

The Relevance of Theological Education in Forming Religious Leaders of Conscience in Africa

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Abstract

Theological education is the transmission of revealed truth by trained leaders of Religious establishments to train and build faith in God. African Religious Leaders - Christians or Muslims - basically need full and grounded knowledge of Theological Education to sharpen their vision for effective leadership. The relevance of Theological Education in the formation of conscience is cardinal in forming human character to uphold sound societal ethos. The research carried out by empirical and evaluation method seeks to espouse the central position of conscience in exercising morality in human society. The training in theological methods and pedagogy is necessary to form sound spirituality of leaders of Churches or Mosques in Africa. The goal of theological education and its benefits is to: promote orthodoxy, guide the leader's intellectual power to deliver divine truth. The solution is that it sets a sound roadmap, proposing a rich agenda on issues of justice, peace and brightens occasions of societal development. In this research, we undertake to expound the teaching that is grounded with God-centred truth in Sacred Scriptures and Sacred Tradition, giving by the use of visual symbols: Facebook, Skype, Zoom link. Therefore, the training in sound Theological Education promotes orthodoxy and sustains the Deposit of Faith; as it brings ever new the refreshing resurgence of virtues above vices, the transformation of life, the creativity of generative knowledge leading to enlightenment, faith and salvation.

Keywords: Theological Agenda, Education, Transformation, Peace, Harmony and Learning.

Introduction

The evolution of Theological Education emerged in the Christian and Islamic faith gradually, it is only when the content of faith espoused in the varied Sacred Scriptures needed further handling that methods and training of experts began. The act of doing theology as a discipline in Christianity comes with the need and power to communicate God's eternal truth by preaching. Karl Rahner wrote: "Theology is for the preaching of the Church. All preaching today presupposes some methodical reflection and hence theology" (Rahner: 1986:1693). The methodical process of analyzing the faith content is called

theological education, which is the *science of God*. It refers to the continuous activity of teaching, catechesis and training on basic revelatory truths that came from God to guarantee human salvation. It is the activity of preaching, teaching and giving instructions in the places of worship, private setting or in the classroom. Theology, as public act, started in Christianity with Jesus Christ or in Islam, with Prophet Muhammad.

Theological education and instructions started with Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad. It is when these founders of these two religions began their ministry of teaching and educating people, that later their disciples expounded this act on the issues of revelation, faith and salvation. The apostles, built a strong and a virile community, teaching on the standard of faith, formation of sound conscience preceding the reception of the Holy Spirit at *Pentecost*; similar scenario occurred in Islam, the *Umayyad*, with the great leadership of the Four Orthodox Caliphs, established a strong Islamic faith after the death of Muhammad. These they did by teaching the central position based on the purity of conscience transmitted by theological education in the *Qur'an*, *Hadith* and the *Sunnah* to their adherents. (Ovey: 1999: 56) In the Early Middle Ages [Wendy & Gaiya: 2019:73], (from 500-1200 A.D.), theological education was present only in monasteries. The researcher establishes that the sound foundation that led to an extensive theological education began with the Fathers of the Church, the Medieval Theologians serving as strong tool of impacting, transmitting and creating enlightenment in the human society. Due to its relevance and importance, it serves as the magnet of conscience.

An integrated education liberates to fruitfulness

The act of serenity and illumination bequeathed through the instrument of education is a purpose driven life that sharpens the intellect and creates vision to meet a quest for excellence. For a human person to receive good education, more efforts must be put to invest in a sound and beautiful experiential process that must transmit and utilize this investment for effective leadership. By it, the power of education changes the status of the person from ignorance to enlightenment, from naivety to interactions, from aloofness to warm-heartedness. Akita wrote: "Your mind is your library of what you read" [Akita: 2015: 114]. The clear reasons one of the Catholic Bishop of Nigeria taught that: "Nigeria like any nation of the world, gives priority to education in the blueprint for national development." [Arogundade: 2015: v]. Agreeing with this position in sort of way, confirms the specific way the task, aim and mission of education amongst many ways being holistic. Sound education for Religious Leaders in Africa, is a vehicle of integrated development.

The task of theological education is for catechesis, teaching and mentoring. Thus, African Religious leaders must work hard to carve a niche for themselves

and for the propagation of faith that is nurtured by a positive conscience amongst adherents of the faith. If this effort is properly exercised, it can lead to a fruitful educational development that can create cells or module of faith-practice that must motivate, transform and creatively translate the gains of our native culture.

The list of the big and great pillars of civil, cultural and religious education are many. Worthy of mention are these gladiators who fought against illiteracy or ignorance, for scholars who researched and work hard to create positive impact for an African enviable leadership in all strata of society. The African heroes are Nelson Mandela, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Kwame Nkruma, Julius Nyerere, Kofi Anan, Emmanuel Cardinal Walligo, Francis Cardinal Arinze, Christian Cardinal Tumi, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sir Tafawa Balewa, Sheik Shehu Lemo, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, *et al*; the dire has just been cast. The Catholic Church, through the Missionaries have maintained an excellent "spirit of Catholicism" [Emeke: 2015: 33] in bequeathing quality civil and theological education in Africa and especially, Nigeria. These actually set the intellectual culture in motion.

Building a culture of excellence and quality in theological education in Africa requires hard work. To truly enrich African religious space, leadership and culture in the twenty-first century, as well as leading to the bestowal of a qualitative education is a most desired good and is an inestimable value of great worth. "From the pleasure of reading more comes the pleasure of knowing more; from the pleasure of knowing more comes the pleasure of growing more in all the different areas of life and our activities." [Devaraj: 2015: 115]. Even though the price for excellence is high and expensive; the greater-end good propels development, making the continent dynamic to bear abundant fruits, to scores of developmental projects. The researcher bears in mind Claude Ake's definition of development as 'the process by which people create and recreate themselves and their life circumstances to realise higher levels of civilisation in accordance with their own choices and values - development is something that people must do for themselves,' [Claude: 1999: 15] for by it, they benefit others too. Therefore, a careful crafting of agenda of theological education enriches the continent.

The power of truth and the spoken word are inestimable. This sensory initiative and guidance can best be achieved if Christian or Muslim leaders communicate this eternal truth, as they share daily by preaching in context and content the riches of varied Scriptural Teachings in their places of worship on every occasion and most especially on solemn festivities. It is now urgent to carve this vision in the minds of our religious leaders in Africa, because this requires

continuous and relentless commitment to education that leads to excellence. The greater task of evolving a conscientious religious and moral truth, better the quality of education that set human conscience on fire and shapes morality. Robert Cardinal Sarah wrote:

In our relativistic societies, no one acknowledges any more that he (she) is a sinner. Sin and repentance have become traumatizing states of soul from which one must be liberated so as to be able to enjoy good spiritual health we consider ourselves victims of want to see themselves as anything but fragile, wounded persons. The impression is given that sin nor longer exists; adultery, divorce, cohabitation are no longer to be considered serious sins [Sarah: The Power of Silence: 2016: 207-208].

From the foregoing then, lies the onus on our Religious Leaders – Christians or Muslims – to speak the truth clearly, to mention by name, the evil, taboo, sacrilege and wickedness being committed by adherents of these religion under the guise of socializing or coping with modern changes.

The task of condemning and attacking obnoxious sinful behaviours in both adults and youths in Africa is now. It deliberately makes leaders to grow a culture that must serve as the agenda that proposes the roadmap to grow a strong African civilization. All leaders in Africa, in all strata of life be it political, social, economic, cultural and especially within the ambient of the religious index are to yield to this urgent task; especially now that we are facing the invisible enemy of Coronavirus. This effort must be embarked on or be engaged to drive listeners towards wholistic education which enriches a conscious ethics, targeting at qualitative community life to build a healthy conscience in the youths who are already been pulled towards harvesting western values as the best of their daily menu, because, what is trending comes more from Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, Twitter, fashion houses and the musical industry than what is preached in Churches or Mosques. What is the way forward for our African adults or youths?

In Africa, the task and vision of Religious Leaders in Christianity or Islam must be to distinguish by their vocation, to acquire a deep God-driven conscience that is healthy, interactive and democratic, so that they can form the basis of faith in their preaching. These leaders must make resolute effort at searching deeply into the Holy Scriptures to create platforms to promote truth in order to intensify the quest for eternal salvation. Growing a healthy conscience in adults and our youths; is an existential task we must build against the rode that bedeviled the continent.

The numerical population of Africa has greatly increased, but not commensurate with sound moral and cultural development. It is quite obvious that physically, the geographical landscape of Africa is the same as it has been in the last three thousand years, but other indices and elements are fast expanding as we journey deep into the 21st century in terms of demography (with more than 1.2 billion inhabitants, more heads to feed but less resources in terms of manufacturing machines to produce more food). In Africa, regrettably we lack effective plans, policies and implementations of economic, education, health and urban development [Cf. Jane Battersby, On Food Security in Africa and urban development, as these directly affect cultural and religious programmes that bring transformation and growth. From observations, Christianity seems to be diminishing in Europe due to low birth rate; it caused Enlow to write that: "Christianity is declining in its [former territorial heartlands but spreading such that it is now a predominantly non-Western religion-and it seems poised to continue this demographic and cultural reorientation for some time to come"[Enlow: 2006:1]. Now as ever, as Africans give birth to more children, they must train them well in sound cultural and religious education. For it is a grounded and integrated education that liberates to fruitfulness, that eliminates gross ignorance in order to build and guarantee enduring developmental spirit of cultural sensibility and nurturing.

Relevance and purposeful agenda of theological education in Africa in the 21st century

In the African continent, the focus for theological education in all formation units, centres and institutions of higher learning (Seminaries and Universities) and specifically on the pulpit must be purposeful, progressive and culturally illuminative. The efforts must orient on examining existential and cultural issues to eliminate them that borders on child-trafficking or enslavement of women, child labour or genital circumcision leading to liberation. Africans must deconstruct Western paradigm (e.g. gay and lesbian practices, same-sex union) and select relevant issues that border on true sharing of natural resources with orphans or widows, clear adherence to ancestral teachings on the dignity, value and respect for elders and the human person. Integrating these cultural metaphors in theological education promote the value and essential biblical testimony bequeathed to Christianity. It is this perspective that the Ecumenical theologian Enlow, pointed out the beauty of seeking to teach the youths a sound culturally enriched agenda of theological education in these provocative words,

...too much of what passes for theological education in the West and, through its pervasive residual influence upon emerging majority world churches, the educational philosophies and curricula of non-Western schools characteristically consist of transmission of

intellectual content and theological dogma that is heavily Enlightenment-laden. Simply put, too often theology poses and answers questions that are irrelevant to constituent churches in many areas of the world while at the same time failing to address biblically urgent questions with which their constituent believers are confronted [Enlow: *Global Christianity and the Role of Theological Education: Wrapping up and Going Forward*, 2006: 2].

From the foregoing, the author opines that Africa, since the early mid-1960s begun a soul-searching project to indigenize, inculturate and contextualize theological thoughts to meet existential realities of political freedom, to eradicate illiteracy, poverty, hunger and examine the consequences of urbanization. Craving, generating or articulating an all-inclusive theological agenda based on cultural sensibilities and squaring the template of genuine application of biblical text to threatening issues. "Professor Walls calls for awakening of theological schools to the true task of theology, namely, to bring the whole of Scripture to bear upon the questions and choices with which ordinary believers are confronted in their calling to live out the Gospel in their native context" [Wall, quoted in Enlow, *Global Christianity and the Role of Theological Education: Wrapping up and Going Forward*, 2006: 3]. This is an excellent mission for all African theologians, to make Christian faith practical, contextualize its content and relevance.

Introspectively, Theological Education must address, "Essentially, the socio-economic development that the African continent needs should be informed by *thought leadership, thought liberation, and critical consciousness*. The three 'instruments'- the trio - should be pursued jointly, for thought leadership without critical consciousness is not helpful" [Gumede:2015: 95]. There is no gainsaying that in the continent of Africa, wide spectrum and inclusiveness of Theological Education cannot be over emphasized. Even though Theological Education is not a magic wand, yet it is expected to play in Africa the decisive role of being prophetic and focusing on the Messianic character of Christ's mission (cf. Lk 4: 18); to be the voice of the voiceless, speaking and addressing issues of injustice, oppression, economic slavery and manipulations.

Setting the agenda for theological education in Africa on existential realities.

It is truism that every human person, community, society and continent is unique and important based on the recorded positive indices of growth and development. The current world population in 2018 stood at 7, 632,819,315 billion, with the African continent being the second most populated after Asia, with a total of 1, 037, 524, 088 constituting 14 percentage of the global family [The World Population, Accessed on <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population>, on 02:02:2019]. This mind-blowing record requires not only

planning, but building a conscious and responsible leadership cadre in Africa cut across the two dominant religions, Christianity and Islam. This is tenable because there is will to grow, expand, develop and scale over natural disasters of cruelty, violence and terrorism. Based on the index of violence and war raging at different locations on the African continent, Religious Leaders' catechesis and spiritual engineering must be focus on peace-building and harmonious accommodation of one another.

A purposeful and useful engagement on a direction to follow in life points out that a journey has a location of departure and an anticipated destiny of arrival. Setting an integrated vision oriented and all-inclusive agenda that maintains the obvious fact that all human persons, cultures, creed or class are created equal by God and are expected to live in peace, justice and harmony in the world; this must be the clear task of Theological Education. Mbiti had already written with clarity that: "Africans are notoriously spiritual and religious by nature" [Mbiti; 1969:1], is a positive affirmation that religious and spiritual goods, elements of worship and faith are already inert in the psyche of the African person whether they are Christians or Muslims.

It is on record that in the African continent, there are many political, socio-economic or cultural disparities amongst its teeming population of over 1.2 billion inhabitants. Feuds, armed conflicts and sometimes wars arise due to inefficiency of management or lack of coordination of natural resources; these are the clear lines drawn where the Religious Leaders of Christians or Muslims are called to exercise ethical leadership to mentor, correct and calm the situation. According to Ackerman, ethical leadership 'is the result of a tough and often conflict-ridden process of institutional design' [Ackerman:2004:448]. There is neither a mechanical formula nor an independent theory to respond to the crisis of leadership on the African continent. There is no magic in ethical leadership, rather than it is given, it is taught, it is exercise by the team as they correlate to the followership in Churches or in the Mosques. Ethical leadership does not emerge spontaneously, out of natural goodness or nobleness of heart of charismatic bureaucrats, especially in some notorious crime-ridden communities. We need to set the agenda on purposeful life, seeking cultural means of resolving conflict added to the Western legal framework.

The task towards "strengthening ethical, political and (religious) leadership entails a peaceful 'mental and structural revolution,' [Ngwane:2003:1], to alter the system that enables unethical people to assume political leadership [Mutibwa: 1992:35]. This is explicitly the continuity by which *Theological Education* has relevance and mandate. In the twenty-first century, 'urgently needed are short and long-term strategies for inculcating ethical leadership values from childhood,' these are congruent realities. Furthermore, assert that

'unless Africans from all levels of society recognize and embrace the challenge of leadership, Africa will not move forward' [Maathai: 2009: 111]. The business of producing corrupt-free leaders in the African society must be the task, mandate and mission of preachers of social ethics, social justice and equitable life of accountability on the high pedestal of the Church or Mosque. Crucial in this mission is the breaking of the chain of self-serving, self-subservient and egoistic political leaders, while focusing on sustainable structural transformation. Until we as African people are able to draw a line that the sanctuary of ethical leadership is the platform of the human contingency and freedom of expression [Hampson and Mendeloff: 2007: 679-699]. We need to grow and bloom.

The research sets to propose and place on record the features, agendas and issues needing urgent attention and treatment within the opportune platform of theological education, in order to wake up and conscientized the weak and set aright the demoralized and over beaten conscience of Religious Leaders in Africa, which might be due to over reliance on foreign donor agencies, theories of relativism, religious bigotry heavily exhibited by hate speech and fanaticism that seems now more than ever before to occupy the centres stage of religious messages on Sundays or Fridays. This gives room for poor delivery of divine truth on the pulpit, podium or lecture rooms.

Practical focus on contextual and inculturation of theological education

At the Incarnation, God became a human being in Jesus Christ, by taking our nature (but without sin cf. Heb. 4: 15) to educate us to be humble, holy, serviceable and literate. In the current dispensation in Africa, the teaching holds ever, that the doctrine and dogma of the Incarnation (cf. John 1: 1-3; esp. 14) sets the tune and platform of engaging on the quest for an interactive theological education that liberates people from the shackles of colonial, military dictatorship and the malady of bad civil democratic rule. We intent to explore specific agenda, reformation and renewal of the theological education embarked by the Roman Catholic Church, other Main Line Churches and the Pentecostal Churches, to demonstrate the relevance of theological education.

A deep introspective reading and examination of the agenda of the Roman Catholic Theological Education before the Second Vatican Council reveals that it was tedious, deliberate and useful methods to transit from what was to what is currently in vogue. Bevans wrote: "In the extensive reformation of the Roman Catholic Church called for by the Council of Trent, one of its most significant decisions was an outstanding achievement in advancing theological education" [Bevans: Roman Catholic Theological Education," in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity, Theological Perspectives - Regional Surveys - Ecumenical Trends*: 1990: 753]. The 19th Ecumenical Council of Trent (1545-1563)

teaches that "all cathedrals, metropolitan, and other churches greater than these, shall be bound.... to educate religiously, and to train in ecclesiastical disciple, a certain number of youths of their city and diocese" for the priesthood in what the Council called "seminaries" [Bevans: 1990: 574]. This is clearly a training for effective leadership in society.

In the Catholic Church, the decisive journey to affirm the important principles that will guide Theological Education was set in motion by the 21st Ecumenical Council of the Second Vatican (1962-1965). This incisive and progressive manner by which development was recorded in the spade of acquiring a wholistic theological education was impressive. Vatican II teaches that: "In the light of the shape and tenor of Catholic theology after Trent, Vatican II's theology was revolutionary. At the center of the Council's concern was the development of a new theology of the church... Vatican II's was the church as the People of God, a community of equals by virtue of Baptism" [Bevans: 1990:753]. This being said, there is a greater need to facilitate and coordinate the dynamics by which theological education amongst Catholic members need to be properly transmitted in the spirit and in the mind of the Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council. What must be proper biblical and doctrinal education must be emphasized always, by which we need to reflect on essential modern ethical character that must reflect a greater spirit of the integration of humanity more than egoistic tendency that leads to destruction. For the task of 'strengthening ethical leadership necessitates the application of transformation tools [Curle: 1990: 35], coupled with the 'moral imagination, the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist' [Lederach: 2005:ix]. Mediation, reconciliation, justice, and peacemaking are benchmarks to transforming the crisis" [Curle: 1990:35]. The trend, of not involving women, children and youth in decision-making needs to change, given that the mother is the primary educator of every person" [Byrne & Senehi: 2009:525-530]. Thus, the Catholic Church set through her sixteen documents released by Vatican II, explicit and extensive catechesis on proper biblically based faith and further strengthen that by specifying the centrality of her sacramental life.

By the efforts of the World Council of Churches, formed in 1948, with headquarters in Geneva, numerous proposals and emphasizes were placed on biblically based theological education that must be focused on practical and contextual cultural challenges devoid of heavy reliance on doctrine, dogma and creedal faith expression as the case with Catholic theological education. Dr. Carver Yu "claims that, while it is theology's duty to examine the extent to which the church truly lives as the eschatological, charismatic, covenantal, eucharistic community of saints, these matters are mostly absent from or perverted with theological curricula" [Carver, Yu: What is the Church? quoted

in *Global Christianity and the Role of Theological Education: Wrapping up and Going Forward*: 2006:3]. Christian ministers outside the Catholic circle propound theories for theological education on personal agenda, learning and experience, not from a centralist position of having a magisterial organ or body to authorize, stamp and articulate the firmness of a teaching.

Modern Pentecostal scholars seem to fashion out a cutting edge for new agenda of theological education that is devoid of following the long tradition of maintaining the two sources of revelation to be Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition built over the ages of Christendom. It is based on these new radical departures from what is common practice in Catholic Tradition that Dr. Carver Yu makes what seem to be new proposals, but radical and wide agenda for theological education the world over. He further "argues that the theological school fails if it does not help the church to maintain a prophetic edge with reference to these attributes. His examples of theological school failure included, (a) the sterile way in which church history is typically taught in theological schools as a series of church events in contrast to the compelling drama of the eschaton; (b) the preoccupation of biblical and theological studies with individualistic rather than communal understanding and application; and (c) the emphasis upon professional competence at the expense of calls to sacrificial service to Christ [Carver:2006:4]. The focus dwells on theological education's contents, application and the psychology of delivery employed by the minister to the congregation; in between the minister and the congregation, there must be ability to proof that he/she can unravel the rich ethical teachings of Jesus Christ to the curious listeners.

Theological education in Africa strives at the application of text, context and content of Christian faith by catechesis

Theological Education handles issues and doctrines of faith, eternal salvation and their application in real life situations, thus, one must know that dealing with theological themes, are not ordinary societal or cultural issues. They are expositions basically on issues of doctrine and faith, mystery and the task of evangelization. So it is obvious that the drive in the twenty-first century is to explicate the content of theological education in Africa and Asia, this is so in order to be more focus on contextualizing and inculturating biblical literature to specifically accommodate cultural sensibilities of the listeners. *On forming World Christians*, "Pinto commended Colossians 1: 24-29 as an appropriate meditation and model. Specifically, verse 28 summarizes Paul's relentless quest to, "present every man (woman) complete in Christ" [Pinto:2006:3]. A clear picture emerges as Pinto further wrote: "The context for the task of forming world Christians is a globalization network itself, concerning which Pinto proffered Hesselgrave's threefold definition: connectivity between cultures, conflict of paradigms, and context of flux" [Pinto:2006:4]. Upon further

examination of the agenda of theological education that might arise from the *North/South Issues*, in addressing the Global Divide, Dr. Chris Wright's captured major issues that x-tray the contentions:

Wright observed biblically that the issue of resource disparity has been a factor in the life of the church since its inception. Citing numerous New Testament references, he illustrated that the principle of reciprocity is imbedded in Christian theology. Gross disparity is a biblical and theological scandal... Citing the polyphonic nature of New Testament theology (that is, (surveying) theological and ethical problems and errors addressed prophetically across cultures). Wright called for charitable but faithful prophetic North-South address of such errors as sexual ethics, prosperity, and Christian citizenship responsibility" [Chris Wright: "North/South Issues," quoted in *Global Christianity and the Role of Theological Education: Wrapping up and Going Forward*: 2010: 4].

From the foregoing, be that as it may, these are concrete and real issues the extremely rich Northern Hemisphere is refusing to discuss in order to appreciate the economic hard times of the Southern Hemisphere as regard the brand of theological education that can lead to empowerment, development and transformation. The initiative needed to handle socio-economic issues in the new agenda of theological education gearing towards a global Christian faith that embraces people in their socio-political network being expressed in their cultural sensibilities.

Another segment by which theological education can flourish in the African continent will be in the context of inculturating the contents of faith by ecumenical engagement, to render a qualitative faith dialogue cut across various churches. It caused an African Ecumenical theologian to make a lucid contribution extensively on this subject. For instance, Njoroge has provided us with the rationale for ecumenical theological education. According to Njoroge, "there is a need to equip every Christian with basic Christian knowledge. The people of God need to understand what they believe in and that it is important to be properly rooted and grounded in God who is love before one can witness to the Good News of Christ" [Njoroge: 2008:7]. In another explicit quest to drive home the motif of theological education, Penner in his book *Theological education as mission* has described the goal of ecumenical theology in following the twenty-first century task of evangelization in these captivating words:

Ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation is not an end in itself but is a means of systematically and intentionally enlightening and educating those called to ministry in its various

manifestations for lay and ordained persons. The process of training women and men to interpret scripture and understand the faith of the church so that they can follow Jesus in God's mission in preaching, teaching, healing and feeding is inevitable. Because of the many evil challenges we face in society, every generation of theological educators must discern how best to equip those who receive the call to ministry so that in due course they can return to the churches and society to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith. [Penner, Peter, (Ed.), *Theological education as mission*, Prague: IBTS, 2005:45].

The principle of engagement in the wide mission of propagating and directing the content based on the context of the African socio-economic, politico-cultural sensibilities and most of all oriented by the multifaceted nature of native religious parlavar; all scholars and ministers, think tanks and missionary energy must be focus on proper ethical and dynamic education. The Christians and the able leadership can never achieve these feats without the cooperation, teamwork and dialogue with Islamic and Quranic religious leaders. The common good is the ultimate quest, formation and aspiration of leadership and followership in the entire continent.

Muslims need to focus more on the universality of God as love: Objectively all Muslims believe that God is love, peace, merciful and just. The characteristics and attributes of God (*Allah*) as Merciful, Love, Peace or Just are most of the content of the Holy and Glorious *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* are faith, doctrine and belief system bequeathed to Islam. It is then in this perspective that we assert that the ethical teaching in Islam is co-terminus to the belief in One God - Allah. This belief system is doctrine, faith and dogma; as such belief in the unicity of Allah cannot be separated or be argued against. Thus, we point out clearly that the "assertion of God's unity (*tawhid*) counts as the primary theological proposition in the *Qur'an*. In Islamic faith, classic ethical teaching originally came from the mouth of the Prophet Mohammad, subsequently, these were espoused in the *Qur'an*, by acknowledging the existence of other spiritual beings; such as angels, demons, and *jinn*, the *Qur'an* uncompromisingly maintains that "There is no god but God"(37: 35 and passim).

Assimilating, interpreting, teaching and applying these eternal virtues of *Allah* in the life of a new convert to Islam, so as to inculcate the human virtues require the doggedness and sincerity of purpose, vision and courage of the Islamic Sheiks and Imams to execute this divine mandate in the human society. Theological Education in Islam is an integral process of Quranic recitation from cradle to the grave; it is more so a wholistic pattern of life that must be followed in the daily exercise and practice of Islamic faith. The complex ladder one need

to ascent the moral staircase to attain proper ethical teachings in the Islamic Religion is mostly associated with Prophet Muhammad as content in the core values of socio-ethical teachings in the *Qur'an*, the *Sunna* and sometimes as found in the *Hadith*.

Islamic theological education is central and existential part of the intellectual culture amongst the elites. There are many and varied theories and traditions that render classic teachings on morality, ethics and the rule of law (Sharia) to be basic principles and mandatory roles a genuine Muslim is called to observed. We can examine the categories below as follows:

The subsequent development of Islamic ethics rests in large part on the relationships between *falsafa*, *kalam*, and *fiqh* that developed during the classical period. For *Sunni* Muslims the textualist tendencies exemplified in *Asharite kalam* and in *fiqh* became primary. Much of *Sunni* thought came to regard practical judgment as a matter of obedience to God's commands, made known in specific, revealed texts as interpreted by recognized scholars of *fiqh*, whose discussions came to carry so much weight what their work alone became associated with the term *Sharia* (law). By comparison, *kalam* and *falsafa* retained a more central role among the *Shia*, as did *ilm al-akhlaq* [Martin: "Islam," in *Harpercollins Dictionary of Religions*:1996:519].

From the foregoing however, ethical teachings in Islamic Religion, taught by parents and Quranic Teachers are obligatory and mandatory. Nevertheless, occasions of the yearly Ramadan Fast, provides ample provisions of bequeathing endlessly the standard ethical practices expected of every Muslim, because, it is a period of grace, prayer, arms-giving, mercy and practical demonstration of charity and love.

Islamic scholars in Africa especially in Nigeria must preach and maintain orthodox Islamic faith against fundamentalism, violence and terrorism in the 21st century. One does not need great efforts to notice the massive drive towards the resurgence of Islam. This has been the efforts of some Muslims scholars and preachers knowing where they are coming from at the beginning of the 20th century. Rogan, a seasoned historian wrote that:

Given the prominence of Islam in public life across much of the Arab world today, it is easy to forget just how secular the Middle East was in 1981. In all but the most conservative Arab Gulf states, Western fashions were preferred over traditional dress. Many people drank alcohol openly, in disregard of Islamic prohibition. Men and women mixed freely both in public and in the work place, as more and more

women were entering higher education and professional life. For some, the freedom of the modern age marked a high point in Arab progress [Rogan, Eugene, *The Arabs - A History*, London: Penguin Books, 2009:399].

It seems the same scenario is occurring to Muslims faithful in Nigeria, thus, the political agitation and quest for radical Islamization of Nigeria by members of the Boko Haram sect, which started with the democratic and civic leaders calling for the full implementation of Sharia in 1999 onwards, in many states in Northern Nigeria. Preaching love, peace and calling for mutual co-existence between Muslims and Christians must be the cardinal task of Islamic preachers, scholars and Sheikhs especially during the month of *Ramadan*. Thanks to NIREC, dialogue has advance.

It seems everybody in Africa today is being challenge by the yoke of modernism. It is obvious in the face of modernity, Islam, like Christianity is facing a huge challenge, problems and is riddle by myriads of moral and cultural issues. Rogan wrote that, "The debates over Islam and modernity have deep roots in the Arab world. *Hassan al-Banna* had created the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 to fight against Western influences and the erosion of Islamic values, banned by the Egyptian monarchy in December 1948, and given then by Nasser's regime in 1975" [Rogan:2009:399]. Ever since advent of these negative forces, who love to promote Islamic radicalization and hate-speech; really succeed in promoting open violence and the killing of innocent people in Nigeria. Reasons why all Islamic preachers need to learn the psychology of mediation to promote peace, reconciliation and dialogue. These are the positive signs and objectives of theological education.

Theological education as a variable tool of evolving conscientious leaders in Africa.

Ministry and leadership in the Lord's vineyard and amongst the Muslim *Ummah* in Christianity and Islam respectively are valuable assets of power. These are exercise in the most sacred space of conscience that elicit joy, love, unity, peace and brings transformation of human society. The explicit high quality of religious leaders becoming the 'voice of the voiceless' in exercising religious leadership in Africa can produce a healthy religious and interreligious culture of love between persons and persons; and more so between multi religious divide. Trading on the objective line of nurturing healthy conscience guides and directs African religious leaders to speak truth to power, and confront evil structures and political leadership with authority devoid of gender bias. It is on this basis therefore, of African Religious Leaders being voice of the voiceless that they have power to address ugly issues of injustice in human society. They qualify to be the most notable persons to address issues of

injustice, abuse of political power due to corruption and the evil of child or the girl-child sex trade endemic in Africa. The acquisition and transmission of theological education to be shared by all persons is extremely important today than ever before.

It further illustrates that wholistic education is an engagement of the human person that directs a quest in freedom to responsibility measured by the engine of sacrifice; above all it is an effort that leads to salvation in fulfilling a desire for a destination to eternity with God in heaven. The task of religion in the world does not just end with emotional fulfilment of observing religious rites and rituals, prayers and devotions, paying monetary obligations and ministerial mandate; but is an urge that has much bigger value and worth. What an elite, enlightened and educated religious leader in Christianity or Islam does at the place of worship, at home and in the society in general must be based on freedom of conscience that have liberated him/her, now transmitted to a larger human society in love and service. A task Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah has done excellently.

Africa is a viable mission field for the formation of leaders of conscience: The continent of Africa is made of 54 countries and four islands, with an overwhelming population of over 1.2 billion inhabitants, mostly young people who are under 25 years constituting more than 50 percent is a gift of God [African population in the World: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/02:02:2020>]. It has a vast geographical landscape, arable land and is gifted with enormous rich mineral and human resources, yet with the least industrialization, reasons why it is less developed and wallowing in poverty, disease and hunger.

It seems that the Mainstream of Western media (CNN, BBC, Voice of America) mostly carry daily contents of bad news against African cultural ethos. These are displayed on their screens on pictures of diseased infested homes, having poor, hungry and streets littered with destitute. These are terrible reportage of woeful record of political and economic negatives as if there is no any good news of development in almost all the Post-Independent African countries. We need discipline theological and intellectual education to show that there are abundant good news and development going on in Africa. Even as we need more politicians, theologians and technocrats to develop a virile, democratic and spiritual platform for the formation of our religious leaders in Christianity and Islam. It is only a conscious religious educator in the Church or Mosque that will say it as it is, in Africa. Africa is not a child of necessity, but a God-given independent people, with rich spiritual and cultural history. We are a proud and homogenous people, were the practice of religious beliefs is enshrined in our DNA.

The formation of a virile Theological Education is essential in the formation of its leaders and the calibration of its citizens in the science of God, promoting justice, sustaining love and envisioning the dynamics of salvation. Ed Stetzer teaches that "It is important to understand that theological education is genuinely essential - not as the engine of the church, but in some ways as the steering wheel of the church. The engine of the church has to be the mission, the passion of God's people who are engaging faithfully and fruitfully in Gospel work, that advances the work of the Kingdom"[Stetzer:2008:6]. This statement underscores the relevance of bequeathing theological education to both leaders and members of the Christian mission for sustainable development, growth and expansion of various ministries in Christendom.

Each Religious Leader in Africa – Christian or Muslim – need know that the task is tedious with so many negative indices of a back lash. Most of the congregations one will lead and educate can be naïve, insulting and rude. Robert Greene wrote: "But keep in mind that there are always bad apples within any group, people who will grumble and not be won over by you no matter what you do. They live to be passive-aggressive and undermine anyone in a leadership position. Don't bother with empathy; nothing will work on them" [Greene: *The Laws of Human Nature*: 2018:461 Decisive leadership involves an introspection.

The relevance of theological education in promoting and developing the Kingdom of God cannot be over emphasized, as it is "the engine that provides the power; the steering wheel helps guide the forward motion... We want the engine to be God's people saying yes to the Lord and engaging in mission. The steering wheel of theological education, when done right can help guide in the right way"[Stetzer:2008:5]. This is the motive of this research to create an enduring legacy of truth.

General Conclusion -The Way Forward

The relevance of theological education cannot be over emphasized in this exposition, nevertheless it suffices to state the obvious: it registers God's presence in direct life of the Religious Leader; it forms character in leaders; it sharpens qualitative and conscientious leaders for the modern society. Christian or Islamic theology is a complex mystery that cannot be understood easily by exploring the use of reason alone. The research underscored, the greater need for the Religious Leader to be a person of faith, clear, articulate and logical reasoning to be able to integrate conscious messages against the negative surge of fundamentalism, hate and unprovocative attacks on unsuspecting adherents.

The way forward is for the Religious Leader to be a well-read person and leader of conscience. Both Christianity or Islam (even now) seems not able to stop extreme fundamentalism that involves cruel and physical attacks, inflicting injury and even death on believers of other religion like Christianity and Traditional Religion in Africa. Rolheiser, recalled vividly that: “During the medieval ages, the Christian church, believing that God wanted us to kill people who were in doctrinal error, conducted the Inquisition. Today we see a new form of this in a number of Islamic groups (in the North West and North East of Nigeria) who believe that God wants infidels of all kinds put to death for the sake of religious purity” [Rolheiser: *Wrestling with God*: 2018:142]. This craze and thirst for blood must stop by the clear process of theological education in both major cities and rural areas of Nigeria. Therefore, the pedagogy, principle, method and modality of bequeathing and transmitting the deposit of Christian and Islamic faith from Apostolic Epoch to the twenty-first century, from the time of Muhammad to our time; even though it is difficult to convinced all adherents of different religions to live in peace, we must continue to teach them. Both Christian and Islamic theological education are not only necessity but are rooted on the quality and enlightenment of the minister or religious leaders in our socio-cultural setting. The presence and the gift of the Holy Spirit couple with the skills of missionary experience centred on continuous catechesis leads to appreciable progress to be seen in the quality of life lived in the human society.

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