in the Old Testament times, because Christianity has to date, retained much of its Hebrew heritage. It may rightly be called "*Transformed Judaism*" (Sayes, 1978).

The teaching ministry (religious education) in the Old Testament begins with God as the Teacher. The God who is a Teacher Himself commands Moses to teach the Israelites His laws, statutes and commands. Moses not only teaches those laws, but he in turn, commands Israelites to teach their children about God (Deuteronomy 6: 1-9). Along with God and Moses, the Old Testament further portrays Jewish parents, priests, prophets,

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sages (wise men) and Scribes (Rabbis) as teachers within the Jewish context of relationship with God.

God as Teacher

Religious education begins with God, not humans. It is as we begin with God that we shall know what to do with education. Byrne (1991:32) scored a point when he said, "*The fundamental thought underlying nearly everything that we would want to say about Christian education is that God is the teacher. It is He who establishes all truth; it is He who wills that men shall know the truth. He gives us curious and reflective minds to seek the truth and grasp it and use it. He even gives us the supreme privilege of helping Him in partnership both to teach and to learn*" (Byrne, 1991).

God revealed Himself to the Jews through history and the law. Thus Hebrew history is Bible history. It is the history of God revealing Himself to Jews and the Jews responding in obedience to God. Initially God revealed Himself to Abraham, and in this revelation God taught Abraham His Word; He taught him what it was to believe; to hold on to God's promises under all circumstances. Abraham became a friend of God because He learned from Him and obeyed Him (II Chron. 20:7; Psalm 25:14).

God revealed Himself to the Jews through Moses and to the Israelites directly through His mighty acts of deliverance from Egyptian slavery (Exod. 3, 12). He manifested Himself to Moses, teaching him about who He was, and then Moses in turn, taught the Israelites about who God was. On the other hand, God also taught the Israelites about who He really was through the miraculous deliverance from Egypt and through the mighty deeds He brought to pass on the way to Canaan. In this way, God was teaching the Israelites to honour Him and believe Him as the only God who was. Throughout, God was involved in the process of teaching the Israelites. His revelation was intended to educate them. Whereas He used Moses to reveal Himself and to teach His laws, He also revealed Himself personally to the Israelites by His mighty works.

The overarching theme of Jewish education was about God. God had manifested Himself to them; in turn, their duty was to teach about the God who had revealed Himself.

The Historical Development of Christian Education in the New Testament

It has already been pointed out that Christianity, as it is known today from the New Testament, has been greatly influenced by Judaism (Jewish education). To this end Charles Benton Eavey (1964:76) argued, "*Jesus and the apostles revered the teachings of the Old Testament though they spoke out forcefully against the ideas and opinions of men that had corrupted God's revelation.*" (Benton, 1964). Therefore in many ways, Christianity was modelled after Judaism.

This should come as no surprise for Christianity emanates from Judaism. Jesus was born as a Jew to save Jews. He came to fulfil the law (Judaism) and not to destroy it (Matthew 5:17). Salvation was first for the Jews, and then for Gentiles. Paul admitted this fact to the Roman Christians, "*I have complete confidence in the Gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews, and also the Gentile*" (Rom. 1:16).

During the occasion of his missionary journeys, Paul would start with the Jews, arguing with them to the end that Jesus was the Messiah. When they did not accept his teachings he would go to the Gentiles (Acts 18:7ff). Jesus defended this truth clearly, sometimes harshly, as with the Syrophoenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28). I am reminded of how He ministered to the Jews only, saying He also was the son of Abraham (Luke 19:1-10). He further sent 12 disciples to the household of Israel only (Matt. 10:5-6). Worship and instruction were modelled after the synagogue pattern. Children were to be instructed by parents. The New Testament teaches the same thing as well (Eph. 6:4). As much as Jews were to be taught God's law, in the same way new believers in the New Testament were to undergo vigorous apostolic teaching in the temple and in houses (Acts 2:42; 5:42). In many ways Christian education resembles Jewish education. The question at stake however, is exactly how Christian education developed in the New Testament.

In the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, teaching begins with God; in this case with Jesus Christ Himself, hence Christian education. The Holy Spirit is also referred to as the teacher, enabling believers to teach and giving gifts of teaching to the church. Further, Jesus commanded His followers to teach, which they did. Thus in short, in the New Testament, in one way or another, every Christian is a teacher. What stands out glaringly is that Christian education constituted a very important component of the entire ministry of the New Testament church.

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Christian education in the New Testament begins with Jesus Himself (Mark 3: 13-15) and then proceeds to God the Holy Spirit. It continues with the Holy Spirit giving gifts of teaching to the church, enabling believers to teach effectively. Further, it becomes imperative for Jesus' followers to teach, so that not only apostles or religious leaders of the day taught, rather all Christians are expected to teach other fellow Christians and unbelievers. This description briefly underscores the development of Christian education in the New Testament.

History of Theological Education

The history of theological education is a relatively neglected field. The structure of the ministry has attracted wide attention, but preparation for its exercise has excited little interest. There are few stages that characterized the history of theological education. They are:

The Early Church

This aspect begins with the earliest period of Church History, which can be defined as when the Church existed within the Ancient Roman World, first as a persecuted minority group and then as the dominant religious force in the Empire. At first, it is find surprisingly little evidence of concern for anything like formal training for Christian leadership. One reason for this may be the marked character of the charismatic gifts which outlasted the Apostolic Age. The Didache, which current scholarship tends to place in the second part of the first century, gives evidence of the charismatic nature of the ministry of 'apostles, prophets and teachers', a ministry which hardly called for formal training. Another early Christian writing, the Shepherd of Hermas, is clearly the work of a Christian prophet (Ferris, 1996).

Even the redoubtable Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius, writing in the early second century, discloses evidence of prophetic gift. In short, it may be suggested, with Funk-Henner, that 'the methodic teaching of the art of ruling souls took the place of the extraordinary effusion of spiritual gifts or charisms which had so largely contributed to the instruction and direction of the newly born Church in the apostolic age' (1 Cor. xii, *et seq.*).

The emergence of moniscopacy in the first part of the second century may have had important repercussions for ministerial training. The bishop, focus of the Church's local unity, was conceived of as embodying in himself the whole gamut of clerical functions.

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In practice, many of these were discharged by presbyters, deacons, and those in the increasing number of minor orders, under the close supervision and guidance of the bishop, father-in-God to the clergy as well as the laity. This intimate personal association of the bishop with his clergy was a source of inspiration and direction to untried clergy.

The epitome of such training is to be found in the group of clergy which Augustine of Hippo gathered around him in the early fifth century (Ibid).

However, 'the first conscious beginnings of regular clerical training', to quote the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia*, may well have come with the subdivision of clerical orders and the practice of raising a minister to a higher order only after he had been tested and proved in a lower one. Already in the Pastorals there is the possibility that the office of deacon was a 'stepping stone' to the office of elder. With the introduction of minor orders (reader, subdeacon etc.) it became customary for an individual to be tested in a lower order before being advanced to a higher. From one of his letters [Ep. xxix] it appears that Cyprian, the third century Bishop of Carthage, elevated no-one without examination (Ibid).

The Early Medieval Period

Moving now into the early medieval period (i.e., c. 500-1000) the Church is found plunged into a new situation. The area in which it had become established was devastated by wave after wave of barbarian invaders. By land and sea, from north, south, east and west, they came, not all at once, but at intervals during the course of half a millennium or more. First Goths, Vandals, Franks—not to mention Angles, Saxons and Jutes—in the fourth and fifth centuries. Before these—and others—had been assimilated, the forces of Islam began their momentous march westwards which was to give them dominance in the Near East, North Africa and Spain, until they were stopped in 732 at Poitiers. Then it was the turn of the North men from Denmark and Norway who ravaged Western Europe and settled in parts of it (Ibid).

Finally, the seething pot of Asia poured into Europe Slavs and Magyars among the last instalment. Apart from the question of survival, the Church of these 'Dark Ages' found itself faced with two enormous tasks: first the conversion of the barbarians—a task which was in some cases almost as formidable as the conversion of communists today; secondly,

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a somewhat self-imposed but almost equally daunting labour—the preservation of the culture of Rome which had to some extent been Christianised.

In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Christian instruction and training found refuge in the seclusion and relative safety of the monasteries. Already in the fourth century, Basil of Caesarea and the 'Cappadocian Fathers', not to mention Jerome, had begun to steer monasticism in the direction of scholarship. Strong impetus was given to this tendency by Cassiodorus and to some extent the Rule of St. Benedict. In Ireland, which escaped the early devastation, monasteries became famous centres of learning. Irish monks ranged far and wide in Western Europe doing valuable missionary service. It was an Irish monk, Maildubh, founder of the community which was to become the great abbey of Malmesbury, who was the first teacher of the renowned—though eccentric English scholar—Aldhelm. Boniface of Crediton, Apostle of Western Europe, received his training at monastic communities in Exeter and Nursling, near Southampton. From Ireland and England, monastic life and training was established in numerous centres on the continent, notably Fulda (Ibid).

The Later Middle Ages

The situation during the later part of the Middle Ages (i.e., c. 1000-1500) was very different from that obtaining in the previous half millennium. Superficially, Europe was now Christianised, and the most sustained effort ever made was promoted to realise the kingdom of God on earth. Pope and Emperor assumed final responsibility for affairs of Church and State respectively (though they rarely succeeded in fixing the boundary between the two to their mutual satisfaction or in determining their proper relationship to each other). Distinctions between the sacred and the secular became blurred in numerous ways, and as a result it is difficult to isolate ministerial training from that given in preparation for the service of God in the state.

Facilities for obtaining the rudiments of a general education were not as difficult to obtain as is sometimes imagined. Monasteries still provided a certain quota, though in an ostensibly Christian society they tended to revert to type and emphasise withdrawal from society. Nevertheless there were monastic schools, usually held outside the precincts of the monastery and staffed by secular clergy. Promising youths might also be instructed by local village clergy. It was affirmed by Theodore of Etaples who taught at Oxford in the early twelfth century that there were experienced schoolmasters not only in towns

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but also in villages. Sons of wealthy families could be boarded out with abbots or bishops to learn good manners in their household and be taught by chaplains and clergy. Through means such as these it was possible to gain knowledge of reading and writing in Latin—still the language of learning and of the Church in the West—simple accounts and training in the liturgical usages of the Church in its worship. Many a ‘poor parson’ like the worthy character in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* would have received such training as came his way in one of the humbler of these modes (Rowen, 1996).

The outstanding development of the twelfth century was the emergence of the university. In a sense, the university grew out of the bishop’s responsibility to provide clerical training. The 4th Lateran Council of 1215 still exhorted every metropolitan bishop to ensure that theology was taught in the context of his cathedral church, but in fact this duty was being taken up by the universities. Owing to the deepening involvement of bishops in affairs of state as well as the higher politics of the Church, the bishop’s teaching duties had long since devolved upon the cathedral chancellor. Now, as part of a notable renaissance of learning, and in some cases at least developed out of the activities of the cathedral chancellor, the university came into existence as a ‘studium generale’ (i.e. a general resort of students) (Ibid).

The organisation of the university seems to have been influenced by the structure of the medieval gild. Ultimate control resided in the hands of the Cathedral Chancellor, but effective control was exercised by the Rector or Master of the Schools, who was usually elected by the masters and merely confirmed by the bishop. Masters gave lectures which were attended by the bachelors who at first lived in rooms, privately hired, then in halls where rooms were let to them by a master. When colleges came in the late thirteenth century they were primarily communities in which masters lived a common life under a warden. The course of studies for bachelors was the already stereotyped programme of the seven liberal arts, comprising the Trivium (Grammar, Rhetoric and Dialectic) and the Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Astronomy, Music and Geometry). More specialised studies, such as Medicine, Canon Law (increasingly important with the growing centralised bureaucracy of the medieval Roman Church) and Theology were post-graduate (Ibid).

Importance of Theological Education to the Changing World
Value of Theological Education to a changing world

Education has been defined as “the process by which children and youth develop knowledge, skills, and character, especially through formal instruction, training, and study.” (Ainely, 1990). Philosophy, according to The Encyclopedia of Christianity, is “a pursuit of wisdom; a search for truth through logical reasoning; an analysis of the grounds of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs.” (Bromiley, 2001). The Greeks define philosophy as “the love and pursuit of knowledge and truth.” (Eims, 1981). Adding Christianity, the indispensable ingredient, our philosophy of Christian education is like an artist who steps back from his work to view the masterpiece in its entirety. How he relates the parts to each other and to the whole reveals the mastery and success of his work. The effectiveness and outreach of our ministries hinge upon the development of our philosophy of Christian education.

Dr. Glen Schultz defines the philosophy of Christian education in a broader sense as Kingdom education which is “a lifelong, Bible-based, Christ-centered process of leading a child to Christ, building a child up in Christ, and equipping a child to serve Christ.” (Glen, 1991). This definition identifies the five pillars of a true philosophy of Christian education: Bible-based, Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-controlled, pupil-related, and socially oriented.

A Bible-based philosophy of Christian education presents the Bible as the foundation of all knowledge. Every aspect of education must be integrated into God’s truth. The scope of God’s truth is universal. God’s truth is not dependent upon what education does. The integration of education should merge into living union with God’s truth. A living union of all aspects of education must take place. The home, church, and school must establish their precepts upon the Bible. Their premise must be that all truth is God’s truth; their communication must speak the truth in love seasoned with grace; and their conduct must speak louder than words realizing the powerful influence of godly behaviour. The result will be children of integrity and honesty balanced by God’s Word, and fit for the Master’s use. “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth” (John 17:17). It is right that believers integrate the truth in every discipline. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16). May the truth come alive in their hearts. The truth must be the unifying factor between the home, church, and school.

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A Christ-centered philosophy of education recognizes that Jesus Christ is our authority and Lord of truth. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is our foundation. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). The Lord is our wisdom and knowledge. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 3:3). The Son of God is our stability. "Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught (Colossians 3:7). Christ is to have the preeminence in all things. Dr. Paul Kienel said, "The purpose of Christian school education is to show children and young people how to face Christ and then with the vision of Christ in their hearts to face the present world and the world to come." (Eldridge, 1999). Students must be led to salvation in Christ, build them up in their faith, and equip them to serve Him. The result will be a spiritual haven where Christ reigns and learning is paramount. Oswald Chambers said it best, "The sweet sign that God has done a work of grace in our hearts is that we love Jesus Christ best; not weakly and faintly, not intellectually, but passionately, personally, and devotedly, overwhelming every other love of our lives." (Davis, 1991). This is the work of a Christ-centered philosophy of Christian education.

A Holy Spirit-controlled philosophy of education acknowledges the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of parents, teachers, and students. The parents and teachers must have His guidance to impart the truth to their students effectively and appropriately.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide in you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17). Parents and teachers must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to think christianly and to effectively communicate the truth in the education of their children. Students need the leadership of the Spirit to be image-bearers of Christ. Romans 12:2 tells us, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." The Holy Spirit correctly focuses the student's knowledge to bring about moral conformity to the image of God's Son. Ultimately, this image bearing will result in godly character. A pupil-related philosophy of Christian education focuses on what God intends every child to be. Parents and teachers understand that each child is a special creation of God (Psalm 139) and made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Yet, due to sin, they are fallen and in need of a Saviour. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved

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ISSN: 2141 - 4181 Science and Education Development Inst., Nigeria

by faith, that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God." Every child can be saved and be whom God intended them to be. Ephesians 2:10 shares that "we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus." Christian education is to instill in a child the knowledge of God; guide him in the development of his personal faith; and help him in the establishment of his Christian worldview. Parents and teachers are to teach children to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. They are to share that they can have a transforming, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Their ministry is to assist them in formulating a Christian mind that is able to think and act according to Biblical principles. "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3). A pupil-related, philosophy of education prepares a student to impact society and bring glory to the Lord.

A socially-oriented philosophy of education teaches young people how to interact and relate with the world. The student understands that all of life is God's. There is no secular and sacred. All truth is God's truth. The parents and teachers integrate faith and Biblical values into a lifestyle reflecting a Christian worldview by example and instruction to their students. This Bible-based belief system determines their attitudes in life and leads to holy and responsible life choices. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Colossians 3:17). Students with this Christian worldview model Ephesians 4:12, "the perfecting (maturing) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." As Bible based, Christ-centered, Holy-Spirit-controlled believers, they have become an imitation of their parents and teachers (Luke 6:40). They are modelling the image of the Lord Jesus. This is the mastery and success of a philosophy of Christian education. This brings honour and glory to God.

Impact of Theological Education to a changing world

Education, as defined by American scholar and biblical thinker Noah Webster, "comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations (Noah, 1989). Webster's definition is itself a demonstration of the chief aim of Christian education—a biblical world view. The Apostle Paul, in his treatise on the value and authenticity of Scripture, explains that "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for correction, for reproof, for

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training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Effect of Theological Education to a changing world

"When he saw the crowds Jesus had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field'" (Matthew 9:37-38).

Theological education begins in the heart of the triune God, who sees the people he has created in desperate need. He meets this need in the Good Shepherd who is also paradoxically the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

God reveals to his people the heart he has for a lost and suffering world and from this revelation a commitment to world evangelisation is born. Jesus himself had to draw the attention of his disciples to the reality that was all around them: "the harvest is plentiful". Although the disciples followed Jesus and listened to him they had never really seen what was staring them in the face. Similarly, today, faith communities of the Lord Jesus gather together in the presence of their risen and ascended Lord, worshipping him and hearing his word, yet many have not *beheld* that "the harvest is plentiful". To see is to observe with one's eyes. To behold is both to see and to understand the significance of that observation. The Lord Jesus calls on his disciples to comprehend the needs of the world around them and then to pray with a view to purposeful action: that workers be sent into the harvest.

Education is the vehicle by which institutions and communities convey to their members the attitudes, values and appropriate behaviours for life within those communities²⁷. Necessarily any education must involve the passing on of content.

However effective theological education to the changing world must see as its goal the formation of values and attitudes as well as the communication of knowledge and skills. Effective theological education for the changing world must, therefore, be transformational.

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Noelliste believes that “essential to the renewal of theological education is the retrieval and the maintaining of its uniqueness and distinctiveness ... Theologically understood then, theological education consists in the formation of the people of God in the truth and wisdom of God for the purpose of personal renewal and meaningful participation in the fulfilment of the purpose of God in the Church and the world (Adeyemo, 1999). On this view, theological education is the process of formation that leads to the transformation of the world through the individual and the collective participation of God’s people in God’s mission.

Summary

In summary, theological education has the unique capacity to assist parents in their God-given mandate to “raise their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4) This education takes place in the context of a biblical philosophy and a Christ-centered curriculum by loving and mature Christian teachers who minister to the whole child using Christ-honouring and effective methods.

While there are many challenges that are facing theological education and theological educators today, the mere fact that they are being addressed is a positive step forward. Institutions, churches and individuals do not accept change very quickly. However, the urgency of our present situation demands that these changes do occur as expeditiously as possible so that the whole world can hear the whole gospel.

Conclusion

Attempts to define the purpose of theological education have been influenced by the ‘unity-in-diversity nature of Christian theology. While believers talk of ‘one faith, one Lord, one baptism’, this oneness is perceived differently in different contexts, so is theological education. Sometimes its purpose is defined by historical understanding of Christianity: that Christianity is paideia, given by God in Jesus Christ, turning on a radical conversion possible only by the Holy Spirit’s help, and taught only indirectly by study of divinely inspired Scriptures in the social context of the church understood to be in some ways a school. The goal will be knowledge of God – forming person’s souls to be holy. Often it is defined by the nature, needs and mission of the Church, - preparing those who will lead the work of the Church. At other times, the purpose of theological education is defined as academic activity. Whether the objective is academic, spiritual or

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ministerial, theological education must seek to provide the theological and educational environment that would facilitate the formation and transformation of those with the divine call to love and serve God in his mission to the world through the Church.

When all is said and done - and all that is appropriate *must* be said and done - we have to agree with Williams that Theological Education whatever the purpose we assign to it, is the work of the Holy Spirit. Unless we start here and commit ourselves to an education which is this fundamental, we shall miss the mark no matter how many schemes and theories we lay on. General education requires an efficient performance of tasks, theological education in addition, requires the *spirit* of that performance - love to God and neighbour. The extent to which this purpose governs all that comprises its common life is the criteria of excellence in a theological school. Schnier describes this purpose as 'formation' - an activity which pervades the whole of the process of the institution and recognized in each discreet part of the process (<http://www.theologicaleducation.org/resources.php> (2005)).

Recommendation

Having done a proper and broad investigation into the importance of theological education in the changing world, this paper recommences the following as vital, crucial as well as imperative:

- a. for all called into the ministry should go through theological education for proper understanding of the Bible.
- b. so as to combat heresies during the discharging one's responsibilities as a servant of God to the world.
- c. all ministers of God should encourage the members to attend and go through theological education so that less work will be done on the members.

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