

Christian Education and Integrity in the Context of Christ Apostolic Church Theological School, Ile –Ife, Osun State

Dr RACHAEL OLUWATOYIN ALAO

SENIOR LECTURER IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

**DEPARTMENT, CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY, OPA, ILE-IFE.**

alaotoyin1010@gmail.com +2348060776517

Abstract

Christian education refers to the kind of training that leads a person into a vital living relationship with Jesus Christ. Very little interest has been shown in how Christian educational values can be used to solve national problems. From time immemorial, the desire to build a just, orderly, peaceful and progressive society has been uppermost in the minds of Nigerian leaders. But due to external influences on them and the lack of proper understanding of Christian Education, their mission and vision continue to remain a mirage. Scholars have written on the nexus between integrity and Christian education but have not adequately situated this in the context of Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary. Therefore, the paper intends to examine the concept of integrity and Christian Education in the context of the Christ Apostolic Theological School and its relationship with the production of properly trained Christian leaders. Christianity is not abstract, but it presents practical truths for every human endeavour. The methodology adopted for the paper is the descriptive phenomenological approach whereby data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The contributions of Christian education and integrity to the development of the theological schools were highlighted and recommendations were taken into consideration to ensure that peace reigns and all social vices are completely eradicated. The research concludes that Christian education and integrity are essential in raising capable Christian leaders in the context of Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary.

Keywords: Christian Education, Integrity, Christian leaders, Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary.

INTRODUCTION

Christian education, by Olarewaju, refers to the kind of training that lead people into a vital, living relationship with Jesus Christ, and that nurtures each student in the doctrine outlined in the Bible.¹ Integrity is the soundness character; it has to do with a sense of consistency between a person's values and attitudes and his outward words and actions.

Some scholars have considered Christian education with Jesus Christ, and not human beings, as being central to Christian Education. Christ is the end and not the people. To be like Christ is the great goal of Christian Education. The result is, therefore that the person becomes the focus of the educative process but not the end. The entire educative process is directed toward the people as a means to an end in bringing the people to Christ-likeness. The Reformer John Calvin was a strong advocate for universal education, believing that every child should be trained in reading, writing math, grammar, as well as religion.² Christian Education regards the child not simply as having a mind, nor as simply being a potential citizen, housekeeper, and wage earner. It regards the child as possessed of God-like qualities, and as destined to a larger life in a society, which involves an interest in God and all mankind. In developing a sound programme of Christian education in the theological school, these characteristics must be considered. The various programmes of Christian education must be organized into a unified plan of action, with coordinated planning and direction. Where Christian education is properly organized, it distributes widely within the fellowship the responsibility of communication of the Christian message. Thus, the various talents and interests of the students and members of the theological institutions are utilized, avoiding overworking a few faithful participants and providing many people with the joy as well as the disciples that comes from home to the school. There is perhaps no more important way for vitalizing the Christian faith than to become involved in training others to share that faith.

Therefore, the task of Christian education is to promote growth in spiritual character by guiding the learning according to known laws of growth as it participates in the life of the students in theological schools. Christian education, as a basic part of the theological school, provides essential agencies which must of course be correlated to prevent

overlapping and omission, as well as to meet the particular needs of each student.

As a concept, integrity and Christian education are commonly used in formal and informal aspects. It is the summary of the quality of the leader's character and God's word. The connection between Christian education and integrity has somehow been neglected in theological schools today. Previous studies on Christian education and integrity have little or nothing to say about the context of Christ Apostolic Church Theological School. Therefore, this paper seeks to conceptualize integrity concerning Christian education and in the context of Christ Apostolic Church School, Ile-Ife and to highlight God's expectations for Christian leaders, especially those who have been exposed to Christian theological education. At the time of creation, God had laid down the sample foundation for the systematic practice of Christian Education. The methodology adopted for the paper is the descriptive phenomenological approach whereby data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from the Bible while the secondary data was collected from books and journals. This paper is significant in that it establishes Christian education and integrity in the context of Christ Apostolic Church Theological School.

CONCEPTUALIZING INTEGRITY

Integrity is a common and well-established concept in the ethical vocabulary. Integrity stems from the Latin word "*Integer*" which means wholeness or unity. This suggests that to achieve integrity, something has to be whole and undivided. In the academic discussion, this position is called "integrated-self view" and means that "integrity is a matter of persons integrating various parts of their personality into a harmonious, intact whole."³ However, a review of the contemporary reference literature reveals various meanings associated with this term, which is followed by its various applications. It is mentioned among the desirable virtues possessed by professionals.⁴ In the *Turknett Leadership Character Model*, developed by psychologist Dr Robert Turknett, integrity is the foundation of the model, and without integrity, no leader can be successful. Integrity encompasses both honesty and wholeness (or integration). That is, a person of integrity is neither dishonest nor fragmented.⁵ To speak of integrity is to speak of being intact, whole,

healthy, or integrated. When sin or moral evil divides people within themselves and from each other, our integrity as individuals and that of the community is destroyed. Similarly, the reality of sin is experienced in the loss of integrity in our relationship with creation. Put differently, a person of integrity does not live a fragmented or dualistic life in which there is a separation between what they proclaim and how they act and also not guilty of the compartmentalization of life whereby there is a dissonance between what is regarded as acceptable behaviour at home and work.

ATTRIBUTES OF INTEGRITY

- (i) **Probity:** Probity means being honest, and having strong moral values. A man of probity is a man who is upright and straightforward in character. Integrity and probity go hand in hand.
- (ii) **Contentment:** This is the quality of being satisfied and happy with what you have. It is the quality of accepting what comes to you without complaining. Contentment is a crucial attribute of integrity. A person of integrity is necessarily a contented person. Contentment is a key to fulfilment, freedom and security.
- (iii) **Truthfulness:** This is the quality of saying what is true. A truthful person is always honest. Truthfulness prevents people from lying, cheating and from deceit. Truthful people are trusted.
- (iv) **Fair-play:** This is the quality of behaving honestly. It is the quality of sticking to laid down rules and treating people without bias. Where there is fair play, people do not feel cheated. Instead, there is the confidence that justice has been done.
- (v) **Uncompromising:** This is the quality that makes a person stick to principles in every situation. An uncompromising person abides by the rules and regulations all the time. A man of integrity must also be uncompromising.
- (vi) **Frankness:** Frankness is the quality of being open, honest and direct in the way people does things. It is a quality that makes people say things as they see them.⁶

THE FUNCTIONS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The functions of education provide a bridge between the aims and objectives. Because education is a process of development, certain functions are required to realize fully the aims and objectives involved.

The functions of Christian education are as follows:

1. An integrating process (God centred)
2. An adjustment process (with God, time and the universe)
3. A redemptive process (from sin and ignorance)
4. A humiliating process (meekness and lowliness)
5. A God-glorifying process (recognize and exemplifying His glory)
6. A restoration process (restoration of Edenic perfection)

Christian education, therefore, means the kind of instruction and training, which leads one to a knowledge of the scriptures and of Jesus Christ as the saviour and Lord. The agencies through which this kind of education is realised include the Christian Church, the Christian home and the Christian school, including Sunday school, day school and special schools.⁷ It is the education that makes the learners grow into intelligent Christian. This Christian education is concerned with three indispensables:

1. To bring about such consciousness within the learner of his personal need of Jesus Christ as Saviour.
2. To lead the learner into a life of accepting Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and providing the conditions under which he may grow into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.
3. To lead the learner to the consecration of his life to God for service.

Christian education desires to establish the gospel in the hearts and minds and social life of learners, so that truth and righteousness may remain and flourish among them. This cannot be done without civilization. Christian education is a distinctive kind of education that demands distinctive treatment. The Christian believes that education must centre in Christ to have meaning. Education involves more than a teacher and learner. It involves God also. Education for the Christian is an outgrowth of Gods revelation. It is the process by which man comes

to knowledge of Gods interpretation as He made it known in creation and revelation.⁸

THE IMPACTS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ON THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY:

There are a lot of benefits that Christian education has brought to Nigerian society. Christian provides sound education to Nigerian people that transformed their lives since the inception of early missionaries. Olarewaju explored the work of Anowi to present a similar report: "The earliest schools in Nigeria were modelled along the lines of these charity schools. The curriculum was overweighed with religious knowledge-recitation of the catechism, reading passages from the Bible and singing hymns... children's religious instruction was reinforced by moral lessons on virtue, charity, humility, courage and truthfulness."⁹ Presently, private colleges and universities owned by Christian denominations in Nigeria have been the avenue to teach Christian Education in favour of society.

Another major impact of Christian Education on Nigerian society is the giving of scholarship grants to young Africans. Olarewaju appraised the works of the early Christian missionaries as they engaged in granting scholarships to young Africans to study in Portugal and Rome to receive a European type of education. Many returned to Africa genuinely with titles, honour and even married in Europe. Churches have not relented in such efforts. Take, for instance, Christ Apostolic Church Worldwide established Joseph Ayo Babalola University at Ikeji- Arakeji, Osun State.

PANORAMIC OVERVIEW OF THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (CACTS), ILE-IFE.

Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, an educational arm of the Church is under the proprietorship of Christ Apostolic Church Worldwide. It was established by the founding fathers of the Church. It started as a Bible Training College (BTC) first at Ede, Osun State in 1952 before it moved to Eriwo- Ekiti, Ekiti State in 1954 and later to Efon Alaaye, Ekiti State in 1959. The purpose for which this Bible Training College was established was for the training of would-be-Catechists (teachers) for Christ Apostolic Church assemblies. Other

Bible Training institutions that existed along with the Bible Training College (B.T.C.) in the Mission were:

1. Babajide School of Prophets and Evangelists at Ilesa in Osun State for training would-be Church Evangelists and Prophets and
2. Pastoral Training Institute as the name suggests, Pastoral Training Institute was established for the training of would-be ordained Pastors that would head each assembly in Christ Apostolic Church. Its first location was at Ibadan then, the Training Institute was moved to Agege, Lagos.

To curtail the duplication of courses and to harmonize the doctrine, as well as to reduce the cost of running the three institutions in the same Mission, the Christ Apostolic Church Authority merged the three institutions to become the C.A.C. Theological Seminary which has its location at Ile-Ife, Osun State Nigeria since 9th September 1979. It has its satellite campuses at different locations within and outside Nigeria. Its mission is to educate would-be-ministers of God in ways and manners to glorify God, while its vision is to train Ministers of God that will edify the Church. All Students of Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary should behave in a manner testifying to their call and not as other non-Christian institutions or organisations. Exemplary conduct is expected of every student. Immoral conduct, cheating, use of alcohol, illegal drugs and foul language are forbidden.

Development flourishes in a society of people of integrity. Due to the presence of national trust and confidence, the school participates willingly in development activities, including payment of development levies, tax and other fundraising activities. Also, because people are honest, embezzlement of theological school funds is not done.

BIBLICAL APPRAISAL OF INTEGRITY AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Bible has a great deal to say about integrity: (Psalm 1:1-6): (Psalm 25:21): May integrity and uprightness protect me because my hope is in you. (Proverbs 10:9): “The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out”. (Proverbs: 11:3NKJV), “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity” (Prov.13:6 NKJV): “Righteousness guards a man of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner”. In the older concept of

Christian Education, the learner was to be adjusted to the curriculum and the school. “Christian Education is the aspect of the plan of redemption God is carrying out through the ages.”¹¹ According to Oluseye, God’s kingdom is everlasting, stretching from eternity to eternity.”¹² Since the foundation of the World, God has been revealing Himself and His plan in words and in Christ of whom the written word testifies. Christian Education is the teaching ministry of the Church, it is Christ-centred. Christian Education is different from secular Education because of its transcending and transforming power. It strengthens the believer, it is the only programme that provides the body of Christ with and theological education for her spiritual growth. It furnishes the church with every necessary life-giving Christian Education from the cradle to the grave. Integrity is one of the major positive values. It is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. A person of integrity says the truth and refrains from lying and cheating whether the situation is favourable or not, and must be sincere and ready to be held accountable for the actions without shifting blame to others. A person of integrity is, therefore, a dependable person, one who can serve as a good representative for the people. Only people of integrity are trusted by others in society. They live out what society approves of and would not go against the code of conduct of their jobs. By this, a person of integrity earns the trust, confidence and respect of other members of society.¹³

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND INTEGRITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OPA, ILE-IFE.

Wherever there is a lack of theological depth in our society, it leads to poor governance, a deathly silence on injustice, tolerance of corruption, materialism and a general loss of integrity and credibility. Living with integrity is not done for personal gain but the result of obedience to God and careful listening to what Jesus Christ says. A theological institution such as the Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary should have a strong department of Christian education to provide that essential part of ministerial/pastoral training. Since Christian education is vital to the function and ministry of the theological school, church, the Sunday Bible School and other educational ministries, together with preaching and public worship, pastoral work and

administration should all be considered at the heart of a Bible College or seminary curriculum especially at Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary, Opa, Ile – Ife.

Peter P. Person writes in his book: *The Minister in Christian Education*:

The seminarian dream focuses on the pulpit. First, because the mass media of pulpit oratory is far more dramatic than teaching a Bible class or visitation. In the second place, he has probably been captivated by the personality of some eloquent preacher. The third reason ... he has been trained to preach. It is quite natural, therefore, for him to dream of himself occupying the pulpit of a large urban church with an assistant to do the calling, a Director of Christian Education to care for the ministry to the children and youth and an efficient office secretary. He is thus free to devote himself to preparation and study for pulpit appearance.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

In Christ Apostolic Church Theological Seminary, Christian Education, the character of Integrity exhibits the obedience and practise of the moral code of ethics, moral values and precepts from God's word. In practice integrity, it produces honour, truth and reliability. It will allow one to keep his or her word and do the best even when no one else is aware. Hypocrisy, Dishonesty, Duplicity and Corruption are the opposites of God's call. The absence of integrity in most of the Theological Institutions today is an indication that Christians are perhaps fakes and frauds at worst and ineffective and useless at best. Christian must pursue integrity and His transforming work to make his name real and shown. Therefore much is being said and written these days about the deplorable state of affairs in the field of Theological education. Christian education has not escaped its share of criticism. The mark of any Christian Institution of learning is not whether teachers are Christian,

whether the Bible is read or taught, or Chapel is held, but whether each subject in the curriculum is presented from the Creator's perspective.

ENDNOTES

¹Isaac Olarewaju, *Adult Moral Education: An Imperative for Global Peace* (Ibadan: Harmonious Publications, 2011), 54.

²Reid W. Stanford, *John Calvin: His Influence on the Western World* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1982), 15.

³James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 567.

⁴ James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, 567.

⁵Robert L. Turknett and Carolyn N. Turknett, *Decent People, Decent Company: How to Lead with Character in Work and in Life*. (United Kingdom: John Murray Press, 2015), 86.

⁶ Olufemi J. Olugasa, *Christian Religious Studies and National Values* (Ibadan: University Press PLC, 2015), 53-54.

⁷Marvin J. Taylor, *An Introduction to Christian Education*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 3.

⁸Marvin J. Taylor, *An Introduction to Christian Education*, 3.

⁹ Isaac Olarewaju, *Adult moral Education: An Imperative for Global Peace*, 54.

¹⁰Christ Apostolic church Theological Seminary Student Handbook, (Ife: Timade Ventures, 2010), 1.

¹¹ George Brenkent, *Cooperate Integrity & Accountability*. (California: Sage, 2004), 36.

¹² Elijah H, Oluseye, *Christian Education for the Church*, (Akure: Duduyemi commercial Press, 1991), 21.

¹³ Elijah H, Oluseye, *Christian Education for the Church*, 21.

¹⁴ Peter P. Person, *The minister in Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1960), 90.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barr, James. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Brenkert, George. *Corporate Integrity & Accountability*. California: Sage, 2004.
- Olarewaju, Isaac. *Adult Moral Education: an Imperative for Global Peace*. Ibadan: Harmonious Publications, 2011.
- Olugasa, Olufemi. *Christian Religious Studies and National Values*. Ibadan: University Press PLC, 2015.
- Oluseye, H. Elijah. *Christian Education for the Church*. Akure: Duduyemi Commercial Press, 1991.
- Person, Peter. *The Minister in Christian Education*. Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1960.
- Stanford, W. Reid, *John Calvin: His Influence on the Western World*. Michigan: Zondervan, 1982.
- Taylor, J. Marvin, *An Introduction to Christian Education*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980.
- Turknett, Robert. & Turknett, Carolyn. *Decent People, Decent Company. How to Lead with Character in Work and in Life*. United Kingdom: John Murray Press, 2015.