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Our Vision

To publish articles that promote Christian ethics in a professional way

Our Mission

To make information available to Christians towards their spiritual growth

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CHRISTIANITY AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This is the fourth and first print edition of *Mature Journal*. The articles in this edition are divided into three categories, viz., research (scholarly) articles, preachers' articles, and professional articles. The main theme for this edition is *Christianity and Educational Development* (Part 2). The authors are renowned Christian academics, preachers, and professionals, drawn from both Christian and secular universities, theological institutions, and living churches.

In his paper titled *Christianity and Educational Development: The Nigerian Experience*, Dele Alaba Ilesanmi (2023) describes Christianity as a representative of the Kingdom of God here on earth (in the world), but not of this world; hence, Christians have not been fighting for their God (John 18:36). The word "Christianity" starts with the word "Christ." Similarly, "Christian" starts with "Christ." Thus, the word Christ-ian-ity is a three-morphemed word of three types of affixations: prefix (Christ), infix (ian), and suffix (ity). The suffix "ity" is belief in or the worship of God or God incarnate, or the way of life of the Christians in relation to their God, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the living God. If religion is belief in a spiritual being or metaphysical reality, then Christianity, a *metareligion*, is belief in ultimate Reality (the Truth) or Jesus, the supernatural Reality. Ilesanmi went further to cite Theodore Greene's concise statement on the watertight compartment relationship between education and religion, particularly metareligion (Christianity). "Christianity is real, Christianity is genuine, Christianity is true, Christianity is life, and Christianity is the way to go in educational development and nation-building."

In his second article, Dele Alaba Ilesanmi writes about the *Changing Faces of Christianity in the 21st Century*. He observes that the centre of Christianity's gravity has moved from the Global North to the Global South. He also observes that Christianity is gradually being threatened in the religious marketplace. He advises that the shift in the global centre of Christianity calls for an urgent response to salvage Christianity from extinction in this part of the global hemisphere (the Global North). In his second article titled *Pneumagogy: A Proposed Theory for Effective Teaching and Learning in Christian Kingdom Education*, Ilesanmi coined the word *pneumagogy* to mean the art and science of teaching and learning in the Christian world under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He argues that a biblically based, Christ-centred, and Holy Spirit-driven theory, like pneumagogy, is better than secular, non-biblically based theories.

Venunye Kwaku Ahamakah works on *The Role of Effective Leadership in Ministry Growth*. He argues that carnal or intellectual knowledge is insufficient to manage spiritual affairs. He says that effective leadership is the catalyst for the growth of any ministry. The author concludes that the Pauline leadership strategies for effectiveness and growth in ministry are the answer to leadership problems.

O. Eyarefe, U. E. Felix, and Y. S. Akogu's paper, titled *Appraisal of Christian Education Ministry in St. Mathias Anglican Church, Umuchima, Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria*, examines the concept of Christian education in St. Mathias Anglican Church, Umuchima, Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria. The authors contend that the teaching-learning process is inspired by God and that the foundation of a true Christian education is built upon a Christian philosophy centred on God's Word, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1). They opine that Christian education is a necessary tool for church administration and growth.

In their second article, titled: *A Review of the Ministry of Intercession as a Paradigm for Ideal Christian Living*, they argue that, as discovered from their review, Jesus Christ is the model intercessor who is interceding on behalf of every Christian in heaven hitherto. The authors also revealed that the Holy Spirit is an Intercessor and Comforter for every Christian who has the personality trait to communicate on behalf of God's children in heaven. They conclude that the ministry of intercession is an indispensable area or department in Christianity.

Olumuyiwa David Samuel writes on *Ethical Leadership Framework for Christian Institutions*. He described ethical leaders as those who believe in "do as I do" not "do as I say". He gave example of our Jesus Christ who demonstrated this type of leadership according to the testimony of Apostle Luke in his address to His Excellency, Theophilus "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach" Acts 1:1(KJV). This simply means that our Lord Jesus Christ did only what he commanded others to do. According to him ethical leaders are practitioners and doers of same thing they instruct their subordinates to do. He expressed his desire to see Christian institutions putting ethical leadership framework in their curriculum and same leaders becoming good examples for their students who see them as mentors and role models.

In his second article, Olumuyiwa David Samuel writes on *Christianity in the Digitalized Age*. His paper focuses on how to instil the culture of digitalization in the hearts of the readers, especially the current church leaders. The author contends that with digitalization, a single person could minister Christ to billions of people at the lowest cost and in one fell swoop. He stresses that the future robotic age will never leave Christianity behind, as more Christians will fully maximize it to bring home the message of Christ.

Crispina Feyisara Adewole's article is on *Motivation: Improve Your Self-Esteem*. She opines that self-esteem cannot be measured with a measuring scale or weight indicator. She says that what we think about ourselves matters. We must not have a negative opinion about ourselves. Adewole stresses that if you think about yourselves, "do you see negative traits like being unworthy, weak, unloved, inferior, useless, a failure, unattractive, etc.?" She argues that low self-esteem is confirmed by a lack of confidence and a negative opinion about oneself.

Ushie Francis Inde works on *God's House: Above Every Other House*. To him, there are many types of houses, but God's house is unique and better than any other house. He believes that people all over the world will have to depend on God's house for instruction, deliverance, healing, restoration, relief, justice, and hope. He concludes that God's house is a place where God manifests his awesomeness, might, and authority over nature and a place for signs and wonders—the unusual miracles. In the author's second article, which is on *Family: The Breed for a Healthy Society*, the author opines that the family plays a very pivotal role in the upbringing of good children that will eventually make up a healthy society. He explains that family is the first and smallest unit of socialisation where children are raised, shaped, trained, and developed from one state or stage to another. The author concludes his sermon piece by identifying two different types of families: the ideal and the unideal. He explains that the ideal family gives attention to their children, but the unideal family does not.

Caleb G. Eytayo in *The Journey of Glory (Deut. 1:1–8)* revealed that the journey of glory is not a journey of sitting on a platter of gold and enjoyment; it is not of sitting for crying; it is not a collective journey, either with friends, relatives, foes, or colleagues. This journey is not a journey you go on anyhow. According to some English Dictionaries, he defined glory as fame, praise, or honour that is given to somebody. Or as a special cause for pride, respect, and pleasure and a set great pleasure or enjoyment in something at the end. He concluded his message by advocating for great commitment to the course of Christianity with total obedience to God's instructions and covering oneself with humility.

Ezekiel Adesanmi Omidiji opined in *Christianity and Politics in the Primitive and Modern Ages* that Christianity is purely a divine religion where Christians demonstrate the character of Christ in words, deeds, and actions. He counseled that Christians must desist from involving themselves in the character assassination of those with whom they disagree or using bombastic words or antics laced with hateful undertones. He concluded that Bible reminds us that it is He (God) who changes times and seasons; He disposes of kings and raises up another; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. Whether in business, ministry or politics, one must exhibit the highest degree of godly characters. You must not do anything that would make unbelievers to question your religion. Everything must be done in godly manner with consciousness that one day, you will give account of all your words and actions. to your Creator.

This fourth edition and first print journal of the International Institute of Christian Theologians, Scholars, and Professionals is loaded with a lot of information that can transform your lives spiritually. Thus, it is hereby recommended for all Christians who love research.

Pastor D. A. Ilesanmi, PhD

Lead Editor and Associate Research Professor

Introduction

International Institute of Christian Theologians Scholars and Professionals (aka Jesus Institute) is established to help Christians rediscover the potentials of continuous learning and benefits of scholarly research works. This the vision of the founding fathers of this great Christian research institute. Research has shown that after many Christians leaders do not further their education after earning first certificate from seminary or Christian theological institute.

International Institute of Christian Theologians Scholars and Professionals (ICTPS) is affiliated with Chosen Life Christian University as a degree awarding institution and publishing outfits. The partnership is yielding positive benefits with the publication of fourth and first print edition of *The Mature Journal of Christian Theologians, Scholars and Professionals*

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3. Certified Christian Professional (CCP)

Conclusion

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Prof Olumuyiwa Samuel, *GCCF, FCCS, CCI, FCCI*

President

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International Institute of Christian Theologians, Scholars and Professionals

THE CHANGING FACES OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

It is crystal clear that over the last few decades, Christianity's centre of gravity has relocated from the Global North to the Global South. While church buildings in Western Europe are being closed, or rather sold, new mega-churches are filled with believers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Charismatic and/or Pentecostal movements practice the Christian religion in dynamic and innovative ways, changing the narratives and challenging the established churches and society at large on all continents. The Global Southern, or non-Western, missionaries are rapidly taking over the Global Northern hemisphere for a reverse mission for the purpose of salvaging the perishing souls, particularly in the Global North, which seems to have departed from its glorious past. Thus, the main thrust of this work is to critically and scholarly examine the current trends in demographical changes in world Christianity, their implications for world Christianity, and possible solutions to the declining status of Christianity in the Global North to save it from going into extinction. This study makes some recommendations and suggests that they might help to engender fresh thinking and better planning in order to respond sensibly to the current challenges and to cash in on the opportunities provided by the Global South phenomenon. The paper concludes by calling for an organised reverse and rescue missions in the Global Northern hemisphere before it is too late.

Keywords: world Christianity, global south and north, changing faces, trends

Introduction

Changing faces is a kaleidoscopic observation describing World Christianity in general. This describes how Christianity fares in the religious market. No doubt, Christianity is gradually being threatened in the religious marketplace. It is rather appalling and poignant that the nations at the cutting edge of Christianity are now gradually losing their grip. Indeed, studies have shown that the West has lost its grip on classic Christianity. The spiritual power has changed hands; Christianity's centre of gravity has moved from the Global North [1] to the Global South [2]; and the Global North is increasingly becoming the epicentre of secularism and moral decadence. It is therefore urgently imperative for the Global South to embark on a reverse and rescue mission to salvage the Global North from the seemingly impending doom lurking at the door of her religious life. When the religious center of gravity changes, its spiritual power weakens. This is an exact description of the present scenario in the Global North. Thank God, Christianity is not static but dynamic and migratory. Hence, the centre of gravity can be shifted to a more receptive region that is ready to obey the divine mandate.

As observed, "Christianity is a migratory religion" (Adedibu, 2018, citing Jehu, 2003), and it is also "a teaching religion" (Ilesanmi, Dele Alaba, 2021). [1] Christianity is seen as both a "migratory and teaching religion" because the initiator of the Christian faith, our Lord Jesus Christ, commanded us to "go and teach" or to "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47–49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). The command "go", involves a change or move to another place; hence, Christianity is migratory. The command "teach", means to guide and impart lives or to restore the image and likeness of Christ in the soul of man.

Unarguably, Christianity is now a predominantly non-Western religion, as opposed to the belief of some Africans that Christianity is a religion of the West. Lending credence to this, in his prescience over four decades ago, Barrett accurately observed that "Africa might well tip the balance and transform Christianity as a non-Western religion" (Adedibu, 2018). This is indeed a plausible observation. Adedibu writes that "The imprint of African Christianity has gradually emerged as a transnational phenomenon across North America, Europe, and the West in general." He went further to say that the resultant emergence of this paradigm shift is described as the Southernization of Christianity. It is believed that it is not apt to use the term "Southernization of Christianity" because the hubs of Christianity is now situated outside the Southern Hemisphere, such as in Nigeria and South Korea, but the adoption of the term "non-Western Christianity" is preferable, referring to those countries outside of Western Europe and North America, as against the view of some scholars, like Jenkins, who prefer to use the term "Southernization of Christianity".

It is clearly evident that the dynamic shift in Christianity largely favours Africa. It is also obvious that the largest Christian communities are now found in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America. It should be noted

here that other synonyms used to describe the Global South include "third world", "the two third worlds," or "the developing world". It is also to be noted that, though we thank God for using the West to bring the light to Africa, the West should similarly be grateful to God for using the non-Western world, particularly the Africans, for the reverse mission—the Africans are now showing the Western world the light of God. This is one of the major faces of world Christianity that has undergone a change.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to critically and scholarly examine the current trends in demographical changes in world Christianity, their implications for world Christianity, and to proffer possible solutions to the declining status of Christianity in the Global North to salvage it from going into extinction by making some recommendations and suggestions that might help to engender fresh thinking and better planning in order to respond sensibly to the current challenges and to cash in on the opportunities provided by the Global Southern phenomenon.

Research Methodology

The research is a descriptive study that relies mainly on secondary data collected from various journals, books, websites, and other publications. This data was then reviewed and analysed to make recommendations and suggestions and arrive at inferences and conclusions.

Current Trends and Demographical Changes in World Christianity

Recent scholarly work on the trend of world Christianity shows an ambivalent trajectory of changing faces of global Christianity. The available data is a mixture of trepidation and respite. Indeed, the current state of world Christianity gives it not much-needed fillip. However, let us start with the 2022 report. Aaron Earls (2022) released the 2022 statistics from the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He mentioned some encouraging trends in the 2022 Status of Global Christianity report.

Though it is a fact that Christianity is declining, people are leaving the church and the Christian faith, and it seems that secularism is growing at an alarming rate particularly, in the West, Earls claims that, globally, that is not the case at all. In his report, Earls has a holistic view of world Christianity. He reveals that the number of all religious people is growing at a 1.27% rate, but the growth rate of non-religionists is 0.52—less than half that number and well below the total population growth percentage—and the number of atheists is almost stagnant, only growing at 0.18% per year.

The Gordon-Conwell report expects the number of atheists to continue to decline by 2050, as there are fewer atheists around the world today (147 million) than in 1970 (165 million). According to this report, Christianity is expected to grow. With a 1.17% growth rate, almost 2.56 billion people are estimated to be identified as Christians by the middle of that year, 2022. By 2050, that number is expected to increase to 3.33 billion (Earls, 2022). Catholics remain the largest Christian group in the world with almost 1.26 billion adherents, but the two fastest-growing Christian groups around the world are evangelicals (1.8% growth rate) and charismatics, or pentecostals, with a growth rate of 1.88%.

The dramatic global growth of Charismatic Christians is remarkable. For example, in 1900, less than 1 million people around the world identified as Pentecostal or Charismatic. By 2050, that number is expected to increase to 1 billion. The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary also states that Africa with 2.77% growth and Asia with 1.50% growth are the places where Christianity is growing the fastest in the world. To support this claim, in 2000, 814 million Christians lived in Europe and North America, while 660 million Christians called African and Asia home. But in 2022, 838 million lived in the global North, while almost 1.1 billion Christians were living in Africa and Asia alone.

In 1900, twice as many Christians lived in Europe than in the rest of the world combined. Today, more Christians live in Africa than any other continent. By 2050, it is believed that Africa will be home to almost 1.3 billion Christians, while Latin America will stand at 686 million and Asia, with 560 million, will both have more than Europe, with 497 million, and North America, with 276 million (Earls, 2022).

According to this report, Christianity will continue to grow in the Global South, but it will also become increasingly less concentrated in the major Christian nations. For example, "In 1900, 95% of all Christians lived in a majority Christian country. In 2022, that number will have fallen to 53.7%. By 2050, most Christians (50.4%) around the world will live in non-majority Christian nations." The report states further that with more Christians living outside of Christian nations, more non-Christians know a Christian. For instance, in 1900, only 5.4% of non-Christians could identify a Christian they knew. That percentage has risen to 18.3% today. And by 2050, 1 in 5 non-Christians (20%) will know a follower of Jesus and have the opportunity to hear the gospel from them. This is quite interesting and encouraging. The report goes on to state that, as a result of this trend, the percentage of unevangelized people around the world continues to fall. For example, in 1900, more than half of the world's

population was unevangelized (54.3%), but that has now fallen to 28% today. It is noteworthy to mention here that up to 5 million copies of the Bible were printed in 1900 and 54 million in 2000. According to the report, it was expected that 93 million copies of God's word would be printed in 2022. "By 2025, 100 million Bibles will be printed each year." This report states further that "currently, almost 1.8 billion Bibles are in circulation around the world. That will climb to 2.3 billion by 2050."

CNN report 2023 reveals a trajectory of Christianity in United States of America. John Blake, CNN senior writer, reports in April, 2023 that:

For years, church leaders and commentators have warned that Christianity is dying in America. They say the American church is poised to follow the path of churches in Western Europe: soaring Gothic cathedrals with empty pews, shuttered church buildings converted into skate parts and nightclubs, and a secularized society where one theologian said Christianity as a norm is "probably gone for good — or at least for the next 100 years."

However, when CNN asked some of the nation's top religion scholars and historians lately about the future of Christianity in the United States of America, they had a different message. They said the American church is poised to find new life for one major reason: "Waves of Christians are migrating to the US." (Blake, 2023). What does this mean? It is evidently clear that American Christianity is on the brink of death. It only takes Christian immigrants to salvage it. This submission by American scholars and historians indicates that the United States of America has lost or is about to lose its place in the comity of Christian nations. What a pity! Though a fulfillment of the Scripture that says "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Matt. 19:30; cf. Matt. 20:16; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30).

Similarly, previous scholarship has observed different demographical changes, such as the Pew Research Report on Global Christianity and Distribution published in 2011, which indicated that in 1910, 66% of all Christians lived in Europe. But, by 2010, 100 years after, only 25.6% lived in this same Europe. Comparatively, less than 2% of Christians lived in Africa in 1910, but after 100 years, in 2010, it increased to 22% (see Adedibu and Igboin (eds.), 2018, p. 12). Adedibu explains further that the Global North contained 80% of the Christian population in 1910 but fell to 40%. Perhaps, he says, the change in global Christian demographics is in the diversities of the expression of the Christian faith in the Global South. If we are to go by Jenkins' prediction, by 2025, 75% of the Roman Catholic Church will live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Adedibu, 2018, citing Philip and Jenkins, 2007, p. 16). Quoting the World Christian Trends and Pew Research Centre, Enzo Pace states that "at least one of the two billion Christians around the world belongs to a Pentecostal church or a Charismatic movement" (Adedibu cites Enzo, Pace, 2017, p. 85).

There are certain factors that we could consider to be the cumulative effect that culminated in the decline of Christianity in the Global North. Apart from moral and religious liberalization, Blake continues his report and analysis on world Christianity when he writes:

A cascade of headlines in recent years have stained the church's reputation, including sex abuse scandals in the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention; the spread of White Christian nationalism; and the perception that the church oppresses marginalized groups such as LGBTQ people. Church leaders in the US also have fretted about the rise of "nones." These are people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or "nothing in particular" when asked their religious identity.

In his view, as reported by Blake, Tina Wray, a professor of religious and theological studies at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island, believes that the ascent of nones will transform the USA's religious and political landscape. In this report, about 30% of Americans now call themselves nones. Intriguing and more worrisome still, in 2010, a local atheists' group called "Coalition of Reason" paid for an advertisement on a billboard in Oklahoma City with the following inscription on it: "Don't believe in God? Join club. This is an apparent ominous scenario lurking in the rickety structure of American and European Christianity. Unfortunately, this appalling situation in global northern Christianity is glossed over by spiritual leaders, Christian scholars, and historians in this part of the global hemisphere. Still on Blake's report analysis, Professor Wray, in spite of this horrendous picture painted by the atheists, still believes that the interests of the nones will soon overshadow those of the religious right in just a matter of years. She states clearly that "Nones are going to vote as a bloc, and they're going to be pretty powerful. White evangelicals will eventually be eclipsed by the unaffiliated." Threatening further, Blake reports Wray's position thus:

Wray says those who are optimistic about the future of the American church underestimate how quickly Christianity can lose its influence even in a place where it once thrived. She cites what's happened in the Republic of

Ireland, an overwhelmingly Catholic country. The Catholic Church prohibits divorce and was once so powerful in Ireland that the country wouldn't legally grant its citizens the legal right to a divorce until 1995. ... But Wray adds that she recently traveled to Ireland and discovered many of its citizens have left the religion. Churches are being closed and turned into apartment buildings, she says. "People who went to mass everyday stopped going," she says. "There's this cultural Catholic identity, but as far as practicing their faith, it's just disappearing. So within a generation, that's all it took. It's just shocking."

The predictions about the decline or extinction of Christianity in America may be premature or not accurate based on Blake's recent report:

Those who predict that the church in America will collapse often overlook how the migration of Global South Christians to America will revitalize the country's religious landscape, scholars say. Christianity could rebound in America if White Christians embrace this one change, they say. Tish Harrison Warren, a New York Times columnist, pointed out recently that Latino evangelicals are now the fastest-growing group of evangelicals in the US. "We cannot assume that America will become more secular so long as the future of America is less white," Warren wrote. The influx of Black and brown Christians from places like Latin America and Asia collides with another trend: a burgeoning White Christian nationalist movement that insists, incorrectly, that the US was founded as a White, Christian nation. It is hostile to non-White immigrants. Some churches may discover that Jesus' command to welcome the stranger collides with their definition of patriotism, Hamalis says. "Many congregations don't realize how much of their Christian identity is wrapped up with a kind of (Christian) nationalist narrative," Hamalis says. "There's nothing wrong with loving one's country, but from a Christian perspective that ought to always be secondary to the mission of building the body of Christ and witnessing to the Gospel in the world."

Blake's report reads in part:

For one, declining church membership doesn't automatically translate into declining influence. Consider some recent landmark events. White evangelicals played a critical role in getting former President Trump elected. Conservative Christian groups played a crucial role in the recent passage of state laws limiting LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer] rights. And the Supreme Court's decision last year to overturn *Roe vs. Wade* was a massive victory for many conservative Christians. And atheism remains a taboo in American politics. American voters still prefer candidates – including presidents Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. "Christianity still holds a lot of capital in this country," says Lee M. Jefferson, an associate professor of religion at Centre College in Kentucky. "There has always been a popular notion that a religious community's strength or influence is connected to numbers and attendance," Jefferson says. *Wisdom: Interreligious Studies for a Pluralistic World*. "Just because more Americans are disaffiliating with institutionalized religion — most notably Christian traditions — this does not always mean that people are becoming less religious," says Gustafson, director of the Jay Phillips Centre for Interreligious Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. "Many still practice spirituality: prayer, meditation... and sometimes even regularly attend religious houses of worship," he says. ... Despite the optimism of many religious scholars, the future of Christianity in America still seems uncertain. Poll numbers about the decline of religiousness in the US cannot be ignored, along with something more intangible: the frailties of human nature.

Given the above permutations, the following questions are begging for answers:

1. What if the US enters another xenophobic period and limits migration from non-White Christians?

2. What if progressive Christians prove unwilling to align with non-White immigrants, who tend to be more conservative on issues of sexuality and gender?
3. And what if some Christians still cling to the belief that America is supposed to be a White Christian nation, even if that assumption causes them to close their church doors to non-White immigrants who could be their salvation?

Data Analysis and Discussions

It is very apparent that over the past 100 years, Christianity has experienced a profound shift from the Global North, its acclaimed geographical centre of gravity, to the Global South, its former mission centres. Whereas in 1900, over 80% of all Christians lived in Europe and North America, by 2005, this proportion had fallen to under 40% and may likely fall below 30% before 2050 given the available data.

Table 1.
Christians by IIN region 1900 to 2050

	1900			1970			2005			2025			2050		
	op ns	Xn n	of all Xns	op ns	Xn	of all Xns	op ns	Xn	of all Xns	op ns	Xn	of all Xns	op ns	Xn	of all Xns
Africa	0			43	0	2	11	6	9	21	8	4	99	0	9
Asia	2			01			31		7	03	1	9	21	2	9
Europe	81	5	8	92	5	0	53	6	3	35	7	0	80	6	6
Latin America	62	5	1	69	5	2	17	3	4	29	2	4	94	0	2
Northern America	8	7	4	12	1	7	75	3	3	06	8	2	56	0	2
Oceania		8		8	3		6	0		0	6		4	3	
Total	58	5	00	,234	3	00	,134	3	00	,626	3	00	,083	5	00

Table 1 shows the dramatic rise of Christianity in the Global South of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and its corresponding sharp decline in the Global North of Europe and Northern America.

Table 2.
Global population and Christians by major cultural tradition, 1900 and 2005

Cultural tradition	Population (millions)	world pop	Christians (millions)	% of all Christians	Population (millions)	world pop	Christians (millions)	% of all Christians
AFRICAN (Bantu, Nilotic, Sudanic)	68		2	*	59	1	32	16
AFRO-AMERICAN (USA Black, Creole)	22		23	4	14	8	12	6
ASIAN (Chinese, Indo-Malay, Korean)	468	2	35	6	2,437	8	36	18
EUROPEAN (Caucasian, Germanic, Slav)	144	7	44	79	938	5	68	34
INDO-IRANIAN (Dravidian, Iranian, North Indian)	302	9	7	1	1,528	4	79	4
LATIN AMERICAN (Mestizo, Amerindian)	48		44	8	390	2	36	18
MIDDLE EASTERN (Arab, Berber, Ethiopic)	52		9	2	404		63	3
OCEANIC (Fijian, Melanesian, Papuan)	3		1	*	17		14	1
WORLD POPULATION	1,620	00	562	100	6,454	00	2,020	100

Table 2 illustrates this major shift to the Global South from the Global North by highlighting the cultural traditions of Christianity. It is clear from the table that Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans are more typical representatives of Christianity than Americans or Europeans. The Europeans (including Americans of European descent) that were in the vast majority one hundred years ago are now in the minority today.

Possible Implications for Global Christianity

The rise of Global South Christianity and the fall of Global North Christianity call for focused attention and a creative response. The demographic trends described above and the fast growth of world religions, especially Islam, has tremendous implications for both global hemispheres. No doubt, these trends have an ambivalent nexus towards the two global hemispheres: challenges and opportunities. Here are some of the possible implications of these trends:

The challenge for the global Church in the Southern hemisphere is meeting the basic physical needs of new converts. For instance, most, if not all, of the African countries' economies are still limping. For the church on this kind of poor continent to meet the basic physical needs of the new converts, who are themselves poor, will be a serious challenge if adequate preparations are not made. There will definitely be an increase in the need for adequate and quality education, health care, food security, employment for the millions of energetic young people, and other social services. How many of our African churches are currently meeting these needs? The greater chunk of new converts to the Global Southern Church is likely to be young, poor, uneducated, hungry, orphaned, and others that are bedeviled with numerous challenges.

The challenge the Global South is likely to face is training more pastors to keep up with the phenomenal increase in believers. Right now, the harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers are few (Matt. 9:36; Lk. 10:2). Churches are planted here and there, but there are no trained pastors to man them. The few people who are ready to pastor these churches are not well trained, if they are trained at all. Thus, the increase may pose a serious challenge to the Global Southern churches.

The presence of world religions, such as Islam, Traditional Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., in the Global South poses another challenge to Christianity in this global hemisphere.

Conversely, the present trends provide a variety of opportunities for the Global Southern churches:

The church in this region can take advantage of the daily influx of young people who are converted to Christianity by training them and sending them out to the Global North as missionaries to preach the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ.

If well managed, through the tithes and offerings, these young converts could support the mission of the church and fund projects that are geared to supporting the millions who flock into the church through the ongoing process of the global South movement.

Recommendations and Suggestions

To deal with the social challenges the Global South will face, there is an urgent need to have relevant programs in place in anticipation of the arrival of the new members. These programs will have to be not only relevant to the needs and aspirations of these new converts but also sustainable, since the work of feeding the hungry, ministering to the poor, instructing the less educated, and supporting the orphaned is not a sprint but a marathon.

To cope with the increase in new converts and immigrants in both the global south and North, there is a need to train more pastors to ensure proper spiritual care, which is crucial for the growth of the new believers and their integration into the church. Without proper and timely spiritual support and care, the new converts may feel like sheep without a shepherd in a world that is not always friendly to those who are converted to Christianity.

There is an urgent need for the Global Southern and Northern churches to embark on training members and new converts on how to co-exist with and share the gospel message with followers of the rival religions. In doing this, the church will have to reach the adherents of these world religions while feeding and keeping an eye on its own members, lest they wander outside of the fold and end up in non-Christian folds. The Global North should encourage the immigrants from the Global South to do a reverse and rescue mission by creating an enabling environment for their churches to thrive and rekindle the fire of revival in the Global Hemisphere.

The Full Scholarship Scheme (FSS) should be established by the Global North for Global Southerners who receive the call of God into the ministry of Christ as missionaries, pastors, evangelists, teachers, prophets, and apostles and relevant ministry works, and who wish to study in theological colleges, seminaries, or Christian universities in the Global North. There is also a need to launch other strategic schemes to explore the opportunities the global South phenomenon may provide for the fulfillment of the great commission in both global hemispheres.

There should be fresh thinking about the challenges the global church, or Christianity, is facing as a result of these developments in the areas of mission and discipleship to fulfill the divine mandate on earth. This may also include equipping young people with the necessary skills and encouraging them to start income-generating projects under the supervision of the church so that they might become as self-sufficient as humanly possible in their environments. This will also benefit the church greatly.

Conclusion

This paper has critically and scholarly examined the trends in world Christianity using the concepts of Global South and Global North Christianity to show and evaluate some trends in world Christianity in general. The study shows that Christianity is in sharp decline in the Global North compared to its rise in the Global South. These global trends in Christianity have turned the Global South into the new centre of world Christianity. This shift in the global centre of Christianity calls for an urgent response to salvage Christianity from extinction in this part of the global hemisphere (the Global North). Being aware of some implications these global trends may pose, the paper recommends and suggests some steps that have to be taken towards formulating a creative response to the challenges for the relevance of the Global Southern Churches on their continents. And there should be an urgent need for a well-organized reverse and rescue mission in the Global Northern hemisphere before it is too late.

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THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN MINISTRY GROWTH

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Abstract

Effective leadership has been a challenge in both Christendom and the secular world. This research work seeks to digest the impact effective leadership has on the growth and success of one's ministry. The researcher will cite Apostle Paul's leadership qualities and styles that made him successful. The study will capture relevant factors that contribute to effective leadership in general, what qualities individuals must possess to become effective leader in ministry and possible factors that could or have contribute(d) to the failure of some leaders in ministry during our time, and the need to apply Apostle Paul's leadership style in 21st century. Life experiences as well as materials on leadership development have indicated that some leaders have sacrificed themselves for the success of what they do, whilst some have assumed that position to be served. This discomforts followers and they sometimes sabotage the leadership or rebel.

Some ministries are struggling because of leadership challenges. Some of these challenges are due to misconception that leaders must be served and so tending to behave as demigods. whilst the foundational Apostles were servant leaders. The study seeks to tackle the following: what is effective leadership? How can a leader be effective in ministry and the impacts, how can leaders sharpen their leadership skills? How did Paul as a biblical figure manage his ministry as a leader? The researcher will use observation and interview method to establish his research. He concludes by enumerating the impact of effective leadership on ministry growth and also outline recommendations.

Key words: leadership, effective leadership, ministry growth,

Introduction

When leadership challenges are experienced in the world, it is because the wisdom of man has failed and that we need the intervention of God. The bible indicates that it is God who gives wisdom. 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him' (James 1:5 KJV). It is therefore not surprising when King Solomon asked for wisdom when he could have sought wealth and fame. (2 Chronicles 1:10 NLT) 'Give me the wisdom and knowledge to lead them properly, for who could possibly govern this great people of yours?' It is, as it were, perturbing to have leaders in the Christendom and for that matter those in charge of various ministries in the body of Christ to have leadership challenges to the extent of crippling their ministries. This implies that carnal or intellectual knowledge is insufficient to manage spiritual affairs. Apostle Paul and Moses among others are great Biblical figures who were successful in their ministries although Moses suffered speech deficiency (Exodus 4:10-12).

However, most leaders argue that all a leader needs is good leadership training or formal education for a requisite skill whereas others think otherwise. McMaster, J.S, (2013) asserted that 'there are some who believe that academic rigor and Scripture should be considered to be mutually exclusive, but the narratives of the participants show strong disagreement; on the contrary, they show that the Christian mind and the Christian worldview do require and reflect strong intellectual capacity and reason, evidenced in the academic strength of their respective programs.' Pont, B. et al, (2008), mentioned in their research on leadership development that it requires a combination of formal and informal processes throughout all stages and contexts of leadership practice. Stotko, (2020). On the other hand, indicates that 'effective leaders possess a high level of emotional intelligence (EQ). As an ingredient of excellent performance, EQ proved to be twice as important as IQ at all levels.' This argument supports the reasoning that no effective leader can solely depend on academic knowledge for a successful leadership. Stotko, (2020), further indicated that the effectiveness of our leadership hinges on the degree to which we are abiding in Christ'. This is foundational for every ministry. Many ministry leaders do not take time daily to abide. This means that we cannot be effective leaders outside God.

Literature Review

Definition of concepts: Leadership and Effective Leadership

Leadership has been defined from various perspectives by various scholars and theologians. Perry, T. (2023) states that the concept of Christian leadership alludes to something deeper than simply a leader who happens to be a Christian. It encompasses the timeless Christian ideals of service, stewardship, shepherding, and humility. (Watt, W.M, 2014, cited Fulenwider, 1997). indicates one of God's spiritual gifts given to His people is the gift of leadership. Fulenwider, then defined this gift as 'the God-empowered ability to set goals in accordance with God's purpose and to motivate others in the body essentially a continuous process of influencing behavior. It may be considered in context of mutual relations between a leader and his followers. Leadership is a dynamic process, which deserves study. It is a relational process involving interactions among leaders, members and sometimes outside constituencies. of Christ to voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God.' Bernard, K. et al, (2013), defined leadership as:

This implies that a leader or leadership has to do with how we relate with one another or our subordinates and there should be dynamism in our leadership skills. (Kotter, 1998 cited Yukl, G. 2006). defines leadership as 'the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.' (Northouse, P. 2010 cited in Kotter, 1998) shares the same opinion as he defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. To these scholars, leadership has to do with one's ability to influence followers for them to agree with their leaders to do what is expected at a particular moment. Their collective agreement must be geared towards a collective achievement. Winston, B.E, & Petterson, K. (2006) explains that:

a leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives.

(Winston, B.E et al 2006, cited DuBrin, 1997; Waitley, 1995; & Prentice, 1961). explains the role of the leader as one who accomplishes a goal through the direction of human assistants by gaining collaboration among followers. Effective leadership on the other hand, according to Writer, S. (2020), is an ability to make sound decisions quickly and confidently is one example of leadership. Leadership is also reflected in the attitudes and behaviours of a leader's colleagues. It is further stated that, effective leadership is characterized by the provision of timely, constructive feedback and clear expectations for both organizational and individual performance is also an example of strong leadership. (Winston, 2006, cited Collins, 2002), also pointed out that great leaders have a fierce resolve to do what needs to be done in and for the organization.

This is consolidated by Sweeney, D. (2022). as she stated in that having a growth mindset and committing to execution are qualities of a great leader. (Sethuraman, K & Suresh, J. 2014 cited Jeannet, W. 2010), explains 'study on leadership have proven that the aspects of personality are also important for effective leadership such as dominance, extraversion, sociability, self-confidence, high levels of energy and resilience. Wisdom and self-awareness of a leader helps to a great extent in influencing the followers.' To them, one cannot be effective in leadership or capture the attention of his or her subjects when the aforementioned qualities. These qualities make a leader distinct among leaders. Implicitly, anything short of these qualities can spell doom for anyone in leadership.

There are diverse theories that anchors effective leadership. (McMaster, J.S, 2013 cited Fullan, M. 2001) explicated that relationships as one of the five factors that leaders must manage in order to lead through change. McMaster, J.S, (2013) indicated that theorists and experts support the value of relationship for effective leadership and its importance to leadership development. They affirm the importance of components such as building trust, communicating effectively, resolving conflict, impacting perceptions, and effecting change. All of this supports the belief that effective leadership happens best within the context of relationship. (McMaster, J.S. 2013, cited Barna Group, 2013,) stated that it is revealed that of all leadership qualities that they value, the most important attribute is integrity, followed by authenticity. This implies, that, irrespective of your level of leadership education, once those traits are missing, it is impossible to be an effective leader since leadership is not only occupying position but exhibiting that which makes you outstanding. This assertion is unarguable having seen how institutions are struggling to grow due to poor leadership styles.

Furthermore, Watt, (2014) has highlighted some principles that affect effective leadership or which can make leaders effective as follows:

Conflict Management: Watt, 2014, cited Campbell 1980) emphatically say, 'Avoid personalized attacks.' Although there is no one particular way to handle conflicts, there many effective ways to do such. As an effective leader, personal attacks during conflicts must be avoided and there should always be pragmatic efforts towards

amicable resolution during conflicts. An effective leader should be able to determine the cause of conflicts around them especially in ministry and address them.

Collaboration: (Watt, 2014, cited Wilmot and Hocker, 2011.) explicated that collaboration is 'willingness to move with rather than against the other – a willingness to explore and struggle precisely when you may not feel like it.' An effective leader should identify and capture the interest of his or her followers to collaborate in everything. This will need convincing them to reason along with you. It is written that 'can two walk together, except they be agreed?' (Amos 3:3).

Love: Love is everything in Christ and Apostle Paul made this clear in 1 Cor. 13. He emphasized it in verse 13 'And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love'. Our character, and values is defined the degree of love and how we understand the dynamics of love. We need to exhibit love in discharging our responsibilities as ministers and leaders since our subordinates and even our colleagues learn from us. The absence of love in ministry is a disaster. (Stonecipher, 2012 cited in Watt, 2014) states that 'authentic leadership has five dimensions – purpose, values, heart, relationships, and self-discipline.'

Patricia (2023), has indicated that for one to be an effective leader, such a person must possess the following traits.

Person of Influence: One of the best qualities of leaders is the ability to influence others to get things done. They help those around them to understand themselves and situations around them so as to be imparted or be an impact in every activity being undertaken. (Webb, C.M, 2021 cited Maxwell, J. 1993,) consolidates the assertion of Watt by indicating that influence is one's ability to help others to follow the leader.

Believe the best in People: Influential leaders identify the strengths and weaknesses of his followers and entrusts them with responsibilities based on their endowments with guidance. It should be characteristic of every leader to believe in the abilities of those following them and not discourage them under any circumstance.

Teacher and Mentor: Leaders are gifted teachers and this is characteristic of all Jesus Christ as well as Apostle Paul and love to help others develop. They exhibit qualities and principles that reflect good and effective leadership. Such leaders teach as Jesus taught His disciples and all who listened to Him at the time. He raised the disciples as Apostle Paul also raised many and notable among them were Timothy and Titus. Paul coached his listeners others on personal development and spiritual growth as he encouraged them to imitate him as he imitated Christ. (I Cor. 11:1-2). Jesus as well encouraged the disciples to master whatever training he was giving them by asking how long will He be with them (Mark 9: 19). Every leader should teach and mentor and expect to see his followers grow.

Have balanced Priorities: Leaders are expected to have a good understanding of their personal priorities. Unfortunately, not all leaders possess this quality and some who have are not consistent in setting their priorities straight. Leaders should learn to balance their leadership skills with this. They should learn to understand life and blend every aspect of life.

Management Practices: Management practices are the foundation for organizational integrity, this calls for total commitment and managing resources to sustain the interest and contribution of those around you. Management practices by leadership contributes positively or negatively to the growth of institutions. This is one of the key reasons some institutions and ministries do well than others. Perry, T (2021), indicates that effective leadership in ministry involves discernment, growth and maturity. This implies, that one cannot be an effective leader without these traits. (Webb, 2021, cited Merritt, J. 2011), supports the aforementioned authors that leaders invariably need traits and keys that distinguish them from the many. To him, leaders cannot be effective without making needed changes and adapting to the views of others. Dever, M. (2017) explicated that for an individual to be effective in leadership, one has to imbibe the following points:

Encourage Godly Authority: It is prudent to build others around us to have godly authority. It is good to raise people who use authority to edify others and not to abuse authority. Pastors and leaders who abuse authority tend to regret since their actions as certain wrong actions taken affects their leadership records and ministry.

Spend time: It is admirable for leaders to mingle with their followers even if not all the times. This builds a strong bond between both parties. As such, it is unhealthy for pastors who wish to grow their ministries and make it effective to create a gap between themselves and their followers. This will be a great mistake. Some leaders feel that getting close to their subordinates will make them lose respect. Ministry is about love and should be treated as such.

Delegate responsibility: In the views of Dever, effective leaders create the platform for his followers to lead. To be effective in ministry, it is good to delegate the right responsibility to the right person. Leaders should therefore take note of the abilities of their followers in terms of leading a group, teaching or preaching the gospel and any other department of the ministry. This helps followers to build self-confidence and feel involved in affairs. It takes a true leader who does not entertain any form of insecurity (followers becoming more powerful or taking over their positions) to delegate followers to manage certain things or take up some responsibilities in the church. This act, makes followers believe in the capabilities of their leader and confidence becomes reciprocal. It is only

when followers are assigned responsibilities that they bring out abilities that are inherent and dormant in them and this will inure to the growth of one's ministry or organization.

Give and receive feedback: Once the opportunity is given to followers to participate in the ministry, it is good to give feedback to them on their performance and as well receive from them on their experiences, challenges and successes in discharging their duties. In doing this, one should provide constructive criticisms and ensure it is well taken. This will harness the potentials of followers and give a clear roadmap of the progress of the ministry and challenges thereof. (Cortez, 2021, cited Wondim et al. 2020) confirmed that feedback from supervisors improves the task performance of subordinates.

The Effectiveness of Leadership on Ministry Growth

Effective leadership has a profound impact on the growth of ministries. When individuals with exceptional leadership skills are at the helm, they can inspire and guide their teams towards achieving shared goals. Such leaders have the ability to create a vision for the ministry, communicate it effectively, and motivate their team members to work towards its realization. A leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision for the ministry's future helps in attracting individuals who share the same passion and dedication. Moreover, effective leaders create an environment that fosters growth and development, providing opportunities for members to acquire new skills and knowledge. This not only helps in expanding the ministry's capabilities but also contributes to personal and professional growth of its members. Anthony, H. (2023), mentioned that leadership effectiveness measures the ability of the church leadership in developing the mission, vision, culture, structure and strategy.

Anthony, H. (2023) affirms that effective leadership contributes to ministry growth in the following areas:

- Gifting, anointing and abilities are identified amongst people and released.
- Unity in and around the church mission, vision and values.
- Individuals are excited about the purpose and activity of the church
- Clear priorities are identified and acted upon successfully

When leaders facilitate collaboration, they create an environment where individuals feel motivated, engaged, and are willing to go the extra mile for the success and growth of the ministry. Effective leadership is an essential catalyst for the growth of ministries. When leaders can inspire and guide their team members towards achieving a shared vision, they can attract and develop talent, foster a culture of collaboration, and ultimately contribute to the overall success and growth of the ministry. Cortez, (2023), iterated this by highlighting Apostle Paul who demonstrated unity coupled with humility in ministry by working with the other Apostles who were with Christ as he stated that:

Paul also demonstrated humility in the practice of leadership. Although his training as an apostle and leader was extraordinary because it emanated from a direct revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12), he did not puff up with pride. Three years after his conversion, it was recorded that he went to Jerusalem to confer with acknowledged apostles before him — Peter and James — and coordinate his ministry with them (Gal 1:18-19). Fourteen years later, Paul again went to Jerusalem, together with Barnabas, to discuss with Peter, James, John, and the other apostles, questions about the application or non-application of the Old Testament laws on newly-converted Gentiles.

Sharpening Leadership skills

Leaders in ministry can sharpen their skills through various practices and strategies, ensuring they are equipped to fulfill their roles effectively. One key avenue for growth is continuous learning. Leaders should actively engage in ongoing education, whether it be through reading theological texts, attending conferences, or seeking mentorship from seasoned professionals. Additionally, leaders should invest in their own personal development by building emotional intelligence, cultivating self-awareness, and fostering healthy self-care practices. Such growth enhances their ability to connect with individuals in their congregation and respond empathetically to their needs. Gurung, P. (2022) indicates that one must study leadership by pursuing leadership courses and attending training sessions that will enhance one's understanding of leadership.

Another important aspect of skill sharpening in ministry leadership is the cultivation of strong interpersonal and communication skills. Leaders must be effective in their ability to convey ideas, visions, and teachings in a way that resonates with their audience. This entails honing active listening skills, adapting communication styles, and seeking feedback from trusted individuals to improve their overall delivery. Furthermore, leaders should strive to develop cultural competency, as the communities they serve may be diverse and require different approaches to effectively engage and support them. Gurung, P. (2022), asserts that for leaders to sharpen their skills, they need to find a purpose that resonates them. This means one needs to understand the purpose of what one seeks to achieve because purpose drives leaders in the midst of challenges.

By prioritizing growth, leaders ensure that they are equipped to navigate the challenges and

complexities of ministry effectively. Yan, A. (2022), consolidates this by indicating that Taking initiative, Critical thinking, Effective listening, Motivating others, Discipline and Continued learning among others are keys to sharpening one's leadership skills. With a commitment to lifelong learning and intentional skill development, leaders can cultivate transformative and impactful ministries that positively influence not only their congregants but also the broader communities they serve.

How Apostle Paul managed his leadership ministry and its relevance in 21st century

Leadership styles have evolved over the centuries to adapt to the changing dynamics of society. While the 21st century presents its own unique challenges, it is intriguing to explore whether the apostle Paul's leadership style still holds relevance today. Paul, a prominent figure in early Christianity and author of several New Testament epistles, displayed leadership qualities such as inspiring vision, adaptive communication, and servant leadership.

Cortez, 2023, cited Cooper 2005) indicated that Paul's leadership model is a transformational one. One crucial facet of Paul's leadership style that remains applicable today is his ability to inspire vision. (Randolph, K. 2021, cited Elkington et al., 2017), explains that leadership development and approaches such as servant and transformational leadership focus on those being led (followers) for their betterment, as Paul evidently showcased (Romans 1:11). Paul had a compelling vision of spreading the message of Jesus Christ to all corners of the world (Romans 1:1-17). In today's fast-paced world, leaders who can articulate a clear and inspiring vision are more likely to motivate and engage their teams. Paul's emphasis on the power of a transforming vision serves as a valuable reminder for leaders in the 21st century to embrace and communicate a compelling vision to drive their organizations towards success.

The concept of servant leadership, which emphasizes empathy, humility, (II Cor 12:1) and a commitment to the well-being of others, has gained recognition in contemporary leadership models. Paul's example reminds leaders that genuine leadership is not about exerting authority or dominance, but about empowering others to grow and achieve their full potential. This he exhibited in Romans 1:12. 'that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me' This approach fosters trust, loyalty, and collaboration while addressing the challenges of the 21st century, such as building inclusive organizations and ensuring the well-being of teams.

The leadership style exhibited by the apostle Paul when reconciled Onesimus with Philemon (Phil. 1:11-16), displays remarkable relevance in the 21st century. Paul's inspiring vision, adaptive communication, and servant leadership principles continue to hold valuable lessons for leaders seeking to navigate the challenges of today's rapidly changing world. He inspired Timothy in his Epistles to him (1Tim 4:12-15). When leaders incorporate these elements into their leadership practices, leaders can motivate and engage their teams, communicate effectively across diverse audiences, and create environments that foster growth, collaboration, and inclusivity. The Apostle Paul's leadership style serves as a timeless guide for leaders seeking to make a positive impact in the 21st century. Paul's leadership style also emphasizes the importance of integrity and ethical decision-making. These are evident in Acts 24:10-21; I Thess. 1:5. Oketch, S. (2020), consolidates the need for integrity by stating 'integrity is essential if any leader is to represent God and Christ in this world. Whatever less than total devotion to God in both character and conduct amounts to compromise with the world'.

Throughout his teachings and actions, Paul consistently demonstrated a commitment to honesty, transparency, and fairness (II Cor 4:2). Lorenzo, R.L, (2011), identified that 'Apostle Paul exhibited a Christ-centered, Love-centered, Mission-centered and Dynamic leadership.' In today's world, where trust in leaders is often lacking, Paul's example serves as a reminder that leaders must prioritize ethical behaviour and hold themselves accountable to high standards. He taught others to in peace (Romans 8:12), he delegated responsibilities by appointing Timothy and Titus into leadership and kept in constant communication with his followers in writing. In a time where ethical lapses are all too common, Paul's leadership style offers a much-needed blueprint for leaders to follow.

Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative study approach to conduct his research. He used both interview and observation to gather his data. The sample population was randomly selected with attention to religious, educational and social background as these can affect one's opinion about leadership and leadership styles. Respondents include pastors, church leaders and workers, and Christians in general including some leadership with leadership background. Among these respondents are both males and females within the ages of 20 to 60 years. The researcher was very tactical in posing his interview questions so as to get the best responses without any prejudiced mindset from the respondents. There was fair distribution of questions. The researcher has also observed some leadership styles amongst ministers of the gospel comparing it to that of Apostle Paul and Moses to see how effective their leadership styles are and how it imparts the growth of their ministry. The researcher conducted his interview in both English and Ewe- one of the major Ghanaian languages to facilitate smooth communication.

Data Analysis

The researcher interviewed 25 respondents. 10 of the respondents indicating (40%) indicated that no institution can develop with a bad leader with a bad leadership style. Among these are six (6) males and four (4) females within the ages of 29-54. They further indicated that, when an institution has a bad leader, there is a tendency for that institution to be branded as bad because the bad leadership style will reflect in the output of the institution.

They indicated also that, there should not be any excuse for having a bad leader in ministry since our forebearers such as Apostle Paul, Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Apostle Peter, among others have set the pace and leaders can learn from their strengths and weaknesses and build on them. 6 (24%) respondents of which four (4) are males within the ages of 31- 40 and two (2) females who are 41 and 38 years respectively indicated that the issue of leadership is a great challenge that must be addressed as early as possible so that it does not tear the body of Christ apart. They indicated that some leaders in our ministry have leadership problems which is practically affecting the growth of the church but unfortunately, they are not ready to listen to anyone so as to address this challenge. 4 (16%) of the respondents, made up of three (3) males who are 35, 47 and 60 years old respectively and one (1) female, 35 years indicated that, a bad leadership is what is exposing the church to public ridicule because followers replicate what they see their leaders doing in public. They also stated that the growth of ministry is not in making name or popularity but good leadership style. They stated that no bad leader can be successful in ministry. 3 (12%) who are ministers of the gospel comprising one (1) male who is 41 years and two (2) females who are 38 and 45 years old respectively gave some personal experiences about some mistakes they have made as leaders which have negatively affected their ministry.

Two of them indicated that they gave so much independence to committees within the church and they were not monitoring their affairs because he feels it will be an interference. This has crippled the ministry and they had to start organizing from the church all over again. One of the ministers indicated that the challenge she had was how to rebuke those who go wrong so she normally did not give attention to mishaps. This, she indicated is the same as what Eli did and it led to the sad end of his children and himself. 1 (4%) of the respondent who is a female at the age of 36 narrated how the church she attends lost its members due to bad relationship between the minister and the congregants.

There were no financial accounts rendered, verbal abuses among others. I, have experienced a situation where a pastor with whom I have worked closely got angry with me because of what she was told without asking to authenticate what she heard. She sidelined me and it affected my spiritual life badly at the time. I have also observed how some leaders and ministers will not or hardly accept anyone's opinion. Some even shut others up during meetings and this has affected the ministry when people started coiling back and stopped speaking to issues during meetings.

Discussions

From the submission of the ten respondents, for every institution to have a good reputation and also perform excellently is dependent on the effectiveness of the leader. They also stated that leaders must recognize their weaknesses and learn from the challenges of our biblical leaders for effective leadership.

Six of the respondents indicated that leadership challenges must be addressed as soon as possible so that ministries can grow. This is an indication that ministries are struggling because of bad or ineffective leadership styles. This is a very challenging issue in managing ministries to effectively take up leadership roles wherever we find ourselves.

From the submission of five other respondents, exposing the church to public ridicule due to ineffective leadership has contributed to either collapse or retardation of the growth of the churches. This must be addressed as early as possible. The respondents expect leadership of the church to adopt and practice what will lift the image of the church so that the public would not look down on the church and its activities. To them, the image of the church is important in the assessment of the effectiveness of a leader. Three of the respondents who are ministers admitted some shortfalls that stained their charisma as leaders. They indicated that it is good to delegate but when there is so much power given to the delegate with little or no supervision, so many things go wrong within the rank and file of the ministry. As such, there should be maximum supervision to ensure proper administration and supervision. Samiksha, S. (n.d), indicates that supervision function ensures strict control over the activities of subordinates.

Recommendations

In view of the theories and the responses from respondents above, the researcher recommends that:

- Leaders must know what they want to achieve and at what time so as to be effective in discharging their duties. This is because when there is no clear-cut vision and mission it becomes difficult to determine what to do and how to go about it.

- Leaders must learn to be dynamic in their leadership styles so as to use the appropriate approach at the appropriate time. Dynamism is characteristic of every effective leader. For one's ministry to grow, he or she cannot afford to adhere to old ways of running affairs. New ways should be explored.
- Leaders must know they are not the sole custodian of knowledge and that they need to have conversation and share ideas. It is only when one engages in discussions with followers and colleague leaders that new ideas will be discovered because people have powerful advice but will not talk until their views are sought. So, they must learn to listen to their followers.
- Leaders must incorporate Apostle Paul's leadership style in their leadership roles in this 21st century. Most leaders feel that the era of the foundational Apostles has passed and so their leadership styles are archaic and are not applicable in contemporary world. This is not true because they were led by God in their leadership journey and so leaders must embrace such.
- Leaders are encouraged to continue learning all the time by reading, attending conferences, and seeking expert advice since there is no end for knowledge and wisdom.

Conclusion

It is crystal clear that effective leadership is the catalyst for the growth of any ministry. A bad leader cannot have a flourishing ministry as followers cannot support or contribute in anything. Many ministers of God and leaders in the church have committed mistakes they could have avoided because they feel they could run their affairs how it pleased them. This has caused them losing their members. To be an effective leader, it takes both the leader and followers to be on the same page of affairs in order to achieve a common purpose. It is apt to adopt the Pauline leadership strategies for effectiveness and growth in ministry.

There are numerous challenges in ministry due to lack of good leadership qualities, poor supervision, lack of commitment by some leaders and subordinates and so leaders must adjust to changing needs in discharging their duties. To impact the growth of ministry effectively, one must follow the proposals raised by different scholars. It is obvious that Apostle Paul's leadership style is still relevant in our contemporary dispensation and as such ministers of the gospel as well as Christian leaders are encouraged to imitate his leadership style as he urged the Corinth church to imitate him as he imitated Christ in 1Cor 11: 1-2.

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PNEUMAGOGY: A PROPOSED THEORY FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CHRISTIAN KINGDOM EDUCATION

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Abstract

Following the series of developed theories underlying teaching and learning and their untamed infiltration into the Christian education ministry, there is a need to develop a theoretical approach to the teaching-learning process in Christian education if Christian Kingdom Education is to occupy its rightful place and fulfill its divine goals. Thus, the main objective of this research paper is to propose a learning theory that will engender a paradigm shift in our Christian educational system. This new theory, pneumagogy or hagiospneumagogy is a sharp departure from the universal learning theories. No doubt, the most reliable way of imparting positive knowledge in Christian Education is to choose the divinely inspired learning theory. Hence, the main thrust of this paper is to propose pneumagogy as an innovative learning theory for effective and efficient teaching and learning in Christian Education. The study revealed that theories that are biblically based, Christ-centred, and Holy Spirit-driven, like pneumagogy, are better than secular, non-biblically based theories.

Keywords: theory, pneumagogy, Christian kingdom education, teaching-learning process, the holy spirit.

Introduction

Dele Ilesanmi (2021) theorises that "the church is a school, a highly organized spiritual educational institution ...". He also explains that Christian education is a corpus of biblical truth, oxygen, and a vehicle of Christianity, without which Christianity is endangered, petrified, and atrophied. He opines that teaching is integral to the existence of Christianity and that Christianity is a teaching religion. This explains the importance and relevance of Christian education in the church. To buttress this, Walter Norvell (2003) says that Christian education is everything the church does since she teaches in everything she does. Ilesanmi (2021) defines Christian education as

a process of initiating or introducing the heathen into the culture of the Christian faith, transforming and equipping him through the power of the Holy Spirit, with the sole aim of bringing him into the right relationship with God and his neighbours through Jesus Christ to impact his society/world with the instrumentality of the Bible (p.6).

From the above definition of Christian education, if the church is prepared to fulfill the purpose of God on earth, the role of the Holy Spirit must not be downplayed. In his own view, Williams brilliantly (2006) posits that:

Christian education is Christian when teachers and learners are dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit in the learning environment. It is Christian when the purpose and goals are honoring to the Lord and to his kingdom. It is Christian when the curriculum is developed from the teachings of the Word and from an understanding of biblical theology. It is Christian when there is an overall understanding and perspective that God is in control and that teachers and learners are sincerely seeking to fulfill his will and purpose in all things. (Pp.639-643 in Horton, David(ed.))

Authentic or true Christian Education should be theocentric, Christocentric, and pneumatocentric. What is more, teaching and learning should be put under the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit, which Ilesanmi calls "pneumagogy" in his Ph.D. work. We must understand that the Christian education discussed here covers all the Christian activities and plans in the church, ministry, schools, Christian theological institutions, and all other associated Christian works and ministries, with no exception.

With the benefit of highlights, therefore, it would be better if, the church, the theological learning institutions, and all Christian ministries could rediscover the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching if they were to fulfill the purpose of God in this present world. Norvell Walter (2003) writes:

For the Christian, learning is not merely academic or rational. While academic skills can be useful and while God redeems us totally, body,

soul and mind, the Holy Spirit work is the transformational agent in the teaching-learning process. The Holy Spirit works through teacher, learner, environment, methods, and content (the Bible). He brings both conversion and maturation (a process) to the disciple of Jesus (pp. 94-106)

Given the above quotations, without the Holy Spirit, the word is powerless. One can speak and quote the word of God, but without being ignited by the power of the Holy Spirit, the word becomes useless and ineffective in the mouth of the speaker. Thus, "Christian education" becomes "ordinary or secular education" without the Spirit of God. This is the exact springboard this writer is trying to provide through a theological educational teaching-learning approach, which he calls Pneumagogy or hagiospneumagogy, with a framework to think about the teaching-learning process beyond pedagogy and andragogy but as pneumagogy, without which education cannot be said to be Godly and Christian. This is because the content of Christian education (the Bible) is birthed by the Holy Spirit, God's breath, to adequately prepare a man and make him useful for the divine assignments he has come to do on earth:

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2Tim 3:16, 17, King James Version)

What is more, this teaching-learning theory, Pneumagogy, is theological. And, since Christian education is learning the content of theology to transform lives and the society in which we live, it implies that Christian education and theology are inseparable companions. This means that education cannot be Christian without Christian theology. Therefore, we cannot separate the two. Christian education is the vehicle of theology, while pneumagogy, as a tool, is needed to drive the vehicle. In Christian education, teaching and learning are theological issues, and Pneumagogy is the major theory that underlies teaching and learning in Christian education. Therefore, pneumagogy in Christian education is theological.

The main objective of this research paper is to propose pneumagogy as a theory and the possibility of having distinctive Biblical learning theories, like pneumagogy. The theory of pneumagogy is an important concept in Christian education that helps to provide divine understanding to both the learners and the teachers and helps them to be well aware and augment their knowledge in terms of vital elements. These elements are educational goals and objectives, teaching-learning methods, teaching-learning materials, the needs and requirements of the students, and aspects related to the overall system of Christian education. Additionally, this paper sets out to develop a learning theory that will culminate in a paradigm shift in Christian (theological, ministry, and church) education. Though this paper focuses on this new learning approach, the major theories that underlie teaching and learning processes, predominately practised in the secular world, such as pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy, and other theories, are succinctly discussed in this paper. No doubt, the most reliable and constant way of imparting positive knowledge in Christian education is to choose a divinely inspired learning theory, teaching method, and curriculum content.

The theory of pneumagogy is important for Christian teachers or educators. In understanding the theory of pneumagogy, the important areas that are taken into consideration are the meaning and significance of the theory. Having an understanding of this concept, pneumagogy, will promote student learning and teacher effectiveness and enrich the overall system of Christian education. It should be noted that Christian education here refers to all activities within the Christian ministries, the church, theological institutions, Christian schools, Christian community services, and so on. Thus, Pneumagogical theory is the theory that postulates how Christian activities, instructions, teaching, or preaching should be put into practice under the leadership of the Holy Spirit for effectiveness and efficiency.

Why the Theory: The Meaning and Significance of the Theory of Pneumagogy

Research has shown that studies with strong theoretical perspectives are frequently regarded as adding value to any field of learning, including that of Christian Kingdom Education. It is therefore essential for scholars and researchers in Christian Kingdom Education and other Christian academic fields to develop strong skills in theory development. Indeed, a well-crafted theory supports logical thoughts and helps, in no small measure, to make sense of the reality that researchers struggle to present. Particularly, Christian Kingdom Educators have a lot to do in this regard by developing new theories that support logical thoughts that are Bible-based, Christ-centred, Holy Spirit-controlled, learner-related, and not secular driven.

This is the focus of this work. Scholars of secular education have developed various theories of learning, such as pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy, peergogy, social learning theory, and so on. All these theories, no doubt, have influenced the Christian world and indeed infiltrated Christian learning. This is a paradoxical influence. If truly we are the children of the Kingdom of God who have access to the secret place of God, living theologically,

biblically, and Christly are a prerequisite for every Christian, and Christian kingdom educators and theorists should not do less. This implies that Christian kingdom educational theories must be theological, biblical, Christ like, and Holy Spirit-driven. R. Paul Steven (1995) states that “Biblical theological education is not inert theology and unreflective action but 'praxis-laden theory' and 'theory-laden praxis’”. In his view, Immanuel Kant said something similar when he offered the maxim that experience without theory is blind but theory without experience is mere intellectual play. This means that what we can learn by doing is much more than a simple technique. Every action has an implicit theory, just as every theory has an implicit action. This illustrates the vital role theory plays in our practical life experience.

The primary benefit of assessment strategies is to find out how much the students or members have learned and whether their learning is facilitating the achievement of Christian goals or if there are obstacles. Though some theories are termed knowledge while others are contrasted with knowledge, some can be tested while others cannot; some theories are idea-based while others are application-based; some theories help to further understanding while others can be barriers to understanding. But the theory of pneumagogy is Bible-based and Holy Spirit controlled. It does not stand as an obstacle to understanding; rather, it aids understanding because it is divinely controlled. Thus, the meaning and significance of the theory of pneumagogy will be understood and appreciated in a satisfactory manner, when the teaching-learning methods contribute significantly to promoting student learning and teacher effectiveness.

Methodology

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research with a descriptive research design. Quantitative research was used to numerically analyze and quantify data into hard facts, while qualitative research was adopted to describe the quality, opinions, or feelings of some people concerning Biblical Christian Educational Learning Theories, particularly pneumagogy. The population for the study comprised only Christians who were workers, ministers, Sunday school teachers, and pastors in their various churches, theological lecturers and students, and owners of Christian ministries across the 36 states in Nigeria. A questionnaire was the instrument used for the collection of data. All questions were constructed based on content as needed.

The instrument used a 5-type Likert scale response questionnaire that determines: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, agree, and Strongly Agree. A random sampling technique was adopted for selecting the respondents. Oral interviews and personal observations were also used to collect information from the respondents. Data were collected using Google Online Form Questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to find out the possibility of having distinctive Biblical Christian Educational Learning Theories, especially the pneumagogical theory. The questionnaire was divided into section A and B. Section A consists of the bio-data of the respondent, while Section B consists of the items to elicit a response from the respondent. The data analysis was subjected to a simple statistical analysis of percentages.

Concept and Components of the Theory of Pneumagogy

There are different definitions of a theory as there are different researchers (Odi, 1982; Silverman, 2006; Vogt, 1993; Babbie, 1992; Schwandt, 1997; Merton, 1957). In his work, Jacob Dankasa (2015) cites Corley and Gioia (2011) and defines a theory as a relationship of concepts that shows how and why a phenomenon occurs. It is made up of “constructs linked together by propositions that have an underlying, coherent logic and related assumptions” (see also Davis, Eisenhardt, & Bingham, 2007, p. 481). Jacob also cites Garver (2008) and suggests that theories vary in their specifications. He says that some theories are termed as knowledge while others are contrasted with knowledge; some can be tested, others cannot; some theories are idea-based while others are application-based. He further states that while some theories help to further understanding, others can be barriers to understanding. For Buckland (1991), Jacob explains that a strong theory is based on perception; whatever theory matches one's perception becomes a good theory. Davis et al. (2007, p. 481) brought together the views of some scholars of theory development and enumerated four elements of a theory thus:

- Constructs
- Propositions that link those constructs together
- Logical arguments that explain the underlying theoretical rationale for the propositions, and
- Assumptions that define the scope of the theory.

Similarly, Wacker (2004) identifies four properties that should characterize a good theory, namely “formal conceptual definitions, theory domain, explained relationships, and predictions” (p. 631). Wacker defines a theory as a link that creates relationships between concepts. Researchers do not agree on a universal definition of a theory. Hence, different researchers define a theory based on their perceptions of what it does. In their view, Sutton and Staw (1995), the lack of a unified definition among scholars of what a theory is has often made it difficult to develop a strong theory. This is evident in many researchers' use of some terms such as “model”, “paradigm”,

“framework”, and “theory” interchangeably to denote the same thing. The distinction between the terms “a model”, “a framework”, and “a theory” should be made so that readers can clearly understand the differences.

Pneumagogy is a learning theory that serves as the conceptual framework for teaching and learning in Christian kingdom education. The theory of pneumagogy postulates that pneumagogical praxis promotes effective teaching and learning in Christian education, and it is a method of teaching that sparks up the light bulb of understanding when applied appropriately.

Pneumagogical learning theory is different from other learning theories in many ways. However, other learning theories like pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy, social learning theory, constructivist learning theory, etc. can adopt pneumagogical processes to fit into pneumagogical standards for effective teaching and learning in both Christian and secular education and induce positive behavioral change. Why is this adoption of the pneumagogical process important? It is important because pneumagogical theory is not humanistic, secularistic, or naturalistic; it is biblical and supernatural. It is a divine process of learning because God is the inspired Being, the Generator of ideas, and the Dispenser of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (Prov 2:6; 2 Tim 3:15–17; 2 Pet 1:20–21).

Therefore, as Christians, we must seek wisdom, knowledge, and understanding where they can be found—not in the books of philosophers, nor in the writings of men about their gods, nor in some other books tagged “holy books,” but in the Lord, the God of the Bible, the only living and true God through His written Word (the Bible) and living Word (Jesus Christ), who is the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24). Thus, the adoption of pneumagogy and other theories of Christian education like theology, bibliology, and Christology is a requirement for the users of other secular theories before Christian education can be regarded as Christian.

The word Pneumagogy was first used by Ilesanmi (2021). He writes that “...teaching and learning should be put under the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit, which he calls “pneumagogy”. The word is derived from two Greek words: “pneuma” and “gogy”. The word “pneuma” means “spirit”, though not just any “spirit,” we mean “the Holy Spirit” while “gogy” means “leading”. Thus, combining the two words, we have “pneumagogy”, that is, the art of leading people through teaching (preaching, training, discipleship, coaching, mentoring, discipleship, etc.) under the direction or control of the Holy Spirit. Same goes with the word “hagiospneumagogy”

The Greek word “hagios” means “the Holy Spirit” but the author prefers to use the word “pneumagogy”. It is the method of teaching and practice in Christian (theological) education. It also applies to all other aspects of learning if God is seen as the Source of all things. It is The Holy Spirit-Centred Learning Theory. In this theory, the Holy Spirit dictates the direction of learning. He (the Holy Spirit) is the power source of all information. Unlike other learning theories that promote humanism and secularism, Pneumagogy sees the human teacher as a “placeholder” and the Holy Spirit as the real Teacher who does the work. Even though other learning theories should not be absolutely jettisoned, the pneumagogues (Christian educators/teachers) are to subject them to the pneumagogical process before they are used. Similarly, pneumagogues or Christian educators are not limited to using one methodology of teaching to foster learning. The environment and the subject matter will determine the method and theory to use. However, all methods and theories could pass through a pneumagogical test or process. We can do this by contextualising them pneumagogically. This, in no small measure, will help fulfill the divine purpose.

For many years, the term “pedagogy” has been used to describe the mode of the educational process where the teacher dictates the direction of learning. It provides structured and paced learning that transmits information and skills from a teacher to a student. We can trace its practice back to the formative era of Greek Education. Though our point of reference may be about three thousand (3000) years ago, we can trace the roots of pedagogy to a period preceding Greek civilization. Pedagogy is the art of leading children and/or youth through preceding Greek civilization. Pedagogy is the art of leading children and/or youth through teaching. It is a teacher-centred learning theory. This theory was the backbone of education during the industrial era. Pedagogy puts the teacher at the centre of learning; it gives the teacher authority to have full control over the learning environment; the teacher detains all the knowledge that is to be dispensed at school; and so on. But the term Andragogy, which concerns the teaching of adults or adult education, had come into usage well before the 20th century.

For instance, it was in use in Germany as far back as 1883, and about a decade later, it came into use in Yugoslavia, France, and Holland. The theory was developed to meet the needs of adult learners. As Erna Oliver (2016) observes, this learning theory is based on a transaction that addresses the immediate and practical needs of context-dependent learners or students. This concept, Andragogy, is predicated on five theories as developed by Malcolm Knowless. Although this is not the focus of this paper, the five theories can be summarised thus: self-directedness, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn. The next theory is Heutagogy which focuses on Self-Determined Learning. The theory was developed in 2001 by Hase and Kenyon of Australia to account for changing circumstances and provide effective education in the twenty-first century. We have other educational concepts that have come into use recently in the teaching-learning environment but are not well known by the majority of educationalists.

Such concepts as Paragogy (also peeragogy or peetagogy, the theory of peer or peer learning), and Academagogy (a student-centred approach to teaching that encourages students to become life-long, self-directed learners. It is a mesh of pedagogy, andragogy, and heutagogy that allows for flexibility and interaction with students). All of these learning concepts can be used in Christian education if they are pneumagogically embedded. This means that the pneumagogical process must be infused, or rather embedded into them when in use in a teaching-learning environment.

Seven Components of Pneumagogical Process can be identified here:

Readiness/Availability: The teacher (pastor/instructor/discipler) must be ready to teach, and the students (members) must be ready to learn. Where the two are not in agreement, the teaching-learning environment may be void or devoid of the illuminating power of God. The Spirit of God cannot move where there is a conflict of readiness in learning, prayer, worship, etc.

Preparation: This includes Bible study/searching the Scripture, and prayer)

Meditation: Be alone with God in thought, separate yourself from distraction, give a deep thought to the word, and open your heart to the Holy Spirit.

Faith: Faith is a requirement before an effective and successful teaching-learning process can take place (Heb11:3; 11:6).

Presentation: This must follow a pneumagogical processes 1-4 above. The content and the method must be divinely inspired. The Holy Spirit created an effect on human writers. He did not merely move their pens. Rather, He moved them to speak and write the Scriptures (2Pet 1:20-21) cf. 2Tim 3:16-17. The Holy Spirit illumines our minds, aids our memory, and speaks through our mouths.

Application: Application is putting into practice what is learned. Any kind of knowledge acquired that cannot be put into practice is useless. Thus, the application of the knowledge imparted is an important factor that brings about attitudinal change.

Acknowledgment: This is a process of allowing and recognising the Holy Spirit in the teaching-learning process. This can be done in the form of prayer, praise and worship. The Holy Spirit is the real Teacher, the human teacher is a placeholder. Hence, we need to recognise Him and allow Him to have His way before the teaching-learning process, preaching-learning process, impartation service, or discussion begins (Prov 3:5-6).

The teaching-learning process in Christian education is empowered or enabled by the Holy Spirit. Hence Pneumagogy is the Holy Spirit-Centred Theory or the Holy Spirit-Directed Approach that provides divine or spiritual empowerment learning that transmits true or divine information from God through His Word and a spiritual teacher to a student (and/or a spiritual student) under the control of the Holy Spirit. We can simply define Pneumagogy as the art of leading people through teaching (preaching, training, coaching, mentoring, etc.) under the direction or control of the Holy Spirit. It is an approach to teaching, the theory and practice of learning, or the act of teaching. The theory of pneumagogy identifies the teacher as an intermediary, the student as a recipient, and the Holy Spirit as the knowledge Holder and Dispenser. Here, the theory views the teacher as a “placeholder”. The real teacher is the Holy Spirit.

This theory is based on the following five biblical theories/facts:

God or Christ-centredness or Centricity/Centrality of God/Christ: All instructions must be God/Christ-centred for a person to fulfill the purpose of God for his/her life. All thoughts, knowledge, teachings, or instructions must be subject to the obedience of Christ our God. All our children must be taught by God because the earth must be filled with the knowledge of Him. Only God can give true wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, and the Holy Spirit remains the Teacher. The major function of the teacher is to relate to the Master Teacher, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of God or Biblicality/ Biblio-centricity: Learning must be rooted in the Word of God. Any instruction or teaching that is not rooted in the Word of God cannot be considered true or genuine learning. This is because the written Word, or the Scripture is given to man by God through His inspiration for teaching, training, mentoring, coaching, instruction, reproof, and correction, in righteousness so that the children of God will be perfect, well-informed, skillful, intelligent, holy, and thoroughly prepared, furnished or equipped unto all good works. Jesus confirmed that the Word belongs to the Father. This will, in turn, positively improve a lot of society. Therefore, learning and teaching must be Bible-based.

Holy Spirit-enabling/Centredness/Centrality of the Holy Spirit: As a person grows up, he/she must learn how to depend on the Holy Spirit, who teaches all things and brings all things to our remembrance. The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. He is God living in us. He is the Teacher of this dispensation. Thus, He must not be ignored in the teaching-learning environment. No Christian educator can successfully impart knowledge and impact lives without the help of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of the truth; He lives in us, and He is with us. The role of the Holy Spirit cannot be underrated in the teaching-learning environment. He does many things: He

teaches, empowers, helps, brings things to our remembrance, guides, and leads, just to mention a few. With this in mind, no spiritual man or teacher can ignore Him. Any education that is not under the control of the Holy Spirit will cause the receiver confusion, calamity, unrest, and sorrow. The maxim that “experience is the best teacher” is not true. No doubt, experience has its place; it cannot teach you all things, but the Holy Spirit can. Therefore, He, the Holy Spirit, is the best Teacher. The teaching-learning process is Holy Spirit-driven.

Prayer: Prayer is vital to the success of the teaching-learning process in Christian education. Prayer is communication with God, which includes praising and worshipping God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), and asking God for your desires in the name of Jesus (John 14:13-14). This will help both the teachers and students to enjoy the same wisdom and understanding God gave to Solomon (1 Kings 4: 29-34; 5: 12) and the excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding He gave to Daniel (Dan 1:20; 5:12,14; 6:3). Only God can give true wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, and this sound, true wisdom is for the righteous (Prov 2:6, 7)

Faith-drivenness: This is the vehicle that we need every day of our lives for our desires to be accomplished and to please our Maker, God (Heb 11:6). It is through faith that the worlds were framed by the word of God (Heb 11:3). It is a vehicle that conveys the word of God to its destination when it is well appropriated. It retains the word of God in the hearts of the students/congregation. The Christian learning environment must be faith-filled before a successful teaching-learning process can take place.

Assumptions Underlying the Theory of Pneumagogy

- The Theory of Pneumagogy is based on the following presuppositions:
- The learner must self-empty himself/herself to permit the Spirit of God to lead. Self-emptiness gives the Holy Spirit the role of leadership in a teaching-learning environment. That is, the learner should see himself/herself as someone who knows nothing before God or in a Christian-learning environment (Prov 3:5-6)
- The Holy Spirit guides the teaching-learning process (John 14:26; 16:13).
- The teaching-learning process is Holy Spirit-driven.
- Learners' and teachers' orientation shifts from human-centredness to Bible-centredness, Christ-centredness, and Holy Spirit-centredness. That is, a shift from pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy, or any secular-human learning theories to Christian learning theories of theology/Christology, bibliology, and pneumagogy.
- A shift from a self-dependent and human-dependent learning approach to a Holy Spirit-dependent learning approach.
- The learning process is faith-driven for the accomplishment of educational goals.
- Learning shifts from secularism, humanism, to spiritualism.
- Godliness is entrenched in the teaching-learning environment.
- The Teaching-learning process is impactful when God is involved (1 Cor 3:6-7).
- Relevant and useful wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are generated (Isa 11:2) because God is the fountain (Isa 11:2; Prov 2:6)
- Teachers are placeholders in Christian education. The Holy Spirit does the major work (John 14:26).

The learning process is spiritually discerned. Thus, natural learners cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. It takes the learners who have the mind of Christ to understand the spiritual learning process (1 Cor 2:10-16). The illuminating power of God creates positive attitudinal change in learners.

Principles of Pneumagogy

The principles here are in tandem with the above basic assumptions, which can be subsumed into five categories: Self-emptiness, Biblicality/Biblio-centricity, Christo-centricity, The Holy Spirit-enabling, and Faith-drivenness. These are elucidated thus:

Learners must come to the learning environment by emptying themselves to permit the Holy Spirit to lead, fill, and empower them. Self-emptiness means, Holy Spirit, I don't know anything, come and teach me, fill me, and empower me. It is total surrender to the will and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible must be the major instructional material for learning. The curriculum must be Bible-based. All other instructional materials must find expression in the Bible and be consecrated to the Lord. That is, if a teacher is using any storybook, the content must be in line with the word of God. If a theory or a method is to be adopted, say pedagogy or andragogy, it must pass the test of pneumagogy.

Learning must be Christ-centred. The teaching-learning process must be centred on Christ. There is no other foundation than the one laid by our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Foundation. The doctrine of Jesus Christ is the foundation or cornerstone of all theology. Any other foundation, apart from Jesus Christ or the one He laid, is another foundation – another theology not based on the doctrine of Christ. Therefore, the teaching-learning process in Christian education is Christocentric.

Presentation of Data and Discussion of the Findings

Section 2: Biblical Educational Learning Theories (BELTA)

The instrument used a 5-type Likert scale response questionnaire that determines: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

Item	SD	%	D	%	N	%	A	%	SA	%
I think that using biblically based learning theories is better than non-biblically based learning theories in a Christian teaching-learning environment	5	4.3	2	1.7	3	2.6	31	27	74	64.3
Using biblically based learning theories will enhance a better understanding of the Word of God than non-biblically based learning theories.	5	4.3	0	0	3	2.6	30	26.1	77	67
I think that using biblically based learning theories will help in spiritual formation better than non-biblically based learning theories.	5	4.3	1	0.9	3	2.6	35	30.4	71	61.7
I think that using biblically based learning theories will help in good moral/value/character formation better than non-biblically based learning theories.	3	2.6	0	0	8	7	38	33	66	57.4
I think Christians are better off when they base their actions and thoughts on biblically-based theories than on non-biblically based theories.	4	3.5	0	0	3	2.6	39	33.9	69	60
Using biblically based learning theories is better than using non-biblically based learning theories in teaching, preaching, discipleship/mentoring/counseling.	3	2.6	2	1.7	4	3.5	34	29.6	72	62.6
Using biblically based learning theories will help promote biblical educational concepts.	3	2.6	0	0	1	0.9	37	32.2	74	64.3
It is better for Christians to have their own educational learning theories that are biblically based, Christ-centred, Holy Spirit-controlled, teacher-learner-related, and socially-inclusive than to rely on worldly theories.	4	3.5	7	6.1	1	0.9	23	20	80	69.6
I think the teaching-learning process will be effective when biblically based learning theories are adopted in a Christian teaching-learning environment	6	5.2	0	0	3	2.6	43	37.4	63	54.8
I think Holy Spirit-driven learning theories are better than worldly or secular learning theories.	4	3.5	1	0.9	2	1.7	23	20	85	73.9

Pneumagogy is a learning theory that is built on Biblical theology and offers twenty-first-century learning and teaching congruent with the demands of Christians. From the Table, it is revealed that more than 73% of the 85 respondents strongly supported that Pneumagogy – the Holy Spirit-driven learning theory, is better than worldly or secular learning theories. The total number of respondents who agreed that pneumagogy and other Holy Spirit-driven theories are better than secular theories is 108 out of 115, representing 96.9%. Additionally, the total number of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed that biblically based learning theories like pneumagogy are better than non-biblically based learning theories is 105, representing 91.3%.

The study also reveals that 107 respondents, representing 93.1%, agreed and strongly agreed that using biblically based learning theories will enhance a better understanding of the Word of God than non-biblically based learning theories. The majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, with the highest percentage, that using biblically based learning theories will help in spiritual, character, moral, and value formation better than non-biblically based learning theories, as indicated in the Table.

Using biblically based learning theories is better than using non-biblically based learning theories in teaching, preaching, discipleship, mentoring/counseling; and they also promote Biblical educational learning concepts. What is more, 69.6% and 20% (89.6%), representing 80 and 23 respondents (103) respectively,

strongly agreed and agreed that it is better for Christians to have their own educational learning theories that are biblically based, Christ-centred, Holy Spirit-controlled, teacher-learner-related, and socially inclusive than relying on worldly theories. This study also reveals that the teaching-learning process will be effective when biblically based learning theories, like pneumagogy, are adopted in a Christian teaching-learning environment, as shown in the table.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it is clear that a biblically based, Christ-centred, and Holy Spirit-directed learning theory is better adopted in a Christian teaching-learning environment for effective teaching and learning delivery in Christian Kingdom Education. Pneumagogical theory is the theory that helps explain how teaching should be put into practice and how it will be valuable to the students in sharpening their skills and proficiencies. The pneumagogical theory emerges from a biblical perspective. It is an aspect of the science of Christian education. It is the fulcrum upon which Christian education or theological education revolves. Though this concept is a new theory propounded by this author, it is the pillar that holds Christian education buildings together. Without the application of this theory, and its associated theories of theology, Christology, and bibliology, the teaching-learning environment may give way to secularism and humanism. And that may be catastrophic for Christianity.

Additionally, it can be stated unequivocally that understanding the theory of pneumagogy and its associated theories is useful and worthwhile to instructors, pastors, preachers, teachers, and students in achieving academic goals and enriching the overall system of Christian education. It is hoped that this paper will be of benefit to established researchers, pastors, theological educators, Sunday school teachers, etc., who may be struggling with how to impact relevant and inspired knowledge on their members or learners for effective and efficient delivery of God's word, and especially younger Christian academics, researchers, pastors, and teachers who are the future leaders in the field of Christian Kingdom Education and other Christian disciplines. This new theory, if followed religiously, will expand the frontiers of pneumagogical knowledge and Christian Kingdom education. This is the first step to revitalizing Kingdom education.

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**APPRAISAL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY IN ST MATHIAS ANGLICAN CHURCH,
UMUCHIMA, OWERRI WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, IMO STATE NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This research work was aimed at assessing the Concept of Christian Education in St Mathias Anglican Church, Umuchima, Owerri West Local Government Area Imo State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive literature review methodology cum observational experiences. To further substantiate the objective of this research work, five study questions were looked into and analysed based on reviewed literatures and personal observations. The result shows that the concept of Christian education is one of the keys to effective church administration. It also indicated that Christian education philosophy and concepts have not been fully put into practice in the study area under consideration. It is hereby recommended that efforts be intensified by the Church leadership to imbibe the basic principles of education for effective teaching and learning in church.

Keywords: Christian education, Christian education ministry, St. Matthias church.

Background

So many thoughts are unveiled immediately the concept of Christian education is treated. Many minds are diverted to schools if education is mentioned but that is very far from the truth. Most of the time, we tend to think of education in terms of what teachers and their pupils do in school. We forget that what takes place in the school is only a small fraction of education. In fact, education is a process meaning it is a series of cyclical activities which take place when human thinking ability undergoes transformation overtime.

The process of education is one which involves a number of activities on the part of several people, including the teacher, the pupil, parents, the government and every citizen of the country. They all participate in the process in one way or the other. Teaching is a key factor in education and learning is another. The first teacher a child ever has is his parents, and this learning process starts as soon as he enters the world. Since the teaching-learning process starts with the child's parents, the mother in particular, the background of the learner matters a lot (Uhie, H. C. & Osuji, U.S.A, 2006).

Encyclopaedia Britannica (2008) defined education as a discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments as opposed to various nonformal and informal means of socialization (e.g., rural development projects and education through parent-child relationships). Education can be thought of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society.

Microsoft Encarta (2009), defined education as the process of educating (i.e. is the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution). Furthermore, and in the field of Learning, Microsoft Encarta also view education as acquiring knowledge or developing the ability to perform new behaviours. It is common to think of learning as something that takes place in school, but much of human learning occurs outside the classroom, and people continue to learn throughout their lives.

According to wikipedia.com (n.d), education is a purposeful activity directed at achieving certain aims, such as transmitting knowledge or fostering skills and character traits.

In summary, Education is the practical way of attaining individual and social fulfillment. It is a process of socialization, enculturation and transmission of what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it, be they children or adults. It can also mean a process of developing knowledge ability in a learner in such a way that he uses this knowledge to improve himself and the society. An educated person therefore is a person who can apply his knowledge and skill in such a way as to find solution to whatever problems that confront him.

Biblical Concepts Allied to Christian Education

Teaching and Learning is inspired by God. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV), "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." This confirmed that anything worth learning is inspired by God and indeed characterised educational dictates. Furthermore, Hosea 4:6 (NKJV)

says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children..” The Bible here confirmed that Education is all about acquiring knowledge and refusal to acquire knowledge makes one destroyed. It also confirmed that the principles of education are fully supported by the Bible. Peter 3:15 (NKJV) says, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”.

This indicates that all humans heart must be week prepared for good works which also formed the basic norm of education. Proverbs 3:13 (NKJV) says, “Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding”. This implies that someone is blessed when wisdom is acquired through educational pursuit. Proverbs 2:10-11 says, “When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul”. This implies that If you choose to love the wisdom of God, and if you choose to appreciate knowledge as a precious gift, then certain and substantial blessings will surely follow. But if you are not willing to meet these conditions, your life will be a dysfunctional and painful experience.

This confirmed education as key to wisdom. 2 Peter 1:5 (NKJV) says, ” 2 Peter 1:5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge (education). This urges Christians to understand that they are, right now, fully equipped to lead the life to which God has called them. Since they are equipped, they must use those tolls through personal effort. They should strive to add Christ's goodness and other powerful qualities to their lived-out faith. Growing in those qualities leads to a productive, effective life of knowing the Lord. Lacking Christ's qualities leads to the opposite.

Philosophy and implication to Christian Education

Philosophy of education refers to the systematic process of understanding and explicating key concepts related to educational practice. Analytic philosophy of education is a contemporary approach to this task and is the technique used in this book to explain key educational concepts. According to Moyo D (2014), who quoted Osman and Cravers (1986), philosophy of education is the application of philosophical ideas to educational problems and about the educational practices leading to refinement of philosophical ideas. He also quoted Langford (1968) who asserted that philosophy of education aims at the acquisition by educators of informed decisions about educational problems. Generally, philosophy of education questions the assumptions, beliefs and view-points about the nature, goals and functions of education.

The following questions are of interest to philosophy of education:

1. What are some of the assumptions that we often hold about education;
2. Are these assumptions true?
3. What is the purpose of education?
4. Is education for character building?
5. Are our children receiving quality education?
6. Should education have aims?
7. What subject matter/content should be taught in schools?
8. Who should choose the content to be leant in schools?
9. In a multi-cultural society, from whose culture should the content be chosen?
10. What is worthwhile knowledge? Philosophy of education enables us to understand the nature of our educational aims, objectives, content and the selection process of such content. Education cannot operate in a vacuum; it has to be guided by a specific philosophy.

Tenets of Christian Education Philosophy

Tenet as defined by Microsoft Encarta (2009) means something accepted as important truth (i.e. an established fundamental belief, especially one relating to religion or politics). Dayspring Christian Academy (2022) identified four major tenets of this Christian education philosophy as follows:

The Development of a Biblical World View is the Goal of Christian Education: Romans 12: 2 says “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and perfect and acceptable.” The Bible is the primary source for all learning. Through principles of truth, it provides the foundation from which the learner can reason to every subject and area of life. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). The Bible does not provide the necessary fact base required to gain knowledge of most subjects. However, knowledge of Biblical principles is absolutely essential to develop understanding and wisdom being the high orders of learning and application in any given subject matter.

Christian Character Development is Primary in the Education Process: Throughout human history, the educational process works from the internal to the external. First, the heart of man must be regenerated, then his mind must be renewed, and finally, he will “walk in a manner worthy of his calling.” Christ opens the doorway

into the Kingdom of God for the individual. The sanctification process that ensues occurs in the character realm first and foremost and is a lifelong progression. Lasting external change and growth come only by way of internal character growth. Romans 5: 3-4 says “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character hope...”

Academic Excellence is an Expression of Worship of Almighty God: Psalms 111: 2 says “Great are the works of the Lord; They are studied by all who delight in them.” The student's academic capacity is addressed and developed as the foundation in Christian character is being laid. Each child is an expression of God's Principle of Individuality. He is seen as an individual created in God's image, unique and possessing certain gifts and qualities that set him apart from all others. As his strengths and weaknesses are identified, the education process both affirms and stretches him, calling him up to excellence in every area of everyday life so that he may effectively exert Christian influence in his life spheres.

Christian Education Requires a Christian Philosophy, Curriculum, and Methodology: Philosophy, curriculum, and methodology comprise education. Likewise, each and every subject that is studied has a unique philosophy (presuppositional truths), curriculum (content) and methodology (application). Philosophy gives rise to both the curriculum and the methods used in studying (teaching and learning). It is the relationship of these three components that provide both the means and the ends for mastering a given subject or topic.

Overview of Christian Education

Christian education can biblically be defined as the efforts of the Christian church to fulfill the great commission of Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, especially the first part of verse 20: “and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you”. The primary goal of Christian education is to inspire a biblical world view in each student. There is a general belief that Christian schools do not prepare children for the "real" world. This is because Christian schools do not prepare children to become like the rest of the world following the scriptural basis as contained in Romans 12:2. As a result, Christian education channeled their teachings on things of God rather than the things of the world. Christian education serves three general areas.

Curriculum: While modern education strives to teach from a curriculum that is patterned to the world, an education that is truly Christian is taught from a biblical base so that students may respond more adequately to God through loving and serving Him.

Life in Christ: fellowship, character training, the bearing of one another's burdens, reaching the lost, spiritual disciplines are centre piece of Christ's life. Christian education therefore teaches students to imbibe the life pattern of Jesus Christ.

Love of God: the most important thing a student learn in Christian education are the love of God for him, and to love Him in return, is ultimately found on an individual basis. A Christian school should assist in that discovery. This is the vision of our founder of Wisdom Bible University. It can do no more and no less, for salvation cannot be forced.

The foundation of a true Christian education is built upon a Christian philosophy centred on God's Word of which the “Word” is Jesus Christ (John 1:1). Education that is Christian by its very nature demands a theological base. By its nomenclature, Christian Education declares a qualitative difference with the general understanding of education. That difference is fundamentally theological and biblical. Theology is compress with so much detail that it must be unpacked before arriving at a theology of Christian Education (CE). Before arriving at a theology of CE, there are areas of theology such as Theism, Soteriology, and Ecclesiology, to name a few. There are also theological formulations such as Systematic Theology, Biblical Theology, Historical Theology, Dispensational Theology, and Third World Theologies, again to exemplify.

Education precedes CE as far as the organized body of knowledge affirms. This is contestable only on theological grounds. Consequently, CE then takes its cue from education. CE is an attempt to declare itself unique from a general understanding of education. Thus, CE is education that is Christian. 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 training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Elements of Theology Education

Proverbs 22:6 states: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." We believe that parents have the primary responsibility that is biblically mandated to do just that. We are honored to partner with parents to train up their children, giving our expertise in academics, spiritual teaching and the nurturing of a child's heart.

1. Truth. Scripture, the revealed Word of God, is taught as truth. You can be assured that among those truths, your students will learn that they are individually and wonderfully created in the image of God. This

crucial truth will help them better understand not only who they are - their own worth as individuals - but also the value of others. They will be confronted with the reality of sin and redemption, encouraged to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, and then nurtured and encouraged in their faith. They will be led to a deeper knowledge of God as He is revealed in Christ and as He indwells them through His Holy Spirit. As Christian educators we recognize that all truth is God's truth. Students will learn that all God's creation is a further revelation of the truth.

2. Biblical Integration. The entire Christian school curriculum is permeated with God's Word. Faith and learning are integrated in such a way as to develop a student who does not compartmentalize the spiritual side of life from the rest of life. It is through this kind of integration that your student will view the natural world of God's creation as well as human history and God's activity in it. Students will develop a godly perspective on humanity, the development of culture, and how they should live in the world. They will learn to deal with challenges of trying to live victoriously, often in difficult circumstances and with difficult people.

3. Christian Staff. The school's administrators, faculty, and staff are born-again Christians who not only know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior but model a Christ-like life in their living, teaching, and leading. They are not only competent in their academic fields, but they also reflect the wholeness of life. Students will see that their teachers' faith is essential to who they are. Their vision in teaching is that their students will acquire wisdom, knowledge, and a biblical worldview evidenced by a Christian lifestyle of character, leadership, service, stewardship, and worship.

4. Potential in Christ. The major objective of every learning experience - the goal - is to enable students to reach their full potential in Christ. That goal requires the Christian school to focus on each student's potential and strive to develop intellectual excellence through the academic disciplines and every planned curricular activity. Students will also be taught to understand their individual responsibility to society, including the importance of serving and encouraging others. In addition to emphasizing how to live in this world, the school will nurture an eternal view of life. The Christian school aims beyond the inward focus of serving self to the outward focus of a life that honors God now and will live and reign with Christ in eternity.

5. Organizational Practice. You can expect all the school's business and operational practices to be biblically based, giving a moral and ethical center to such matters of school governance as policy development and implementation. You can expect that in handling all necessary financial arrangements, the school will recognize your value as a constituent and as a member of the larger school family. You can expect clear and open communication from the school regarding your child(ren), classroom issues, school activities and events, and your own participation. No Christian school can be "all things to all people," but you can expect the highest integrity as the school communicates with you regarding how it can best serve your student(s).

Christian Education is Christ-Centred

Christ-centred education puts salvation first. (Col. 1:18) Christ is the centre 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-centred 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. 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).

Christ-centred education teaches the claims of Christ upon one's life. The secular, public education is thoroughly pupil-centred. 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-centred. Instead of Christ-esteem, it is worship of self, the deifying of man. Christ-centred 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)

Christ-centred education states that the content for Christian education must be in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. (Ps 119:128; II Tim 3:16-17) This provides the basis for the integration and correlation of all subject matter. Every subject is taught with Christ as the centre. 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.

Christian Education Ministry

The Christian Education Ministry has been identified as one of the primary ministries to the body of Christ in any Christian organization. The Christian Education Ministry is comprehensive, far reaching, and multifaceted

inclusive of disciples of all ages. The Christian education ministry is characterized by its diversity of offering opportunities for Bible study and spiritual growth through the identification, use and development of one's spiritual gifts. Christian Education Ministry involves the administration and coordination of programs or strategies to facilitate the spiritual growth or discipleship of believers into Christ-likeness. The educational ministry of the church is very relevant because it helps people face the reality of imparting the biblical truth unto the Christians. In Christianity, ministry the office held by persons who are set apart by ecclesiastical authority to be ministers in the church or whose call to special vocational service in a church is afforded some measure of general recognition. The type of ministry varies in the different churches. That was developed in the early church and is retained by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican, and some Protestant churches are episcopal and based on the three orders, or offices, of bishop, priest and deacon (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2009).

Methodology

A descriptive case study as well as literature review design was adopted whereby few research questions relevant to the study were analyzed. More so, Having known the fundamentals and philosophy of Christian Education in contemporary setting, it is very important to use these concepts to appraise a local church such as the St. Mathias Anglican Church situated at Umuchima in Owerri West Local government Area of Imo State Nigeria. As a local church of the Nigerian (Anglican communion), there is need to basically x-ray the church on the basic educational philosophies of the Anglican communion (Anglicanism) and how they are implemented for the growth and development of the church.

Therefore, to properly appraise the local church, some pertinent questions were given due consideration as follows:

1. Is St. Matthias Church Umuchima practicing the Christian education philosophies (Anglicanism) mentioned above?
2. How knowledgeable are the members about Anglicanism generally?
3. Are there teachers to teach the members about the doctrines of the church?
4. Is there a special education ministry for teaching in the Church?
5. Are there well-defined Christian education ministries (such as children, youth, women, men, evangelism, prayer ministry etc) in the church?

Analysis of Research Questions Based on Observation

Question one: Is St. Matthias Church Umuchima practicing the Christian education philosophies (Anglicanism) mentioned above? A good observation showed that Anglicanism is well practiced in the church. This is so because, prior to confirmation by the Bishop of Egbu Diocese, educational classes are usually organized to teach those wanting to be confirmed and inducted into Christian Fathers, Mothers Union, Women Guild and Girls Guild. The parish priest handles some major aspects of the training while he appoints knowledgeable, seasoned men and women who are well equipped with the church doctrines to handle some other aspects of the training. It is observed that despite the training administered to members of the body of Christ, some persons still fall short of the doctrines of the Church.

Question two: How knowledgeable are the members about Anglicanism generally? Ideally, it is expected that those trained in the knowledge of the Church be of good stead. The biblical saying that many are called but few are chosen is implicated in this regard. Many people were taught the rudiments of Christian living but suffices to state that confirmed still people go against the doctrines of the Church.

Question three: Are there teachers to teach the members about the doctrines of the church? In St Mathias, very few train teachers abound to further train others. There are two lay readers who were trained and commissioned by the diocese. Lay readers are assistants to the ordained priest and meant to teach, preach, and conduct Church services according to the Church doctrine. The lay readers are not well utilised for training of other members of the Church. It is also observed that the lay readers are not sponsored to regular trainings that will equip them for God's service.

Question four: Is there a special education ministry for teaching in the church? There is no special education ministry in St Mathias Church, Umuchima, Ihiagwa. The diocesan has a ministry in charge of education but at the parish level, the priest is overworked to handle this aspect of the Church. Education ministry plans and implement programs that edify the body of Christ continuously.

Question five: Are there well-defined Christian education ministries (such as children, youth, women, men, evangelism, prayer ministry etc.) in the church? The only ministries seen to be functional is the women ministry, men ministry and the children ministry. Other ministries are dormant due to one reason or the other. Here is need for the education ministry to be fully function even at the parish level of the church to remove excess load shouldered by the parish priest.

Conclusion

Christian education has been identified as an indispensable aspect of Christian fellowship and church administration. Christian education employed various philosophies to achieve desired purposes. This presentation therefore x-rayed St Mathias Anglican church Umuchima Ihiagwa as a case study in this regard. The tenets of Christian education as exposed by the reviewed literature has given a leeway in identifying some of the issues bordering on effective Christian education in the church. It therefore necessary to foster administrative strategies that will cushion the effects emanating from Christian education philosophies (Anglicanism), knowledge of members about Anglicanism, inadequate teachers in the church, availability of special education ministry for the Church and well-defined Christian education ministries in the church. Based on the literatures reviewed and personal observations, it could be seen that Christian education is a necessary tool for church administration and growth when properly adopted and applied in St Matthias Anglican Church Umuchima, Ihiagwa in Owerri West Local Government Area of Imo State Nigeria. In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations are hereby proffered:

The St Mathias church should create an education ministry with a program coordinator appointed to take charge of planning and implementation of Christian education programs. This directorate or department should be able to design regular education programs for the growth and developed of the church.

Training the trainers program should be organized regularly to educate those who will in turn train others.

Regular workshops and seminars be organized to continuously teach the members about subjects that pertain to Christian education.

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A REVIEW OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION AS A PARADIGM FOR IDEAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

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Abstract

This academic research review report showcases the Ministry of Intercession as a Paradigm for ideal Christian living. It is aimed at disusing the concept of intercession ministry considering its nature and importance in Christian way of life. It also unveils how the ministry of intercession can function both in heaven and earth. This research report adopted the descriptive literature review design approach whereby various related literatures on the variables of interest were sourced and conclusions drawn to substantiate the objective of the work. The result based on biblical evidences showed that the ministry of intercession has a crucial function both in heaven and on earth. The result of the review also indicated that Jesus Christ is the model intercessor who is interceding on behalf of every Christian in heaven. It also revealed that the Holy Spirit is an intercessor for every Christian since as the comforter, he has the personality trait to communicate on our behalf to God in heaven. More so, evidences abound in the scriptures that men of old interceded on behalf of others to God. It is therefore recommended that Christians embrace the concept of intercession while on earth because our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ modeled its importance while on earth.

Keywords: intercession, intercession ministry, intercessor, model of intercession.

Introduction

Christianity has evolved to be embraced by those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior because a ransom has been paid by Jesus Christ by presenting himself as a lamb for the remission of sins. In the course of Christianity, devotees are meant to maintain certain standard of worship in meeting with the dictates of Christian living. One of the basic principles of Christian living is centered on the art of intercession. This area of living has manifested into bigger domain of faith known as the ministry of intercession. This ministry is undoubtedly very crucial as it functions in heaven and on earth. Intercession is a calling. It is a living based on what Philippians 2:4 which says “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Intercessory ministry is made up of prayed over believers in Christ, who are prophetically called by God to discharge responsibility laid onto them by God Almighty himself. Intercessory ministry is both a revelatory and redemptive process for humanity forming one unit that cannot be separated. Intercession ministry has therefore become an integral part of church activities culminating into a full-fledged ministry.

According to Samuel Nyatsikor (2023), Intercession is intervention; it is godly interference in the affairs of others. It is a supportive ministry and belongs to the Body of Christ. The focus of the Intercessory Prayer Ministry is to help ensure that there is continuous effectual, fervent prayer and intercession at the church. Intercessory pray, which is praying on behalf of other people, is a powerful expression of love and spiritual warfare. The ministry of intercession has a lot of challenges to cope with in meeting with the ideals of the ministry. Therefore, anyone who is an intercessor at some point have his/her health attacked, marriage attacked, family relationships attacked, livelihood and provision attacked. An intercessors life is always a target of enemy assault. The principle of intercession is that a Christian bear another's burdens and so fulfills the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). In face of adversity, sin, illness and Satanic activity, God's word to His people is to intercede.

Overview of the Ministry of Intercession

According to Samuel Nyatsikor (2023), the first mention of the word “intercession” in the Bible is found in Isaiah 53:12. It is “pāgha” in Hebrew language. In the New Testament, different Greek words were used for the word “intercession.” For instance, it is “huperentugchano” in Rom. 8:26 (thus “to intercede on behalf of”), entugchano in Rom. 8:28 (thus “to chance upon, confer with, to entreat in favor or against”).

The word “intercessions” as found in I Tim. 2:1 is from the Greek noun enteuxis which means “petitions.” This infers a bold appeal on behalf of others. It denotes empathy, sympathy, compassion and personal involvement, in that we don't just see the needs of others but we identify with them and take action or get involved to meet those needs. Intercessions are confident requests for others and self (Lk. 11:5-13).

According to Samuel Nyatsikor (2023), there are numerous instances of intercession recorded in the Old Testament including the followings:

- Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons is an act of intercession (Gen. 48:8-23).
- Joshua interceded for the people after the sin of Achan (Josh. 7:6-9).
- Deborah's song comprises intercessory notes (Judges 5:31).
- David's prayer for deliverance of the people from pestilence (II Sam. 24:17);
- Elijah's prayer for the widow's son (I Ki. 17:20), and for rain (I Ki. 18:42);
- Elisha's prayer for the widow's son (2 Kings 4:33), and opening of the young man's eyes (2 Kings 6:17);
- Hezekiah's prayer for the people who had not prepared to eat the Passover (2 Chronicle 30:18);
- Nehemiah's prayer (Neh. 1:5-11).
- Job made intercession for his children (Job 1:5), and for his friends (Job 42:8-10),
- Jeremiah offered several intercessions (Lam. 2:20, 5:1, 19, Jer. 10:23, 14:7, 14:19-22).
- Isaiah did it (Isa. 25:1-12),
- Ezekiel made intercessions to God for the people (Eze. 9:8, 11:13).
- Daniel made intercessions for Jerusalem and the people (Dan. 9:16-19).
- There are several Many of them could be called intercessory Psalms (Psa. 20:1-9, 25:22, 28:9, 35:13, 51:18).
- There are also evidences of intercession recorded in the New Testament as follows:

Ephesians 6:18. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. This urged us to pray for all the saints; 1 Timothy 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men (NKJV), Requires us to pray on behalf of all men; 2 Corinthians 1:11. You also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many; Philippians 1:19. For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; Romans 10:1. Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation; James 5:14. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; Matthew 5:44. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; Galatians 6:2. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

There are many challenges to the ministry of intercession - the flesh and the devil are primary. Your body will say, "It's too early, it's too late" and the enemy will fight this like nothing else because he knows the power of our prayers. Distractions, doubts will assail. Be strong and filled with the Holy Spirit. Resist the devil and let flee (James 4:7)

Nature of Intercession Ministry

The ministry of intercession is now an indispensable resource in church management and growth especially in fostering good Christian living. The ministry of intercession therefore functions in heaven and on earth. In view of this, intercession could be regarded in the nature of the followings as noted by David Cannistraci (2017):

Intercession is Prayer: Every believer should go before the Lord in prayer. Prayer is a lightning rod, a live wire. It's a connection with the only One who has the power to meet every need, solve every problem, and restore every loss. Intercession is a unique "gear" of prayer that takes up the needs of others. In 1 Timothy 2, "intercessions" means a bold appeal in behalf of others. It denotes empathy, compassion and personal involvement, in that we don't just see the needs identify with them and get involved. Nothing in scripture calls intercession a spiritual gift, but intercessors are a gift to me.

Intercession is the Ministry of Jesus: During his earthly life Christ offered both requests and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his devotion." Hebrews 5:7 (NET). The cross itself was an act of intercession. Jesus identified with us in our need, came to God compassionately on our behalf and carried the burden of our sins so that we might be free and blessed. That's intercession of Jesus Christ on our behalf. You never know how powerful your prayers are too deliver you from your darkest moments.

Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf. "Hebrews 7:25 (NLT). This is who Jesus is. He does not stand aloof from the needs around Him. He gets involved, feels the pain, takes action to resolve it. But nothing we do in these areas will make any impact apart from the power of God in prayer. God has a role for each of us as believers: The Ministry of Intercession. Because prayer is the work of the church, church leaders must all participate and lead the way. The twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Acts 6:2-4 (NKJV). One of the greatest examples of intercession is found in Ex. 17:8-13.

While Joshua and the army of Israel fought the Amalekites in the valley below, Moses help up his hands in intercession all day long. When he grew weary, Aaron and Hur held up his hands until the battle was won. That's the amazing power of intercession!

Intercession is Spiritual Warfare. We're not waging war against enemies of flesh and blood alone. Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV) says "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places". The ministry of intercession is the key to God's battle plan for our lives. It's the kind of prayer that endures setbacks and overcomes obstacles. It's prayer that "presses on" until we come into God's will in whatever situation we're facing (Phil. 3:12).

Characteristics of an Intercessor

An intercessor should be able to possess certain attributes and the qualities should be those of our model intercessor Jesus Christ. As portrayed Eddie Smith (2012) the following qualities help make a good intercessor:

Dedication (Steadfastness): An intercessor must be committed to Christ, to others and to the task of intercession. There simply is no substitute for dedication. Colossians 1:23 says if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. Also, Colossians 4:2 required of us to Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; Other supporting scriptures includes; 1 Core 15:58, 2 Peter 3:17, Col 2:5.

Reliability: It's not our ability that God looks for, but our availability. An intercessor must be a reliable, dependable and faithful Christian to others. 1 Corinthians 1:9 inform us that God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. God also require us to be a reliable person in intercession ministry.

Integrity: Integrity simply means a state of being morally sound, honesty and freedom from corruption. In Psalms 26:11-12, David said But as for me, I will walk in my integrity; Redeem me and be merciful to me. V12 My foot stands in an even place; In the congregations I will bless the Lord. Eddie Smith (2012) paraphrased this portion of the Bible that in all my public trust I will walk uprightly and pay strict attention to truth, honesty, justice and mercy. I will not plan evil schemes or use myself to promote my own cause.

Objectivity and empathy. Objectivity and empathy are tricky. Both are necessary, but they must be kept in balance. If we are empathetic intercessors who cannot find objectivity in prayer, we will soon be consumed emotionally and ultimately overwhelmed with the prayer needs we bear. On the other hand, if we are objective intercessors without empathy, who cannot feel the needs of those for whom we have been commissioned to pray, our prayer life will grow stale and eventually dry up. Proverbs 10:9 says He who walks with integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will become known.

Kindness. Kindness is a necessary commodity for the intercessor-advocate, Kindness is one of the ways you can tell from a person's life if they are a follower of Christ as we read in Galatians 5:22-23.

Discipline. The intercessor will not be successful without applying discipline to his or her work of intercession. 2 Timothy 1:7 says For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Leadership ability: In his book Wind and Fire, Bruce Larson points out some interesting facts about sandhill cranes: "These large birds that fly great distances across continents have three remarkable qualities. First, they rotate leadership. No one bird stays out in front all the time. Second, they choose leaders who can handle turbulence. And then, all during the time one bird leads, the rest honk their affirmation. "That's not a bad model for the church. Certainly, we need leaders who can handle turbulence and who are aware that leadership ought to be shared. But most of all, we need a church where we all honk encouragement. It is safe to say that some of our prayer assignments are also being borne by other Christians. The apostle Paul warned us that we are "not to think of [ourselves] more highly than [we] ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).

High moral character: According to Eddie Smith (2012), a Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka, who was acquainted with both Christianity and Buddhism, was once asked what he thought was the great difference between the two. He replied, "There is much that is good in each of them, and probably in all religions. "But what seems to me to be the greatest difference is that you Christians know what is right and have the power to do it, while we Buddhists know what is right but have not any such power." Just as a good advocate should be a person of high moral character, an effective intercessor must also live a holy life of high moral character.

A team player: Corporate intercession is almost an unknown art. In most places it is individual intercession in a corporate setting. Thankfully, the church is beginning to understand how to gather as a group and approach God as one person. The abilities to work well under pressure and with minimal supervision are grace

gifts that God has given most intercessors. People of prayer, we admire your faithfulness to voluntarily spend the time you do in prayer on behalf of others. Intercessors are emphatic mediators (Gen 18:21-33; Exo 32:9-14; Num 14:11-19). They are also available and self-sacrificing vessels (Eze. 22:29-30). Through intercessory prayer we become partners with God in bringing His will to fruition in the world.

Argument 1: Intercession Ministry Function on Earth

There is need to state based on biblical evidences that the ministry of intercession is very much in operation on earth before the advent of Jesus Christ, during the life of Jesus Christ and after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This can be seen through the following domains:

The Church as an Intercessor on earth: The church is seen as a congregation of believers united in Christ. The church is therefore an institution of intercession where prayers are rendered by the body of Christ to God on behalf of believers. In those days, intercession was done through Gods ordained priests, prophets who intercede on behalf of the people to God for forgiveness of sins and showers of God's blessings (1 kings 8:30).

Sub unit (group) as an Intercessor: The church is made up of different groups; women group, men group, youth, children, clergy etc. These groups are also involved in intercession of behalf of leaders of sort ranging from the church, political office holders, members etc.

Individuals as intercessor on earth: To start with, Jesus Christ was an individual intercessor (Prophecy of Isaiah 59:16) during his life time on earth. He encouraged all his disciples to emulate his standard of intercession as an individual. Biblical evidences indicating individual intercessors in both the old and new testaments such as Moses (Exodus 32:30-32) It is therefore the duty of every Christian to individually intercede on behalf family, fellow brethren, church leaders, body of Christ and political leaders.

Argument 2: Intercession Ministry Function in Heaven

This argument unveils Jesus Christ as a model intercessor who reside in heaven and interceding on our behalf. There are also scriptural evidences that the Holy Spirit plays the role of intercession. An intercessor is someone who intercedes, mediates, advocates, or pleads on behalf of another. The prayer found in John 17 is one of the many instances in the scriptures when we see the Savior acting in His role as our intercessor with Heavenly Father. The Bible shows us that Jesus speaks to the Father on our behalf. Romans 8:34 says that Jesus "is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." In 1 John 2:1, we read that Jesus is our "advocate with the Father," and from Hebrews 7:25, we learn that Jesus "-always lives to intercede" for us.

There are some biblical evidences portraying Jesus Christ as the model of intercession (Samuel Nyatsikor, 2023). Among these are the books of Isaiah 59:16; Luke 22:31-32; Timothy 2. Similarly, the Holy Spirit as an Intercessor. Evidences abound in the Bible about the intercessory ability of the Holy Spirit. S there is need for us to depend on the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:26-27, apostle Paul shorts saying "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. V27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes Intercession for the saints according to the will of God. It is important that each of us is filled with the spirit of prayer. Intercession should become prophetic, guided by what God says and reveals.

Conclusion

The ministry of intercession is an indispensable area or department in Christian gathering. An overview of the intercession ministry has been discussed. The need for intercession therefore cannot be overemphasized. More so, intercession has been viewed as the process whereby an individual and groups prays to God Almighty on behalf of others. A lot of biblical evidences have been revealed to massively support the ministry of intercession. Argument one disclosed the fact that intercession can function on earth drawing evidences from both the old and new testaments. More so, there are biblical scriptures in support of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit interceding in heaven on our behalf.

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COMPREHENSIVE ETHICAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR A CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Abstract

Ethical leadership is described as a type of leadership which is inculcated by well-groomed leaders who believe in exhibiting inward beauty outside, who believe that every speech made must be followed by the appropriate actions, who believe that demonstrating private life in the public is the right thing to do. This set of leaders believes so much in the saying, "do as I say".

Ethical leadership should be a subject of national discuss and be integrated into school's curriculum from the nursery section. It should be a course that must run from the nursery to the higher institution. The decadence that the society is presently experiencing is as a result of different leadership approaches exhibited by the previous leaders at all levels in many Christian schools. As John C. Maxwell most favourable quote is "everything rises and falls on leadership". Leaders are the live wire of any organization, community, state and nation.

Once the leaders get it right, the followers would follow suit. The predicament being experienced in Christian schools today is a shortfall on leadership. The present leaders groom the future leaders. To me, leadership is everything. Comprehensive ethical leadership framework for a Christian educational institution is a scholarly written piece towards enhancing the scope of Christian education and ethical leadership framework. This piece tends to promulgate new approach to establishing framework for ethical leadership in Christian Schools.

Keywords: Christian education, Ethical framework, leadership, Christian leaders,

Introduction

Jesus Christ demonstrated this type of leadership when Apostle Luke addressed His Excellency, Theophilus in the book of Acts 1:1. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach" (KJV). The phrase "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach" simply connotes that our Lord Jesus Christ never preached was he never put into practice. Such is the case of ethical leaders. They are practitioners. They are doers. They are action oriented. They say what they do, and do what they say. They do not belong to the group of leaders whose unwritten law is "do as I say, do not do what I do". Ethical leaders are people of their words. You cannot meet them where they once forbid you not to go. They are perfect model of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ also demonstrated the kind of leaders he was when addressed the people of his days: But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working" - John 5:17 (NIV) If today's Christian educational leaders could emulate the virtues exhibited by our Lord Jesus, all Christian schools would be the most outstanding of all. According to Hitesh Bhasin, ethical leadership is defined as a type of leadership that is incorporated by those leaders who demonstrate appropriate and ethical behavioral conduct inside as well as outside the organization. Leaders with ethical leadership styles exhibit good values via their words and actions, plus they do what is right, show integrity, and do not overlook wrongdoing.

Literature Review

The Purpose of Developing an Ethical Leadership Framework for a Christian Educational Institution.

The need of the hour is developing an ethical leadership framework for a Christian educational institution. The moral decadence being experienced in most Christian schools should not continue. There is need for highly placed Christian schools' leaders to declare state of emergency in school leadership system towards inculcating ethical leadership frame such schools.

Until ethical leadership framework is admonished in Christian schools, such institutions may be not better off from their counterparts in the world. In those days, parents of other religious beliefs send their children to attend Christian schools because of the moral values and ethics highly exhibited by the school authority. Gone are those days. Many Christian schools are more corrupt than the secular ones. Though we still have very few Christian schools where ethical leadership is highly valued with their students doing well in all spheres of life.

Identification of Core Ethical Principles

This study will identify the core ethical principles which should be incorporated into Christian schools. Koocher and Keith-Spiegel (1998): *Ethics in Psychology*, the following nine ethical principles for psychologists were outlined. According to these authors, these principles can be applied to ethics by leaders of different fields. Koocher and Keith-Spiegel's nine core ethical principles are so basic but could not just be overlooked. Here are the nine core values of ethical principles as analyzed.

1. Do No Harm
2. Respecting Autonomy
3. Benefiting Others
4. Being Just
5. Being Faithful
6. According Dignity
7. Treating Others With Caring And Compassion
8. Pursuit of Excellence
9. Accepting Accountability

For the sake of the scope of this study, I will explain five out of the nine ethical values listed above that are mostly related to Christianity.

Core Ethical Leadership Framework

- 1. Do No Harm:** Do no harm “is a universal phrase used to express ethical rules of modern medicine. From memorial, it is generally that this aspect has been taken care room the ancient Greek Hippocratic oath, no translations of the oath contain this language. This simply means that medical personnel most especially doctors should help their patients as much as they can by recommending solutions or treatments for which the potential benefits outweigh the risks of harm. The "Do No Harm" principle is also used in conflict matters
- 2. Respecting Autonomy:** Respect for autonomy implies acknowledging that autonomous agents are entitled to hold their own viewpoints, are free to make choices, and act voluntarily according to their values, beliefs and preferences. Basically autonomy includes (a) freedom of thought, including the ability to “think for oneself”, make decisions, determine preferences and moral assessment for oneself; (b) autonomy of intension or willpower, this is regarded as the ability of a moral agent to decide on their plans of actions and activities; and (c) lastly, autonomy of action, this involves doing what the agent thinks and intends or wills to do.
- 3. Benefitting Others:** This concept of beneficence and benevolence simply means personal qualities of mercy, kindness, generosity, and charity. The language of a principle or rule of beneficence refers to a normative statement of a moral obligation to act for the others' benefit, helping them to further their important and legitimate interests, often by preventing or removing possible harms.⁸
- 4. Being Just:** The principle of justice says that mental health professionals have a responsibility to be fair and impartial. It also states that people have a right to access and benefit from advances that have been made in the field of psychology. This simply means that leaders of all cadres should work towards treating of different races, colours, ages equally
- 5. Treating Others With Caring And Compassion:** Treating others with caring and compassion is a great value that was taught by our Lord Jesus Christ. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This concept has been widely accepted as "Golden Rule" This means that you should treat others as you would like to be treated. This ethical value can only be reached when on you are passionate about welfare of others around you.

Ethical Principles of Integrity, Justice, Compassion, and Humility.

- 1. Ethical Integrity:** is principle states that, in research and practice, psychologists should never attempt to deceive or misrepresent. This simply means that there should not be any form of deception in fabricating or manipulating outcomes of a particular research. Leaders should also aim at being honest, straightforward and transparent in their dealings.
- 2. Ethical Justice:** The principle of justice says that mental health professionals have a responsibility to be fair and impartial. It also states that people have a right to access and benefit from advances that have been made in the field of psychology. This simply means that leaders of all cadres should work towards treating of different races, colours, ages equally
- 3. Ethical humility or moral humility:** This is widely defined of being aware of moral fallibility (Gow, 1996; Kupfer, 2003; Mason, 2020). According to Smith and Kouchaki (2018), “Moral humility is a virtue composed of having (a) a recognition of one's own moral fallibility, (b) an appreciation for the moral strengths and moral views of others, and (c) a moral perspective that transcends the self” (p. 79)¹⁰. Take for instance; people may have specific concerns related to their age, socioeconomic status, race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or disability.

Framework for Ethical Leadership in Christian Education

- Leadership:** Christian institutional leaders should understand that they are generational builders and the students are learning unwritten laws from their speeches and behavioural patterns. They must be conscious that those they are leading are seeing them as role models and believe that whatever they do is the best. As Christian institutional leaders, the following traits should be paramount in them.
 - Optimistic Leaders: Leaders must always be on the line of positivity.
 - Trustworthy Leaders: Leaders must be very reliable..
 - Emotional-Intelligent Leaders:
 - Selfless Leaders: Leaders must be ready for selfless service.
 - Courageous Leaders:: Leaders must be bold in taking steps
- Accountability:** Christian institutional leaders should know that accountability is a core course in moving Christianity forward and must be opened and ready for thorough investigation of their books of records for necessary actions by the required authority.
- Honesty:** The saying: honesty is the best policy should be written boldly in Christian institutional leaders' minds. Being truthful and straightforward build great confidence among the followers.
- Openness:** Christian institutional leaders should be transparent with open minds for check and balance except where such information is restricted by the court of law as provided in the constitution. .
- Integrity:** Christian institutional leaders must come alive and be themselves without allowing external influence to seduce them to take inappropriate decisions that could jeopardize the future of their calling into such a noble ministry.
- Objectivity:** Christian institutional leaders should shun any partisan politics in decision making and must be strictly objective in arriving at final decision without any prejudice or partiality. .
- Selfishness:** Christian institutional leaders should by way of urgency begin to develop for the sake of the incoming generation..

Best Ethical Leadership Framework for Christian Education

Recently, ethics for Christian educators and leaders has taken on significance among current debates on the growth and standardization of Christianity. The secular ethical guidelines deal with moral issues but cannot fully be adopted in the Christian circle because of omission of biblical values which are important to Christianity. In fact that is what distinguishes Christian educators from their secular counterparts. While secular educators may be guided by ethical guidelines as established by their governing councils or the law guiding such professional body by the government, the theological school should build their ethics on biblical standard.

The followings traits are ethical guidelines within Christian education.

1. Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit remains the separator between Christian leaders and secular leaders. Holy Spirit has always been readily available to help every Christian educator or leader to set up standards according to the will of God. Jesus Christ promised his disciples to make sure they receive Holy Spirit for the purpose of knowing the truth and staying in the truth always.

“I have much more to tell you but you cannot bear it now. Yet when that one I have spoken to you about comes—the Spirit of truth—he will guide you into everything that is true. For he will not be speaking of his own accord but exactly as he hears, and he will inform you about what is to come. He will bring glory to me for he will draw on my truth and reveal it to you. Whatever the Father possesses is also mine; that is why I tell you that he will draw on my truth and will show it to you. John 16:12-15 (Philip). When a Christian scholar or leader makes Holy Spirit their guide, it boosts their reasoning and gives them ability to promulgate laws that are biblically related and establish guidelines which are near the biblical principles.

2. Wisdom:

Christian ethical leaders must know that godly wisdom is a key in setting up rules and regulations towards guidance which would eventually result to ethical framework for such institution. The book of wisdom usually referred to as Proverbs is full of scriptural verses reminding Christian leaders to seek godly wisdom.

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding - indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. - Proverbs 2:1-8 (NIV)

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding - indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if

you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones

It should be noted that the wisdom being discussed here is spiritual in nature. Christian leaders are counseled against using worldly wisdom in making their judgments. "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God".

Notwithstanding, Christian educators and leaders are expected to have better skills and perform very well in their careers using applied discretion and what they have been taught. In addition to these is exercising Godly wisdom which is spiritual in nature. "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God".

3. Service:

Ethical Christian educators and leaders are servants. They are always consumed to serve others wholeheartedly. They build good friendship with their students and followers. They exist to give not to take. They are added value to those they are leading. "He said to the disciples: You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desire to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The bible vehemently goes against pride. This trait when found in a Christian deprives such from becoming effective leaders or Christian educator. "In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." 16 To humble oneself is necessary in order to become a servant leader. A servant leader cannot allow pride in one's position or level of authority to prevent serving others.

Ethical Leadership Framework Necessary for Christian Education

Leadership skill is an essential tool in becoming a successful Christian educator or leader. Though there are many skills that leaders should possess, but for the sake of this study, we shall be looking at three major leadership skills as far as Christian education is concerned. These skills include 1) moral reasoning, 2) decision-making, and 3) interpersonal skills.

1. Moral Reasoning: Audun Dahl, Melanie Killen (2018) defined moral reasoning as an integral to morality and its development. We define moral reasoning as the formation of judgments in accordance with principles concerning others' welfare, rights, and fairness. By this definition, moral reasoning is distinct from other types of social reasoning, for instance, reasoning about social conventions and traditions. One of the greatest skills Christian leaders should possess is ability to reason morally and spiritually. One thing that distinguishes Christian education from the secular is the spirituality. Same thing goes with Christian educators and leaders. Being spiritually reasonable is one key that makes Christian education more viable and glorious than the secular. It is the responsibility of every leader in the Christian circle to imbibe the culture of moral reasoning using biblical concept.

2. Interpersonal Skills: In as much as leadership is all about managing and directing people, the need to possess interpersonal skills cannot be over-emphasized. In any Christian organization, the possessing of such skills will help leaders grow such organization to enviable heights.

Interpersonal skills may be verbal and nonverbal communication, the ability to listen, handle conflict, communicate, teamwork, empathy, optimistic and negotiate. Being flexible and positive, able to listen, and communicating well are important criteria for success at work.

3. Decision-making: According to Wikipedia, decision-making is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several possible alternative options.¹⁹ Decision making can be either rational or irrational. The decision-making process is a reasoning process based on assumptions of values, preferences and beliefs of the decision-maker.²⁰ Every decision-making process produces a final choice, which may or may not prompt action.

A great leadership skill that must be worked upon is ability to make decision without blaming anyone for its consequences. A leader makes decision and stays by it. Whatever be the outcome of such decision is taken as the will of God, whether good or bad. Ethical decision-making processes involve evaluating and deciding on a course of action that is consistent with ethical principles and values. The process guides decision-makers through problems to reach a workable solution, helping them avoid unethical alternatives and unattractive consequences.

Ethical Leadership Framework as Applied by the Management of International Institute of Christian Theologians, Scholars and Professionals (ICTSP)

The International Institute of Christian Theologians, Scholars and Professionals (ICTSP) is a global forum of Christian theologians, scholars, leaders, coaches and professionals around the world. It is aimed at bringing together like minds who share same common purpose to foster deeper relationship and exchange of sound ideologies among concerned members.

Based on the core values of the founding fathers which have the following aims and objectives as guidelines for leadership framework of this institution

1. To raise the standard of concerned Christians and expose them to 21st Century system of getting things done rightly.
2. To encourage excellence and specialist expertise in matters pertaining to Christian education and professionalism.
3. To help members achieve their personal aspirations, fulfill their career ambitions and develop their innate potential.
4. To support lifelong learning and encourage education in Christian setups.
5. To give professional recognition to the knowledge and skills of Christian Theologians, Schools and Professionals.

According to <https://ictsp.org>, the International Institute of Christian Theologians, Scholars and Professionals (ICTSP) has since been become one of the fastest growing Christian research institutes in the 21st century. The leaders are inspired to emulate principles of ethical leadership framework as enumerated above towards effectiveness and efficiency.

The result of this singular step has made the institute a sought-after and a place where Christian researchers find abode and upgrade their knowledge and skills in solving critical problems associated with their scholarly mandate. Right from engagement stage of both paid and voluntary staff, the human resources department educates the potential staff on the need to apply good Christian ethics and moral values into their operations.

The research and development (R & D) department keeps doing more research in updating the system on the latest trend in Christian leadership. The outcome is always being published in the Institute's journal called The Mature journal of Christian Theologians, Scholars and Professionals (MJ-CTSP). The Mature Journal is research template where Christians, scholars, theologians and professionals make known their new discoveries and publish their thoughts for the whole world to view.

In a nutshell, International Institute of Christian Theologians, Scholars and Professionals (ICTSP) adoption of ethical leadership framework has distinguished the institute from the rest and made her get kudos from scholars around the world.

Methodology

This study dwells deeply on the need to have ethical leadership framework at Christian educational institutions at all levels - from cradle to the topmost level. The saying: 'catch them young' should always be in the dictionary of every Christian leader. Once the students get it right from the elementary schools, the future of such community or nation would be great.

This study opens the eyes of the readers to the need to urgently embrace ethical leadership framework in all Christian schools and integrate the subject of ethical leadership in the school curriculum for the purpose of building the next generation of Christian leaders.

The research employs contextualized approach to analyze the nitty-gritty of the foundation of ethical leadership framework. This methodological approach is geared towards the two key features: the analytical framework and finality of the source by the authors under review.

The primary source of information is from Holy Bible where scriptural quotations were drawn from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the prophets whose giants strides made great impact in the lives of ancient Israel and their neighbourhood.

The secondary source of information consists of scholarly pieces written by different authors whose writings are in accordance with the subject being discuss. The words by seasoned writers such as Koocher, G. P., & Keith-Spiegel, etc.

The study further takes cognizance of articles or journals from seasoned writers via internet. Internet remains the singular source for largest data collection. So the author makes use of internet facilities to draw data and information from well meaning websites for the purpose of bringing home the point under discussion. The main reasons for selecting these sources are that their writings are contemporary and relevant to the subject being discussed

Discussion

Becoming an ethical leader requires a re-centering of one's life. Viewing the world from a biblical perspective is a must. Preparing oneself through careful Bible study is one key to becoming more like Christ, the ultimate leader. Scripture also provides numerous other examples of positive leadership qualities.

Leadership, according to Maxwell (2002b), is not about the things we do; that is management. Leadership, he insists, "is the person who we are – our character inspires others." Leadership is about influence, and "moral leadership begins with moral leaders" (Lashway, 1996, p. 3). Leaders teach with actions, not just with words. What one does is who one is.

Thus, to become an ethical leader, one must do more than follow a set of rules. Lashway (1996) notes, "The leader's responsibility is complex and multi-dimensional, rooted less in technical expertise than in simple human integrity"

It is therefore recommended that ethical framework should be applied in all Christian schools to fast-track the need for bible-based institutions towards integrating Jesus leadership style into the Christian based institutions and directly integrating the same culture in upcoming Christian generals.

Conclusion

Educational leaders influence a large number of followers ranging from students, to teachers, to parents. No matter what leadership style or combination of styles you choose to apply, leaders must realize that their influence is what counts.

A Christian leader, who is overseeing about one hundred students, will have to deal with more than one hundred parents and probably more than twenty staff. These are direct relationship he has for being a teacher. When you look at the siblings of such students, friends of parents and relatives of the staff that are not part of the school system, the number grows to over five hundred people. What an incredible number of people this educational leader influences day in day out! The question is, are educational leaders making the most of this opportunity to influence people for Christ? Simply by the way leaders conduct themselves, they witness for or against Christ.

Christian education environment is one of the most effective ways to make Christ known to all and sundry. Developing and applying ethical framework in school environment would enable more people to come to Christ and get to know more about God's plan for their lives. Christian's school environment remains the most effective medium to positively influence others for Christ and inculcate leadership style of Jesus into the future leaders. Whatever profession or career you choose to spend your entire life in, you must pass through teachers whose ethical values have great effect on your decision and personality in the nearest future.

This is a clarion call to all Christian leaders and educators to always be conscious of what brings us together than dwelling on what divides us. Christ is the bond that brings all Christians in the world together. So developing an ethical framework that is in line with the Holy Scripture would go a long way to help catch them young and sustain the density of holiness and purity among future leaders of the largest and most concentrated religion in the world.

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CHRISTIANITY IN THE DIGITALIZED AGE

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Abstract

Christianity remains the largest religious sect in the world, with over 2 billion adherents. Despite different persecutions from different quarters, Christianity is on the rise. In any age, Christianity takes the lead among religious organizations when it comes to welcoming new technological discoveries. In the 17th century, when the printing press was newly introduced, Christianity was so marveled at to an extent that the first set of bibles, usually referred to as the King James Version (KJV), and was published in 1611. In the early 20th century, when radio was newly discovered, Christianity took over the radio world and used it to preach the gospel until the whole radio world was saturated with the message of Christ. The same thing goes with the introduction of television (TV).

Telecast evangelists arose in mass throughout the world where people have access to TV, and a lot of people were won to Christ. In the 21st century, which is generally referred to as the digital age, Christian leaders all over the world are now using internet technology to minister Christ to the generation Z, or homo digitalis. This article gives brief report on the need to instill the culture of digitalization in the hearts of the readers, especially the church leaders. With digitalization, a single person could minister Christ to billions of people at the lowest cost. Indeed, the future robotic age will never leave Christianity behind, as more Christians will fully maximize it to bring home the message of Christ.

Keywords: **digital age, Christianity, technology, Christ, church, religion.**

Introduction

Digitalization has indeed turned the world into a global village. Information is now at the fingertips of users of Android or smart phones and operators of laptops or computers. Geographical distance no longer creates barriers. Feedback could be gotten in the twinkle of an eye. Product and service delivery has become better and faster. Information about anything is now made possible with different search engine optimization (SEO) platforms like Bing, Yahoo, and Google and social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc.

The purpose of this article is to instill the culture of digitalization in the hearts of the readers, especially the church leaders. With digitalization, a single person could minister Christ to billions of people at the lowest cost. Digitalization is the fulfillment of the prophecy according to Habbakuk 2:14:

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (NIV).

With the introduction of the Internet in worship centers, it is easier to carry out the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the book of Matthew. 28:18-20. The message of Christ must reach the whole world before rapture can take place. Until the last person hears the gospel, Jesus Christ may tarry for a very long time. The best medium of communicating the message of the Christ to the cross is to apply the technology called Internet.

Christianity in the Digital Age

Christianity in the Digital Age refers to the impact of digital technology and the internet on the practice, dissemination, and engagement of Christianity. The rise of the digital age has brought about significant changes in how Christians interact with their faith, connect with others, and access religious resources. Some key aspects of Christianity in the Digital Age are online fellowship, virtual church, Digital ministry, etc

Christianity is spreading at a very high speed due to the usage of digital devices like phones, laptops, etc. The combination of Christianity and digitalization has greatly contributed to the spreading of the gospel of Christ, especially among Generation Z, or Homo Digitalis. The young people have made the internet their virtual home. They spend more time connecting with people from different parts of the world through digital devices. The marriage between Christianity and digitalization has now been blessed with productivity, prompt delivery, easy accessibility, speed, accuracy, etc. With an increase in the population of youths on a daily basis, Church leaders have been advised to embrace digitalization in order to attract this set of people to embrace the gospel.

According to United Nations:

Today, there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24, accounting for 16 percent of the global population. By 2030—the target date for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that make up the 2030 Agenda—the number of youth is projected to have grown by 7 percent, to nearly 1.3 billion.

With digitalization, a single person could minister Christ to billions of people at the lowest cost. The number of Christians in the world is soaring; hence, the need to embrace technology to sustain this figure cannot be overemphasized. The youth make up the largest percentage of these newly converted Christians. These youths, who have made the Internet their second home, needs constant teaching and counseling to sustain their salvation.

The population of Christians in the world is too large to be neglected.

There will be over 2.6 billion Christians worldwide by the middle of 2023 and around 3.3 billion by 2050, according to a report published in early January by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. The 2,604,381,000 estimate for the mid-year 2023 Christian population total is a 44,506,000-person increase from the mid-year 2022 total. The new estimates of the worldwide Christian population for both 2025 and 2050 are higher than the 2022 report's estimates. The 2023 report projects a Christian population of 2,662,979,000 in 2025 (up 25.8 million from the 2022 estimate) and a population of 3,342,878,000 in 2050 (up 8.8 million). The number of Christians as a percentage of the world population declined from 34.5% to 32.3% from 1900 to 2000, before rising 0.1% from 2000 to 2022. If the report's estimates prove accurate, Christians will comprise 34.4% of the global population in 2050.

The Future of Christianity in the Digital Age

Many people are concerned about the future of Christianity in an increasingly secular society that celebrates individuality, personal choice, and consumerism. At the same time, more people express an interest in spirituality than ever before. Today, you can find countless religious communities online where you can connect with others around the world. People can now pursue spirituality without worrying about their physical location, travel expenses, or busy schedules. They can join digital churches that they feel are more compatible with their beliefs than local churches if they are not biblical.

In recent years, many churches have made it their mission to modernize and take advantage of technology. This can be seen in apps, virtual reality tours, and connections through social media. It is essential to recognize the benefits and pitfalls of digitalization in religion. Today, churches use apps for holy and religious purposes, such as Bible verses, meditation, and prayer requests and reminders. Virtual reality tours are used to allow churchgoers to explore the inside of the church building without having to travel there.

Conclusion

Everything seems possible with the advent of the internet. Geographical location poses no distance any longer. In fact, the internet made us believe that the reign of Jesus Christ from the city of Jerusalem to the whole world was possible. The Internet's founding fathers said the Internet was still in its infant stage. What a paradox? If with this wonder that the Internet is performing at this infant stage, what will the world be like in the year 2050, when a lot of discoveries will have been made and artificial intelligence (AI) will have taken over almost all the aspects of life.

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MOTIVATION: IMPROVING YOUR SELF ESTEEM**Dr. Crispina Feyisara ADEWOLE***ICTSP Global Director of Mission & Entrepreneurship*

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Introduction

Everyone at some point in life lacks self-confidence, doubts their abilities, and has negative thoughts about their body, mind, and status. Negative self-appraisal can affect how we live our lives, deal with problems, and deal with life issues. How do you define self-esteem? How do you distinguish it from momentary uncertainties and offer information and skills for improving self-esteem so that we can be at our best?

What is self-esteem? It refers to an individual's sense of value or worth. In practical terms, it is about what an individual thinks of himself or herself. It is something called self-image, self-concept, or self-perception.

We can view ourselves in a mirror and recognize ourselves, as opposed to animals that can't recognize themselves in a mirror. Unfortunately, what we see is not always accurate because what we see through is often compromised. This is because we perceive things through the interpretation skills that our parents and environment gave us. For example, if I put on dark glasses, everything I look at will appear dark, even if the thing is white. To make matters worse, we place values on things based on our perception, whether they are clean or corrupt. If a child is raised to think that she is stupid and will never amount to anything, that child grows into adulthood thinking he or she is worthless and will never become anything.

If another child receives frequent criticism about his body weight, that child will associate that child's chubbiness as an undesirable thing. The child is likely to grow up with low self-esteem and a lack of confidence. The way we value ourselves becomes a problem when our scale is significantly lower than the real value. For example, if a grain seller thinks his smaller measuring cup or bowl is the same as the standard measuring cup, which is larger, and sells his grain with the smaller cup, the grain seller will cheat the buyers every time he uses the cup until he realizes it and changes the cup or sells at a lower price.

How do I know my Self-esteem Level?

Self-esteem cannot be measured with a measuring scale or weight indicator. Are you happy or unhappy with yourself or your life? When you think about yourself, do you see negative traits like being unworthy, weak, unloved, inferior, useless, a failure, unattractive, etc.? Low self-esteem is confirmed by a lack of confidence and a negative opinion about oneself. There are a few examples of things that might indicate low self-esteem. Getting nervous about talking to strangers: you are not smart if you cannot understand an instructor. Negative self-talk like "I am fat, I am not good, I am overweight. It is my fault; I probably deserved to be treated that way." Children may not engage in many leisure or recreational activities because they may believe that they are not good enough or that they don't deserve to have fun.

The following traits are usually found among the people of low self-esteem

Criticism: people with low self-esteem often lack self-care or become too self-conscious of their outward appearance as opposed to their inward appearance because they do not have a high sense of value for themselves, they may think excessively or indulge in other substance use to numb or compensate for their disadvantages.

Ineffective Communication: people with low self-esteem issues often have a passive communication style. They are not assertive in expressing their opinion because they believe it does not matter. They may be afraid of being wrong, lack the energy to stand their ground, and defend their opinion. They would rather forgo their needs than fight for their needs. This case has a lot of problems for the person professionally, relationally, and health-wise.

Always offensive: When you meet someone who usually report you to yourself or others, such person is suffering from self-esteem. They usually misinterpret other's expressions. It is as if everybody hates them or their actions. They pick offense at anything, anyhow and anywhere.

Self-Hatred: They always want to be someone else. Their skin colour, stature, race always annoy them. They always compare themselves with some else. You will hear statement such as "How I wish I am this or that". Low self-esteem people don't see anything good about themselves.

Conclusion

The need for you to accept responsibility and face life reality cannot be over-emphasized. The word of God says you are wonderfully and beautifully made. There is nobody on earth that is more valuable than you.

GOD'S HOUSE: ABOVE EVERY OTHER HOUSE**Apostle (Prof.) Ushie Francis INDE***ICTSP Global Registrar**General Overseer, Straightway Divine Christian Outreach Incorporated, Abuja
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Introduction

There are different types of houses located in different parts of the world with different functions and services. People also patronize these houses for different purposes and reasons best known to them. People tend to seek comfort, satisfaction, pleasure, protection, relaxation, or a solution to their problems, not minding how much it will cost them just to get what they want. In spite of all these reasons maintained above, the truth remains that these houses may not be able to provide satisfaction or permanent solutions to their clients or customers; most of these houses are business- and profit-oriented, with personal interests, nothing more. The primary aim of this articles is to project the image of God and his house above other gods and houses. Types of houses, modes of operations, and what is obtainable from these houses will be looked at, along with their consequences. Furthermore, the benefits of patronizing these houses will also be highlighted, so as to create balance between them.

To say that “God's house is above every other house” is not an overstatement, as God is supreme compared to none. He is the Omnipotent in the sense that he is the Almighty, all-powerful God, the creator of the heavens and the earth. Capable of delivering from harm and danger (Gal 1:1; Rev 19:6; Dan 6:22; I Sam 23:14; Matt 14:26–27). The Almighty God is everywhere and can do all things. He sees and hears everything that goes on—on the face of the earth, in heaven, and beneath the earth. That's why He is called the Omniscience and the Omnipresence (Matt. 19:26, Lk. 18:27, Lk. 1:45, Isaiah 44:26, June 20:21, en.m.wikipedia.org). The God with unlimited power, unquestionable authority, infinite wisdom, knowledge, and understanding says yes, but nobody can say no. The Almighty God said in the book of Isa 2:2–3 that, “In the last days, the Lord's House shall be established at the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and also all nations shall flow unto it. Guidelines and laws are formulated in God's house that are binding on everyone on earth. God, in his wisdom, equipped his house for the end of time to meet the desires of all human beings and offer solutions to their problems. It is his house that people will say, Come, let us go to the house of God that he may teach us his ways so that we may walk in it. It is a reference point. A place of assurance, hope, satisfaction, deliverance, health, and comfort.

God's house has everything that life can offer, even beyond the natural. Once you take your problem or any issue of concern there, there's a guarantee because, with God, all things are possible (Matt 17:20; Mk 10:27; Lk 18:27; Lk. 1:37). It just requires faith and belief in God and his word. Mark 11:24 says, "Therefore I say unto you what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall receive them." God has actually equipped his house ahead of the challenges and calamities that are bound to emanate from the hostility and wickedness of the devil. In the midst of all these calamities, God said that whoever will call on the name of the Lord God shall be saved (Joel 2:32; Acts 26:21). So, God's house is not just an ordinary house but a supernatural one with extraordinary power. He does not lie; he does not change or fail. Whatever he says comes to pass. He is the Alfa and the Omega. He has neither a beginning nor an end (Deut 10:17; Rom 2:11; Acts 10:34; I Pet 1:17; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; Num 23:19; I Sam 15:29; Titus 1:2). God manifests His awesomeness in His house before His people.

Definition of Terms

God: The Oxford English Dictionary defines God as “the creator and ruler of the universe and source of all authority, the supreme being.” Mariam Webster Dictionary says, "God is the supreme or ultimate reality, such as (a) the being perfect in power, wisdom, and godliness who is worshiped in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism as the creator and ruler of the universe." Even though there are so many acclaimed gods all over the world, the truth remains that there is only one God who is the creator of the heavens and the earth, who has power over all creatures and natures (Dan 4:25–32; Dan 5:21–32; Jer 27:4; Ps 83:18). The Almighty God rules over the earth and has dominion over all. All other gods being worshipped by different tribes, communities, cultures, languages, and nations are inconsequential and immaterial, as they are limited in power, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. They are creatures, not the creators.

House: According to Oxford English Dictionary, a house is “a building for human habitation, especially one that consists of a ground floor and one or more upper storeys”; “a building on which people meet for a

particular activity.” Mariani Webster Dictionary defines a house as “a building that serves as living quarters for one or a few families at home; a shelter or refuge such as a nest or den.” Mariani Webster Dictionary also sees a house as a “gambling establishment, a place for business or entertainment, a building in which something is sheltered or stored, a government legislature, deliberation, or consultative assembly.” A house is where people stay, live, or meet for activities.

God's House

There are many types of houses today around the world, such as political and administrative houses, white houses, green houses, club houses, powerful houses or houses of worship and encounter, houses of gods or goddesses, houses of God, etc. The House of the Almighty God, the maker and creator of the heavens and the earth, is different from all other houses. The earth is the house of God, where people live and carry out various activities. The Garden of Eden is the first known house of God, created and established for Adam and Eve to dwell in. He normally comes down for fellowship (Gen 1:1–31; 2:8–10). God was doing the creation while Adam was doing the naming of things, and whatever name Adam gave them was perfect and acceptable. These were the activities that took place during the first house. (Gen. 2:19-20).

In addition, God relates to his people in his house for orderliness. In continuation of this, God gave instruction to Moses on how to construct a house called “the tabernacle,” meaning the tent of meeting (Exo. 25:1–14). Similarly, Solomon built another house of God during his reign as king in accordance with God's instructions and specific pattern (2 Chro 3:1–3; 2 Chro 5:1; 2 Chro 7:11–12). Nehemiah is not left out of the building of God's house. The Bible records that he rebuilt the house of God (Ezra 3:7–13; Neh 4:11–20). It is important to mention that God's house has never ceased to exist, as he continues to relate to His people. It should be noted that God's house is a place of encounter, a place where God meets the needs and desires of His people; God's house is known as the tabernacle, sanctuary, or temple; a house of prayer; and the synagogue is being reformed from one generation to another (Isa 56:7; Matt 21:13; Ps 1:5:16, 19).

Furthermore, God's house is open to all sets of people. The poor and the rich, the slaves and the free, servants and masters No sentiments, racism, tribalism, or discrimination. God's house is accessible to all. The House of God is where laws, policies, and guidelines for the standard of living for all generations and classes of people are derived (Isa 2:2). The House of God is a reference point. Isaiah 2:2 says:

And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains, shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

People all over the world will have to depend on God's house for instruction and the word of his grace, which is able to sustain and give life to every lifeless situation (Jn 6:63; Acts 20:32). In God's house, requests, supplications, and prayers are being made personally and directly to God. Here, people in despair, pain, grievance, and agony distress—the afflicted and the destitute—pour out their hearts unto God. For example, Hannah in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:3; 1 Sam 1:9–12; Mk. 1:23; Mk 3:1; 6:2; Lk 4:33; Matt 4:23; 9:35).

People are delivered from the shackles, clutches, and claws of the enemy and demonic forces; from the kingdom of darkness, unclean and evil spirits are being cast out from people that were possessed, and captives are set free. Justice justice was given to the oppressed, the marginalised, and the downtrodden, while hope is restored to the hopeless (Joel 2:23; Lk 4:18; Job 34:18–19; Isa 30:18; Deut 10:28). Satanic yokes are broken, evil loads and burdens lifted (Isa 10:27; Nahum 1:13; Isa 14:25). God's house is the house of peace, joy, satisfaction, and comfort. In His house, there are many useful gifts, such as spiritual gifts, grace, auction, power, honour, glory, the seven spirits of God (Isa 11:2), spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4–10), and all that pertains to life and godliness, which God gives liberally to his people (2 Pet. 1:3; James 1:5).

Conclusion

God's house is far above other houses because God cannot share his glory with anyone. A place where God manifests his awesomeness, might, and authority over nature and the normal God's house is a place for signs and wonders—unusual miracles. God gives eternal life to his children who believe in the finished works of his Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross of Calvary. God loves unconditionally and gives freely to all. The sun and the rain, air and space to live on the earth are both for the righteous and the unrighteous, the good and the bad. Those who love and appreciate Him as well as those who doubt. His gifts can't be bought with money (Acts 8:19–20). Come to God today and acknowledge his love and work of salvation for mankind (Jn. 3:16). God's House provides the best, offers permanent solutions to all problems, and, above all, gives eternal use. Don't waste money and time on what does not give satisfaction (Isa 55:2; Isa. 55:1-2). Go for the original, not the fake; go for the best rather than the inferior.

FAMILY: THE BREED FOR A HEALTHY SOCIETY**Apostle (Prof.) Ushie Francis INDE***ICTSP Global Registrar**General Overseer, Straightway Divine Christian Outreach Incorporated, Abuja
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Introduction

Undoubtedly, the family plays a very pivotal role in the breeding of good breeds that will eventually make up a healthy society. Family is the first and smallest unit of socialisation where children are raised, shaped, trained, and developed from one state or stage to another. It is popularly said and widely believed that fish can be easily bent when still fresh than when it is tried. The foundation of every structure determines the durability and sustainability of the structure. Parents and elders in the family should not only provide for the physical needs of the children but also imbibe in them good morals and virtues, good conduct, and charisma.

When a child is formed in the womb, it is totally and completely God's responsibility for the formation and nurturing of the child. It is only the mother who carries the child in the womb who contributes to the nurturing of the child by way of eating a good diet, administering proper or adequate medication as will be recommended, and engaging in some exercises to keep the child healthy. The moment the child is born, the entire family swings into action to ensure the proper upbringing of the child with proper nutrition and medication alongside every other basic need, which are not only physical and material needs but also spiritual needs.

If the foundation is properly laid in the home, where the family abodes, and built up as a follow-up by other related units and agencies of socialisation, the society will indeed be a better and healthier environment, so the foundation of children should not be ignored nor overlooked in the family, which is the breeding stage.

Conceptual Clarification/Definition of Terms

Family: According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, family is defined as:

1a) The basic unit in society traditionally consists of two parents rearing their children.

b) spouse and children.

2a); A group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head;

3a) a group of persons of common ancestry'

(b) 'A people or group of people regarded as deriving from a common stock. With the above definition, a family is considered a unit that is made up of parents and children, either living together or at a distance. A family also has a head as an authority who oversees and supervises every activity, ensuring effective compliance, loyalty, obedience, and orderliness. The head is always in charge of the helm of affairs in the family. Bolande Bolaji Blessing (September 30, 2022, in Building the Next Generation of Citizens: The Dimension of Parental Roles)

In 2023, Health Resources and Social Services says that a family is a group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adaptation who live together; all such related persons are considered members of one family.

Breed: Merriam Webster Dictionary says that breed is "to produce offspring by hatching or gestation," to bring up, to nurture," to inculcate by training, e.g., good manners into one's children."

- **Healthy:** beneficial to one's physical, mental, or emotional state, showing physical, mental, or emotional well-being. Healthy economy. Healthy environment. The term healthy" refers to the complete soundness of an individual's spirit, soul, and body.

- **Society:** Merriam Webster Dictionary defines society as 'an endearing and cooperating social group whose members have developed organised patterns of relationships through interaction with one another. A society has to do with a distinguished set of people or groups in a community in a geographical location that pursue a common interest, share the same ideas, and work towards achieving a common goal.

Roles and functions of the family

Provision of Basic Needs: The main and most important role and function of any family is to provide for its occupants the basic needs (necessities) of life. Any family or parents who failed in this area have failed in totality. Talking of basic needs, I want to state here that the most valuable needs a child would need are spiritual needs. So, I will categorise basic needs into two categories: physical needs and spiritual needs. Physical needs are food (diet or nutrition), water, clothing, shelter, education, recreation, and sports. Spiritual needs: virtues, morals, fear of the Lord God, love for God and man, obedience, contentment, integrity phil. 4:8, Gal. 5:19–21, Job 36:11–12, Isa. 1:19.

Discipline: Parents are not to pamper or overlook the ugly deeds of children, as some parents will say leave him; he's still a child. Prov. 23:13 says, 'withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Proverb 22:25 says, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him'. Proverb 29:15 says, 'The rod of reproof gives wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame. Prov. 19:18 says, 'Chasten by son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.'

Bishop Lalachan (2023) has this to say: "The family is the most important single factor in the moulding of a human being. It either prepares him to reach for the ultimate destiny and fulfillment, or it cripples and inhibits him from attaining his original potential when a society disregards its family. It suffers irreparable loss." It is therefore better to do the needful from the beginning than to try to solve a problem that is beyond control. Bishop Lalachan further stated that if the family fails, then all other institutions in society will definitely fail.

Parents as Role Models: Parents in families leave a lasting imprint on the lives of their children through their lifestyles. Children easily learn from what they see with their eyes and from what they hear with their ears. If parents are saying one thing but doing another, children adapt to what they see. If families must produce the next generation of good citizens, then they must be role models. A role model refers to an individual whose achievement, behaviour, or way of life is emulated by others who also aspire to be at the same level as the person (see study.com). A role model is someone we look up to, admire, imitate, and emulate. Someone who inspires others motivates them to imitate their good behavior. In the book of II Timothy 1:5, the Apostle Paul talks about a transition of faith from a grandmother, Lois, to a mother, Eunice, and later to her child. Their unfeigned faith is not compromising, irrespective of what comes.

- **Family:** A place of devotion or prayer. There is a saying that a family that prays together stays together. With prayer in the family, they are bound to overcome trials, difficulties, oppositions, aggression, hostilities, and conflicts and will be able to subdue forces that are likely to attempt to disorganize and frustrate efforts made by parents to put their children in order. During the devotion period, the family members will learn to trust God and depend on him. Moral lessons will be taught and learned from the Holy Book (the Bible), where instructions, principles, and guidance are laid down on how to live a better and more successful life.

The fear of the Lord will be instilled in the lives of family members, especially the children, who need to know the rudiments. Apostle Paul in the book of I Timothy 4:14 admonished Timothy not to allow himself to be despised by any man in his youthful age but to stand firm in faith as an example to other believers in conversation in purity, charity, and in word.

When children are taught continually, it sticks and impresses. Parents are to create quality time for devotion and prayers in their homes. The reason why the family is so unique and fundamental to the breed of a healthy society is because God Himself is the founder of the institution. God has the best standards, guidelines, and principles for its success. His word says in the book of Prov. 22:6 that train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Biblical principles are the guideline, manual, and pattern for breeding healthy citizens for a better society (Prov. 19:14; 22:4; I Tim 6:17).

Conclusion

An ideal family is one that provides all that is required or needed for its members. It gives attention to their children; they are like real friends and companions to their children; it attends to the physical and spiritual needs of their children; it monitors the activities and movements of their children to know what they do and people they mingle or associate with; it does not just provide whatever their children's requests from them but will consider the relevance at the time and consequences of such things in their lives safety first; it helps their children with their homework and educational activities; and it is a good influence on society. On the other hand, an unideal family pampers its children, does not have time for them, provides whatever their children request, not minding the consequences, does not provide the basic physical and spiritual needs for them, and does not have the fear of God in them or in their children. This type of family is a bad influence on society.

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THE JOURNEY OF GLORY

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Introduction

Our scriptural text shall be Deuteronomy 1:1 – 8

The journey of glory is not a journey of sitting on a platter of gold and enjoyment; it is not of sitting for crying; it is not a collective journey, either with friends, relatives, foes, or colleagues. This journey is not a journey you go on anyhow, etc.

Let me give you a few definitions of what glory is, as defined by the English Dictionary.

Glory is fame, praise, or honour that is given to somebody.

Glory is a special cause for pride, respect, and pleasure.

Glory is to set great pleasure or enjoyment in something at the end.

Below are a Few Scriptural Definitions of Glory

As defined by the prophet Jeremiah, to get to an unexpected end of one's desire, "for I know the thought that I think towards you, saith the Lord, though of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end", Jer 29:11.

Getting to your expected end successfully with peace of mind and resting all around without stress is called good success. This is being described and defined by Joshua 1:8: "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but thou shalt meditate there in day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success".

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.

The very moment Devil knows this plan that God has for us, he has been waging war against us not to get to our promised land; he has turned himself into a roaring lion, walking about and seeking for whom to devour (1 Peter 5:8). He has many strategies he uses for our destruction in order for us not to get to our glorious land or promised land.

Below are the Ways Enemies Used to Debar us from Entering into our Glorious Land

(1) Sin: Exodus 20:1–17: These are the instructions that God arranged for us to follow, so as not to go astray before Him. The definition of SIN is Simple Instructions Neglected. The moment we go against the instructions of God, we have committed sin. The Devil knows that the moment we neglect the simple instruction of God, we have no place to go. He will use that against us to entangle us to get to our promised land.

(2). Satan: Satan himself knows we have been used as replacements for him; that is why he is roaring about looking at whom to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

(3). Nations and their Kings: In Psalm 2:1_2, it says, Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves up, and the ruler took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed. This reminds me of the seven nations that gathered themselves together against the Israelites so as not to get to their promised land that is flowing with milk and honey.

(4). Flesh: Our flesh is part of the enemies that are waging war against our glory; the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh would not allow us to do so. I would like you to read from the book of Galatians 5:17–21 and see the obstruction flesh causes.

(5) House hold enemies: The one you are born together with and the enemy of your father lineage would not allow you to do good in life; they know more about your forefathers than you do. They know the details of your generation that you yourself did not know; there is nothing you can hide from them. If you want to rise up, they will pull you down. In Genesis 37:12–28, we see how the brothers of Joseph hated him and sold him to a slave land because of the good potential that God deposited in his life to use in his future glory. I pray for you; you will get to your promised land in Jesus name. Amen.

Before you can get to your promised land, here are few things you need to put in place

(a) Follow the will of God and meditate in His word always, Joshua 1:8.

(b) Always be in the presence of God.

(c) Run away from sin and all its appearances, because sin makes man sink.

(d). Be watchful and prayerful.

(e). Commit your ways to God's hands.

(f). Always keep your secret secrets; don't share your vision, mission, and dreams with anybody except God.

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS IN THE PRIMITIVE AND MODERN AGES

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Introduction

Convincingly speaking, it has been discovered that out of about 4,000 Religions existing in the whole Universe, there are three most popular religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Christianity is the most prominent religion of all because it is the religion that reveals the mind of God to humanity. It is religion that reveals Christ to people and people to God. The agenda of God for humanity is sure and certain. The involvement of Christians in taking a functional and active part in Politics cannot be overemphasized. The plan and purpose of God are for man to fear Him through His teachings and laws. This agenda can only be achieved when Christians take an active part in Politics for a good and formidable government. The main and major objective of this framework is to position us to have the real knowledge and mind of God as His elects. Our responsibilities and assignments in the world of politics as Christians cannot be overemphasized.

"Christianity and Politics in the Primitive Age" is a topic that gives us an understanding and shows the importance of the construction of how Christians participating in politics came into existence. It also reveals the Political Structure that opens ways for cordial relations between Christianity and politics, both in the olden days and in the modern world. The systematic approach and the opportunity given to the Christians to take functional parts in the government, particularly in the Roman Empire, England, America, and so on, are eye-openers. As a result of this, the program of God for humanity to trace back to the right track is His concern. It is imperative to show the world, as children of the most-high God, what we Carry and that we can show forth the glory of God almighty when we are involved and right the wrong. Thus, This write-up is a serious and fascinating work that focuses on the role of Christianity in Politics in the Primitive Age. The laudable achievements and how Christianity gained prominence politically, especially in the Roman Empire and some other countries, Popular Countries.

Historical background of Christian's involvement in politics

There are numerous thinkers who have come out with the argument that Christianity directly supports a particular political or philosophical position, which is why there have been a wide variety of ways in which thinkers have conceived of the relationship between Christianity and Politics. As a matter of fact, the relationship between Christianity and Politics is a historically complex subject and a frequent source of disagreement in the history of Christianity. On the basis of Christianity and Politics, some thinkers or philosophers also came out to argue for Christian communism, Christian socialism, Christian nationalism, Christian Anarchism, Christian libertarianism, and Christian democracy, respectively.

In the Roman Empire, it was vividly discovered that Christianity was most prominent, and at this period of time, it was very illegal, unacceptable, and an aberration to practice Christianity, the reason being that at that time, those who practiced Christianity were severely persecuted. In 301, the first place where Christianity was officially recognized as a religion was known as the Kingdom of Aiiinemia. During the reign of Constantine the Great, we found out that Christianity gained prominence in Roman Politics at that particular time. In his time, Christianity was given an opportunity by his government, and its practice was also legalized in the Empire in the year 313. Constantine the Great also gave some Christians an opportunity in his government by appointing them to various positions.

More so, in 380, Trinitarian Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire. At that period of time, it was officially and generally confirmed that Christians do more and better for the good of the Empire by forming "An army of piety" that prays for the stability of government and the well-being of the Empire and the Emperor. In a nutshell, it has been argued that Christianity made very significant positive contributions to the development of modern democracy.

In the Middle Ages, Christianity took the lead and dominated European politics. Not only that, during the fall of the Western European Empire, the Pope was nominated to effectively serve as the Political leader of the Region. The church, as a body, also maintained a very strong influence over the other kingdoms of Europe. Not only that, but secular rulers also supported the missionaries efforts to expand and enlarge their realms. We equally found out that politics was addressed directly or indirectly in the Bible (Rom 13:1; 1 Peter 2:14–15), encouraging all to follow and obey the authorities of the government as government authorities were instituted by the authority of God.

Denominationally speaking, the Catholic Church is deeply intertwined with the history of European

Politics. It developed alongside the status of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire and persisted through the Middle Ages as one of the most powerful political forces in Europe. In 2015, Pope Francis stated that Catholics should be involved in Politics to improve the world.

How should Christians view politics?

As children of God and as Christians, I would like to let us know and keep in mind that there is no political party that is entirely bad as far as politics is concerned; the fact remains that we live in a fallen world. As followers of Christ, what should be our attitudes and our involvement in Politics? It has been said often that "Religion and Politics don't mix." Is that really true? Can we truly have political views outside of the considerations of our Christian Faith? We cannot, of course. The Bible has given us the answers regarding our stance towards Politics and government. Glory be to God! Realistically speaking, God's plans, purposes, and agenda for humanity are already fixed, and His will is inviolable. The truth is that the will of God permeates and supersedes every aspect of life. What He has purposed, He will surely bring to pass; no Government can thwart His will.

My findings and Recommendations

I have come to discover that the relationship between Christianity and Politics is a complex one. I found out that the church has played a mixed role in the history of political liberty, to be sure. At times, it has suppressed Political, religious, and Economic liberty. It is certain and clear that Christianity is not a political program, but it nevertheless gives us a certain way of thinking about the state and the role of politics. As a matter of fact, it is to be noted that a Christian vision of government is clearly different from a secular vision of government with religion sprinkled on top. A Christian vision of government is grounded in key theological and philosophical ideas about the nature of God and reality. The importance of justice and the value of freedom, the role of the family, and a rich understanding of the human person as created in the image of God Made for flourishing and called for an eternal destiny.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by saying, as Christians, let us demonstrate the character of Christ in us in our words, deeds, and actions. We must desist from involving ourselves in the character assassination of those with whom we disagree or using bombastic words or antics laced with hateful undertones. We must extend grace and kindness regardless of political affiliation, religious preferences, or personal behaviors. Let us boldly engage in the political process in an irresponsible and informed manner. Let's remember that it is God Himself who appoints the rulers in all societies. The Bible reminds us that it is He (God) who changes times and seasons; He disposes of kings and raises up another; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

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