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Introduction

For the April/May 2021 edition of the African Theological Journal for Church and Society (ATJCS), an overwhelming number of articles, including some from doctoral students, have been received. It underscores the need for and vibrant interest in a theological journal that is accessible and affordable, focussing on scholarship in and on the African context. A wide range of topics are being covered, all making a significant contribution to reflecting on the church's role within African societies. Apart from appraisal of constructive engagement, a prophetic word on the deficiencies in the church's (and generally Christians') obedience to its calling is ever present in the articles: there is a deep sense of concern about the impact of the church on African societies.

Prof Sunday Agang, provost of ECWA Theological Seminary in Nigeria, is setting the table for the discourse on the church's role by asking the question whether the African church has not been reduced to "remnant status". He makes a distinction between the "true" believers and the large bulk of outwardly religious people that do not abide by the basic requirements of being the people of God. Despite the statistical evidence of rapid growth, the church's real impact on the society is questionable.

Dr Josephine Munyao, staff member of Daystar University in Kenya, is elaborating on the two foundational viewpoints regarding all community development practices in Africa. She differentiates between two points of departure: the question "what don't you have?" or "what do you have?" She recommends theological participation, indeed leadership in the conception and approach to development, because development is by nature theological business.

Dr Tshenolo Jennifer Madigale, staff member of the University of Botswana, is examining the provision of assistance among the elderly who are caretakers of children who are made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS – and what role could the church play. The article is based on empirical research. She is making some practical suggestions, especially regarding the church's pastoral role.

Kehinde O. Olusanyo, lecturer of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomoso is focusing on the perennial challenge of poverty in Africa and the role of the church in providing lasting solutions. The article reflects on the reality of poverty in Africa, biblical understandings of poverty, an ethical analysis of the church's role in the responsibility of the church in combating poverty as well as some homiletical implications.

Anyway Kze Gambo, staff member of ECWA Theological Seminary in Nigeria, is reflecting on the challenges posed by internal migration in Nigeria, especially the focussing on the Fulane herdsmen. What could be the reaction of Christians on the violent insurgent activities associated by these activities? Based on principles derived from a social textual reading of the Epistle to Ephesians, the author suggests a theonomous counterintuitive strategy.

Dr Folashade Oloyede and Dr Akinwale Oloyede, both from the Nigerian Baptist Theological seminary in Ogbomoso, Nigeria, explore the need for and effects of intentional training of faith-leaders for combating developmental and ecological challenges. The article is based on an empirical research project.

Prof Samuel Peni Ango and Rev Gonjing Chorwunna of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, are reflecting on the fragmented approach in education (especially theological training) based on the existing dualism that advocates separation of church and state and the resulting inability to apply biblical knowledge to solving life's problems. The research found that integrated learning takes place randomly, but without cognitive recognition among the students. The article recommends more intentional description and application of the principles of integrated learning in teaching and learning in theological institutions.

Catherine Falconer and Dr Robert Falconer, of the South African Theological Seminary, are focusing on foundational questions regarding the millennial reign of Christ and its application for the church's mission, also in the African context. It gives preference for a "amillennialism" perspective (the present reign of Jesus Christ in heaven) as best foundation to proclaim the kingdom of God and for a full-bodied praxis of missions.

Dr Wessel Wessels, member of the Faculty of Theology and Religion of the University of the Free State (South Africa) reviews the publication edited by J.A. van den Berg: *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Perspectives from theology, philosophy and education*. The so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution has vast implications; it poses opportunities, but also challenges to the church's ministry – also in Africa.

Prof Sunday Agang

(Editor in Chief)

Dr Gideon van der Watt

(Executive Editor)

Agang, S B 2021, 'The African Church as a Mixed Bag: Its Quantity and Quality Reduced to a Remnant Status', *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 4-27

The African Church as a Mixed Bag: Its Quantity and Quality Reduced to a Remnant Status

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Abstract

The primary focus of this article is on the remnant nature and scope of the African church. Thus, I employ the biblical concept of a "remnant" to argue that the present demographical statistic of church growth in Africa does not translate to a concrete or tangible moral and ethical impact on society. In spite of the Southward movement of the centre of gravity of Christianity, the African church remains vulnerable like a remnant. It is in short supply of strong prophetic voices against enormous socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-religious injustices or corrupt practices at all spheres, including the church itself. The concept of a "remnant" is a key concept in the Old Testament (OT). It indicates a distinction between the "true" believers and the large bulk of outwardly religious people that does not abide by the basic requirements of being the people of God. I am using it in this article to make a comparison between the statistical evidence and the real impact on the society. Therefore, in the article I seek to argue that the African church statistics should not bluff us. Of course, looking at the multidimensional social, ethical, moral, economic, political and religious matters confronting the African continent even where the church seems to be in the majority, one cannot help but conclude that the African church is a remnant church. But, how can one convince a reader that African Christianity is a remnant faith when the current statistics is showing otherwise? For example, in 2020 the Center for the Study of Global Christianity published data that claimed, "[T]here

are more than 631 million Christians that currently reside in Africa.”¹ This figure accounts for 45 percent of the Africa’s population. Furthermore, the Pew Research Center postulated that, “By the year 2060, six of the top ten countries with the largest Christian populations will be in Africa.”² In spite of this apparent growth of the church, this paper argues that the African church is a remnant. Taking the statistical evidence available at face value, it is ridiculous to say that the African church is a remnant. Of course, we can define a remnant as a few people who remain after a catastrophe or war has struck the larger group. In the sense that we are using this concept here, we are not only referring to numbers or quantity. Rather, we are concerned with both the quantity and quality. What are the evidences that the African church is a remnant? The paper seeks to answer this question by addressing the following issues: the African church and its remnant reality; why the African church still remains a remnant church in spite of its enormous numerical growth; and the need for a radical spirituality.

Introduction

Undoubtedly, over the years, the African church has witnessed unprecedented growth to the extent that scholars have concluded that the centre of Christian gravity has shifted to the Southern Hemisphere.³ Yet, in this paper, I attempt to argue that the African church remains a remnant church in terms of its moral and ethical impact on the general society. The positive narratives that scholars like Philip Jenkins (2006) and Timothy Tennent (2007) have given about the African church have not allowed us to carefully evaluate the public impact of the church on the African society. Few scholars have drawn our attention to

¹ “The Current State of Christianity in Africa, 24 June, 2019. Culled from <https://thelastwell.org/the-current-state-of-christianity-in-africa/>, on 4 July 2020.

² “The Current State of Christianity in Africa, 24 June, 2019. Culled from <https://thelastwell.org/the-current-state-of-christianity-in-africa/>, on 4 July 2020.

³ Gene L. Green, “Introduction”, *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective: Exploring the Contextual Nature of Theology and Mission*, edited by Jeffrey P. Greenman & Gene L. Green, (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2012), 9.

some of the salient challenges that the African church is facing. For example, Beneet Bujo has one peculiar challenge:

There have been many obstacles to hopes that independence would create a more friendly environment for African cultural values and lead to the development of a theology freed from colonial burdens. Wars, corrupt dictators, and a continuing economic colonialism from the rich North have created an environment where Africans continue to struggle to assert their own dignity and the dignity of their cultures.⁴

The situation Bujo described in 1992 has not have any significant change in the 21st century. Conflict, violence and wars have continued to devastate our communities. Many countries with high Christian presence in Africa are still defined by abject poverty. Apparently, the African church has not yet connected its mission with the need of the poor in the continent. This is one of the reasons why the African church can be regarded as a remnant. For example, its theologians, unlike their Latin American counterparts, have not yet realised that the intrinsic connection between socio-economic injustices and conflict violence. That is, our history of social, cultural, economic, political, and religious injustices have created a situation whereby poverty is a man-made, destructive thing that must be fought against. Gustavo Gutierrez, for instance, realised that “Poverty is not a result of chance; it results from unjust structures.”⁵ To encourage the Latin American church and its theologians to stand up against the oppression of the poor, he argued that poor people are a social class. He wrote, “It became crystal clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action.”⁶ Many African theologians focus on the matters of culture and identity, while their counterparts in Latin America

⁴ Benezet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context: Faith and Cultures*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1992), 5.

⁵ This is quoted from Brown, 1978:61-62 by William Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 80-81.

⁶ This is quoted from Brown, 1978:61-62 by William Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 80-81.

wrestle with social and political issues.⁷ Another reason why the African church is showing signs of a minority status in the continent in spite of its celebrated numerical growth lies in its lack of a concrete stand or lack of having a political ideology and stance that enable it to prophetically critique and denounce the social injustices happening on the continent. Thus, this paper argues that if the church in Africa wants to have a significant positive impact across the continent it will have to give priority to the existential problems relating to justice, human rights, peace and religious freedom, which will bring hope for the future. The church and its theology have to “make the local reality in all of its dynamics the starting point of theological reflection.”⁸ This dynamic is not limited to values and identity, but also to political power and social/economic domination. Our theological reflection has to address science, technology, trade patterns, the media, particularly from the dimension and point of view of the “victim” of those forces of modernity. Another important issue facing the African continent is neo-colonialism, which is spearheaded by China and multinational companies, railways contractors, etc, who are exploiting African workers at all levels.⁹ The African church can be said to be a church without a political and social theology because of its longstanding divorce between evangelism and social actions-(imported from overseas) and the concentration on the separation of church and state, the sacred-secular divide, and so on, all of which are a misconception of the Christian faith and its public dimension (Matthew 28:18). The next section will address the African church and its remnant reality.

The African church and its remnant reality

In Africa, evangelical Protestants need to pick up the issues that they have been known to confront and had long championed – justice, the plights of the poor, freedom and so on. The African church in some African countries’ context has allied with the wealthy and the powerful. Consequently, Kamaara notes the nature and scope of the remnant experience of the African church when she writes, “While Christian values are expected to foster national

⁷ Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World*, 71.

⁸ Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World*, 72.

⁹ Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World*, 73.

cohesion and identity, more often than not Christianity has provided a convenient rallying point around which ethnic conflicts are mobilised.”¹⁰ African theologians and historiographers have largely focused their theological reflection on the nature of Christianity and overlooking its political function.¹¹ The church action and/or inaction is responsible for the combusting situation of evil! To a large extent, the African church needs to hear Paul’s admonishing, “Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love.” (1 Corinthians 16:14 – NLT)

In the 1980s African theologians, alongside their counterparts in the Majority World, were very optimistic about the impact Christianity would have on the African continent. The African theological enterprise raises many questions.” One of such questions was:

Regarding the churches, is that movement marginalised, or is it part of the African churches’ dynamism? The answer to that question, in Africa itself, is not so simple. And it seems that the same question is not simple anywhere in the Third World. In reality, the concrete experience of the African churches shows scepticism, sometimes full commitment, and even enthusiasm. The attitude of the churches is therefore very diversified. However, we must recognise scepticism as being the attitude of some individuals. The general tendency is toward a global conscientisation of the people in favour of human liberation and promotion in Africa. The solidarity to the churches with people who suffer, who are dominated and oppressed, is proclaimed all over Africa in such a way that it can serve as a model.¹²

¹⁰ Eunice Kamaara, “Towards Christian National Identity in Africa: A Historical Perspective to the Challenge of Identity to the Church in Kenya” in *Studies in World Christianity*, 16, No.2, (July 2010): 1.

¹¹ Dyrness, *Learning About Theology from the Third World*, 75.

¹² “African Report” in *Third World Theologies; Commonalities and Divergence: Papers and Reflections from the Second General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians*, December, 1986, Oaxtepec, Mexico, edited by K.C. Abraham (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1986, 1990), 56.

With the presence of Christianity in Africa, the degree to which Africans have continued to endure misery unabated – in both life and death – is unacceptable. This chapter is an assessment of the church in Africa’s need for a positive turnaround, a holistic transformation and development.

Nothing will change if the African church does not grasp its remnant place in Africa and work on subverting the old order by infusing it with the new order, which Jesus has introduced in the world. Yet, it is extremely hard to convince anyone that the church in Africa is a remnant. The exponential growth of the church in Africa is undebatable. From Africa’s independence in the 1950s and 1960s, all strands of Christian denominations – Roman Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Christians and independent churches – have continued to experience extraordinary growth. As the continent’s population numbers continue to surge, Christian numbers are also increasing in an unprecedented manner. Yet, the impact of the Christian faith in the continent does not seem commensurate with the growth of the church. When Philips Jenkins told the world that Africa had become the epicentre of the Christian faith, we went into jubilation. We were overwhelmed with celebration to the extent that we failed to ask what specific responsibilities that growth put on the African church. To grasp the degree of the expectation that the African peoples have on what the church can achieve in the continent is to realise that Africa has found itself in a religious, social, cultural, political, economic and philosophical quagmire whereby it needs the church to give the African peoples a future with hope. What that means is succinctly summarised by a reflection paper presented by African theologians at the Second General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians meeting (which was held in an awfully long time ago!). It indicates that not much has changed since then, if that is your point. Without mincing words, the African theologians at the meeting seemed to have demonstrated an awareness of the task before the African church. They reported that:

The role to be played by the church is evident because human conditions and institutions of the period subsequent to colonisation are deteriorating fast. It would not be too much to say that the church appears to be the only solution to the general distress in certain African countries. However, it would be childish to fall straight forward into self-satisfaction. Although the mission of the church in Africa is great, the real situation of the church, on the other hand,

*is dramatic. For the African church is intimately tied to the future of the African continent, which is now about to drown. If Africa sinks, the African church will sink with it. The assertion of that reality is the major mission of the African church.*¹³

This is an apt assessment of the responsibility of the African church to the African peoples. However, that vision is to some extent a mirage. It has not been sustained. Africa has many competitive realities and challenges that have made the church a remnant. As it is, the task of the church in any given society is holistic. It is fundamentally involved in saving souls, saving their minds and their sociological and anthropological contexts. It is a holistic task because it involves partnering with the incarnate Jesus Christ, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, to reposition and transform every social structure and institution that serves as an impasse to the abundant life that Christ promises all those who will place saving faith in him (John 10:10). In spite of its phenomenal growth, the African church has remained a remnant. Its existential experiences since colonialism, independence, post-independence and the present ongoing neo-colonialism.

In spite of the growth of the church in Africa, Christianity has not really demonstrated the tremendous potentials it has shown in other contexts.¹⁴

One of the reasons Christ came into this world is to destroy the works of the devil, so that ordinary humans like us can nurture and promote the civilisation of love and inclusiveness. But why is the African church still a remnant? African scholars have tended to argue that one of the many reasons is the way the church was planted. The gospel was proclaimed to Africa by a people who did not respect the God-given cultural values of the Africans. Everything about African cultural values was not important – it was considered inferior to their own superior culture. Thus, in Africa:

¹³ K. C. Abraham, ed., *Third World Theologies: Commonalities and Divergences: Papers and Reflections from the Second General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, December, 1986, Oaxtepec, Mexico*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1990), 43.

¹⁴ Abraham, ed., *Third World Theologies*, 36.

The Christian faith, as transmitted by missionaries, is completely coated in its Western cultural straitjacket. Too intellectual, too judicial, too much of a stranger to day-to-day life problems, the revived doctrine becomes a Sunday dress worn to church. At home, at the farm, on the job, we put on once more our ordinary dress for current business. Those day-to-day problems are sickness, infertility of wife or cattle, a neighbour's jealousy, scarce or abundant rainfall, the drought which burns farms, luck in hunting, success in business, a victory over an enemy, bad luck, all kinds of powers, wizards, soothsayers, healers, etc.¹⁵

This tradition of lack of paying close attention to what the African peoples are going through as their daily existential experiences is still here. The African church has largely remained silent in the face of overwhelming human rights abuse of women, widows, children, orphans, the poor and the weak. One of Africa's feminist theologians, Mercy Amba Oduyoye, rightly observed that, "[T]he church of Christ is God's instrument for the liberation of the human spirit and for demonstrating the first fruits of the God's Reign."¹⁶ When we take a close look at the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious challenges that the African peoples are going through today, we can't help but conclude that the African church is a remnant, if what Oduyoye said is right, and I believe she is. Compared with its counterpart, the Asian church, which is just a little above 3% of the population of the continent, and yet is speaking out against social, cultural, political, religious and economic injustices, the African church situation is unacceptable.

By and large, the African church needs to become aware of its fragility. By all standards, the African church is a remnant. In 2002 the Christian population in Nigeria was only 40%, and Islam was 45%. The spread of Christianity in Africa is not in question. In many respects, the contemporary spread of the church in Africa is unprecedented. Although most of North Africa is predominantly Islamic, other parts of Africa, however, have embraced the Christian faith. For example, Wikipedia has noted that, "Christianity is embraced by the majority

¹⁵ Abraham, ed., *Third World Theologies*, 39

¹⁶ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Commonalities: An African Perspective" in Abraham, ed., *Third World Theologies*, 104.

of the population in most Southern African, Southeast African, and Central African States and others in some parts of the Horn of Africa and West African.”¹⁷ In fact, the spread is dramatic and visible in many African countries with an explosion in terms of the number of “church denominations and structures across urban centres and even in rural areas. In some cases, mega-church sites are morphing into cities, complete with housing estates, banks, grocery stores and police stations. Beyond dominant architecture, the prominence of Christianity is often visible in other ways, in Ghana, for instance, small and medium scale businesses are often named based on biblical verses.”¹⁸ Yet, what seem to be a missing link is that the church in every region does not grasp its holistic responsibility. Due to many decades of exploitation, oppression and marginalization, the African church came into being with a tremendous sense of powerlessness, a shallow faith. And as the church continues to face the storms of life, it seems as if Jesus is still asking the African church the question he asked his disciples when they faced a similar threatening situation, “Where is your faith?” (Luke 8:25) For the African church to bring good news to the society and its immediate members, it needs to have a renewed confidence in the God whose power is incomparably great (Ephesians 1:18-23). The African church needs to realise that the role of the church involves, among other things, nation building and concrete contribution to the welfare of the [secular] states in Africa.¹⁹

The African church needs to follow a cue from its Asian counterpart that takes into consideration the cries and groans of the suffering of its masses of people who are politically oppressed. Their people are made to feel powerless and economically exploited across the Asian continent. The Asian approach to the plight of the masses reminds the church that it needs to understand Christ’s suffering as holistic – socially, culturally, politically, economically and spiritually. For instance, Dr Kim Yong Bock, Director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, once argued: “Christian theology has traditionally underestimated the seriousness of social evil, a mistake caused by its attempt to understand sin and evil in individual, spiritual or

¹⁷ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Africa/. Culled on 4 July, 2020.

¹⁸ qz.com/Africa/1587317/how-many-christians-live-in-Africa/. Culled 4 July, 2020.

¹⁹ Bong Rin Ro, “Theological Trends in Asia” Vol. 13-Issue 2, pp.4-5.

metaphysical terms.”²⁰ I see this as one of the problems that make the church in Africa a remnant church.

Why the African church remains a remnant despite the growth of Christianity

How can we convince anyone that the church in Africa is to a large extent a remnant? Is it not true that, “The church of Christ is God’s instrument for the liberation of the human spirit and for demonstrating the first fruits of God’s Reign.”?²¹ Yes, it is absolutely true. But why is Africa still a continent whose masses suffer systemic social and cultural injustices, economic exploitation and extraordinary human misery under the watchful eyes of the church, which is said to be God’s instrument of socio-economic justice, socio-political order and socio-spiritual freedom, transformation and development? Is the church, its members and clergy not aware that Africans’ misery is largely man-made? There are basically two categories of theologians in Africa.

On the one hand, there are those who have not grasped the role of the gospel in social transformation. That is, they are not able to perceive the symbiotic relationship between the gospel of salvation, saving souls and the work of social engagement. They tend to completely reject social action. This group seems to be in the majority in Africa, because the missionaries who brought the gospel to Africa, came during the time of a one-sided emphasis on personal conversion to the detriment of social action. Rather, they tended to assume that to be involved in the gospel of social transformation is to be involved in something that undercut our true calling. Thus, many Christian leaders in Africa are in the category that believe that the gospel does not have a social action dimension. They identify salvation primarily with spiritual conversion and view liberation theology as focusing only on a “social gospel”, and therefore deviating from the biblical message.

On the other hand, there is a remnant group of African evangelicals who insist that the gospel requires Christian involvement not only in the process of saving

²⁰ Kim Yong Bock, “Theology and the Social Biography of the Minjung”, in *CTC Bulletin* (April 1985), 74.

²¹ Abraham, *Third World Theologies*, 32.

souls, but also in the process of saving their minds, their worldview; that is, involvement in both liberation and social transformation. For this remnant, sin is both personal and social, both spiritual and natural, both individual and structural.

It seems clear to me that it is this polarisation that is one of the issues that has made the African church a remnant, in a social context, which is threatened and in fact under siege. Therefore, it requires us to recognise the radically holistic nature and scope of Jesus' ministry. As Mugambi insists, if we take a critical look at Jesus' ministry, we will undoubtedly realise that it was both a ministry of personal and social transformation.²² As such "salvation and liberation are theologically compatible." Thus, he wrote that in the African context and in the Bible salvation, as a socio-political concept, cannot be complete without liberation as a theological concept. Thus Jesus, proclaiming his mission, quoted from the book of Isaiah to indicate the correctness and relevance of his concern (Isaiah 61:1-4). To escape from its present remnant status, the African church must seek an integrated approach to the gospel, which overcomes the polarisation between liberation and salvation paradigms. For example, Diane Stinton has cited how it can be proved beyond reasonable doubt that Africans' spiritual, economic, cultural, political and social underdevelopment,

[I]s artificially created by the pauperisation of some as a result of the enrichment of others. It is not a secret to anybody that our underdevelopment develops the developed countries. First of all, this is because our economy is located on the periphery, with the North and the West being the centre. Our whole wealth is intended for rich countries. The subsoil's resources and the agricultural products are exploited, their extraction and their production being a prime concern of the developed nations. Products for local consumptions are mostly imported, whereas the food-producing farms are sacrificed for agribusiness. The situation gets worse with the notorious deterioration in the farms of exchange. Prices of raw materials are fixed by the developed

²² J. N. K. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), 33.

countries without taking into account the real needs of African workers.” The neocolonial movement spearheaded by the Chinese has joined heads with the already existing “world monetary system which is a very skilful machinery for exploitation, domination, and systematic pauperisation of the Third World countries.”²³

This lament forces us to ask the question, “What is the specific relevance of the Christ of the African church to life in contemporary Africa?” One of Africa’s finest theological minds from Kenya, J.N.K. Mugambi, has trouble accepting that the whole gamut of Africa’s religiosity has not made enough impact as its potentials indicated. The African church has not attained its full potentials. In her research on this matter, Diane Stinton discovered that Mugambi fundamentally sees Africa as continent of paradoxes. He poignantly expressed the paradox of Africa being the most “religious” and specifically “Christian” continent at the end of the twentieth century, while “its peoples remain the most abused of all in history.”²⁴ To make the desirable impact that the African church has the potentials of making, Mugambi calls for social reconstruction at three levels: personal, cultural, and communal. At the cultural, personal and communal levels of reconstruction, Mugambi argued that the liberal model has become outmoded. According to him, we now “need to shift paradigms from the Post-Exodus to Post-Exile imagery, with reconstruction as the resultant theological axiom.” Stinton understands this to mean that, “Since the 1990s were viewed as a decade of reconstruction in many areas, such as constitutional reforms and economic revitalisation, African theology was called to play a culturally reconstructive role like that of Protestant theology during the European Renaissance and Reformation.”²⁵ Mugambi argued that Jesus’ mission in Israel was profoundly reconstructive in nature and scope. In other words, if we pay attention to Jesus’ ministry, we will realise that it was essentially a reconstruction of Judaism rather than deconstructive. He cited the example of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) as “the most basic

²³ Diane B. Stinton, *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary African Christologies*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 222.

²⁴ Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 33 in Stinton, *Jesus of Africa*, 223.

²⁵ Stinton, *Jesus of Africa*, 223

of all reconstructive theological texts in the synoptic gospels.”²⁶ In his analysis of Jesus’ mission, Mugambi sees reconstruction at the following levels: personal, cultural and ecclesial.²⁷ Stinton tells of how Mugambi offers evidence in Jesus’ teaching regarding the need for transforming personal motives and intentions in order to produce constructive change. Following examples from Matthew and Luke, Mugambi concludes that, “The key to social transformation is appropriate disposition of the individual members of the community concerned, especially its leaders.” Mugambi is fully aware that St. Paul has said that God has invited us into partnership with his Son (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). The churches of Africa are challenged by the scriptures to continually act as God’s witnesses on earth in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom we affirm to be Christ. Each Christian is challenged to act upon this challenge and endeavour to make it a reality. Do we witness with despair, or with hope?

Mugambi is not alone in calling for African theologians to engage the African social context. Mercy Oduyoye of Ghana, in her reflection on the reconstruction of Africa, writes: “The future of the Church in Africa is dependent on its ability to embark afresh on the mission of Christ in Africa.”²⁸ She argued that: “The mission of Christ is a critical and an important mission. It therefore requires Christians responding to all the poverties of human life.”²⁹

Grasping Oduyoye’s explanation, Diane Stinton believes that it means ensuring that the gospel is, “Set in the context of the real lives of the people to whom it is delivered” and that it makes a difference to those lives. Oduyoye further stresses that “a visit of both ecclesiology and spirituality is urgent for the theological enterprise of the African church. The viability of this reconstruction

²⁶ Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 13 in Stinton, *Jesus of Africa*, 224.

²⁷ Stinton, *Jesus of Africa*, 224.

²⁸ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, “The Church of the Future in Africa: Its Mission and Theology”, in *The Church and Reconstruction of Africa*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi (Nairobi: AACC, 1997), 73 cited by Stinton, *Jesus of Africa*, 225.

²⁹ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, “The Church of the Future in Africa: Its Mission and Theology”, in *The Church and Reconstruction of Africa*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi (Nairobi: AACC, 1997), 73 cited by Stinton, *Jesus of Africa*, 225.

will depend upon the development of a dynamic Christology.”³⁰ The African church needs to grasp Jesus’ radical approach to the mission of the God (Isaiah 61:1-2a). The fruits of the kingdom of God – the whole gamut of the blessings of the kingdom – is what is in mind here. For Saint Paul succinctly points out: “I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.” (1 Corinthians 9:23 NLT)

I read this phrase in my personal devotional time one day, and I could not help but ask, what does Paul really mean by this phrase “To spread the Good News and share in its blessings”? How does this help me to grasp the situation the church in Africa is in? On face value, I understood it to mean that it is one thing to celebrate the unprecedented growth and spread of the Good News in Africa, but it is also an entirely different ball game to actually share in its blessings. The Good News has two sides like a coin: Spreading it and participating in its contemporary transformational and developmental fruits. In this case, I can convincingly say that the Africa church is a remnant. For although Christianity has continued to enjoy unprecedented growth and spread in the global South, Africa, Latin America and some parts of Asia, in many respects the church is still a remnant in its impact on the social, cultural, political, economic and moral landscape or worldview of the continent. If we compare the African church to how the Gospel turned its first century society upside-down and what it did went to Western Europe, particularly during the ministry of John Wesley, we can definitely agree that the church in Africa is a remnant. Undoubtedly, African Christians know how to spread the Good News like Paul, but they rarely know how to fully share in its blessings. What are those blessings of the Good News that we are missing? This is one of the tasks before us in this article. In what way can we justify the thrust of this article: The church in Africa as a remnant church? To justify it we have to look at available models.

Lessons from a Latin American model

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted, he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to

³⁰ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, “The Church of the Future in Africa: Its Mission and Theology”, in *The Church and Reconstruction of Africa*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi (Nairobi: AACC, 1997), 73 cited by Stinton, *Jesus of Africa*, 225.

those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour... (Luke 4:18-19; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2a RSV)

Although this model has been around for quite a while, its lessons are still fresh. The text above is generally accepted as the express mind of Christ for ministry or Christ's manifesto for the mission of God. The Latin American model helps us to glean significant insights about what having the mind of Christ in Africa may entail. The African church does not need to reinvent the wheel. It has a lot to learn from its counterparts in Latin America. Of course, African theologians have used or adopted the liberation model before in their theological reflection. However, I do not think that they have done enough to warrant stopping the ongoing socio-economic and socio-political injustices in the continent. In this section we will concentrate on the Latin American theologians' interpretation of who Jesus is.

Jesus's incarnation, life and ministry provide the template which the church needs to do well in every continent of the world. Our relevance depends largely on our perception of our history and its connection with the incarnated Christ's ministry which he announced in Luke 4:18-19. One of the reasons that the resurrected Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into his disciples was that our personal life and public and social life would be characterised by a "demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (1 Corinthians 2:4-5) We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can open our inner eyes to enable us to discern the nature and scope of our generation's human evil or its realities in our context. In this respect, I find Latin American Christology very rich and refreshing. Generally speaking, our perception of who Jesus is often informs and shapes what we do in private and public. Any image of Jesus Christ we create in our minds usually emanates from our lived experiences or our existential narrative. In his article, "Christologies³¹ of Latin America", Jose Miguez Bonino states, "The understanding of Jesus Christ of a given church, time, or people cannot be limited to their theological (dogmatic) definition, but is also seen in the place that Christ plays in their faith, their religious

³¹ Jose Miguez Bonino, "Latin American Christologies" in Virginia Fabella and R. S. Sugirtharajah editors, *Dictionary of Their world Theologies*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 54.

attitudes, their piety, their iconography, their celebrations, and even their folklore. In this sense, there have been and are very different ‘faces of Christ’ in Latin America.” Based on their understanding of Christ’s salvific programme on earth, Latin America opted for an alternative to theological reflection that gave them a deeper understanding of the nature and scope of liberation. They understand liberation comprehensively. For example, Gustavo Gutierrez underscores the many dimensions of economic dependency by describing three interdependent levels of liberation – which include, but are not limited to, liberation in the economic and political sphere, liberation from dehumanisation, and liberation from sin.³² The liberationists’ understanding of the holistic nature of theology have been distilled as follows:

First, liberation from socio-political, socio-economic and socio-religious structures of injustices. At this level of liberation, the theologians address the matter of the oppression of the poor by the rich, workers by owners, and majority by minority which is institutionalised by unjust economic, political, and social structures. Gutierrez argues that liberation on this level requires a structural transformation to create economic, political, and social freedom for the majority.

Second, liberation from dehumanising structures. At this level of liberation, the theologian addresses the oppression of dehumanisation which “marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it.”³³ Here Paulo Freire is very helpful. He explains how a culture of silence dehumanises the poor and oppressed in Latin America because they lack a critical consciousness of who they are and what their destiny as a subject, not an object, might be. Liberation allows them the freedom to voice the silence and to follow their “vocation of becoming more fully human.”³⁴

Third level is a liberation from the structure of sin. At this level liberation theologians see sin as the ultimate cause of all injustices and oppression for

³² As cited in Priscilla and John R. Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, (Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 34.

³³ As cited in Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 35.

³⁴ As cited in Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 35.

individuals and society; it infiltrates every dimension of human life and creation. Liberation from sin enables true community with God and with neighbour to become a reality.³⁵

Where is Jesus in all of these three levels of a Latin American interpretation of liberation? Jesus Christ is undoubtedly seen as the ultimate liberator in all three. What is the evidence for this claim? First, during his earthly ministry, Jesus fought economic structures with his teaching, such as the parable of the workers who laboured for different lengths of time but earned the same wage (Matthew 20:1-16). This parable is a frontal attack on the view that those with more money deserve it and, concomitantly, that the poor deserve their low economic status.³⁶ Second, Jesus Christ fought social structures by eating meals with so-called sinners and prostitutes. Third, Jesus Christ fought dehumanisation by placing human need above even the most sacred traditions such as Sabbath purity (Mark 2:23-3:6). Fourth, the poor and the oppressed were conscientized in his presence. For instance, blind Bartimaeus, whom the crowds silenced, was given voice and healed by Jesus. (Mark 10:46-52). An unnamed woman with a flow of blood and no financial resources touched Jesus and subsequently “told him the whole truth” (Mark 5:25-34). Fifth, Jesus fought sin by denouncing everything – whether religious, political, economic, or social – that alienated people from God and from their neighbour. In short, the ultimate project of Jesus was “to proclaim and be the instrument of the concrete realisation of the absolute meaning of the world: i.e., liberation from every stigma (including suffering, division, sin and death) and liberation for real life, for open-ended communication love, grace, and plenitude in God.”³⁷ That infers that Latin American liberation theology is emphasising holistic liberation. Liberation needed at all the different dimensions of life includes, among other things, “the social, the political, the economic, the cultural, the religious and all their interrelationships.”³⁸ It seems to me that one of the reasons why the African church is still a remnant is the political and cultural hierarchical perspective of its theology and structures in the continent. A church which is still confused as to whether or not its responsibility includes

³⁵ Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 35.

³⁶ Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 35.

³⁷ Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 35.

³⁸ Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 5.

giving a voice to the voiceless by combining evangelism and social action, faith and reason, is not following St. Paul's command to, "Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love." (1 Corinthians 16:13-14 NLT) Without the African church being on guard, standing firm in its faith, being courageous and strong and doing everything with love for human flourishing of the poor, it will remain a remnant in the midst of its progress. As I have said so far, the African church focuses on culture and identity, which is okay. But it has left out other important core social, political, and economic values such as the need to decry corruption and impunity, the outright violation of the human rights of the masses and vulnerable members of our society – women and children, widows and orphans, the poor of the poorest, the ethnic, political and religious minorities. One of the major problems is the African church attachment to hierarchical church structure, which has made it difficult for its adherents to see it as a "popular church." History is repeating itself, so to speak. "The church itself, which was supposed to be a new social ethic, became very comfortable with wealth and possession after Constantine make it the state religion in A. D. 313. We moved from underground catacombs to princely basilicas."³⁹ Rohr is right when he says, "Those who stay on the side of power have consistently misused and misinterpreted the gospel."⁴⁰ They often become blind to the plight of the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed. Thus, the African church needs to carefully re-evaluate and rethink its hierarchal structures so as to come to terms with the existential realities and experiences of its members. After many decades of independence, Africans are still not integrated. The reason is that they are still divided along tribal and ethnic lines. This situation has created an impasse to all sort of developmental strides on the continent.

The model of African Nationalists

The African founding fathers had a vision of a united Africa. For example, in Kenya and Nigeria the founding fathers did their best to restore the rapid erosion of community consciousness. Some of the measures that were put in place included the development and crafting and the inscribing of the philosophy of peace, love and unity in their national anthems and national

³⁹ Richard Rohr, *Jesus' Plan for a New World: The Sermon on the Mount*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Franciscan Media 1996), 24.

⁴⁰ Rohr, *Jesus' Plan for a New World*, 24.

pledges.⁴¹ This philosophy was based on the desire to build a united and prosperous continent. The African church is fortunate to be in a continent where many of the different national anthems and pledges are theologically inclined. The founding fathers “recognize God as the creator of the universe”. Many of them also acknowledge that national blessings proceed from God, the Almighty Creator of all the galaxies and the Sustainer of the entire universe. As it is said “The National anthem is clearly a prayer for unity, peace and liberty.”⁴² Of course, these core values – unity, peace, and liberty – are God’s revealed ethical and moral vision for society. Given that the African church has not paid attention to such an awesome opportunity, it has not taken advantage of this moral potential, which could have served as an impetus for political, social and economic engagement with the powers that be. Therefore, in many respects, it has failed to call to question the oppressive political, economic, social or cultural structures in Africa. This situation of failure has lent credence to its remnant mentality, which has caused it to lose sight of its God-given potential to reposition and subvert the old order that is detrimental to human flourishing in Africa. For instance, the political elites and the few rich elites that have become “rentiers” to use Guy Standing’s term, cannot call them to their God-given vocation – order, justice, freedom and peace and unity. By this failure, which is largely due to what Ron Sider calls, a one-sided Christian⁴³, a Christianity that divorces evangelism from social action, the church has demonstrated that it has accepted a remnant status quo, in spite of its phenomenal growth and size, its social and political impact is not commensurate with its unprecedented growth.

The African theological model: political and prophetic critique

Jesus’ legacy of political and prophetic critique of inhumane social structures and unjust political regimes is exemplified by African Christian leaders who stood against those who perpetuated ingrained social structures of economic exploitation, impoverishment, and marginalization, and leaving their victims with no option, but to remain politically and socially voiceless, and economically powerless. Their existential experience is characterised by

⁴¹ Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 22.

⁴² Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 23.

⁴³ Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in Age of Hunger: Moving From Affluence to Generosity*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 5.

suffering, pain and death. African is not in short supply of men and women who have understood Jesus' vision of a new world order. As Rohr noted, "Jesus' new world order is utterly subverting the old-world order. This is what makes people so furious: Jesus simply ignores the systems of values and righteousness that are so important to them."⁴⁴ Jesus' focus was in repositioning their mindset to focus on "what is really Real—the "Kingdom" experience, which is the heart of Jesus' teaching. "It's Reality with a capital R, the very bottom line, the pattern-that-connects. It's the goal of all true religion, the experience of the Absolute, the Eternal, what is. The Kingdom is Jesus' way of describing God's dream for the world."⁴⁵ The problem is that Christ's subversive attack on the old order through prophetic critique, which has been demonstrated by prophetic voices of African leaders like Kenyans Archbishop David Gitari and Archbishop John Okullu, have been sustained. That is, the prophetic ministry of Archbishop David Gitari, Archbishop John Okullu and Desmond Tutu of South Africa and/or a host of others on the continent have not quite been sustained. Contemporary African clergy exert enormous influence on both church and society. Thus, based on the influence that African clergies exert on society in the continent, we can argue that the African church has a political potential to the State to bring political and economic transformation. In many respects, the Catholic, Protestant evangelicals, and the Pentecostal leaders of some African countries maintain intimate ties with the ruling regimes to the extent that they can be used to defend the status quo to the detriment of their members. Other clergies who exert enormous influence and garner respect have chosen to focus on protecting their prestige and self-interest instead of speaking out against the social ills devastating society. As a result of their silent stance, they implicitly put their political involvement behind the perpetuation of the systemic structures of injustice which benefits a minority instead of the majority of the poor in the continent. Corollary attention to the Jesus' ministry will show the African church that it needs not only to do everything with love but also that because of its love for Christ and his Kingdom values it must get involved in political and prophetic critique of all inhumane structures and systems that have continued to make the majority of African voiceless, powerless and despairing. Many African peoples live in the situation of incredible religious, cultural, social, economic

⁴⁴ Rohr, *Jesus' Plan For a New World*, 29.

⁴⁵ Rohr, *Jesus' Plan For a New World*, 29.

and political uncertainty. Unlike the Latin Americans, who in their preferential option for the poor paid attention on Jesus' ministry and argued that Jesus rejected a purely spiritual message that placed the reigns of God into the future and asked people to wait passively for it,⁴⁶ the African church and its theologians, by and large lack such a focus. Only a remnant of the African theologians has been able to realise the holistic nature of their ministry. The majority needs to learn from the liberation theologians who have argued that a careful reading of the Gospels shows that during his earthly ministry, Jesus placed the reign of God in the people's very midst through proclamation, healing, and exorcism (Luke 17:20-21). They further pointed out that Jesus equally rejected a purely political role at the time, which manifested itself in three currents: prophetic in the appearance of the Messiah in the desert; sacerdotal, in the manifestation of the Liberator in the Temple; and political, in the revelation of the Messiah on the mountain of God. (Matt. 4:1-11).⁴⁷

A radical spirituality

For the African church to overcome its present social status of being a remnant, it needs a radical grasp of Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality does not have any dichotomy between sacred and secular. Its bearers realise that they engage in the ministry of propagating the kingdom of God by his mercy. Thus, all they are doing is meant to be a way of reciprocating the many favours, benefits and opportunities they are enjoying through their faith in Christ. For example, in his article, "Spirituality Today", John Risley asserts that, "When Christians, in their struggle to create a just society, turn to the historical Jesus and make a preferential option to support the poor, a spirituality of liberation emerges."⁴⁸ Latin American theologians arrived at this option by many decades of carefully reflecting on their Christian faith and its implication and impact on the social or existential experiences of the masses in the Americas. Spirituality, according to, John Sorino, has to do with the "correct relation of the subject with history, of the spirit of the subject with the proper,

⁴⁶ Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 46.

⁴⁷ Pope-Levison, *Jesus in Global Context*, 46.

⁴⁸ John Risley, "Liberation Spirituality, in *Spirituality Today*, Summer 1983, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp.117-126.

objective weight of history, with its proper spirit.”⁴⁹ Taking a cue from Latin America may enable the African church to also reflect more concretely on its own experience of God and his coming kingdom. For instance, a truly African spirituality, rooted in its particular social, historical reality, could be a great source for renewal and liberation, decolonisation, reconstruction, and transformation for the African church.

Conclusion

In this article we have basically argued that, it is one thing for the African church to experience exponential growth to the extent that the future of Christianity in the continent is secured, particularly as the countries in the continent witness continuing explosive growth. Nevertheless, it is whole different thing for the growth to be commensurate with the enormous pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial challenges the whole continent continues to wrestle with. Past and present realities of systemic injustices have left the continent not only as a prey of neo-colonialism but also as real victim of dire poverty, corruption, intra-communal violent conflicts, intra-religious and inter-religious conflicts, gender-based violence, human rights abuses, extra-judicial killings, terrorism, climate change, etc. These moral vices have made it extremely difficult for the African masses to enjoy true de-colonisation and independence. The historical tradition of Christianity is that it is a bringer of good news to the poor and weak, the oppressed, the marginalised, the voiceless and the powerless. Citing the prophet Isaiah, , Jesus Christ, proclaims, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favour...” (Isaiah 61:1-2a; Luke 4:18-19 RSV). It is this mission of God that helps the church to be an instrument of God that gives hope to those who are hurting and have been made to believe that they have no dignity. That enable them hope to correct their self-destructive naive acceptance of the image of inferiority.

⁴⁹ John Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroad: A Latin American Approach*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1979),

Although the majority of African Christian denominations are silent in the face of extreme exploitation, oppression, marginalisation and so on, there is a remnant made up of evangelical church individuals and organisations who are not silent. They are making fervent efforts to advance justice, just-peacemaking, and promote moral high living throughout the continent. For example, some African public theologians are working with the African theological institutions who are members of Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT) and their churches through the publication of an African Public Theology textbook in 2020, which will help them to infuse a new fresh consciousness that reflects Africa Union’s Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want (the Africa God Wants) – a strategic framework for growth and sustainability. The Association of Evangelicals in Africa has come up with a vision that is aligned with Agenda 2063. So, the African church has no excuse for remaining a remnant. It has models in the lives of the late Archbishop David Gitari of Kenya and Archbishop John Okullu of Kenya, both of whom were Anglican clergies. They both stood with the masses and fought for the true freedom of the masses from their governments detrimental public policies. The African church needs this prayer from Psalm 82 by Yohanna Katanacho:

O Lord! You want justice and want us to walk in its footsteps (v.2). You care for the orphan, the poor, and the widowed (v.3). Empower me to become an eye for the blind and a tear for those who sit in darkness. Turn me into legs for the crippled and for those who suffer immobility. Enable me to be a mother for the poor and for orphans. Give me the strength to be a voice for the mute and for those whose tongues have been silenced. I desire to be a home for a homeless nation. I want to be a comforting smile during a season of sadness, a moment of rest in an eternity of torture. May I become a garment of mercy for the helpless.

My world has become an island of the rich surrounded by a sea of the poor. Half the people on earth live below the poverty line; many are living on less than a dollar a day. They lack water, homes, and education. Without the eye of justice, we don’t see their plight; without the ear of mercy, we don’t hear their voice. Should we enjoy our island of richness and ignore the waves crashing on our beach, waves full of pain, weakness, and poverty?

Our neighbours are sinking in a sea of sorrows. They want justice and search for it.

“Who is my neighbour?” the church continues to ask. But I plead for justice and seek to walk in it. O God, rise up and transform your church to become a seeker of justice who walks in its path (v. 8). Help me today to wake up from the drunken seeking of riches so that I can start showing mercy to the weak, the orphan, the widow, the handicapped, the refugees, and the unemployed. Help me to seek justice for poor nations, for their sons and daughters.⁵⁰

Amen, Amen!

⁵⁰ Yohanna Katanacho, *Praying Through the Psalms*, (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2018), 163.

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What Don't You Have? The Violation of a Foundational Theological Principle in Africa's Development Practices

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Abstract

The quest for development for the African context has been largely elusive despite the application of numerous theories and strategies. Contemporary explanations do not sufficiently account for the root cause of the persistent underdevelopment. This article argues that the secular conception and approach to development defeats the process from the onset because it starts the process from the wrong question: 'What don't you have?' strengthening contextual weaknesses. It proposes that development should start from God's contextual endowment and strengths determined through the right biblical question: 'What do you have?' The purpose of this article is to challenge the sacred-secular dichotomisation that consigns development to secular public spaces while limiting theology and the church's functions around people's private and spiritual life aspects. We recommend theological participation, indeed leadership in the conception and approach to development because development is by nature theological business.

Introduction

Underdevelopment has persisted as a global challenge despite many decades of development engagement. The persistent underdevelopment of African countries has been explained through divergent positions of blaming the African context on the one hand or placing the responsibility on the developed countries on the other. But while both sides have valid arguments to a great

extent, there seems to be a foundational problem in the way development has been traditionally understood and approached that thwarts even the most genuine efforts. This article seeks to interrogate the way development has been understood and approached to determine this foundational problem and propose a strong foundation for addressing Africa's unrelenting development challenge. It begins by exploring the challenge of underdevelopment in the context and the popular explanation for it. This will be followed by an outline of how development has traditionally been understood and approached and the errors that make it elusive especially for developing countries. Then we will discuss the foundational problem that occasions the operationalisation of the wrong understanding and approach to development powered by the wrong question "What do you not have?" at the beginning of the process. Finally, the paper will propose an alternative model for Africa's development based on the primary principle of contextual endowment established by the right theological question "What do you have?" and proceed to provide scriptural bases for it. Bringing together development and theology, this paper argues that the secular approach to development violates a foundational theological principle and that factoring in the active involvement of God and His endowment of the context at the foundation of the whole enterprise can help achieve the desired developmental results. The discussion will raise examples from the Kenyan context as well as other African countries.

Africa's persistent underdevelopment and popular explanations

Numerous development theories have been formulated and applied but have failed to bring about the desired change even though every successive theory promises to deliver results better than its predecessor. Leys surveys the emergence and successive failure of major development theories from the 1950s to the 90s, namely, the economic, modernisation, dependency, Marxist, and neo-liberal theories finding them too generalised to address diverse contextual realities in the countries being developed (1996:9). The alternative development approaches that included community development theory sought to focus on specific regions with the local contexts' participation promising better results in developmental engagement (Martin and Mathema 2010; Mulwa 2008). Despite the great promises, the newer approaches have not necessarily guaranteed desired change as they have even, at times,

aggravated the problem. For instance, Martin and Mathema (2010:22) observe that the persistent problem of underdevelopment in the informal settlements in Kenya despite heavy Non-Government Organisations involvement is caused by agents who do not desire positive change lest they lose the benefits they reap from the persistent underdevelopment.

In the course of the quest for development globally, it has been realised that developed countries continue to prosper while the developing countries deteriorate; and that the gap between the two is continually increasing. This scenario has led to the conclusion that developed countries are responsible for the deterioration of poor countries. Some have pointed out that the genesis of the problem was occasioned by the historical forces of the slave trade, trade relations, colonialism and neo-colonialism that created inequality long before the world began to be globally concerned with development (Chege and Sifuna 2006; Katongole 2005; Mushanga 2011; Rodney 2018). Indeed, Rodney (2018:12), in what could be stated as a matter of rule in international relations, correctly observes:

When two societies of different sorts come into prolonged and effective contact ... the weaker of the two societies (i.e., the one with less economic capacity) is bound to be adversely affected – and the bigger the gap between the two societies concerned the more detrimental are the consequences.

These voices have indicated for Africa and other developing contexts, and not without grounds, that as long as these countries keep depending on the developed countries for capital, technology, loans and other resources, they will never truly develop. Recommending the example of Japan for breaking this dependency, Kinoti advises African countries “that import substitution and technological assistance programs lead ... to greater dependence ... to more debt and to more poverty” (1997:175-176). This wisdom needs to be borne in the mind of individuals and agencies seeking to develop poor nations.

But in all fairness, the underdevelopment of Africa and other contexts is not entirely caused by developed countries. Africa has her fair share of the responsibility. For a long time, countries have been trying to deal with poverty, diseases, illiteracy, retrogressive cultural practices and political instability

among other problematic developmental challenges. Internal vices such as negative ethnicity and corruption are perhaps the biggest challenges crippling their efforts. Parker and Rathbone (2007:47) correctly observe that ethnicity, being a key identity marker among African people has been appropriated “especially for politicians” as “a tool used for the accumulation of power.” Defensive voices such as Nangoli (2008:9) however argue that negative ethnicity was instituted in Africa by former colonial masters. But then, Githu Muigai, a former Attorney General gives the correct perspective concerning how these ethnic lines were never perceived as a problem after independence but rather as an opportunity to be exploited. Citing the case of the founding president of Kenya, he observes that ethnicity was meticulously appropriated “as the dominant basis of political mobilization” in the quest for power and wealth (2004:215). In fact, negative ethnicity has been a major challenge in Kenya to date. The eruption of post-election violence in 2007-8 was ethnically instigated and took the economy back from the highest GDP of 7.0 in the entire decade, achieved in five years of continuous rising trajectory and hard work, to a low of 1.6 (Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis 2010:2). Evidently, the challenge of negative ethnicity persistent in developing countries is a major challenge to development.

Corruption, a twin challenge to negative ethnicity, has also negatively affected development efforts in many African countries. While acknowledging the fact that all countries struggle with corruption to some degree, countries in Africa over the years generally perform extremely poorly. In 2015, Botswana and Rwanda were ranked among the best performers. Botswana was in position 28 with a score of 63% while Rwanda was in position 44 with 54%. Namibia and Ghana were in position 45 and 56 respectively. Nigeria came way below in position 136 with 26% of cleanness as Kenya followed closely at position 139 with a score of 25% (Transparency International 2015). The trend is fairly similar in the 2018 index. Botswana scored 61% in position 34; Rwanda 56% in position 48; and Namibia 53% in position 52. Ghana seems to have slipped back to score 41% in position 78 while Nigeria and Kenya deteriorated both competing for position 144 with a tied score of 27% (Transparency International 2018).

High corruption levels in a country would definitely create a hostile environment for its development and vice versa. It is no wonder that Botswana

has been one of the African countries with remarkable growth comparable to the phenomenon experienced in the East Asian economies in the 1990s (World Bank 1993:1). Rwanda also is one of the few African countries scoring highly in the achievement of Millennium Development Goals concluded in 2015, and currently reported to be making visible strides in economic and human development (UNESCO 2017). Much as there is celebration for these two African nations, the question remains, but beyond the scope of this paper, whether or not the notable development reported is experienced by the majority of the population or by only a few. This is because at times indicators of economic development may be very high while the largest populations wallow in abject poverty. For instance, Dube (2002:62) raises legitimate concern why independent Botswana's leadership seeks foreign companies from all over the world arguing that they create jobs for the locals while in the real sense they entrench "increasing' problems of poverty, unemployment, social inclusion, and other forms of marginalization". The absence or low levels of corruption encourage development and vice versa.

While the ranking and scores of Transparency International are always disputed by countries that find themselves presented in a negative light, there seems to be justification for looking at Kenya more closely. Institutions ranked highly in corruption prevalence over the years in the country include the police, political parties, parliament and the judiciary, all critical organs in the maintenance of law and order, a precondition for development (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre 2012). Report after report reiterates that in the actual governance, the various regimes leave trails of major economic scandals and gross malpractices as demonstrated by various government and non-government reports on Kenya (Human Rights Watch 2002; Government of the Republic of Kenya 2004; Kenya Commission of Human Rights; Kenya Land Alliance 2006). Other corruption scandals featured in the public domain yet to be addressed include Anglo-leasing, Goldenberg, the National Youth Service, the Kenya Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the National Cereals and Produce Board, the Aror and Kimwarer water projects, and Kenya Medical Supplies Authority's COVID-19 management and financial scandals.

Clearly, developed nations genuinely involved in the development of Kenya and other countries are justified to blame the countries themselves for the frustration of development efforts. Equally, the developing countries sincerely

concerned about their own situations and working hard to remove all hindrances would also justifiably blame their developed partners for their plight. Both sides of the argument have valid arguments calling for serious attention if development will be realised. African countries have to deal with the rampant corruption, negative ethnicity, and the rest of the impediments to create favourable socio-economic and political environments. They certainly have to think deeply and act decisively on their unequal relationship with the developed world and its effects. But since these truths have been in the public for a while now, this knowledge should have begun to help the nations make decisions yielding positive results by now which is hardly the case. There seems to be an underlying reason why development for most countries in Africa has generally been very slow or totally elusive. To correctly determine the cause of lack of meaningful development, it is important to first check the foundation upon which development is built by examining how development is currently understood and approached and how subtle misconceptions are entrenched.

Traditional conception and approach to development and inherent errors

Since the 1980s, when this author was a high school and university student of Economics, development was tied to production which was constructed around land, labour, capital, and entrepreneurship as factors of production as well as the environment in which they are worked out. Developed countries have always been known to have the right conditions that favour development while underdeveloped ones do not. The laws of demand and supply that appeared to be cast in stone explained why the west was doing better in the world market compared to developing countries, as the latter largely depended on agricultural goods that always flooded the world markets resulting in low prices. At the same time, the constant or rising demand for machinery and advanced technology was always attracting competitive prices. This narrative based on theoretical economic principles formed the understanding that African countries were the epitome of underdevelopment as European countries and the United States were the archetype of development.

The paradigms that made a great impact on economic thinking were constructed around the classical theories. Rostow (1960) socialised Economics students in the 1970s and 80s in proposing stages of development, beginning with *traditional societies*; followed by *preconditions for take-off*; then the *take-off stage*; followed by the *drive to maturity*; and ending with *the age of mass consumption*. As a result, the first misconception was engraved. Development was conceptualised as the access to unlimited consumption rather than the engagement in undeterred production. As Hout (2019:3) correctly points out, there is the inculcation of “an emphasis on consumption rather than production”. Consequently, the value for purchasing power for the young countries is pegged, not on what people can produce and sell or export to other countries but on what they can buy or import from the rest of the world.

Closely tied to the erroneous conception of development in terms of consumption is the second error formed in the young minds, who are currently the drivers of economies in developing countries now around their 50s or 60s. They were cultured to believe that ultimately the goal of development was for developing countries to be formed in the likeness and image of developed countries, especially in the expansion of industrialisation, modernisation, and ability to acquire desired goods and services. This culture becomes problematic and grossly misleading for poor countries. Unfortunately, this understanding is still the operating paradigm in most developing countries. After almost 60 years since Rostow’s theory was developed, Kenya’s Parliament Budget report of 2019 still uses the model colourfully illustrated on the title page with the question, “Ready for take-off?” in the assessment of the country’s development index. The report laments that the country is just entering the pre-conditions for take-off, with its biggest challenge being that “the invisible hand of cartels that interferes with market forces and distorts supply, ultimately pushing prices upwards and some producers out of the market” (Government of the Republic of Kenya 2019:iii).

It is development understood in spending categories that compels countries like Kenya to, for example, hire companies from the West, and now also the East to bring in their expertise, superior capital and technological power to construct roads and standard gauge railway lines through “increasing government spending on expansion, and *modernization* of our railways, roads, ports, airports, energy, water and the ICT and telecommunications

infrastructure” (Government of the Republic of Kenya 2013:ii). At the time of writing this paragraph it was exposed that the country faced a debt crisis to the level that it risked the loss of both its most strategic Kenya Ports Authority assets and the Mombasa port. These assets were used as collateral in the 2013 loan of about Ksh. 500 billion from a Chinese Bank for the construction of the Standard Gauge railway line running across the country from Mombasa to the Uganda border (Hellenic Shipping News 2019). The government Auditor General referred to the deal as “a lopsided loan agreement” at the expense of Kenya’s economy (National Sportslink 2019). Solomon (2019) refers to the Chinese government approach as “debt-trap diplomacy” in her operation with developing countries and Henry quoted the New York Times’s description of China’s approach as “ambitious use of loans and aid to gain influence around the world – and of its willingness to play hardball to collect” (Henry 2018). The pressure to be like the United States of America, China, and the rest of the developed world pushes the country deeper and deeper into debt in total disregard of all caution or warnings (ICPAK 2018). Questionable is whether the construction of the standard gauge railway line through foreign financing was not a priority for Kenya at the time. Consequent to the operation of the railway line, jobs have been lost from many fronts as trucks on the Nairobi-Mombasa highway have been minimised. Many of the towns and businesses along the highway have closed down. Crowning this loss, there is a minimal positive benefit to the common person, even though we have a transport network close to what China has.

Individual lifestyles seem to be following the same consumer pattern as in most African countries. For most people in Kenya, for instance, driving a car is evidence of development. The country imports cars and then purchases petroleum products to run them from foreign countries. There also seems to be a craving for prestigious guzzlers purchased through huge loans which are serviced over long periods, not only further providing a market for European countries but also crippling local capacities to innovation and investment both directly and indirectly. The most-watched movies are produced from abroad modelling for the present and the next generation cultural values far removed from the local context.

Thirdly, the traditional understanding of development arranged countries in a continuum labelling some as least developed on the one hand and others

‘developed’ on the other with the rest falling in between as ‘developing’ countries, and explained the process as a linear progression with a destination. The classification is grossly misleading in that developed countries are imagined to have reached the final destination and only engaging in the process for the sake of other countries. It has also been observed that the continuum of countries is misleading because some countries originally designated as developing have shifted positions, and the global relationships established in the 1950s and 60s based on donor-recipient dynamics have also changed (Harris, Moore, and Schmitz 2009:7). The truth of the matter is that all countries are essentially ‘developing countries’ including the developed ones. Not one country can claim to be developed enough to be in no need of any more of it.

The fourth distortion entrenches inequality. Empowered by the development destination concept above, developed countries legitimize their position as the ‘masters’, ‘owners’, and ‘drivers’ of development, affording them the right to act as referees of the process in which they are also players. There lacks a neutral, fair and authoritative umpire in charge of the development game to ensure it is played justly according to some rules. For instance, what or who regulates China’s historical exploitative approach while relating with less-developed countries as observed above? While some limited rules and regulations may be put in place to control the overt structures, no human standards can be developed to check the desire to maximize profits at the expense of the weak partner at personal, national, international and global levels. And since it is virtually impossible for the referee to fairly officiate a high-stakes game in which he or she is also a player, it is thus not difficult to understand why development founded on the supremacy of some countries as the reference point against which all other regions measure themselves is elusive (Mehmet 2002).

Lastly, the entrenchment of inequality finally legitimizes a wrong design for development engagement. Development is deliberately designed to start with the wrong question: *What do you not have?* While this is a logical starting point for the more privileged partner due to the international trade angle to development discussed above, it is to the disadvantage of poor countries. This is because the question begins the process of development from a point of weakness rather than strength for the countries. Since no country can be

developed from its weaknesses, this approach only makes the countries weaker in the long run. It ignores local resources and the potential of the contexts being developed, no matter how few or negligible they are. Instead, power is relinquished to the developed world for the transformation of the local contexts. On deeper examination, the model employed in the development for poor countries appears to be a sanitised side of international trade. Onuoha and Qobo (2012:5-6) correctly state an economic fact that developing and developed countries do not have common interests, concerns or felt needs when it comes to the dynamics of the international playground. The reality of gestalt images to both developed and developing countries looking at the same picture called development, but seeing totally different things and outcomes seems to reduce the chances of the weaker partners to ever realize the picture of their pursuit. This is because they hardly see the other picture of trade and business being appropriated by their partners. It is not clear what checks or measures development partners employ to ensure the absence of exploitation of the lesser partners knowing well that what the disadvantaged partners need is what the developed partners badly want to sell in a capitalistic market that seeks to maximize profits and reduce costs as much as possible. As noted above, dependence on other countries for capital, aid, technology, and manpower eventually leads to more poverty and dependency.

The traditional conception and approach to development inculcated at the introductory levels of development thinking are erroneous and grossly limiting for Africa and other developing countries. The disposition to spend as evidence of development, to feel perpetually underdeveloped in comparison to the rest of the world, and to depend on more developed partners for their prosperity are programmed to thwart efforts to meaningfully transform the continent. It is no wonder that despite many decades of global engagement there are widening gaps between developed countries and their developing counterparts. Before we propose a favourable understanding of development, we need to underscore the foundational factor that occasions, sanctions and powers the misconception of, and erroneous approach to development.

The foundational problem and the wrong question

The foundational problem that occasions the gaps described above rotates around the paradigm employed in the understanding and approach to

development. Covey (2004:23-24) offers invaluable insights on the importance of using a correct roadmap. Explaining the futility of finding one's directions to a destination using an incorrect map and comparing this to the pursuit of development with a wrong paradigm, he correctly observes:

You might work on your *behavior* – you could try harder, be more diligent, double your speed. But your efforts would only succeed in getting you to the wrong place faster ... The fundamental problem has nothing to do with behavior or your attitude. It has everything to do with having the wrong map.

In this case, challenging developing countries to deal with their moral issues and other challenges is good. Similarly, encouraging the developed world to address the inequality and exploitation in international relationships around development and international trade is good. And we must do these things. But because the paradigmatic template in use is a faulty one, good as these challenges are, the desired goals will not be achieved.

The foundational problem rotates around the inculcation of a purely secular vision to an enterprise in which divinity is so much invested, and especially for a context in which a religious worldview reigns. Simply stated, God, religious and theological dimensions are not anywhere in the current approach to development. Since the enlightenment, long before development was formed as a discipline, human preoccupation has rotated around “how the modern, scientific, and democratic mind can best intervene to improve human existence” (Peet and Hartwick 2015:3). Before this period, the general worldview acknowledged the Biblical and theological teachings around the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, the total depravity of humanity, and their need for God's intervention (Grenz and Olson 1992:104; Lane 2006:234). After the enlightenment, however, the truth was driven by humanity's resolve to separate all forms of scholarship from matters of religion and theology ceased from being the superior team-leader on whom the rest of the sciences depended, and to whom they should align as the chief (Aquinas 1485:1.1.5).

While the enlightenment and its effects have prevailed for many centuries in the West, most of the developing contexts lived and functioned without this

secularization baptism. African communities, for instance, have always lived with a consciousness of the presence of God, or gods, and His active involvement in all the affairs of humanity and creation. This religious and spiritual worldview brings both physical and spiritual aspects of creation together in a complex operational interdependence where humans are part of that whole rather than its master (Mbiti 1975; Turaki 2006). Effectively, the nature of the challenges faced as well as the solution to them must also be connected to this worldview that pervades all aspects of human life whether socio-economic, cultural, political or spiritual. Thus, development, especially for Africa, cannot be approached as a purely secular enterprise. Deneulin and Bano (2009) studied the relationship between religion and development reaching the correct conclusion that the two cannot be separated. Effectively, at least for the African context, development has to eventually be aligned to the people's foundational beliefs. In fact, it has been established that among the factors that boosted development in Europe faster than other parts of the world was the Christian protestant faith that shaped a development-conscious worldview for individual persons that prioritised hard work among other virtues (Peet and Hartwick 2015:151-152).

Unfortunately, any scholarship worth its name today introducing spiritual, religious or theological dimensions into the academic and public conversation is treated with suspicion. As Marsden pointed out, the academy finds the incorporation of the existence of God and His involvement in the natural world issues outrageous (1997:13-24). The position that faith is supposed to be relegated to the private realm, not the public sphere of academic scholarship or the round tables of reflection on development, should be found foreign thinking in the African understanding of the world, its elements and their relationships. This foreign imagination that separates sacred and secular life aspects also, now, unfortunately, consigns the church to a preoccupation with spiritual matters pertaining to salvation from sin, qualifications for eternal life and a right relationship with God while expecting secular leadership to mind the physical, socio-economic and political wellbeing of the people (Gifford 2008). Matters to do with the alleviation of suffering in society are hardly placed anywhere near the centre of focus in many churches' practical approach to the gospel. Even faith-based development agencies have been prohibited to integrate their theological perspectives with development mission. Perhaps the greatest challenge of Christian approaches to

development rests in the accusation of engineering conversion of people in pluralistic contexts forbidden by the 2012 ACFID Code of Conduct (Enright and Ware 2012:100). The norm has been to employ a purely secular approach to perceived secular issues and challenges while requiring the church to deal with faith issues privately.

As a result, the Church, and her theology in Africa, do not take their rightful position to lead or guide society in the circumstances it finds itself. Yet, the solution to societal challenges has to be theologically or spiritually determined. Myers (2011:86, 90) states a fundamental theological principle in understanding and dealing with underdevelopment: “The nature of poverty is fundamentally relational ... The cause of poverty is fundamentally spiritual.” This summarizes the causes of poverty to two aspects – human relationships and the fallenness of humanity. Since the church deals with these two aspects, it cannot be uninvolved when it comes to the diagnosis of the root problem that breeds self-centeredness and greed, or laziness and corruption in the failure of development efforts. Groody offers correct insight on the root cause of exploitation at the international level. While acknowledging that “global inequalities of today are rooted in structural injustices in society”, he advises that “on a deeper level they are also integrally related to the disorders of the human heart” (2007:10). The church, and Christian theology, are best suited for this diagnosis and cure of these disorders given the power of the gospel message founded on God’s righteousness and justice.

But then rather than strategically planning for and leading the world in its development, the church trails behind the world responding and reflecting on its effects on the people. Oduyoye (2004:99) correctly describes this unfortunate state and posture of the church in Africa:

The churches often wait for political crises to make statements, civil wars to work on reconciliation, natural disasters to provide humanitarian aid. The church in Africa tends to be a ‘rear action’ church, rarely visible on the front lines, and often delayed in arriving on the scene afterwards to pick up the pieces. In terms of being with people in crises, the church in Africa, with the significant exception of some clergy and lay leaders, has usually stood aloof and remained mute.

Theology has a lot to say about development. A proactive approach needs to be taken by the church and theology to help society wrestle with underdevelopment among other societal challenges. It will be helpful to understand development from a theological point of view as a process intended, initiated, and guided by God – theological business through and through. It started beyond humanity and their time. Men and women must humbly accept that they begin with things that they did not bring to the table in the first place. Throughout history, discovery, invention, scholarship and innovation are God’s intended activities for humans using their God-given skills and creative abilities to make their lives better. In their experience of God’s creation, humanity is exposed to the potential and productivity of the rest of creation that includes the earth, plants, animals, the atmosphere, and the water masses just to name a few. The observation and study of wind, water, air, minerals, and rain led to the generation of electric, solar, hydro, geothermal, or chemical energy guided by the natural in place from the beginning. It is therefore a faulty approach that starts the process of development from any context by asking “What don’t you have?”

The foundational problem is that while development is profoundly theological business, the paradigm within which it is worked out is purely secular. This does not mean that secular proposals cannot be applied in the African context with positive solutions. What it means rather is that these proposals need to be eventually aligned to theological truths that people in the particular context live by and uphold. For instance, Sen (1999), like the United Nations, approaches development as the expansion of freedom, personal choices, and human rights. Indeed, these are expected to have a great impact in the African context where there is much marginalisation, discrimination and abuse. However, in the African cultural and Christian context, the unlimited notion of individual personal freedom to do whatever one chooses hardly applies because, as Myers (2011:30) correctly points out, one may even choose “to give up some of our freedom because we can better love God and our neighbour when we do.” Thus, being deeply theological, development needs to be defined and approached through foundational theological principles, not through purely secular models.

Without a correct paradigm, development is reduced to international trade and business enterprise. Developing countries will continue to be frustrated

that the more they get involved the less developed they get. Arguments will continue to be engaged, whether underdevelopment is caused by developed or developing countries without the courage to examine the map used to help people arrive home. With the right conceptualising of development in theological terms, a theological approach with the right question would be applied with the promise to deliver better and surer results than any secular models. Such a model, unlike the secular approaches discussed, must be theological and must begin with the right question.

An alternative theological model with the right question

As discussed above, the erroneous approach to development rises from a faulty understanding or conception of what development is. A theological perspective must first define development theologically. A possible theological definition of development must factor in at least three central truths. First of all, development has to be conceptualised as the process of pursuing desired transformation and improvement of life and the creation of relationships. Secondly, it pertains to humanity as responsible and accountable stewards utilising, enhancing and protecting God-given material and immaterial resources available in their context. Thirdly, it has to be measured by the well-being of all, and the degree of justice and righteousness in social-economic, political, environmental, and cultural relationships. Unfortunately, this is far from what development is understood to be in contemporary society.

A correct perspective to development that works for Africa therefore must take into consideration several factors. Firstly, it must have, or strongly imply, the presence and active involvement of God who is in charge of the work as part and parcel of his mission in the world. It must acknowledge that He has supplied the natural, human, environmental, technical, scientific, and philosophical resources necessary for development. Secondly, humanity's role in the work should be that of a steward privileged to participate in the *Missio Dei* as one whose life finds fulfilment in God's purposes for the created order and its relationships (Groody 2007:23-24). Development work, on the part of humanity, involves the activity of discovering, studying and cultivating creation to make it fruitful as expressed in Genesis 2:15. Consequently, the privileged few, whether in terms of education, wealth or positions at micro or macro levels of development, or even in the so-called stages of development, ought

not to see their advantage as a license to exploit others but as a privilege to serve them and a higher purpose too. Thirdly, the evaluation of the success of various development projects by the various agencies, whether the local government or the World Bank, should not just be measured by quantitative indices in the socio-economic or political lives of the people. It must be measured against a higher standard of justice and righteousness at the point of conduct, attitude, motives and character of all stakeholders involved in the process, and its positive impact on people and their relationships. This is because, as already established, developmental approaches with moral imperatives, yield better fruits than those without (Ajulu 2001:14).

This theological approach acknowledges that God has laid down the foundation and potential for development in every context according to His wisdom and purposes and that development has to begin with what people have in their context but never with what they do not have. So, rather than asking, *“What don’t you have”*, the correct question to ask is: *“What do you have?”* Ironically, both the West and the East apply the correct question for their context by always beginning with what they have. But when they come to the developing world, they begin with the wrong question to create a market for that which they have. God has already endowed Africa and other developing contexts with resources from which to begin and drive their development. Mlay (1997:147) summarises the diverse wealth of the African context that includes *“resources of land, forests, water, minerals, oil and gas”*, lamenting that *“its people are underutilised and its cultural wealth unexploited.”* Instead of development being built on these strengths and potential areas, unfortunately, it has been worked out from the points of technological weaknesses and capital inadequacies.

More often than not, the strengths of developing contexts are winked at or quickly passed as weaknesses. Two examples will suffice to qualify this point. While Africa is endowed with 25% of the world’s arable land, its share of production from this endowment potential to the world market is not 25%. Its contribution comprises only about 10%, constantly importing food and other products from other continents thereby keeping the agricultural sector completely underdeveloped (Kariuki 2011:3). The wealth and potential of land are hardly appreciated. Taking Kenya as an example, most of her Eastern region’s land is categorised as arid and semi-arid and therefore dismissed from

any meaningful agricultural use. But whenever these regions have their chance to receive adequate rains, they have bountiful harvests, as the soils are extremely fertile. There is little thinking on harnessing this God-given resource to ensure that this land has reliable sources of water for meaningful agriculture that leads to sustainable food security. The government's megaprojects are designed towards constructing huge and expensive water reservoirs that hardly mature due to the corruption challenges discussed above. Poverty is deliberately exploited by a political leadership over the years which glories in the provision of relief food whenever there is famine and drought, as a means of winning votes from the poor masses.

But this is not just a local leadership problem. Leaders of development internationally do not seem to realise the serious implications of hunger, despite reports and statistics indicating that hunger is a major challenge for development. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report indicates that there are rising trends of undernourishment in the world where Africa leads the list with a prevalence of 19.9% followed by Latin America with 14.4% (2019:8). Similarly, the World Health Organization (2019:5) reports that about 33% of deaths in poor countries occur to children below the age of 5 years and that the majority of them are caused by "communicable, perinatal and nutritional conditions." It is for this reason that Save the Children (2012:1) laments:

As world leaders have been occupied with one economic crisis after another, a hunger and malnutrition crisis affecting millions of children has gone unchecked. While the world has been experiencing years of financial turmoil, pervasive long-term malnutrition is slowly eroding the foundations of the global economy by destroying the potential of millions of children.

Sincere efforts for laying the foundation for development require that developing countries focus first on food security to ensure that their populations' first basic needs are met. Instead, projects target an expanding middle class whose needs, mindset and priorities synchronise with the economic and technological needs of the rich nations. It is, for instance, the middle class that needs cars, roads, standard gauge railways, fast foods and business deals that provide money for the sustenance of personal power. It is

beyond this paper to discuss the business ethics of multinational companies allowed to operate in Kenya. It suffices, however, to point out that there is an outcry about their practices of channelling their industrial wastes into the few rivers available, rendering the resource poisonous and unfit for human consumption or food production. This would never happen in developed countries. In effect, the rich soils unadulterated with artificial fertilizers; the clean run-off water from the rain; the equatorial climate; and the ability for everyone to grow food for consumption and sale are ignored so that a firm foundation for true development remains untenable.

The second example pertains to Africa's population endowment that has always been a blessing but has instead been construed as a curse and a hindrance to development. Following the insights of the classical Malthusian population theory entrenched in early nurseries of Economics classes highlighted above, it is still assumed that "the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce sustenance for man" (Malthus 1798:10-11). But this is only one side of the coin. Mlay observes that, with a population of over 600 million in 1992 forming 10% of the population of the world, Africa was generally sparsely populated except for some regions and cities which were overpopulated. He further points out that after independence, most of the nations "felt that there was a need to encourage the growth of their national populations to tap perceived vast natural resources, especially land" (1997:130). As a matter of fact, the whole idea of the transatlantic slave trade was to raise a productive population for the West as a factor of production. Even when young and strong men especially were not shipped to the West, they were utilised in foreign plantations in their own countries as a cheap labour force for colonialists, as historians have pointed out (Sifuna 1980).

The positive relationship between population and development is always ignored despite its reality in history. As Rodney (2018:110) explains,

Population growth played a major role in European development in providing labor, markets, and the pressures which led to further advance. Japanese population growth had similar positive effects; and in other parts of Asia which remained pre-capitalist, the size of population led to a much more intensive exploitation

of the land than has ever been the case in what is still a sparsely populated African continent.

The point is, a high population is more often than not a prerequisite for development. Nevertheless, the 1980s and 90s were perhaps the peak decades campaigning fiercely for cutting down of populations for developing countries at both national and international levels to encourage development, even though vast lands of the various countries were, and still are, uninhabited. Meanwhile, and unfortunately, there is runaway unemployment in such an endowed continent, because this precious endowment has yet to be fully appreciated and appropriated in working the land. The continent is moved from its strengths and directed to concentrate on its weaknesses that only guarantees dependency on more developed nations for capital, technological, and financial resources. Financial aid, on which African countries depended for a long time, has been described as

... the silent killer of growth” whose application “chokes off desperately needed investment, instils a culture of dependency, and facilitates rampant and systematic corruption, all with deleterious consequences for growth (Moyo 2009:48-49).

The point I am making is that Africa’s abundant endowment of land and large population always looked at as hindrances of development by local and international development agents are the very strengths upon which meaningful development could, and should be constructed. Someone may argue that a lot of these resources are not useful because of a lack of reliable rainfall. However, reliable rainfall comes in once in a while. In any case, even when the rains are inadequate to sustain crops to harvest, the water from these unreliable rains is allowed to run off freely into the rivers and eventually into the Indian Ocean causing soil erosion on its way – a resource that could be harvested and used for irrigation until the crops reach maturity. The badly sloped and gullied lands in some places are not a hindrance. They should be looked at as resources to facilitate natural water harvesting. The mindset is key here. It calls for the ability to see possibilities even in the face of hindrances. The Endower of contexts considers it necessary that poor countries focus on what they have rather than what they do not have to begin their development. The Bible has many instances to illustrate this principle.

Biblical examples with the question “What do you have?”

The approach that seeks to transform people and their contexts by first establishing what exists in the context is the most foundational principle of development put in place by the Creator of the universe. Indeed, the Bible rings with repeated incidences of God enquiring what his people have whenever He sought to bring about change and transformation in their lives and situations. Hardly did He use what they did not have. Numerous examples are available from the Bible. For instance, Peter and John in Acts of the Apostles chapter 3 did not have silver or gold to give to the crippled beggar as it was required of them by the law that encouraged the giving of alms to the poor. But they had a Name and that was all that was needed to permanently and irreversibly transform the entire life and condition of the beggar. Even if the two apostles had borrowed money to give to the beggar, they could have fulfilled an expectation of righteousness, but his condition would not have been meaningfully changed. His need went beyond basic needs or economic empowerment. He needed to be whole. Financial aid or alms, just as it could not help the beggar, cannot lift begging nations out of the shackles of poverty.

A second example pertains to the invalid healed by Jesus at the pool of Bethesda after 38 years of his life in John chapter 5. When asked by Jesus if he wanted to get well, he kept lamenting how he did not have *a man* to help him jump into the waters whenever the angel stirred the pool. But then he had One man standing before him, the One who was sending the angel to work out the miracle with whom there would be no need for waiting for the next time the angel would come, or for a helper to get him into the water for healing. This man standing before him made a permanent difference in his life to the extent that the one who needed to be carried around by helpers was able to walk around by himself and even carry his own bed.

A third example concerns Moses in Exodus chapter 14. When they were blocked by the sea in front and the enemies were closing in on them fast, God used what Moses had in his hand. In verse 16, God instructed him to stretch his rod over the sea. On doing this, a way was made in the sea and Israel was saved from imminent extinction in the hands of the Egyptians. When the Egyptians attempted to follow Israel into the sea, they all perished as the water covered them.

A fourth example concerns a widow in 1 Kings chapter 17 who did not have much flour to knead bread to give to Elijah the prophet as he had asked during the great drought. She explained that she had a little flour and little oil to cook one last meal for her and her son only and then they had to wait for death. God used the negligible offering she had to first serve His prophet according to His instruction and He then ensured a constant supply of food throughout the famine for her and her son.

A fifth example is about the widow in 2 Kings chapter 4. She was poor and heavily in debt. Her debtors threatened to throw her children into slavery until the debts were settled. Elisha asked her what she had in the house. It turned out she only had a jar of oil. The prophet instructed her to borrow as many vessels as possible and pour oil from the jar into them. All the vessels were filled with oil that could be sold to pay her debts, while she could live on the remainder, leading to her social, economic and political turn-around.

The disciples of Jesus in John chapter 6 serve as a sixth example. They did not have any food for themselves, neither could they afford to buy enough of it to offer the hungry crowds that had followed Jesus and listened to His teachings. But they had among them a boy with five loaves of bread and 2 fish which, according to their confession, were negligible in the face of the need before them. But Jesus used these to feed over 5000 people with left-overs that filled 12 baskets. Examples upon examples can be drawn from Scripture witnessing to God's pattern of using the little people had, rather than what they did not have, to miraculously make a permanent and irreversible difference in their lives. From these examples, it is evident that it did not matter how negligible the resources were.

Notably, in every account, there was something available to be used for the miracle to take place. These negligible resources were all that was needed to be magnified once offered to God in obedience and used in line with His guidelines and instructions. While these episodes were miracles from a human perspective, to God they were His ordinary way of operation. What is demonstrated by these Scriptural examples about persons is also true for communities, societies and nations. It follows then that Africa's development needs to be worked out from contextual resources supplied by God no matter how negligible they appear to be and that they need to be utilised in ways in

line with His will and purposes. It requires that humanity relinquishes the self-entitlement as the master of the universe to God. Then development in Africa will come about as a miracle because God is at work. This is because the right theological question is always, “What do you have?”

And Africa has a lot more on top of a large supply of labour force and vast lands with the best arable soils in the world. Africa has young people and children forming the greatest part of its population; an excellent equatorial climate with natural solar light and energy; beautiful panorama and tourist attraction sites; diverse species of wildlife and excellent conservation reserves; naturally grown foodstuffs; excellent coastal beaches; great institutions of learning from where appropriate contextual development should be invented; and the list is endless. Most important, Africa has a rich spiritual heritage with deep faith in God and His involvement in their context. Development should therefore be based on these tangible and non-tangible resources.

Conclusion

International relationships and local conditions indeed have a direct bearing on development or lack of it. They are however not the primary causes of resistant underdevelopment. This article has demonstrated that the foundational problem lies in the understanding of what “development” is and how it is approached in the limiting secular vision within which it has been operated. Development itself has been identified as an enterprise in which divinity is intrinsically involved from the beginning. Consequently, operationalising it in a dualistic matrix that demands the separation of sacred from secular, church from state, physical from spiritual, and theology from development, will continue to produce mixed results at best. A foundational theological model that seeks to begin the process by establishing contextual endowments first and the active presence of God forms a firm foundation upon which development should be built because it works with higher ethical and moral standards for the true prosperity of poor countries. It dispels self-centeredness calling for justice and righteousness that prohibits exploitation of the less privileged and upholds genuine concern for others expressed in the principles of justice, integrity, and equity.

The theological model for development first calls upon the world and agents of development to recognise the limitation of the purely secular matrices employed in addressing human challenges and problems. Secondly, it calls upon stakeholders to consider that the model discarded many centuries ago and marginalised in scholarship and public policy formulation circles today, might provide the turnaround for frustrated and sincere development agents. Thirdly, it is a call to recognise that even if world systems reject the role of faith in seeing human problems and their solutions, the strategies worked out must be in keeping with the principles that govern the functioning and relationships of the universe as established from the beginning. In other words, even if the world does not acknowledge that God created the world, it cannot run away from the imperative to conform to the natural endowment principle for contextual development.

The church and her theology need to rise above a preoccupation of the salvation of souls with little relevance to the plight of humanity in the world. It requires the church to embrace the fact that God is concerned about the suffering of His people and also at work in alleviating their challenges as clearly demonstrated in Scripture. It needs to be realised that to the degree that the church embraces the separation from the world through dualistic arrangements, to that same degree does she dislocate herself from the instrumental role that God desires to work out through her to bring about shalom-peace to His people in the here and now. As long as theology is quiet in Africa, and as long as it lags behind development, politics, policy generation, finance, and governance, there will be no promise for true alleviation of the challenges of underdevelopment facing Africa. This is because theology and development are not merely inseparable: they are profoundly and theologically integrated.

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Who Cares for Them? Analysing Provision of Care and Assistance Among the Elderly People in Botswana: Communal Contextual Pastoral Theology

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims at examining the provision of assistance among the elderly who are caretakers of children who are made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

Method: Data for this paper is drawn from the 2019 thesis study on the elderly in Botswana.

Results: Research in Botswana shows that the elderly caregivers who are looking after children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS need concrete support systems to deal with their prevalent stresses. They also need targeted and specific interventions to address their needs.

Discussion: A sense of community and communal support is still normative in the community of Botswana. However, familial support towards the elderly has since changed because of demographic changes and values. Through the usage of a Communal Contextual Pastoral Theological Approach, this paper suggests that pastoral caregivers are an integral part of the continuum of care of the elderly in Botswana. Elderly caregivers need to be nurtured and supported for the betterment of the wellbeing of everyone, including children who are both infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Introduction and Background

Changes in family structures

The family has always been the most important provider of support for the elderly and children in Southern Africa. However, there are changes in family structures. Velkoff and Kowal (2007:95) assert that traditionally there was a high value placed on marriage. The marriage ensured not only its universality, but also its occurrence early in life with the consequence that childbearing started early and, in most cases, continued until late into the productivity span. The institution of polygamy promoted competition for childbearing among co-wives; it also contributed to sustaining high fertility. The use of modern contraception was traditionally unacceptable as it violated the natural process of procreation. The traditional long period of breastfeeding and postpartum abstinence guaranteed adequate spacing between children. This trend was believed also to encourage better care of the elderly. The traditional society believed that having more children ensured that when the parents have reached an older age, they will be better taken care of by their children.

Okoye (2012:140-145) maintains that fertility behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa like other parts of the world is determined by biological and social factors. These factors include early and universal marriage, early childbearing as well as childbearing within much of the reproductive life span, low use of contraception and high social value placed on childbearing. In the face of perceived high infant and child mortality, the fear of extinction encouraged high procreation with the hope that some of the births would survive to carry on the lineage. However, as per the literature above, there is a decline in fertility that is owed to HIV and AIDS and other factors. There is also a decrease in the population of young adults.

Marriage and procreation had always remained a value in both traditional and modern Africa. It is, however, unfortunate that many productive young parents leave their children with their grandparents before they are mature enough to take care of themselves and their grandparents. The traditional arrangement of caring for the elderly is therefore not applicable in this context. When parents die at a young age, their children would not be mature enough to take care of anyone, including themselves.

As stated by Shaibu (2013), Africa is in a transitional period between its collective past and a more individualist future characterised by the extent to which kinship values are upheld and rejected. Therefore, to understand the phenomenon of family caregiving to the elderly in Botswana, it is necessary to place it within the context of these social and economic forces that have made it both an issue demanding attention and a focus of intervention by policymakers. This means that economic demands would not make it easy for communal relationships and family caretaking. Maruapula and Chapman-Novakofski (2007) confirm that the traditional extended family is being transformed with the prevalence of a gradual zero-couple or single-parent families in Botswana. The expansion of destitute programmes has also reflected the collapse of the informal system of social support and increasing poverty (Mugabe 1997). These factors should lead to growing concerns regarding the care of the elderly by families (Shaibu and Wallhagen 2002).

Shaibu (2013) argues that with increasing urbanisation and migration in Botswana and an increasing number of children born to unwed mothers, the grandmother has become a key figure in many households. She is often the main care provider for children of absent daughters - a phenomenon also observed elsewhere in Africa. However, what happens when the grandmother herself needs care? (Ingstad et al. 1991). This study is primarily concerned about the wellbeing of the elderly who are caretakers of orphans who have lost their parent(s) to HIV and AIDS. As if the role of caregiving does not challenge them enough, they are faced with challenges in all aspects of their lives. Who takes care of them and how are they taken care of?

Modernisation and Urbanisation

A change in family structures is attributed to societal and economic changes. It is argued by several authors that there is an inverse relationship between the status of treatment of the aged and the degree of modernisation (Van Dullemen 2006; Karlberg 2003; May 2003). This is because the process of Westernisation has destroyed those values which support the traditionally high standards and important roles of the aged. Ingstad et al. (1991) even argue that there are two aspects of modernisation: the shift from subsistence agriculture to wage employment and the participation in Western education are more influential aspects of modernisation affecting the older population in Botswana and other African countries.

Shaibu and Wallhagen (2002) on the other hand, blame modernisation and industrialisation for creating the gap that leads to the disrespect and consequent abuse of elders in Africa today. They argue that the impact of modernisation on the elderly in Botswana has been poverty due to marginalisation, loss of social and economic support from economically active members of the family due to negligence by the children and the community at large and the weakening of institutions that functioned as sources of social and economic support. This increasing urbanisation and emphasis on the nuclear family and individualism may make one fear that the caretaking family system may not be the support system one would like it to be. Rural to urban migration and the emphasis on a monetary economy also tend to weaken the extended family as a support system for the elderly dependent group.

In this paper, an orphan is a child under the legal age, who has lost either one responsible parent or both parents due to HIV and AIDS and their age ranges from infants to 18 years. Not all of them are living with HIV and AIDS, but all of them are affected by HIV and AIDS and are therefore made vulnerable because of this. As per the literature, one of the reasons for the negligence of both children and grandchildren is modernisation and urbanisation (Shaibu 2013:264). Therefore, a child who has lost his or her parent who was a primary caretaker and has a surviving parent who has never been active in their life, but fully left under the care of a grandparent is an orphan. This means that it is indeed, social and economic forces that have transformed the family unit.

Another observation by Mutemwa and Adejumo (2014) is that when one parent dies of HIV and AIDS, the other is often also living with HIV and AIDS and dies shortly after, leaving the children as orphans and creating a parenting crisis in most societies. This means that HIV and AIDS, modernisation, urbanisation and other factors play a role in the negligence of both children and grandchildren.

Single parenthood

According to Karlberg (2003:45), another factor that is undermining kinship-based family structures is the prevalence of single parenthood, particularly among young urban females. As increasing numbers of women have joined the labour force and single and female-headed households have become a discernible pattern on the African social landscape. Women in the traditional

society were believed to be the ones to stay at home and take care of their elderly. With women staying home and the men going out to work, it was believed that the children and the older population would be well taken care of by the women. However, with the increase in single parenthood, women are also forced to go out and join the working force. This, therefore, means that they cannot stay home and take care of the ageing. Leaving the elderly at home is a challenge for the elderly. They would not cope successfully with ageing in isolation. The elderly need others to provide for their social, emotional and financial support, security, love and understanding. Caregiving to the elderly in this study means attending to all forms of support and assistance given to an elderly parent.

Fosterage

Durant and Christian (2007) maintain that economic downturn and increased urban poverty in the rest of Africa have undermined the institution of fosterage that for long sustained the ties between rural and urban households. Fosterage constitutes part of the trend where the welfare of rural dwellers depends on their solidarity ties with urban kin families. A vital component of this practice is the channelling of remittances from urban workers to rural areas through educational support. By conferring parental responsibilities to their urban relatives, fosterage guarantees the mobility of children from rural families. Over the years, the fosterage of African children had significant demographic and economic consequences. It subsidised high fertility among rural and low-income families and gave low-income families the means of defraying child-rearing costs. All the above have shown to have adverse effects on the ageing population. This is because the families are disintegrated, and women no longer stay home and provide care to the elderly.

The elderly and their need for community

As indicated in the literature, the elderly are grieving the loss of their loved ones. In other instances, they have a double loss. Shaibu (2013:364) reports that in Botswana, most “grandmothers had sustained multiple losses, with some reporting a loss of up to six children and having to raise up to nine orphans.” This means that there is a need for people to journey with them through the grieving process. A mourning group could help the grieving elderly. Those who had gone through the grieving process could join such

groups to help others, when their sorrow has become easier to bear. One on one pastoral counselling services could be offered by a church minister who is trained to deal with grief. If they do not have the skill to help people deal with grief, other professionals such as counsellors and psychologists should be engaged (Switzer 1989).

The elderly are going through developmental stages of ageing. In the process, they are experiencing physiological and psycho-emotional challenges. This means that they cannot defeat these challenges alone. For them to outgrow those challenges and flourish, there should be a loving companionship; they also need to know about those changes so that they learn to live with them. Someone must teach those who are not educated (Clinebell 2011:31-50).

The elderly are becoming parents to their grandchildren amid their challenges. They are re-mothering the HIV and AIDS affected grandchildren. While dealing with societal stigma towards HIV and AIDS, they are challenged by the upbringing of adolescents. They cannot do this alone without the help of an accepting and loving community. Children can also become a subject of interest for pastoral caregivers. One way of helping children through a crisis is to build a network of children and address their common problems as well as their difficulties.

Mudavanhu (2008:93) mentions that the grandmothers must be assisted with insight regarding HIV/AIDS and in particular, how to handle the problems they are encountering in their roles as caregivers. The author further states that skills training, knowledge, and orientation in raising grandchildren, some of whom are infected, are needed and that the grandparents need social support and psychological help to strengthen their capacity to continue as caregivers and to ensure optimal functioning for the future of the orphans in their care.

The elderly are facing economic, social, religious, cultural and psycho-emotional challenges. Here the Church is challenged to be familiar with the local context. Teaching about faith only will not take these problems away, but using available resources to help the situation will be of great help. In the same way, the Church should reach out to the whole community. In such situations, pastoral care entails being an advocate for the elderly in the presence of God through intercessions during worship, teaching, preaching or being prophetic.

Being prophetic means being advocates of compassion, solidarity, justice and human worth in society.

Elkin (2015) rightly asserts that in a good support system, one feels they have a place they belong and feel safe sharing their problems. Krill (2014:182) emphasises that human beings can find meaning in their own lives for the first time when they can form relations with others and can get help working through a problem when they have a sound support system. In the existential social work by Krill, service providers should attempt to share context with their clients. This is the world they live in; the world that they cannot separate themselves from. It is their context that gives them meaning.

The plight of the elderly indeed calls for collective effort. Literature continues to show that, due to HIV and AIDS, urbanisation, money-based economy, individualism and other factors, the familial social network seems to be history. Research worldwide calls for communal support of the grieving elderly who are caretakers of children affected by HIV and AIDS. Apart from being failed by the family, many governments continue to fail the elderly; failing to address their needs. As indicated earlier, care is intimate and should be done by a close family member. However, in the absence of family members, the Church can claim its position of being family to those who do not have anyone to assist them. Through his letters, Paul encourages the church to care for one another. In his writings to Timothy and Titus, Paul focuses on the responsibilities of pastors to care for and strengthen the flock (Oden 1983:5). Such care should also be extended to the elderly community today.

While trying to understand the context of the elderly, Maslow maintains that there is a particular order in attending to human needs. This study maintains that the needs of individuals are unique, therefore, there should not be an order that guides what pastoral caregivers shall attend to. Pastoral caregivers should be guided by the situation of the individual elderly they are serving. This mandate of the Church is in line with Matthew 25:31-46, which calls Christians to feed the hungry, refresh the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, tend the sick and visit the imprisoned. Alongside such compassionate service is the call “to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4:18). Not all people are hungry, thirsty or captives. The church should know the specific need of each elderly

person without assuming that all their needs are the same. Pastoral care, therefore, must take every dimension of suffering into consideration. The list of human needs in Maslow's list are not complete without the inclusion of spiritual needs (with physical and material implications) and the need for actions that will address the specified needs in a life-changing manner. Therefore, addressing both is the pastoral need.

Data and Methods

Data from this research are drawn from a 2020 thesis study on the *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans* (Madigele 2020). The study used a multi-faceted approach encompassing qualitative, quantitative, descriptive, contextual, explorative, and phenomenological research. The situational analysis describes the challenges and the needs of the *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans*. In line with the definition of elderly in the Botswana context, the study describes the elderly as age 65 and above. From a total of 50 *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Botswana (ELCB), 45 agreed to participate in the study, translating to 90% of the sample size. Meanwhile, the Ramotswa has a total of ten (10) potential pastoral caregivers in the form of elders. The study does not consider philanthropic care given by individual members of the church as pastoral care. Pastoral care is here defined as systematic church elder coordinated activities geared towards the deserving, the *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans* in this case. From the ten (10) potential pastoral caregivers, two declined to participate in the study, resulting in 80% of the sample size partaking.

For this study, the purposive sampling technique guided the recruitment process. The study targeted the *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans* who had been primary caretakers of the orphans for more than a month. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. There were two sessions of focus group discussions among the pastoral caregivers and church leaders which were meant to encourage self-disclosure among the participants (Krueger 1994) and to complement findings from the questionnaires. The first group consisted of eight (8) participants, while the last group consisted of six (6) participants.

Moreover, there was a forum for five (5) focus group discussions with eight (8) elderly participants. A total of 40 *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans* participated in the focus group discussion after having completed the questionnaire. The whole idea of having those organised discussions in groups was to gain information about their views and experiences on a topic (Gibbs 1997). Participants also gained from these discussions because they felt supported and empowered. These discussions somehow created room for spontaneity and cohesiveness (Sim 1998: 345-352).

The quantitative data was managed and analysed with the aid of SPSS while the qualitative data was analysed with the aid of NVivo8 (Gibbs 1997). The software helped in coding, content analysis, categorising and sorting of the text. Transcripts were read repeatedly, coded and then categorised into various themes. Thematic challenges of the *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans* identified in this study include the:

1. Physical;
2. Social;
3. Economic;
4. Psycho-emotional; and
5. Intrapersonal.

1 – 4 are inter-personal challenges that encompass the external environments of the *grieving elderly caregivers of AIDS orphans*. The comprehensive pastoral caregiving package included mitigation measures encompassing:

- a) Coping skills;
- b) Financial assistance;
- c) Emotional assistance; and
- d) Spiritual assistance.

The attributes a – c will be assessed across 1 – 5 towards developing a comprehensive pastoral caregiving tool. The study revealed insufficient or no pastoral care in the context of the above themes and sub-themes. The study presents a comprehensive model referred to pastoral caregiving to *grieving elderly caretakers of AIDS orphans*. Meanwhile, in the event the study revealed the existence of comprehensive pastoral caregiving, the study proposes Communal Contextual Pastoral Theology as an enhancement. The burden of

re-mothering of orphans made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS has a remarkable impact on the grieving elderly.

Results

Distribution of household of the elderly living arrangements by sex and age group

The distribution by age shows that there is a tendency for elderly people not to live with close relatives and with their spouses. An overwhelming percentage of the elderly do not live with persons unrelated to them either. Only about 15% of the elderly are living with one person not related to them (Figure 5.1). This means that there is a minimal role of non-family members as care providers, hence more room to grow in the future. To facilitate the roles of pastoral caregivers, there is a need to be mindful of the existing norms, expectations and preference in personal care support. UN-DESA (2011) reports that, on average, around three-quarters of persons aged ≥ 60 years in less developed regions live with children and grandchildren. One in four people in Botswana are now living with HIV/AIDS, and 93,000 children (12%) are orphaned due to the disease (AVERT 2020).

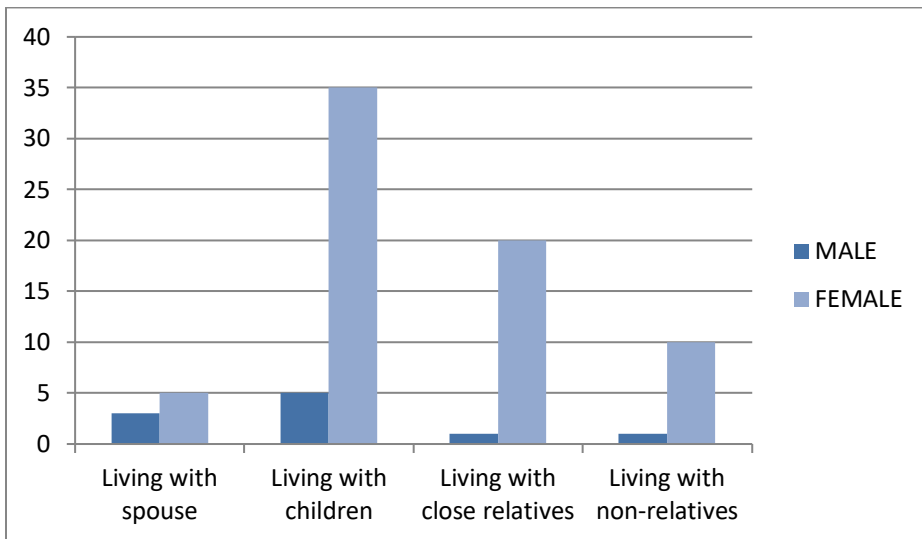


Figure 5.1: Distribution of household of the elderly living arrangements by sex and age group

The distribution of household of the elderly living arrangements suggests that in most cases, they live with people they are closely related to. A national analysis of adults aged 65 and older shows an overwhelming preference for family members as the main key providers. However, the traditional system of living with and caring for the elderly is under increasing strain. Moreover, the economic development, rural-to-urban migration and changing norms concerning families and households are weakening traditional support systems (Mokomane 2012). On another note, the findings reveal that co-residence does not necessarily imply that the older people were being taken care of.

It can also be observed that the number of elderly living alone decrease with increasing age and so those living with a spouse. The volume of caregiving peaked in the 65-79 year age groups and only dropped in their 80s. Women carried much larger responsibilities of care than men because they took care of more children under the age of 10 years. Through home-based care, the country was trying to capitalize on the goodwill of the elderly who had been contextually and culturally seen as caretakers (UNAIDS 2001). In that regard, we find that by and large the elderly remain primary caretakers regardless of their physical, mental, and emotional hardships. The elderly are said to be lacking in many factors (Kang'ethe 2006). This means that having young, robust, dynamic and knowledgeable people to assist in caregiving responsibility could give relief to the elderly. These are also implications for improving and strengthening social interventions in home-based care in the context of Botswana.

All participants are caregivers. Figure 5.1 shows that all 40 (35 females and five males) of them are living with children. Of the total number of participants, only eight (8) are living with the spouse, which means most of the households are headed by one grandparent who is the caregiver in this case. On average, males are more likely to be living with a spouse than females, and this can be attributed to the fact that women tend to live longer than men, hence in a household where a man is still alive, there is a much greater likelihood that the man's wife is still alive.

Another report states that 42.5% of orphan caregiving households are headed by grandmothers in Botswana (GoB 2008). This means that there is a need to

reduce the burden of caring for women and promoting an equal sharing of responsibilities. The traditional barriers that prevented men from caring responsibilities should be broken. Besides, some elderly men may feel more comfortable when cared for by males than females. Moreover, some elderly women may feel more comfortable if cared for by their spouses than strangers.

Communal Contextual Pastoral Theology

John Patton (1993) introduces the *communal contextual* approach that highlights the task of pastoral care as a mission of the whole Christian community, focusing on the holistic or contextual dimensions of human beings. This means that pastoral ministry should touch all the aspects of human existence such as the social, economic, political and psycho-emotional aspects. He emphasises that pastoral care and counselling is not only a minister's or counsellor's role but a role of the whole church community. Patton's approach has its main focus on the Christian community, and it operates within the confines of the Church. This approach, however, ignores the existence of humanity outside the walls of the Church.

Jesus' ministry was not confined within the walls of the Church or a worship place; the approach of his ministry was characterised by dynamism. Paul employs the same expression when he talks about the Church being visible in a particular family (Romans 16:3-5) and a particular city, i.e., Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2). Similarly, Lartey encourages the principle of dynamism rather than exclusively focusing on one area and one people (2006:136). Even though this approach lacks a sense of interdenominationalism and ecumenism, its communal nature is based on how and whom pastoral care should be extended to others. Firstly, Patton sees the Christian Church as a new community that has a shared vision and which commits to be responsible towards one another. This approach is based on the biblical tradition's presentation of a God who cares and who forms those who have been claimed as God's own into a community celebrating that care and extending it to others (Patton 1993:5).

Patton believes that healing comes through hearing. According to Patton, pastoral care is based on members of caring communities expressing their care

by hearing and remembering others as reciprocity of God's hearing and remembering created beings. Patton (1993:15) asserts,

A ministry of the Christian community that takes place through remembering God's action for us, remembering who we are as God's own people, and hearing and remembering those to whom we minister.

This means that God created human beings for a relationship with God and with one another. God continues in relationship with his creation by hearing us, remembering us and bringing us into a relationship with one another. Research shows that the elderly are the forgotten community in Botswana. They need to be remembered, heard and understood for them to gain their strength and liberation. Patton argues that pastoral care and counselling are open to questions, experimentation, modifications and re-adjustments as new facts and more in-depth insight into various situations are attained. This means that different problems and situations help with the formulation of new knowledge. The essence of counselling is communication. It is when understanding takes place between those who are communicating with each other and with each other (Patton 2005). Pastoral care involves communicating painful experiences, suffering, or various emotional pains and deep hurts (Patton 2005:15).

He appeals for a community-centred approach to replace the fast-weakening structures of traditional social relationships and support in the face of modernisation and urbanisation. Furthermore, he emphasises how particular contexts inform the method and goal of care. Pastoral caregivers should understand the context of care. Thus, pastoral care should take notice of people's cultures, experiences and worldview. What pastoral caregivers ought to do is to respond by remembering and reflecting on God's dealings with the community. Patton calls attention to contextual factors affecting both the message of care and the persons giving and receiving care.

Communal contextual pastoral theology, therefore, puts more emphasis on the development of the human person from the context of community. Thus, within the Christian community, worship and celebration, preaching, teaching and evangelism, care and counselling, human development and enhancement

together with pastoral formation are intertwined to give a communal and holistic approach to growth in all areas of communal and individual lives.

This study is concerned with the wellbeing of the grieving elderly who are caretakers of orphans affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. It argues that since social structures of caregiving had been weakened by modernism, urbanisation and civilisation, thus leaving caregiving on the shoulders of the elderly, “who care for the elderly.” There is a need for a community of care; a community that is not confined by space, culture, location or time; a dynamic community that reaches out to the people in need wherever they are. There is a need for a community that acknowledges pluralism and thus ecumenist in approach; a community that will not undermine people’s cultures but will use culture to liberate people if not reasoning on cultures (Clinebell 2011; Lartey 2006; Patton 1993:70).

Pastoral caregivers are expected to have the capacity to mobilise and utilise resources within the community to provide care. They should be able to revive the spirit of usefulness within the elderly so that they can assume their roles and identity. Pastoral caregivers should be able to come up with community programmes that are based on the needs and contexts of the elderly. Pastoral ministry to the elderly also involves identifying common or individual needs of the elderly. Another important aspect is to recognise the support system that is already in place. What skills and gifts can members of the church community offer? The support system within a congregation may consist of social workers, nurses and lawyers. If they are not there, it would be better to engage professional carers who are funded by government bodies, but other roles including advocacy, spiritual care and practical support, such as transport, can be carried out by the church (Clinebell 2011:347; Patton 2005).

As emphasised by Patton (2005:27), the church minister or pastor should be the facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to bring the people together and mobilise the required support. The facilitator should help his or her congregants to cultivate love, respect and a sense of mutual responsibility among all ages. He or she should also make sure that older people are visited in their homes so that their needs can be communicated with the church minister and other members of the church. If some elderly people are not able to communicate their needs, the facilitator shall contribute or involve

someone skilled in making people come forward for assistance (Clinebell and Clinebell 1984:310-322; Patton 1993:224).

Pastoral caregivers on the field should keep on reporting their progress to the church, where they could be assisted on how best they can handle their cases and for debriefing. The whole church will have ownership of the programme. The facilitator's role also entails engaging professionals to educate the elderly and their families on the process of ageing. He or she should also assist them to go through the process of grieving when they experience a change in living arrangements and challenges of caregiving. The facilitator should also facilitate the training of the pastoral caregivers to make their services more effective. This study maintains that the local church should form relationships with local welfare departments, health facilities and businesses for the betterment of the care of the elderly.

Pastoral caregivers should also have the capacity to listen. Even though the approach of pastoral ministry proposed in this study is on the sharing of experience, pastoral caregivers are facilitators of healing. They are expected to be empathetic and to be able to understand the meaning-making world of the elderly. This study observes that people are their best judge of what their needs are. Therefore, it is essential to listen and learn from them (Clinebell 2011:75; Lartey 2006:69; Patton 2005:3).

For Lartey, listening skills will enable pastoral caregivers to enter into the real-life experiences of oppression that exist in all communities in the world in their struggle to recover their humanity (2003:102). He asserts that listening to the confidant's story over and over again with interest to help their healing process can accelerate their feelings towards the acceptance of their grievances (2003:69). This acceptance will help them deal with their problems by themselves or with the help of relevant people. Moreover, pastoral caregivers should be inspired by scripture and human experience. The dignity of those who are suffering can be restored by those who are privileged.

Reflecting on the above assertions, it could be argued that Christians, therefore, have been given the prophetic role to liberate others from any form of deprivation. We learn from Luke 4:18 that a church is a therapeutic

community of healing and is a herald of peace. It should be in a position to voice out the concerns of the people to the powers that be.

Summary and Recommendations

This study revealed that, though burdened by the caregiving responsibilities and the realities of ageing, grandparents remain heads of families with dependents. The most striking feature of the traditional care system among Batswana is their complex family systems where children are not only on the receiving end but also participate in the caregiving role. Pastoral caregivers are to be aware of this cultural heritage and encourage every member of the family to play a part in caring for the orphans. The church should come in as a support system for the families.

In a situation where families neglect orphans or when they are not helping the elderly in the caretaking of orphans, pastoral care should engage in responses that are sensitive to society's culture. This approach emphasises the culture of the people whom the Gospel/Christianity reaches, thus making culture a factor in the method of doing African Theology and spirituality. This study proposes a Christian ministry that is constructed on a two-fold foundation of biblical and African cultural values.

Pastoral care services should aim at providing necessary support to enhance the quality of care of the elderly caregivers and also sustain the wellbeing of the elderly caregiver. This paper argues that the necessary support should be coupled with training or orienting the elderly in coping management strategies just after they lose their children before they assume the caregiving role. There is also a need for the development of policies that can thoroughly evaluate the need of elderly caregivers. Pastoral counselling sessions should be organised by pastoral caregivers whereby a forum comes into existence where elderly caregivers could allow them to air the problems and challenges they encounter. It is essential for pastoral caregivers to work together with other service providers in their locality.

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The Church and Poverty in Africa: Ethical Analysis and Homiletical Implication

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the perennial challenge of poverty in Africa and the role of the church in providing lasting solutions for this challenge. In the pursuance of the thesis of this study, which is that the church has an ethical role to play in ameliorating, if not eradicating the problem of poverty in Africa, the writer considers conceptualizing poverty in Africa, Biblical understanding of poverty, ethical analysis of the responsibility of the church in combating poverty in Africa, and homiletical implications of the church's role in the challenge of poverty in Africa as objectives. The writer approaches the concept of poverty from the perspective of the Bible and argues that the perspective of scripture is that poverty exists and the rich should care for the poor. The writer also argues that while both the Old and The New Testaments encourage a benevolent attitude from the rich towards the poor, the poor should not be lazy in terms of work and personal efforts. The paper examines the ethical responsibilities of the church, concluding that the responsibilities of the church are sectioned into theological, educational, and pastoral responsibilities. The writer argues that these responsibilities have homiletical implications. The implications are that the church should have more prophetic preaching. This prophetic preaching should be biblical, and church's preachers should have lives that agree with their messages. There is a connection between the pulpit and the growing rate of poverty in Africa; the writer, therefore, recommends that the church does more in the war against poverty on the African continent.

Introduction

Contemporary African society is bedevilled by a myriad of social, political, environmental, economic, and religious challenges. Political rascality and ethnic clashes, armed robbery and kidnapping, Islamic fundamentalism and insurgency, corruption and economic austerity are palpable landmarks on the African landscape. It is bewildering to note that a continent blessed with such enormous human and natural resources can be in a precarious state as marked by contemporary African realities. The African public considers the culprit: political leaders, traditional rulers and a host of historic and contemporary cabals that have held captive the socio-economic destiny of the African people.

In the book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney blames European Slave traders for the contemporary predicament of Africa. Rodney notes that through the use of warfare, trickery, banditry, and kidnapping, the western world syphoned the destiny of Africa during the slave trade (1973:83). Diverse opinions exist on parties to be blamed for the predicament of the African continent. Some scholars opine that some blame should also come to the church. Comparable to the biblical “*mene mene tekel upharsin*” the church in Africa is adjudged to have fallen short of societal expectations. The thesis of this paper is that the church has an ethical role to play in ameliorating, if not eradicating the problem of poverty in Africa. This is besides the fact that other factors are jointly responsible and other solutions are probable for the menace of poverty in Africa. This paper will specifically consider how the church in African contributes to the problem and how the church ought to provide some solutions.

In the pursuance of the above thesis, the writer will consider the following: conceptualizing poverty in Africa, biblical understanding of poverty, ethical analysis of the responsibility of the church in combating poverty in Africa, and homiletical implications of the church’s role in the challenge of poverty in Africa.

Conceptualizing poverty

The term poverty has been defined in several ways and within diverse contexts. Ruth Lister avers that proffering a definition for the concept of

poverty may be controversial because of the nebulous nature of the concept. Lister explains that there are several approaches to the definition of the concept. According to Lister all definitions of poverty would be correct once they are considered within the context of the author, whether social, political or historical context. Lister concludes that two approaches to the definition of poverty exist. These approaches Lister refers to as the narrow and broad approach, explained in terms of whether the definition considers poverty in terms of the material core, the nature of the material core, or the symbolism that are normative of the concept (2004:13). Sofo C.A. Ali-Akpajiak and Toni Pyke in their book *Measuring Poverty in Nigeria* agree that the multidimensional nature of poverty makes the concept difficult to define. They succinctly note that because the poor are not a homogeneous group, developing a generally accepted definition would be difficult (2003:5).

The possibility of a universally acceptable definition of poverty may seem improbable. However, a definition of poverty is essential because the perspective used in defining the concept determines to a large extent, how the eradication or alleviation is approached (Ghafoor 2010:1). Ghafoor recommends three approaches to the definition of poverty. The *monetary* approach, which deals with defining poverty in terms of ratings according to financial expenditure per day. This is exemplified in the World Bank's definition of poverty as living on or below \$1.90 per day (2018). Similarly, Lusted defines poverty as earning below \$1.25 a day, and extreme poverty is earning below half of the above amount (2010:10). The monetary approach to defining poverty is more common than other approaches. This is so because it is easier to measure the material substance of individuals based on their monetary value.

The second approach is a *capability* approach. This approach considers beyond the financial capacity of individuals; it cogitates the deprivation of certain natural capacities which could make poverty possible even in a rich country. This approach considers the individual's capacity for wealth creation and resources available for such wealth creation on an individual basis. Illustrating this definition is a United Nations description that conceives poverty basically as denying an individual the right to choices and opportunities, the violation of such an individual's human dignity, making him/her unable to effectively participate in society (2017). This definition accentuates the basic

understanding that poverty is more than lacking finance. It explains that once people are not able to make choices or take advantage of opportunities within their context, such people can be regarded as poor.

The third approach is the *multidisciplinary* approach which is a deviation from the quantitative methodologies and indices of measuring poverty and concentrates on the social relations that are responsible for the production of poverty. The social interactions responsible for poverty is the focus of this approach (Lusted 2010:2). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Developments (OECD) caps this approach by defining poverty as “interlinked forms of deprivation in the economic, human, political, socio-cultural, and protective spheres” (Handley et al. 2009:1). This definition accentuates the interplay between economic, human, political and socio-cultural factors concerning poverty.

These three approaches can be said to be the umbrella ideologies under which perspectives of poverty can be grouped. In defining poverty, it is either viewed from the perspective of how much an individual has available in meeting his/her essential needs or an individual’s lack of capacity to possess a choice among the various options available which also relates to the individual’s inability to take advantage of the variety of opportunity available to him/her. The last perspective is the view that poverty is deprivation in terms of the human, economic, social, cultural, and protective domains.

Scholars like Robert Chambers concurs with the monetary, capability, and multidisciplinary approaches as the overarching ideologies to the definition of poverty. However, Chambers includes two other approaches to the views through which poverty can be defined. According to Chambers, the monetary approach should be split in two, income-poverty and material lack poverty. Also, Chambers explains that the above approaches are all opinions for researchers, some of whom have never experienced first-hand poverty. Therefore, Chambers suggests another approach, which is cantered on a definition of poverty by the poor. About 2000 poor people from different parts of the world were brought together to consider how poverty would be defined. The synthesis of the contributions suggests that poor people consider poverty in terms of the distance between ill-being and wellbeing. Concluding from the opinion of Chambers, a valid definition of poverty would depend on who is

giving the definition (Chambers 2006). In the context of this paper, poverty is defined as the lack of basic amenities, whether personal or public, insufficient financial capability and capacity in relation to available resources within a particular context.

Regardless of how the concept is viewed, poverty remains one phenomenon with devastating repercussions for the African continent. Africa houses 75% of the poorest countries of the world, and approximately 414 million people live in extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan. In Africa alone, an estimated 589 million Africans live without electricity, over 700 million people live their lives without access to clean water, and not less than 20% of women live without access to education; there is an increase in the death rate due to malaria, the global hunger challenger has greater propensity to increase in poor Africa (The World Bank 2018). The results of poverty in Africa are not hidden. The continent has evidence of the effects of this monster concept that Africa grappled with since its foundation.

The causes of poverty in Africa may be grouped under different classes according to Howard White and Tony Killick. White and Killick suggest that the causes of poverty may be classified under social classes which deal specifically with the political, economic, and social causes of poverty; the second class has to do with the level which addresses international, national, or household level of poverty; and the third classification of the causes of poverty in terms of being primary or proximate (2001:xvii). This paper does not intend to focus on the cause and effects of poverty; therefore, the writer considers White and Killick's classification of the causes of poverty in Africa as sufficient.

A biblical understanding of poverty

The word of God is fundamental in the life of the church. It is generally considered relevant in matters related to life and practice. This writer considers it important to survey poverty in light of the biblical text. This is considered necessary because the paper deals with the role of the church concerning poverty. This section will excavate the position of the Bible on poverty.

Poverty in the Old Testament

The Old Testament is replete with examples of all forms of poverty. Poverty is often considered a socio-economic issue, and rightly so. However, Ayiemba, Theuri, and Mungai (2015) allude to the connection between involuntary poverty and the fall of man. Involuntary poverty, according to these authors, is a situation where lack occurs because of a natural disaster, or situations completely beyond the control of a human being. They illustrate involuntary poverty with the great famine referred to in Genesis 41:54 (Ayiemba, Theuri, and Mungai 2015:43). Similarly, Jeffrey Palmer opines that myriad forms of poverty exist in the Bible and concurs that there can be involuntary poverty, illustrating it with the case of slaves who are poor basically because they are slaves (2005:16). In addition, he notes that natural disasters, social upheavals, oppression and war can be other sources of involuntary poverty which is common in the Old Testament. Palmer however alludes to the concept of the bound slave as an example of involuntary poverty in the Old Testament (Palmer 2005:17).¹

He identifies five levels of poverty in the Old Testament. Loss of things; loss of influence; loss of identity; loss of hope; and complete dependence on God. The loss of things refers to the loss of possession. This can occur through natural disasters, war, and a range of other factors. Genesis 42:1-2 depicts a situation where Jacob sent his sons in search of food because of a long drought. This kind of situation could bring about poverty because of the loss of possession and wealth. The loss of possession and wealth directly leads to a loss of influence. Wealth makes an individual a part of the influence in society. The rich control power in any setting. Palmer explains that once possession and wealth are lost, individuals involved also lose connection with the people in power. This loss of connection with power results in the loss of influence (2005:16).

The next level of poverty is the loss of identity. Palmer's opinion is that once people lose wealth and possession, and they also lose influence, then, there is the tendency to lose identity. This idea is depicted by the story of the Israelite

¹ Exodus 21:5-6

spies in Numbers 13:33, where the spies considered themselves as grasshoppers before the people of the land.

According to Palmer, this grasshopper mentality is a result of the poverty of resources and influence that Israel had to pass through for hundreds of years. The fourth level of poverty recognised by Palmer is the loss of hope. At this stage of poverty, social services experience a breakdown and unethical practices begin to take place because of abject poverty. Cannibalism, ritual murder, and a high rate of robbery and other social vices begin to take place, all as evidence of the lack of hope. Palmer provides biblical examples of such loss of hope as a result of poverty from II Kings 6:24; 31 and Job 6:11-13.

The last level of poverty as described by Palmer is a complete and total dependence on God. For Palmer, when people resign to the hands of God alone without any other opportunity for intervention, it is the last stage of poverty (2005:16). I consider this last state an unnecessary inclusion. This is because the Bible is unequivocal on the expectation for believers in Christ to put all their hope in Christ and nothing else. The rich are no exception to this expectation.

William Ondari (2001:356) points out that God has a special affection towards the poor. In Deuteronomy 15:11, God commanded the Israelites to relate generously with the poor, knowing that the poor will always be in the land. Similarly, Leviticus 19:9-10 encourages wealthy farmers to deliberately leave some leftovers during harvest for the poor to glean. Verse 15 of the same text provides that rich people be impartial in their dealings with the poor. The land purchased from the poor should be safeguarded and be returned during the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:25-28). The Old Testament Prophets were vehement against the oppression of the poor and other vices that related to the rich taking advantage of the situation of the poor (Ondari 2001:357).² Proverbs 14:31 is instructive on the relationship between the rich and the poor. The verse provides a conception that the poor must be treated in such a way that God is honoured, as the oppression of the poor is contempt of God.

² Isaiah 58:6-7; Amos 2:7; 8:5-6

Terry Lockyer adds that a perusal of Proverbs proves that poverty can also sometimes be a result of laziness, indiscipline, and irresponsibility, and prosperity a product of hard work and diligence. Lockyer however notes that a larger portion of the book of proverbs presents poverty as a product of socio-economic injustice (2012:4). Samuel Waje Kunhiyop concludes that an assessment of poverty in the Old Testament reveals the compassionate interest of God for the poor, and the laws provided for the defence of the poor against oppression. According to Kunhiyop, the Old Testament is unequivocal on the expected benevolent threat of the poor by the rich, and the oppression of the poor is considered a dishonour to God.

Poverty in the New Testament

Daniel Bitrus suggests that the benevolent treatment of the poor replete in the Old Testament is carried forward into the New Testament. He explains that the charge of Jesus to the rich young ruler is typical of the New Testament teachings on the treatment of the poor (2003:141). Terry Lockyer avers that Luke 6:17ff represents the general ideology of Jesus about wealth and poverty. He warns however that the verse may not be taken as absolute for all individuals (2012:5). Kunhiyop holds that, though the New Testament does not contain elaborate instructions concerning the treatment of the poor as in the Old Testament, the New Testament gives much attention to the needs of the poor (2001:12). He specifies that the parables of Jesus identify the centrality of care for the poor and needy. Parables of the rich man and Lazarus, the Great Supper, the Widow's Mite, and other New Testament passages like the discussion between Jesus and the rich young ruler, and the conversion of Zacchaeus illustrate this (2001:12).

Olusola Igabri notes that the New Testament has three dimensions of relationships with the poor: *Concern* for the poor as in Matt. 26:11, *ministering* to the poor as in Mark 10:21, and the *relationship* between the rich and the poor as in Luke 16:20 (Igabri 2016:4). It is important to recognise that Jesus Christ himself took part in caring for the poor. A succinct example would be food in Mark 6:33-44 where Jesus feeds the crowd (Kunhiyop 2001:12). Aside from the ministry of Jesus to the poor, other parts of the New Testament bear the same understanding. For instance, the church's leadership encouraged Paul and Barnabas not to neglect the poor in their newly endorsed ministry in Galatians 2:10, similar to Jesus' injunction in Matthew 19:21 (Bitrus 2003:141).

In sum, poverty in the New Testament is not differently perceived from the Old Testament. The same ideology of the phenomenon of the poor and how they should benevolently care for them are found throughout the Bible.

Ethical analysis of the church's role in combating poverty

It is common knowledge that Africa is tremendously religious. Obaji M Agbiji and Ignatius Swart consider religion as an inseparable part of life in Africa (2014:1). The African is a religious person, almost every part of African life is submerged in religiosity. Aside from a very few dissenting scholastic opinions, most African scholars agree that Africa is incurably religious (Platvoet and Van Rinsum 2003:123). The pervasive nature of African religiosity may not be contestable. The widespread presences of Churches, Mosques and African traditional religious shrines illustrate this very reality. Despite Africa's ubiquitous religiosity, the continent is still rated the poorest in the world. Jaco Beyers opines that the prevalence of religion and the almost tangible presence of poverty appears to be paradoxical. He expounds that religion and poverty may be referred to as strange bird fellows (2014:1). This section deals with understanding what role the church has to play in the eradication or reduction of poverty using the Divine Command Theory as the basis for the analysis.

John Stott opines that the church has over the years neglected its role in global social concerns. This, according to Stott, accounts for the increase in global social vices. The church can no longer continue to stand hands folded, while contemporary social concerns go 'south.' The church can respond to these towering challenges such as war, creation, care, human rights, ethnic diversity, same-sex relationships, and poverty that have become major global issues in one of two ways: escape or engage. Escape is for the church to separate itself from the world, rejecting it completely. This approach translates to shorting the ears against the cry for help. The 'engage' approach is rather different as here the church takes up the responsibility of stepping in, and stepping out. The church raises as help as the cry of the world is heard. The church for centuries has taken the escapist attitude as an approach to dealing with the challenges of the world (Stott 2006:24). The foregoing therefore implies that a more deliberate response must be made by the church to help solve the challenges the world finds itself in.

The church in Africa is a part of the African continent. It is within the continent that the church carries out its functions. The church should therefore see the continent as one to cherish and preserve, despite the challenges it faces. Since poverty is the focus of this paper, it is imperative therefore to consider the role of the church in addressing this global menace, with a specific focus on Africa. Ayiembra, Theuri and Mungai opine that it is the divine mandate of the church to participate in poverty alleviation. The trio base their thesis on the idea that the creation story bequeaths man the responsibility to care for all that God has created, therefore continuing the creation. The writers explain that the account in Genesis 1:27-28 reveals man's spiritual, social, economic, and political responsibility in caring for all that God had created. The church must therefore see itself in the light of this responsibility as it responds to poverty (2015:43).

A myriad of opinions exists on the ethical role of the church concerning poverty alleviation/eradication in Africa. John Stott opines that the church has the following ethical roles in response to the problem of HIV/AIDS, a major offshoot of the problem of poverty in Africa: Theological response, pastoral response, educational response, and prophetic response. These responses are hereby adopted as the major ethical responsibilities of the church to the problem of poverty in Africa. These responsibilities are discussed as:

Theological Responsibility:

It is the responsibility of the church to provide the right perspective on poverty. Over the years, some churches have taught parishioners that poverty is a sign of proper spirituality; some even believe that the poorer one is, the closer such a person is to God. There is the other extreme that poverty is a sign of satanic affliction and curse. These two extremes admit other views that are theological blunders that the church has the ethical obligation to address. It is the moral responsibility of the church to provide a sound theological understanding of what poverty is and how it should be responded to. Kunhiyop insists that some approaches to poverty are inconsistent with scriptural truth and must be adjudged so (2001:14). Beyers (2014) opines that a worldview of poverty determines how poverty is perceived. The Christian church should make a deliberate effort to present the Christian worldview of poverty.

The church's theology of poverty should be biblical. Bitrus (2003) mentions that the Bible deals extensively on a variety of subjects, and there are models on the subject of poverty that the church can draw theology from. The Bible should therefore form the nucleus for the church's theology. The church should not condemn a world it has not taught. The general idea is to condemn the world when they take an approach that is unbiblical, non-theological, and contrary to the Christian worldview. It is the responsibility of the church to shine the light of knowledge and teach the right theology for the development of congregants on matters relating to poverty (Stott 2006:49).

Pastoral Responsibility:

Stott laments the ideology that the church does not have social responsibility. Proponents of this ideology hold that the only responsibility of the church is to evangelise the world. It is further argued that any act of social responsibility by the church would be tantamount to worldliness (Stott 2006:50). Conversely, Hans Haselbarth avers that the church in Africa is strategically located to be a catalyst for rural development. The close contact of the church with the people is foundational and informs the moral basis for a pastoral role for the church (1976:37). Stott notes that the church cannot continue with its irresponsible escapist attitude, but as the Lord Jesus Christ, the church should show an attitude of care and compassion (2006:24). The church cannot continue to abandon the world around them in the current chaotic condition. The church should be compassionate towards the poor and needy.

James Ndyabahika explains that part of the pastoral role of the church is the responsibility to care for the poor. The challenge of poverty is not something to simply lip sing, but the church must be deliberate in addressing it. Part of the response of the church to poverty is taking proper care of the poor (2004:208). Julius Oladapo notes that the African context is appreciative of the church's capacity in running institutional social services. The church should be involved in providing healthcare and educational services for the poor. He noted that the church has participated in these areas for centuries. The writer however noted that more deliberate efforts should be added as an ameliorative measure for the challenge of poverty (2000). Similarly, Asea Wilson and Rantsoa Letsosa explain that the Old and New Testament reflect generosity to the poor. These authors insist that this generosity is a contemporary ethical responsibility of today's church. The church should

provide avenues through which the poor can be assisted generously (Wilson and Letsosa 2014). They further recommend that the church should be involved in the global fight against poverty by generously giving and providing avenues through which the poor can be assisted to become self-sufficient and properly equipped to handle poverty themselves.

Educational Responsibility:

According to M.B.I Omoniyi, education affords individuals the groundwork for poverty eradication. It also provides a foundation for promoting economic development. Omoniyi opines that education is also foundational for the economic and social welfare of the citizens of a country. Omoniyi argues that education is key to growing economic effectiveness and social consistency, the maximization of the value and proficiency of the workforce and consequently raises the poor from poverty. Omoniyi noted that education improves the overall productivity and intellectual flexibility of the workforce and guarantees that a nation is competitive in the world market now characterized by changing technologies and production methods (2013:178).

Stott agrees that education is a powerful weapon in the hands of the church. According to Stott, this is because poverty and powerlessness in Africa are largely due to ignorance amidst other causes (Stott 2006:43). Paul Gifford succinctly records that the old missions brought literacy as an instrument for Christianizing Africa, the effect of the literacy program resulted in political and economic value for the then Christians. Contemporary churches in Africa must borrow a leaf from the western mission enterprise of the colonial period and make deliberate efforts in meeting the educational needs of the poor (1998).

Homiletical implications

An analysis of the ethical responsibility of the church raises implications for the 'pulpit'. The church's homiletical enterprise is directly implicated by the moral misgivings of the African continent. The pulpit is responsible for the declaration of the mind of God to the pew, therefore this writer assumes that the growth of poverty in Africa is an apparent indictment on the homiletical enterprise of the church in Africa. This section deals with the implications of widespread poverty in the African continent on the homiletical enterprise of the church in Africa. The following implications are considered germane:

Implications for Prophetic Preaching:

Stott insists that it is the responsibility of the church to hold African leaders accountable for their actions (2006:172). Prophetic preaching is a good homiletical tool for accomplishing this responsibility. Marvin McMickle purports that prophetic preaching sermonic communication shifts attention from what is happening in a congregation to what is happening in society. Prophetic preaching challenges leaders and followers on the fulfilment of responsibility. It is a method of sermonic communication that addresses the ills of society and the response and responsibilities of leaders and followers concerning societal ills. According to McMickle, prophetic preaching is necessary to turn the attention of leaders to their failures in society (2008:408). Similarly, Oladapo explains that since the church is not in competition with political and traditional authority, and there is no tendency for the church to take over the political or traditional authority, the church should therefore serve as a conscience to political and traditional leaders (2000:146). The church should address political corruption, ungodliness among political and traditional leaders, as well as members of the church contributing to the breakdown of law and order in the nation. Christians involved in political corruption should be rebuked and the evil they perpetuate should be deliberately addressed without prejudice.

Implication for True Biblical Proclamation:

Complex homiletical issues have risen in contemporary times; many have questioned the viability of preaching as a means of communicating God's word. Several suggestions have been put forward with regards to whether other means of communication can be used as a replacement for preaching. The contemporary sermonic climate is rigged with homiletical dynamites that tend to work against congregational persuasion. Several means and methods are recommended to curb the increasing negative persuasions against preaching that continues to pervade the preaching atmosphere in Africa generally. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in his discussion of the primacy of preaching, stated that preaching is the furthestmost imperative of the church (1971:9). This statement made five decades ago still forms an existential reality for today's church. David Larsen alleged that there is the view in some quarters that the days when the church was moved by the persuasiveness of its frontrunners are now relics (1989:11). Larsen's observation accentuates the idea that preaching in the 21st century has antagonists. Due to poverty in

Africa, Africans are in search of greener pastures and many turn to the church for a message of hope to succour them.

One phenomenon that has invaded the African preaching landscape due to the poverty of Africa is prosperity preaching. This concept of preaching tends to spiritualise success, insisting that getting comes by giving. Those who have been enslaved by this fast-growing teaching believe all things are theirs and whether such believers work hard or not, grace will provide all they need. Parishioners who attend prosperity preaching churches are taught to name it and claim it. Whatever congregants can claim by faith will become theirs on earth (Kitause 2014:31). Prosperity preachers explain that prosperity is a reward of prayer and faith and poverty is the evidence of the lack of faith (Koch 2009:3).

This concept represents the ideological mindset of lazy people. Many fold their hands expecting miracles to fall from heaven without putting their hands and minds to work. Preachers in the African context should teach biblical methods of prosperity to congregants. The preacher in Africa should teach sound theology of work. The African preacher should encourage parishioners to do excellently with their hands and pay attention to business. African preachers should preach God's kind of prosperity. Biblically, prosperity is beyond material wealth and physical abundance. The Bible recommends all-rounded prosperity. Biblical prosperity addresses the spiritual as well as the material wellbeing of believers. This kind of holistic prosperity that is expressed in 3 John 2, which involves the prosperity of the spirit, soul, and body, should be preached by preachers in the African context.

Implications for Homiletical Ethos:

It is no longer strange on social media, television, newspapers, magazines, and other media-related outlets to find headlines describing the unethical, and sometimes outright immoral behaviour of clergymen. This kind of news, sometimes pebbled by ignorant and non-religious people, goes a long way to portray the clergy in a very bad light. Much can be said of financial misappropriation, sexual immorality, and sometimes to the shock of many, the use of diabolic powers to perform signs and wonders. Kehinde Olusanya argues that the effect of these kinds of practices and their rumours on the preacher's persuasion of the congregation can be devastating. Homiletic ethos

in the context of this paper is the ethos relating exclusively to preaching (2018:131). It is the power of honesty of the preacher as perceived by the congregation. Homiletic ethos relates to how well the preacher convinces the audience that he or she is qualified to represent God in the preaching of the word. This concept addresses the personal life and personal ethics of preachers, which forms a basis for the preacher to obtain the right to speak to others on God's behalf. According to Paige Patterson quoting Paul S. Wilson, ethos about homiletics has to do with the manner listeners perceive the character of the preacher in the course of the sermon delivery. Aristotelian artistic means of persuasion take three forms, which are popularly known as ethos, pathos, and logos (Patterson 2010:29). Ethos is referred to as the character, appeal of the speaker, or in more practical terms, it relates to the audience's question to wonder who's talking (Leith 2011:47). Ethos in Greek is used to mean "character". The Greeks use the word to designate the guiding principles or standards that are characteristic of particular communities, nations, or specific ideologies. The concept is also used to refer to the power of music to influence the emotions, behaviours, and morals of hearers (Weiss and Taruskin 2008:1). Similarly, Nan Johnson refers to ethos as persuasion through the character of the speaker (1984).

John Broadus, quoting Phillips Brooks, suggests that preaching is "the communication of truth by man to man. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality..." (1944). The person of the preacher going by the above definition definitely affects the potency of the message. Preachers must therefore consider their lives and their doctrine closely. A.P. Gibbs concludes that the preacher is to do more than preach the doctrine of the Word of God. The preacher must also wear that doctrine on him/her so the world can see the doctrine exemplified (2013:47). According to Kehinde Olusanya (2018), the life of the African preacher should exemplify all that he/she preaches; this is because in the African context the effectiveness of the message is determined to a large extent by the life of the messenger.

The African preacher can overcome the shadow of doubt cast on the clergy in Africa by living a life beyond reproach, a life that preaches the message again and again. African preachers cannot afford to live contrary to what their sermons teach, as this will continue to affect the image of the clergy in Africa. Gibbs alluded to this when he stated that "more damage has been brought to

the cause of Christ through the inconsistent lives of those who profess his Name and preach his Word than anything else” (2013:47). The African preacher must rise above materialism, sexual impurities, ungodly competition in ministry, ecclesiastical corruption, and other vices that work against the promotion of the preaching ministry in Africa.

Conclusion

In the context of this work, poverty is not only evident in Africa, it is widespread. Several definitions are proposed by different authors for the concept. The writer discoursed the concept of poverty from the perspective of the Bible, arguing that the perspective of scripture is that poverty exists and the rich should care for the poor. The writer also argued that while both the Old and The New Testaments encourage a benevolent attitude from the rich to the poor, the poor should not be laid back and lazy in terms of work and personal efforts. The paper examined the ethical responsibilities of the church, concluding that the responsibilities of the church are sectioned into theological, educational, and pastoral responsibilities. The writer argues that these responsibilities have homiletical implications. The need for the church to have more prophetic preaching, the need for Biblical preaching, and the need for the church’s preachers to have lives that align with their messages are the implications deduced by this writer. There is a connection between the pulpit and the growing rate of poverty in Africa. The church should do more in the war against poverty on the African continent.

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Internal Migration in Nigeria and its Attendant Insurgent Challenges: A Proposal for "Theonomous Counterintuitive Strategy" as a Panacea

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Abstract

Except with the advent of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the country in the year 2020, insurgent activities associated with internal migration and, especially the ones perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria, have been daily news in recent times. Because of the widespread nature of the activities, complexity, persistence, acute dreadfulness, socio-political, economic, judicial, military, historical, and other perspectives have been engaged to examine the myriad instances. Several solutions have been proposed and implemented. Lamentably, none of the solutions has successfully been able to stop the Fulani insurgents. In joining the quest for the more viable solutions to the malicious perpetrations against the Christian fold, particularly in the Middle Belt and southern regions of Nigeria, the present article proposes a theonomous counterintuitive strategy as a panacea. Consisting of tripodal PRP-R techniques, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy is hereby put forward as the more viable way of resolving the migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria and beyond. The strategy is drawn from the application of Ephesians by Vernon K. Robbins's social and cultural textural reading of biblical texts.

Introduction

Migration can be said to be as old as the human race. It started after the historic event in Genesis 3, which resulted in the first humans (Adam and Eve) to relocate. This was invariably the first human migration and since then migration in its different shades and gravity has been going on. In Nigeria, migration dates back to the pre-colonial period. Virtually every ethnicity in the country has experienced a form of migration at one time or the other. Migration takes place across regions, borders, and cultures with a variety of causative factors in play.

The late twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries have recorded a high level of human migration that consists of patterns that are both extraordinary and multifaceted. I will discuss the considerable attention that has been given to these in migration scholarship. Similarly, the key performers and the various consequences of internal migration in Nigeria have been carefully explored. Some of these scholars have painstakingly worked on the solutions to the numerous issues arising from internal migration in the country (also see the next section). This article joins this solution-seeking discourse in quest of the viable ways of tackling insurgent challenges that are associated with internal migration of, particularly, the Fulani ethnic group in the country.

From a careful examination, this article puts forward that the solutions hitherto are in essence rooted in the human instinct and lack the potency to resolve migratory insurgent challenges. Thus, it proposes a theonomous counterintuitive strategy which consists of tripod techniques that, trustworthily, possess the potency of resolving these challenges. This strategy is developed from the Epistle to the Ephesians with a few supplements from related texts. Given that internal migration in Nigeria and its attendant insurgent challenges, which Ephesians is engaged to address are societal and ethnic by nature, the article employs Vernon K. Robbins' conversionist, reformist, and utopian ideologies in his "social and cultural texture" interpretative approach. Hence, it reads the epistle as a social rhetoric (masterpiece) exclusively designed for the transformation of the society in light of its configured divine principles.

The article is structured into four parts. The first focuses on the migration indices up to the present time. This section establishes the reality of migration in general and internal migration in Nigeria in particular, to serve as a foundation for the subsequent discussions. The second part devotes attention to the contemporary attendant insurgent challenges of internal migration in Nigeria. The third surveys and appraises the hitherto solutions to the migratory insurgent challenges. The fourth section, the crux of the article, explores Ephesians to explain and advance the theonomous counterintuitive strategy.

1. The contemporary representativeness of migration

In a variety of shades and phases, migration along with its natural outcome, immigration, is both prehistoric, historic, and universal (Bellwood 2013:2; see also Herrera and Garcia-Bertrand 2018). Both in the prehistoric and historic times, migration is considered to be a permanent translocation – a “movement of all or part of a population to inhabit a territory separate from that in which it was previously based” (Bellwood 2013:2; Linhard & Parsons 2019:4). Such a movement from one location or region to another to establish a new residence (permanent or temporary) within the same country is considered to be an internal migration (Oyeniyi 2013:13; Theresa & Uroko 2019:97). Historically, Bukola Adeyemi Oyeniyi (2013:14-17) surveys and categorises Nigeria’s internal migration into pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary trajectories. During the pre-colonial era, Oyeniyi appraises, migration was the translocation of the dominant ethnic groups (the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa people) from outside Nigeria into the country and a further relocation to villages and settlements in the interior. In the prehistoric and earlier historic times, which form part of the pre-colonial era here in Nigeria, such migrations were into virgin lands or “regions that had no prior inhabitants” where the migrants in question established the original settlements (Bellwood 2013:3). Though socio-economic, geographical, ecological, agricultural precepts are among the fundamental factors responsible for these (Bellwood 2015:59), it can be said that such migrations were simply an unconscious extension of God’s skewing and scattering of the primordial mono-linguistic people in Genesis 11:1-9 to continue the expansion of the human race and filling the earth (Gen. 1:28).

During the colonial era, migration was more of what Bellwood describes as movement into regions already having populations in residence (Bellwood 2013:3). Oyeniyi (2013:17-18) notes that during this period, both inter- and intragroup migration was rampant and three key factors, namely religion, colonialism, and western education, served as the impetus to its extensiveness. He narrates further that at that time, the inherent administrative authorities of both Christianity and Islam posted their preachers and teachers to different locations (mostly the interior remote or rural areas) to make and educate disciples for their religions. This created a sort of recurrent oscillated migration between the urban and rural areas. Similarly, the establishment of the earliest educational institutions in the urban centres orchestrated migration from the rural to urban settlements for the acquirement of basic education. Furthermore, for the sake of business and economic adventures, people moved from one location to another to settle and open shops by which they built their capacities and promoted the welfare of the initial inhabitants through bringing goods and services within their reach. Migration in this period can be said to be characterized by naturalness. The well-being of either the migrants or their host communities or both was spontaneously central in the initiative as well as the entire enterprise.

In the post-colonial period, according to Oyeniyi (2013:19), "...the location of industries, government offices, public and private agencies, infrastructural and developmental projects in urban centres ... continued to draw migrants, especially young ones, from rural areas". According to Godwin O. Ikwuyatum (2016:117), "... [This period] witnessed heightened labour migration from several parts of the country to the main administrative and economic centers (*sic*) of the country and to more varied destinations than ever before". The economic buoyancy resulting from the 1970s affluence in the petroleum industry along with its attendant developmental indices occasioned a large movement of people in the rural areas to the township in search for better life. Similarly, the decline in the 1980s and the compelling policy adjustments by the government and private sectors caused a significant movement back to rural areas due to the associated challenges of the economic decline (Oyeniyi 2013:19-20). Ikwuyatum (2016:117) substantiates this with specifics and date:

... The changes in the economic and political policies of the country resulted in changes in the pattern of intraregional labour migration

in Nigeria. One, in particular, is the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in June 1986. SAP dictated a shift from the official policy of full employment to substantially reduced government spending on critical services, such as health, education, and housing. This created a greater tendency for persons to emigrate.

This caused a mammoth migration from the cities and urban centres to other locations, especially the rural areas where the majority returned to farming, petty trading and the like.

Going further from the post-colonial era, Steven J. Gold and Stephenie J. Nawyn (2015:1) observe that the contemporary period is characterized "... by an unparalleled level of human migration ..." and its patterns are similarly unprecedented in several ways. The patterns, the nature of the actors, and the processes of the migration are dynamic, spatial, and complex (Ikwuyatum 2016:117-18). According to Ikwuyatum (2016:118),

The recent survey by the National Population Commission (NPC, 2010) ... revealed that migrants and return migrants showed a youthful age structure, that is, migrants between 10 to 34 years dominate the migration process in Nigeria ... The NPC (2010) survey further showed that migrants with no formal education, ranked highest (27%), followed by those with primary education (21.3%) and the least are people with Postgraduate qualification (0.6%).

Ikwuyatum (2016:118) continues that the bulk of this migration was from the northern to the Middle Belt and southern parts of the country. More than a few states in these regions have more than two-fifths of their overall populations as internal migrants.¹ The volume of internal migration in the

¹In another parlance, Ikwuyatum puts forward that, incongruously, the volume of internal migration in the country is inversely proportional between the Hausa-Fulani north and the other ethnic groups in the Middle Belt and southern regions. In his computation, the volume of internal migration in general in the middle and lower regions of the country is more than four times the one in the northern regions. However, this volume by gender is about 2:1 female vs. male ratio in the northern regions and 1:2

contemporary era can be said to have risen quite significantly. Scholars have associated this with several factors (Asueni & Godknows 2019:82-93; Ikwuyatum 2016:115; Kulcsár 2015:28-37; Oyeniya 2013:17-18) that are not crucial to the thrust of this paper. They are, hence, being discounted.

Significant efforts have been made in migration scholarship to narrow discussions and analyses on internal migration in Nigeria. Several scholars have paid closer attention to the key actors of internal migration in the country. The Fulani pastoralists and their internal migration indices are particularly selected to illustrate the key actors and their insurgent activities resulting from their migration to their host communities which are at the receiving end in each case of insurgency. The rationale behind the selection of this ethnic group is that their internal migration paradigm will, for the most part, enhance the attainment of the foremost objective of this article.

In allusion to Tauxier and Fricke, Agbegbedia Oghenevwoke Anthony (2014:57) states that the Fulani ethnic group originated from the plateau region in the north-central region of Guinea known as Fouta Djallon, from which they migrated massively to other parts of Africa including Nigeria. Another version traces the origin of the Fulani people to the Arabian lineage in North Africa and the Middle East (Falola and Genova 2009:135; also see Enor *et al.*, 2019:266). Within the Nigerian context, Nwaoga C. Theresa and Favour Chukwumeka Uroko (2019:97) note that the Fulani people originated from the northern part of the country from where they migrated to other regions. This internal migration has a long history. Anthony (2014:58) relates that at the dawn of the twentieth century, the Fulani migration to the Middle Belt and southern regions of the country was seasonal. At the end of the rainy seasons, they were mostly sited in different places in their destinations moving in the reserves in search of greener meadows for their livestock. Likewise, at the beginning of the new farming season, they were sited migrating back to the north. As years went by, considerable affability between them and the initial inhabitants in the

male-female ratio in the Middle Belt and southern regions (see 118-19). An interesting plausible inference can be drawn from these statistics by Ikwuyatu: related female gender motivational factors which require further investigation and analysis are more predominant and compelling in the northern parts of the country compared to their counterparts in the Middle Belt and southern regions. Marriage, womanly labour and socio-economic activities are possible insinuations.

various communities was developed. They therefore began to settle more perpetually in their migrating destinations (host communities). Nonetheless, this later development came along with some unpredictable challenges in the hereafter (see the next section for these).

2. Contemporary attendant insurgent challenges of internal migration

The Middle Belt province has recorded a considerably high population of the Fulani pastoralists in the latter part of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries consequent to the age-long human phenomenon, namely migration. In more specific terms, Anthony (2014:57-61) notes that, as a result of migration, the Fulani people in their numbers have penetrated and diffused Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Niger, Kaduna (especially the southern region), Kwara, Kogi and other states at the Western province of the country. Scholars have severally and sufficiently proven that insurgency, and especially, the one been perpetrated by the Fulani ethnic group, is very well intertwined with migration. Idowu Adetayo Johnson and Biodun Taofik Okunola (2017:52) are so categorical that, pastoralism, and more particularly that of the contemporary migrants in the Middle Belt and southern regions of Nigeria, is a new phase of terrorism in the country.² For Omilusi Mike Opeyemi (2016:48-74), these cattle grazers are roving bands of terrorists rather than innocuous nomads. On the one hand, migration is an inescapable reality of life, but on the other hand and especially in the contemporary backdrop, it is being accompanied by varied issues of identity, space, and insecurity or vicious conflicts (Olugbenga 2013:77-81; also see Schmid 2016:3-4,13-14,41-46). In March 2017, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State declared that the state was being attacked several times from Fulani herders who migrated to the

²A noteworthy inference needs to be made here. From Johnson and Okunola's retrospection, it is worth noting that other insurgent activities around the country are limited to some localities or regions. The migrant Fulani herdsmen insurgency is national. It pervades virtually every locale in the Middle Belt and southern regions. (Are you sure about this? I would guess that Boko Haram has killed more people than the Fulani crises.) It is more widespread, often hostile, and has claimed more lives than every other crisis in the nation. It comes in a variety of ways ranging from kidnapping, raping or sexual abuse of victims, the use of more sophisticated weapons, and continues to increase day by day.

region from the northern parts of the country (International Crisis Group 2017:7).

Historically, the primal Fulani migrants had a peaceful and symbiotic relationship with their host farming communities; in exchange for the grazing rights, the herders' cattle fertilized the farmlands of the host communities in preparation for the subsequent farming season. Contrary to this, the contemporary relationship, more especially in the second decade of the twenty-first century, is unfriendly (International Crisis Group 2017:1; also see Ogbette *et al.*, 2018:46 for the more historical development of this tension).³ Various statistics show that thousands of Nigerians are being brutally killed on account of this migratory herdsman insurgency (see the references to Enor, Ogbette, and others below).

Frank N. Enor, *et al.* (2019:270), report that, since 2015, these migratory malevolent acts have become a monthly affair. In 2015 alone, 97, 368, 635, 431, 267, 276, 81, and 136 were killed in May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December respectively. Afamefuna Samuel Ogbette, *et al.* 2018:46), narrate that, so far, according to newspaper reports (which are often editorially tampered with), over 60,000 people have been killed on account of Fulani herdsman attacks. According to Abdulbarkindo Adamu and Alupsen Ben 2017:23-37), in Benue State alone, in less than three years, 1 January 2014 through to 31 August 2017, 14 of the 23 local government areas of the state were attacked by the migratory Fulani herdsman. A total of 4,194 were killed and 2,957 were injured. A total of 195,576 homes and 30 church

³From the report of this International Crisis Group, two things are worth noting. First, the savageness orchestrated by the migratory Fulani people and its attendant relational effects is occurring in the Christian dominated regions of the country. They are taking place in 22 of the 36 states of the country and these 22 are within the central and southern regions. Second, it is evident that the Fulani-Farmers' unfriendly relationship is alarmingly increasing and following the various factors that aggravate the tensions, their evolution especially with respect to their origins, their spread and human toll, the inadequate responses by the government, security agencies, etc., there is a greater tendency of a much more heightened unfriendliness than what is currently happening. Take for instance, the very way the Christians perceive what is happening and the supposed necessary measures they adopt (see the latter part of this section, pages 6-7 below, for some of these) have greater capability of exacerbating the animosity and its repercussions.

buildings were destroyed. Over 23,000 were displaced and no fewer than 100 women were abducted and sexually abused variously. They severally stress that the atrocities of the migratory Fulani herdsmen were horrendous and their victims were overwhelmingly Christians and non-Muslims (see Theresa and Uroko 2019:102, Enor, *et al.* 2019:269-78, Akerjiir 2018:17-21, and Afolabi 2016:12-15 for the incidences and stats in Plateau and other states). For Ningxin Li (2018:1), the Middle Belt region and, more particularly, Benue, Plateau and Taraba states are the most impacted states in the country.⁴

A very critical resultant effect of these unfortunate incidences is the rifted human relations created between Christians and the Fulani ethnic group and the Muslims in general. Ogbette, *et al.*, (2018:50) captures this thus: “Violent crisis in Nigeria ... have created a rift in human relations ... Fulani herdsmen and farmers’ crisis (*sic*) have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other ... [and] leading to new trends in the polarization of communities”. Upon their initial migration to a community, Anastasia Sandra Akerjiir (2018:41-46) observes that the Fulani people were often quite peaceful. They often went to the head(s) of their host communities to request and obtain permission to graze their herds in their neighbourhood(s). On the contrary, Akerjiir continues, the terroristic Fulani herdsmen of the twenty-first century were characteristically ferocious, insolent and confrontational. They often carry sophisticated weapons and rather than grazing around like the earlier set of herders, they have preferred grazing on people’s farmlands at will without permission, and destroyed food and cash crops. They often kill and destroy whoever questions their unbecoming attitudes. These and several other malicious treatments of farmers created a serious relational problem between them (also see Nzeh 2015:21). Similarly, from a more theological perspective, Moses Audi (2019:191-192), in allusion to several others, attests that in less than a decade into the twenty-first century, the Christian-Muslim relationship became increasingly more difficult. The former cordiality had given way to resentment.

⁴It is worth pointing out here that the farmers are to blame for some of these crises. Joshua Bagudu Boyi observes that sometimes the Christians are the actual perpetrators of the violence.(80)

3. The solutions to the migratory insurgent challenges hitherto

Solutions to the challenges of insurgencies that are associated with migration abound. Scholars have offered numerous and varying proposals ranging from social, economic, security, governmental, judicial, etc. as solutions. For Johnson and Okunola (2017:51-53), the major solution to this incessant migratory menace ravaging the country lies with the government of Nigeria. In their opinion, a National Livestock Development Policy should be promulgated as that would be a viable route of resolving the migratory insurgent challenges (also see Ogbette *et al.*, 2018:52 for other things the government should do). It is worth noting here that any presumption that the solution to the current migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria lies with the government is highly an unlikely supposition. The governments of Nigeria are, expressly, known for setting up high powered technical committees and developing quintessential policies but failing in implementation. Take, for instance, according to the International Crisis Group (2017:10):

Soon after assuming office in 2015, President Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to formulate a comprehensive livestock development plan including measures to curb farmer-herder clashes. In August 2015, a FMARD committee recommended short-, medium- and long-term strategies, including the development of grazing reserves and stock routes . . . On 3 March 2016 . . . Agriculture Minister Audu Ogbeh announced that government was sending a bill to the National Assembly to prohibit cattle from roaming in cities and villages. He added that the government had ordered fast-growing grass from Brazil to produce “massive hectares of grasses”, which would be ready for consumption “within the next three months”. More than a year later [and till the time of this article], there has been no further word about the cattle banning bill and the promised grass.

A lot can be read between the lines regarding the unexplainable demise of this proposal. Thus, it is evident that the government of Nigeria, in particular, is bound to fail in terms of taking adequate measures to tackle the contemporary

migratory insurgent challenges. The solution, therefore, does not lie on the government whether at the Federal, State, or Local level. The effect of their failure irrespective of the unexplainable factors underlying such will be massive.

Li (2018:8-12) proposes a couple of strategies: the “Forcing and Competing”, “Win-Win”, “Compromising”, “Avoiding”, and “Accommodating” strategies and the “Transformative Mediation Process” as a conflict intervention panacea (also see Ozoigbo 2019:276-78 who proposes a couple of other solutions including restructuring and community policing). These proposals are essentially deficient in providing a substantial solution to the migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria. The “Forcing and Competing” strategy which suggests the use of force by the government to enforce law and order, for instance, is not realistic given that one of the parties might comply while the other may not. If, for example, the Fulani herdsmen could come out during a 24-hour curfew at the peak of one of the crises and attacked some communities and get away with it with no arrest nor prosecution despite the massive array of the law enforcement agencies, this strategy is not realistic (some people in some crisis areas who prefer to be anonymous have testified to this). Similarly, the “Avoiding” strategy which encourages the evasion of conflict situations only has a partial and temporal solution.

Additionally, the “Transformative Mediation” strategy will just be another “way forward” that has failed many times in different places. The common scenario is that one of the parties often makes efforts to keep their part of the bargain but the other party who may have a subjective idea of peace, often do not keep their part of the bargain. Peace resolutions and agreements were reached more than once in several places, but the Fulani herdsmen turned back and launched attacks on the other ethnic groups and communities. A most recent incident attests to this. The Christian host communities in Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State have been experiencing serial attacks, killings, and destruction of property by the Fulani herdsmen in recent years. Interestingly, on April 26, 2020, the various religious, community and ethnic groups’ leaders were gathered and a reconciliation meeting was held where it was agreed that peace should reign from then henceforth. A number of the Fulani people were in attendance. However, quite surprisingly and disheartening in the evening of that same day, the Fulani people launched an

attack in one of the communities and no fewer than five people were killed. On May 12, 2020, the local television media houses, Channels Television and the African Independent Television (AIT), for example, reported another attack in which not less than 15 people were killed in *Gonan Rogo* settlement. In an AIT correspondent's interview with the villagers on May 13, 2020, the villagers testified that the attack was carried out by the Fulani people. It is noteworthy that in some other instance, some Christian militants have also violated peace treaties. Driven by vengeance, it is reported that several attacks were lunched on Muslim communities in Plateau during which many Muslims were killed and a large number were displaced (Boyi 2020:85). Thus, it is obvious that the popular peace dialogue fora in Nigeria and especially the regions predominantly affected by migratory insurgent attacks are essentially political displays that lack the fundamental elements to resolve the ravaging migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria.⁵

Furthermore, the host communities and victims of migratory insurgent challenges who are mostly from the Christian fold have devised some solutions in response to the blatant adversatives threatening them. Coming from the backdrop that the current migratory insurgent challenges are subtle forms of Jihad intended to subdue and forcefully convert the inhabitants to Islam, "Communities in the middle belt and south have formed self-defence vigilante groups" for reprisal attacks (International Crisis Group 8). The Fulani herdsmen were ordered to vacate the southeast territories or face the full wrath of the people of Biafra in April 2016, and the National Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) President, Reverend Olusola Ayokunle, issued a threat in May 2017 that, "If the government fails to stop the provocation by the Fulani (herdsmen), they should be prepared for war. No ethnic group has a monopoly of violence and

⁵In much broader sense of conflict resolution, forgiveness and reconciliation ideologies as psychological pathways of transforming conflict and building peace among warring parties have been proposed. To achieve these, Hagitte Gal-Ed (2009:97-150) suggests the application of "ARTiculation" – "a grounded theory of art as dialogue-based process of realization and transformation. Augustine Nwoye (2009:vii &121-36) suggests the promotion of forgiveness through frequent organization of restorative conferencing. These proposals are palpable except that, according to the editors of this volume, they are designed principally for "those who are tired of war, hatred, and similar dilemmas that continue to plague all peoples". Also see Nel Noddings' care theory proposal (2018:295) which is designed to provide guidance toward the "establishment, preservation, and deepening of cooperative human relations.

no ethnic group should be a monster to others” (International Crisis Group 2017:8-9).

Similarly, Audi (2019:190-93) narrates that there is a significant change in attitude and response to the insurgency by the Christians. Instead of considering the present insurgent challenges as a clarion call to hearty spiritual awakening and rising to her responsibility of evangelizing the dying world, the persistent attacks from the Fulani herdsmen are breathing hatred into the hearts of the Christians and encouraging violent responses. Consequently, retaliation and the circle of violence, as well as the expressions of resentment, are the order of the day. Some have settled for the imprecatory prayers and fervently praying for the misfortune of their attackers and all who subject them or other Christians to grief and desolation.

From a closer examination of the solutions so far, whether proposed or applied, this article holds that the solutions are all rooted in the human instinct and, just as it is noted above, they evidentially lack the potency to effectually tackle the problem of migratory insurgencies. Donald Grant (2018:1-3) describes instinct in general as a basic and innate part of the human make-up which is very well buried in the human frame and inner self. It is the in-built might that is responsible for the predominant human actions. The killer instinct, in particular, is that “dark side” or “split [twisted human] personality” that is characteristically violent. It is the origin of human aggression and the urge to kill a fellow human being like it would be done of an ordinary fly, a mouse, or any lower animal.

Three things regarding human instinct and its ripple effects merit highlighting here:

First, the actual orchestrator of human instinct is the Adamic nature (configuration or make-up) of humankind. Grant’s description of the “dark side” or “split [twisted human] personality” can be linked to Paul’s characterization of the law of the mind that makes humans captive to the natural law of the sin that exists in them (Rom. 7:17-23). Frank J. Matera (2010:176-78) labels this as the human “*egō, ego*” which is “indentured [being slavishly-masterfully contracted] to sin,” the inner power that works contrary to anything good.

Second, the stimulants of human instinct are, by the same token, associated with the Adamic nature (configuration or make-up) of humankind. In his description, Grant (2018:3) portrays the killer instinct as being housed in the base structures of the human brain, the part which is sometimes referred to as the reptilian or crocodile brain. This killing intuition is being triggered when the human's "normal controls and inhibitions are degraded or removed ..." by some factors or influences. This is most predominant when the killer perceives the prey as "subhuman", a judgement being initiated by the social strata, colour, or religious affinity of the prey/victim. Such a dehumanizing view of a fellow human being is a product of the perverted human nature. It can be argued that the anger, insult, and the address of a fellow human as "fool" which Jesus condemns in Matthew 5:21-22 are tantamount to dehumanization that is rooted in sin. The nature of the reward here signifies Jesus' disavowal of such a reptilian (crocodilian) attitude.

It is against this backdrop that this article proposes a theonomous counterintuitive strategy by which, it strongly holds, insurgency in general and the one associated with internal migration in Nigeria in particular, can be effectually tackled. This then leads to the final section, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy as a panacea.

4. The Theonomous counterintuitive strategy as panacea

The term counterintuitive is derived from the words "counter" and "intuitive". The prefix "counter" denotes opposition. For example, it indicates an action that is or goes contrary to the normal action of the main element in question (Webster 2004:296). The term "intuitive" is an adjectival form of intuition which is used to refer to an instinctive action⁶ (Webster 2004:668). Thus, the term counterintuitive is used here to denote that which is contrary to expectations or that which is not in accordance with the conventional way, feeling, or imagination. It particularly refers to thoughts and actions that are contrary to the dictates of the human intuition. Similarly, the term theonomy denotes the state of affairs being governed or directed by God. Thus, the

⁶An instinctive action is "An inborn pattern of behavior (*sic*),"an innate motivation or impulse that is characteristic of a thing or person and "is often a response to specific environmental stimuli" (Morris 1969:675).

phrase “Theonomous Counterintuitive Strategy” refers to the counterinsurgent approach that does not follow the dictates of the human instinct. It rather follows God’s principles and directives in the Scripture. This is, particularly, applicable to Christians, those who are in Christ Jesus. God’s principles and directions in this article are drawn from the Epistle to the Ephesians, the encapsulated book of God’s philosophies, ideals, and methods of accomplishment which are, above all, functional for humankind.

Since issues of internal migration in Nigeria, including migratory insurgent challenges, are societal and ethnic by nature, the conversionist, reformist, and utopian ideologies of Robbins’ social and cultural texture analysis of a biblical text are employed to achieve the objective of the article (Robbins 2003:147-50; also see *Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (SRI); and De Waal 2010:51-52). The conversionist social rhetoric ideology holds that the world is certainly corrupt and full of evil because the people in the world are corrupt. Hence, the transformation of the people is proportionally the transformation of the world (Robbins 2003:147; De Waal 2010:51). The focus of this ideology is the transformation of the corrupt people. The reformist social rhetoric ideology places emphasis on the social structures of the society. It sees them as corrupt and the only solution lies in the transformation of these structures. It sees the solution as rooted in some supernaturally-given insights (Robbins 2003:149; De Waal 2010:52). The utopian social rhetoric ideology believes in the possibility of a new order in which evil is curbed and, in view of the shortfall of other principles, it places emphasis on the application of the divinely orchestrated principles as a more viable means of realizing such an order (Robbins 2003:149; De Waal 2010:52).

Principally, the discussion in this article is grounded in the complementarity of these ideologies. All three identify the corrupt settings that require transformation. The article, therefore, identifies the scenario of the internal migratory insurgent activities as the inappropriate state of affairs that requires urgent and more viable resolutions. Similarly, the three ideologies recommend transformation as the way forward. The conversionist ideology only recommends the transformation of the society via the people. The reformist ideology goes further to point out how this can be realized by noting the unusualness of the transformation element. It categorizes the element as “the supernaturally-given insight”. The utopian ideology particularizes these

supernaturally-given insights as divine principles and mechanisms which, here, are taken to be the Scripture. Thus, for this paper, the unusualness of the transformation element is the counterintuitive character of the strategy in view and its divineness is the theonomous aspect, the divinely orchestrated principles designed for Christians in the Scripture. Hence, the article reads Ephesians as a section of the Scripture which calls for an all-inclusive transformation. Consequent to this, therefore, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy in Ephesians is regarded as consisting of three techniques: the Perceptive, Reactive, and Prayer-Resistant techniques acronymically labelled as the “PRP-R” techniques. These are as follows:

4.1 The perceptive technique

The perceptive technique of theonomous counterintuitive strategy for countering migratory insurgent challenges has to do with discernment, and particularly, the Christians’ view of the migrant insurgents (the migrant Fulani herdsmen in more specific terms). In this section, emphasis will be placed on what these aspects of perception should be following the theonomous philosophy inscribed in Ephesians.

According to Ephesians, the Christian perception of the migrant insurgents (the Fulani herdsmen in particular) should be theonomous, the very way God perceives them. From the author’s narrative in the doctrinal section (chapters 1-3), before the salvation he wrought in Christ Jesus, God, from a standpoint, saw that the entire human race was “outside of Christ”. All human beings, once upon a time, existed “outside of Christ” in a monarchical atmosphere, the realm of a ruler and an abstract determinative force that paranormally sways his subjects to act in opposition to God and all that relate to him (2:1-3). While in their deadness and brutal enslavement in this realm, God perceived them as “helpless innocent slaves⁷ in need of redemption”, thus, he prehistorically proposed to save them (1:3-14) by the demonstration of his incomparably great power and the subjection of everything under the feet of Christ (1:19-20).

⁷This term is used here to refer to useful hard-working people who are being dominated and blindly forced to go the opposite direction and do the wrong things which they ought not to do (Rom. 7:14-24).

The author goes further in 2:4-8 to depict the lenses through which God perceived the human race in that depraved state: the lenses of love (2:4 and kindness in 2:7), mercy (2:4), and grace (2:5, 8). Love, mercy, and grace (along with others to be discussed subsequently) are, therefore, counterintuitive characters. Given that “mercy” and “love” in 2:4 both describe the character of God that occasioned his response to the deplorable condition of humanity (Thielman 2010:130, O’Brien 1999:164), it is logical to read the expressions, “πλούσιος ὢν ἐν ἐλέει, because he is rich in mercy” and “διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ, because of his great love”, as depicting the cause of his response contrary to the wrath of God which would have naturally been expected (Thielman 2010:132). Similarly, in 2:5 and 8, the author states that the salvation of those who were awaiting the full wrath of God is an outcome of his grace. This is another causal expression specifying another factor that caused God’s contrary-to-the-normal response (Arnold 2010:135-36). To Thielman (2010:141-42), the grace here does not only provide the foundation for the salvation, by the very way the author positions the term, grace, near the front of the clause, thereby giving it special emphasis, it can be said that it is the grace of God (the character which he demonstrated) that saved the people.

Furthermore, in the exhortative section, the author contrasts the current and the previous statuses of his readers and insistently instructs them that their present standing should be distinctive (4:17-24). His characterization of the Gentiles’ way of life here recalls and avidly elaborates their earlier categorization in 2:1-3. According to him, the activities of those who are outside of Christ (the contemporary Fulani insurgents, for example) are products of futile thinking, darkened understanding, and hardened hearts (4:17-19). By this, invariably, the author directs those who have become dearly beloved children of God (4:1) on how to view their previous life and those who are still in that camp. This describes the existence of the “Gentiles” under the influence of the world-rulers and abstract determinative forces of 1:19-20, 2:2, and 6:12. Consequently, for Thielman (2010:294), “... [They] are certainly culpable and pitiable ... They are suffering, but they are unaware ... their hopelessness has left them with nothing to live for but their greed. Their greed has, in turn, produced in them all kinds of bizarre behaviour”.

With this, therefore, Ephesians spells out the superlative way of perceiving those who exist outside of Christ and the roots of their activities. Situating this in the context of migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria with the Fulani herdsmen as a case of study, the Christians in the host communities should adopt this perceptive technique. Instead of identifying the insurgents in their communities as migrant “Fulani Herdsmen” who invade, destroy their property, and kill their loved ones, they should see them in the light of the characterizations above.⁸ They are really in need of help. Instead of responding to their malicious activities from their human instincts, the theonomous counterintuitive strategy should be adopted and the first technique is to perceive them the very way God does. The very way Christians perceive the insurgent Fulani herdsmen in their communities plays a significant role in their counterinsurgency efforts in the contemporary setting.

4.2 The reactive technique

The reactive technique of the theonomous counterintuitive strategy for defying migratory insurgent challenges has to do with response, and particularly, the most effectual approach of responding to these challenges. Contrary to the instinctive solutions highlighted above, Ephesians offers the reactive technique that constitutes the theonomous counterintuitive strategy. This technique predominantly involves the exhibition of the full Christian identity before, during and after any insurgent attack. This exhibition has three interrelated workings which are as follows.

The efficient effectuation of ecclesial graces

⁸It is worth mentioning here that the contemporary Fulani insurgents’ vicious treatment of Christians can be analogically compared with Saul of Tarsus who was a terror to the early church to the extent that he desired nothing short of tutoring Christians and, perhaps, stamping out Christianity in Jerusalem and environs (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2). In his ravaging and quest to destroy Christianity, God perceived him as a useful hard-working person who was being evilly dominated and blindly forced to go the opposite direction and do the wrong things which he was not supposed to do. Hence, he was converted and he became Paul, the greatest Apostle of in the history of the church. Such a view of the internal migratory Fulani herdsmen is recommended. The likelihood of some of them becoming like Paul should not be relegated.

The first is the efficient effectuation of ecclesial graces. Ephesians 4:7 declares that, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, each Christian has been given grace to be effectuated while in this life. The grace (gift or enablement) to evangelize (4:11), for instance, is given primarily for "... [the never-ending engagement] in the preaching of the gospel" (O'Brien 1999:299) to make the redemptive message known, especially to non-Christians (Arnold 2010:259, Thielman 2010:274) and win (gain) them over to the Christian faith (Hoehner 2002:543). To Ruth M. Melkonian-Hoover and Lyman A. Kellstedt (2019:3), "Activism-the commitment to spreading the 'Good News' through evangelism and missions" is central in the cardinal belief criteria that define evangelicalism and the Christian faith". The very unfortunate scenario in the contemporary church is that the grace of evangelism is being neglected. According to Audi (2019:190-93), up to the end of the twentieth century (prior to the year 2000), Christians in Nigeria conceived Muslim opposition as an inevitable challenge and persisted in their evangelistic efforts to win the Muslims over to the Christian faith. On the contrary, in less than a decade into the twenty-first century, Christians lost their previous evangelistic virtues and turned to worldly responses.⁹ Invariably, this paradigm shift has created a barrier for preaching to and converting the Muslims to the Christian faith. The counterintuitive logic here is this, with the right perception of the insurgents in their communities (as pointed out above), rather than going for any worldly way and against all other impulses, Christians are to resolve to make the redemptive message of Christ known to them. This is a working under the control of God and it has the potency of transforming the insurgents. In the opinion of the Institute for the Study of Insurgent Warfare (2014:10), the viable way of engaging and overcoming an enemy is not defined by the effort toward annihilating the enemy or destroying the enemy's property or belongings, it is rather defined by the strategy to make the enemy cease to be an enemy. The only basis for any insurgent to transform and cease to be an insurgent is for the insurgent to

⁹In quite specific terms, Audi states that the various ways the church is currently responding to insurgency in Nigeria are worldly. These ways include (1) the application of situational ethics rather than the true teachings of the Bible, (2) the postulation, adoption, and implementation of the theory of "Self-Defence", (3) the retaliatory or affront attacks against the identified enemies, (4) the practice of imprecatory prayers, (5) the impulse to appease the masses rather than God and his sovereign will, interest or pleasure, and (6) the return of many to fetish practices in search for powers to protect themselves (see the reference to Audi in the text).

enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ as this alone would guarantee the change in the way of thinking and behaviour of the insurgent (Arnold 2019:292-93). The efficient effectuation of ecclesial graces such as evangelism is a crucial technique in the realization of this transformation.

The act of living out the elevated status of the Christian

The second proaction in the reactive technique is the act of living out the elevated status of the Christian. Imageries portraying the status of the believer in Christ abound in Ephesians. For example, 5:1 designates believers in Christ as “τέκνα ἀγαπητά, beloved children” of God. Thielman (2010:321) observes that this designation goes back to their characterization as adopted children of God in 1:5 whom he chose to unconditionally show his rich mercy, great love, and abundant grace (2:4; 3:17, 19; 5:2, 25) and by virtue of their adoption, these characters should pattern their behaviours. Harold W. Hoehner (2002:196-97) expatiates that under the Roman law, the one adopted does not only become a bona fide member of the new family setting, the adoptee also inherits the *patria potestas*’ position (the absolute authority of the adopter) and acquires new status, privilege, and property not available under the former setting. In the context of Ephesians, Christians are the adoptees, the life outside of Christ under the dominion of the ruler of the Kingdom of the Air and the abstract determinative force in 2:2 is the former setting, and God is the adopter. The *patria potestas*’ position Christians inherit is the transcendent position along with Christ in the heavenly realms (2:6, cf. 1:20-22). Because of this new status, they acquire the privilege of being indwelt by the Triune God (2:22; 3:16-17; 1:14; 4:6), the privilege of the working of God’s power (the incomparably great power, 1:19) in them (3:16, 20; 4:7; 6:10), and the privilege of being fathered by God (2:18; 3:14; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23) whose characters are pacifying and emulative (1:2; 2:14-15, 17, 6:15, 23). Thus, according to Ephesians, Christians are required to live out the new status they have attained and the privileges they have acquired in their daily living and in every facet of their lives. An example might suffice here.

Paul’s missional or apostolic efforts in Acts 16:6-15 (his effectuation of the apostolic and evangelistic graces) very well illustrate this reactive technique. According to the narrator, the missionary team journeyed through the region of Asia Minor. Under the total guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were prevented from preaching the gospel in that region (16:6-8). This illustrates the

functioning of the Triune God dwelling, working, and filling them as indicated in Ephesians 1:14; 2:22; 3:16-17; 4:6; and 5:18. This also portrays the keenness of, especially, Apostle Paul and his total submission to the workings of the Triune God. Similarly, the phrase “they tried to enter Bithynia” (16:7) is understood here to depict Paul's impetus enrobed in his zealously to preach the gospel everywhere. It is worth noting here that the passion and zealously to preach the gospel are good qualities, but they can sometimes be directed wrongly when the human instinct (even the good impulse) is in control rather than the Holy Spirit. The praiseworthy thing here is that this missionary team submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit rather than their intuition.

Under that divine providence, they arrived at Philippi where they suffered brutal and unjust treatments (16:22-24), which illustrate the various unexpected insurgent predicaments contemporary Christians experience. According to the narrator, while in the prison, Paul and Silas were practically counterintuitive (16:25). Instinctively, Paul and Silas would have been discouraged, doubted the genuineness of their overall or present mission, or questioned God about his leadership and sovereignty following the disgrace of being stripped of their clothes and severely beaten in a public square. Instead of these and, perhaps, other forms of natural human response, they prayed and sang songs of praise to God. In the same vein, when the gates were turned open, instead of impulsively taking advantage to get out of the prison since, as would be assumed, that was an answered prayer, they remained. Furthermore, they showed the jailer that they were more interested in his safety than their freedom (16:27-28). These combined theonomous counterintuitive activities occasioned the transformation of the jailer and his household (16:30-34). It is interesting to note, the history of Paul's apostolic activities shows that theonomous counterintuitive performances attracted a variety of miracles. Although it was not absolutely a persecution-free endeavour, God ceaselessly proved that he is most powerful, wisest, and was in full control of all situations which he always topstitched for the good of his faithful servants and the glory of his pleasure. This is exactly what happened in Philippi. The ability of this missionary team to live out the ideal Christian life as specified in Ephesians caused the members of the team to establish Christianity in Philippi afterwards.

The concretization of the faith that extinguishes all the flaming arrows of the devil

The third and last proaction in the reactive technique is the concretization of the faith that extinguishes all the firing arrows of the devil (6:16). The subject of faith occurs eight times in Ephesians (1:15, 2:8, 3:12, 17, 4:5, 4:13, 6:16, and 6:23). In four of these uses (2:8, 3:12, 17, & 6:16), faith is portrayed as “the means or instrumentality by which the verbal action ... is accomplished” (Wallace 1996:125). In 6:16 particularly, it is the metaphorical shield reminiscent of the ancient Roman foot soldier’s buckler by which “all the flaming arrows (attacks) of the evil one” can be extinguished irrespective of their viciousness or deadliness. According to Clinton E. Arnold (2010:497,294), Satan, being the evil one here and the principal opposing leader ranges a variety of forces against the church to reassert his dominion over her members. He also aims at destroying them physically to hamper the redemptive mission of the church in the world. By way of inference, all the powers (physical or spiritual whether known or not) and structures responsible for the insurgent activities against Christians constitute this variety of forces in the contemporary setting. The killings and protracted destruction of Christians and their property as well as the inexpressible hardships attending those who survive any incidence form part of the flaming arrows. All of these are aimed at causing Christians to question the reality of Bible truths that relate to them and their lives here on earth.

Quite counterintuitively, instead of any instinctive reaction which would be the human otherwise customary thing to do, this portion of Ephesians instructs believers in Christ to simply apply faith to extinguish these blazing missiles. The nature of this faith and its application are very well illustrated by the episode in Daniel 3:1-30. This passage relates a contention between allegiance to God on the one hand and Nebuchadnezzar’s golden statue on the other. The entire scenario was otherworldly schemed to cause the three young Jews to subvert their allegiance to God. This supernatural scheme was executed by human beings and their stratified structures and it came with death consequence such as the furnace of blazing fire (3:15) for any form of repudiation. Vehemently disregarding the imminent death that was staring at them (the furnace of blazing fire), the three young Jews concretized their faith in God. They unreservedly expressed their unwillingness to succumb to the intent of the otherworldly scheme even if it meant dying (3:16-18). It is interesting to note,

for this article, the high point here is the resolute conviction (trust) in God, his character, and the truths in his word (the Bible) which these young Jews expressed. The concretization here is the movement beyond mere conjectural, theosophical, or superficial acclamations about God to the application of an irrevocable conviction rooted in God himself, his character, and his truths. It is by such an exhibition of faith that Ephesians 6:16 says believers can extinguish all the otherworldly schemes against them. The three young Jews could not escape being thrown into the burning furnace that was heated seven times hotter, but certainly, they were able to quench the scheme and its intention. In the end, like it was the case of Paul and Silas in Philippi, the young Jews were rewarded with an unprecedented miracle that brought glory to God (3:19-30).

4.3 The prayer and resistant technique

The prayer and resistant technique of the theonomous counterintuitive strategy for defying migratory insurgent challenges has to do with prayer and firm resistance.

The prayer technique

The subject of prayer is also given prominence in the epistle to the Ephesians. The author informs his audience of his heartfelt prayer for them in 1:15-23 and 3:14-21. These sections embody the contents and purpose of Christian prayer. The contents include thanksgiving and supplication for wisdom (or “insight into the true nature of things”, Hoehner 2002:256) and the adequate understanding of who God is, what his eternal purposes for believers are (1:16-23), and the magnitude of his love for them who believe (3:17-19). Other items of the supplication are God’s inner strengthening of believers (3:16) and Christ’s total filling of them to the measure of the fullness of God (3:17, 19). By implication, these are to form the core of believers’ prayers. Whether before, during, and after insurgency attacks, Christians ought to thank and supplicate for insight into the true nature of things, adequate understanding of God, his eternal purposes for them, his abundant love, God’s inner strengthening, and Christ’s total filling of them to the measure of the fullness of God. In the third and last section on prayer, 6:18-20, believers are instructed to deeply engage in praying at all times and the contents of the prayer in the earlier sections are, in another way, restated. It is worth stating here that believers’ victory over the strategies of the devil himself and all other evil powers does not rest only

in their putting on of the armour of God (Eph. 6:10-17), in addition to this, they need to “pray with constancy, devotion, and alertness” (Thielman 2010:432).

The incident in Daniel 6:1-28 very well illustrates the reality of prayer technique as a theonomous counterintuitive strategy. While in a foreign land, despite the reception and relative political opportunities he and his fellow young Jews enjoyed, Daniel understood the potential opposition they could experience given the differences in the religious settings. Thus, Daniel resolved to pray with constancy, devotion, and alertness. Earlier in the book, Daniel’s deep-rooted ideology regarding prayer and his devotion in it did not just provide a solution to King Nebuchadnezzar’s puzzling dream, it kept all the wise men in Babylon from being put to death (2:1-49). It is also obvious from 6:5-10 that the man Daniel did not cease from praying with constancy, devotion, and alertness. The narrative relates that even with Daniel’s constant and devoted prayers, the evil schematization against him was, in part, successful. He was thrown into the den of lions. It is interesting to note, God allowed this partial success for the greater good, the revelation of the mystery he had in stock which no one (including Daniel) knew about. The mystery is this, God allowed Daniel to be thrown into the den of lions to extinguish the flaming arrows hurled at him. To the scheming officials and the evil one behind their plots, by throwing Daniel into the lions’ den, both he and his religion were to be eliminated in Babylon. This, being their ultimate target, God did not allow. Rather, Daniel was protected from any harm, his God was glorified, his conviction was strengthened, and his religion was promoted (6:19-28).

Applying this to the migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria, it is worth stressing that though Christians may have to experience the partial success of the evil plans against them like the insurgent activities of the Fulani ethnic group, they ought to pray with constancy, devotion, and alertness and be all the more resilient. The contents of their fervent prayer should include hearty thankfulness to God, plea for wisdom amidst challenges, better understanding of God, his eternal purposes, and the magnitude of his love for them despite their ugly experiences. They should also deeply solicit for God’s inner strengthening and Christ’s total filling of their hearts to the measure of the fullness of God. Like the case of Daniel, the ultimate goal of the devil will be quenched. The use of the future middle indicative of $\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\alpha\iota$ in Ephesians 6:16 (Larkin 2009:161; Hoehner 2002:847) gives this assurance (Merkle 2016:468).

The resistant technique

In the warfare metaphorical depiction of the Christian life (6:10-18), the epistle stresses the need for believers in Christ to stand firm in their daily living. The idea of standing firm is insistently depicted in 6:11, 13-14 as an obligatory element of Christian living. This refers to the virtue of unwaveringly maintaining one's position amid and against all the strategies of the devil (Thielman 2010:419, Hoehner 2002:823). In the other New Testament passages, this virtue is tagged endurance (Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:11; James 5:11; and 1 Pet. 2:19), or perseverance (Rom. 2:7; Eph. 6:18; 2 Thess. 1:4; and 2 Pet. 1:6). "To persevere' in the original Greek language *hypomenein* (preposition *hypo* and verb *menein*) means to remain ... to be firm ... to bear, to wait ..." and the same idea "is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew" *qawah*, *yahal*, and *hakah* (Adiwardana 2010:174).

To Samuel E. Balentine (2015:16-23), this can be called patience and the man Job is a biblical archetype of this virtue. According to him, patience is the ability to subject one's emotions and motivations. It is a resolute standing against powerful and life-threatening adversaries and adversities. Such a resolute stand is not a passive response to these adversaries and adversities, it is rather rooted in a decisive refusal to submit to the pressures of the adversaries and adversities being fully aware that such will be attended with grievous losses, and perhaps (though definitely not entirely), even dying in the process. This sort of resistant technique (patience or perseverance) does not only run "counter to the contemporary culture" (Adiwardana 2015:173), it runs counter to the world's wisdom and intelligence. It is counterintuitive and profoundly rewarding. Remarkably, Job's patience (resistance, endurance or perseverance) was rewarded in the long run (42:7-17). If the adversary (1:9-11; 2:4-5) initially conceived that Job was going to become impatient due to the terrible effect of the adversities and, as a result, his allegiance and devotion to God would be dented, to his dismay, his intent and expectations were unsuccessful. The narrative recurrently states that amid all the adversities, Job did not waver nor sin against God (1:22; 2:10).

Christians in the history of the church also experienced dynamic challenges. The earliest disciples in Acts of the Apostles severally faced difficult times from the Jewish religious leaders and the government. According to Earle E. Cairns (1998:90-94), the persecution started by Nero in the latter part of the first

century lingered and kept increasing in form and intensity up to 250 AD when it assumed a universal status till 305 AD. The earlier disciples and church fathers suffered martyrdom during the different stages of this persecution. Despite this, Christianity kept growing in number and strength. Cairns notes further that “The rapid spread of Christianity, even during the periods of heaviest persecution, proved that indeed the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church” and this was the reward of Christians’ perseverance. On the contrary, Philip Jenkins (2008:97-98) observes that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in much of Africa, Asian and the Middle East, due to lack of perseverance which cannot be detached from certain nominally inclined factors and human intuition, very many professing Christians converted to Islam. Perseverance, together with the other counterintuitive techniques described above, is the most reliable solution to the highest severity of the worst situation that ever confronted and can confront believers in Christ anytime and anywhere. If apart from the revelation of God, his works, his eternal love for humankind and the salvation through Christ, the eternal glory in the hereafter, “the aim of the Scriptures is to promote *hypomone* [the Greek for perseverance] ...” (Adiwardana 2010:178), then perseverance ought to be given a topmost priority by every Christian. The cultivation of perseverance is, thus, not optional for Christians.

Conclusion

Migration is an ageless phenomenon and is an integral part of human existence. It is, however, being attended by a variety of challenges. In Nigeria, the Fulani migration to the Middle Belt and southern states, in particular, comes along with different horrendous adversities on the Christian host communities as a result of the migrants’ insurgent activities. These insurgent activities and all forms of adversities are aimed at destroying Christianity in Nigeria, but, quite significantly, the outcome, in the long run, depends exclusively on the decisions reached by Christians both individually or collectively. The choices are between the normal human instinctive response(s) and the theonomous counterintuitive approach. Since, historically, the former has essentially exhibited serious lack of the potency to bring about lasting solution, the latter, as difficult and unintelligent as it may seem in the view of the world, suffices to be a panacea to the contemporary migratory insurgent challenges in Nigeria and beyond.

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The Impact of Ecotheological Training of Faith Leaders in Mitigating Ecological Degradation in the Global South: A Nigerian Perspective

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Abstract

Faith leaders, as trusted opinion leaders, can play a strategic role in influencing community members towards mitigating ecological degradation. Prior debates on the religious contribution to the ecological crisis have not adequately explored the effects of intentional training of faith-leaders for combating developmental and ecological challenges. The varying degrees of commitment to creation care observable among the faith leaders underline the need for, and impact of, the intentional training of faith leaders. This paper seeks to address this need. We argue that intentional *ecotheological* training of faith leaders will enable them to be more effective influencers on ecological and sustainability issues. This will equip them to appropriately engage in creating ecological awareness within the community, thereby translating to mitigation of environmental degradation.

1. Introduction

Ecological degradation is one of the six categories of global challenges that the sustainable development goals seek to address and reduce to the minimal level possible by year 2030. This enormous task of preserving the planet earth from degradation includes "sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations" (United

Nations 2016). Previous studies have significantly approached the global environmental crisis in response to the degradation in the environment and climate change as well as approaches for mitigating the ecological hazards in the context of ecotheology, a discipline that began in the mid-twentieth century (Mante 2004, Nihinlola 2013, Faniran 2014, Asiedu-Amoako 2014). These majorly African voices were in addition to the numerous explorations of the subject from scientific and anthropocentric perspectives that have dominated the discourse (Anselm 2006, Kortetmaki 2013, Samuelsson 2013).

While the relationship between religion and global challenges or faith and development has been established (Shehu and Molyneux-Hodgson 2014; Abu-Sayem 2019), prior debates on the religious contribution to the ecological crisis have not adequately explored the effect of intentional training of faith-leaders for combating development and ecological challenges. This paper addresses this gap in knowledge. We argue that faith-leaders, as trusted opinion leaders, can play a strategic role in influencing community members towards mitigating ecological degradation. Hence, this research is entrenched in theories of faith leadership and ecotheology. *Ecotheology*, a term coined from ecology and theology, is “a reflection on different facets of theology in as much as they take their bearings from cultural concerns about the environment and humanity’s relationship with the natural world” (Deane-Drummond 2008:x). It aims at equipping Christian groups (and by inference faith leaders) by enabling them to link environmental issues with theology towards engaging them in practical environmental projects (Deane-Drummond 2008). The study thus discusses the concept of ecological degradation in the Global South; it explores the role and significance of faith leaders as trusted opinion leaders; it presents their current awareness and efforts in mitigating ecological degradation in the community, nation and the world at large; and it highlights how their intentional training would foster their accomplishment.

2. Ecological degradation in the Global South

This section focuses on the concept of ecology and ecological degradation, which poses sustainability challenges to the Global South with emphasis on Africa. The concept of ecology has been generally known as the inter-relationship of human beings with other living species in the environment as well as the interaction of living things with one another and other elements in

their immediate environment. The term was reportedly coined in 1873, but largely employed by Lynn White (Yamauchi 1980:193-202). According to Gnanakan, “ecology is the scientific study of the interactions between biotic and abiotic organisms and their environment. Biotic refers to the living and abiotic to the non-living components of an ecosystem” (2004:17). Ecology is often used synonymously with ecosystem, a self-sustaining system formed by the interaction of individual organisms with each other and with other components of the environment. It could be a living environment, a tropical forest, a lake, a field or a whole range of physical and biological conditions that surround human beings (Gnanakan 2004:16-17, Faniran 2013:119).

The earth environment embodies the interaction of four major components, namely lithosphere – the solid, rocky crust covering the entire globe; and atmosphere – the body of air which surrounds the planet and unseen gases or objects; it also includes the hydrosphere – a body of water masses such as the oceans (representing about 97 percent of it) as well as rivers, lakes and moisture in the air; the fourth component is known as biosphere – referring to all living organisms and embodies a network of plants, non-human animals and human beings (Faniran 2013:119). A theology of interdependence among these four components of the ecological sphere has also been explored (Oloyede 2018:111-114).

The rigorous engagement of ecological study can be traced to Lynn White, whose address in 1966 (published in 1967) recognized the arrogant attitude of Christians to their environment. This arrogant attitude is due to the wrong interpretation of the biblical dominion mandate which has been identified as the historical roots of the ecological crisis (White Jr 1967, Santmire 2014). White’s identification of science and technology in the nineteenth century as a source of ecological crisis, which was not as sophisticated as this twenty-first century scenario, was quite apt, but the largely religious nature is really contentious. While the dominion misinterpretation is a feasible cause of global degradation, White did not directly associate the arrogance with the Fall of Humankind, which resulted in depravity of the human mind and disharmony with nature among other consequences. Contemporary realities and empirical investigation have however indicated that unwholesome human dispositions are fundamental factors responsible for issues of ecological degradation in the African context. These unwholesome human dispositions include self-

centeredness, greed and power hunger, ecological ignorance and illiteracy, and lackadaisical attitude among others (Oloyede 2020:248).

The African environment is apparently blessed with resources in the hydrosphere and biosphere components, which potentially provide a better chance of sustainability among other countries in the Global South. It is however pathetic to note that the continent is largely rated poor, underdeveloped, less developed or developing. A large percentage was regarded as third world countries (fourth or fifth world countries in some reclassifications) which refer to economical and ecologically bankruptcy (Eriksen 2015:3). These are few of the descriptions of the Global South which consist of non-western or developing countries that are faced with social, political and economic challenges such as poverty, environmental degradation, human and civil rights abuses, displacement of refugees, hunger and disease. The Global South thus consists of nations of Africa, central and Latin America and most Asia (Mingate 2015:8).

Ecological degradation in the world has been classified into seven categories due to the complexity of the phenomenon. The first category is the alteration of the earth's energy exchange occasioned by human and industrial activities, as well as soil and land degradation, which is the focus of Bahnsen and Wirzba (2012). The second category is the approach to and extent of consumption. Waste and ecosystem dysfunction forms the third. Land conversion and habitat destruction, species extinction, global toxification and human and cultural abuse are the other four categories identified by DeWitt (2011:41-54).

There are three major sources of environmental degradation, which are categorised as human activities, industrialisation and globalisation that is influenced by man, science and technology. The different forms of pollution arising from the sources have also contributed to global climate change, also known as global warming (Carter 2016:1-3, Moo and White 2014:54-79). There are also waste problems and exploitation of natural resources leading to land degradation and extinction of species. The wideness and spread of these groupings of ecological degradation are apparent in the African daily newspapers and on the internet.

There is an interconnection among the sources of degradation. For instance, refuse accumulation and household wastes contribute to land pollution and air

pollution especially through burning. Common examples of air pollution in some parts of Africa include excessive emission of carbon monoxide from generating plants or automobiles and locating poultry or piggery farming in residential area. These are somewhat informed or influenced by poor maintenance culture and the poverty of resources or ideas to site the business in secluded or reserved farming areas. Loss of forests, overuse of land, water pollution leading to death of aquatic species and loss of species are other environmental problems leading to or aggravating poverty of Africans and their resources. The use of chemicals in pesticides such as DDT for securing plant crops from destruction is also causing cancers, birth defects and infertility (Kinoti, 2006:616).

Improper waste disposal in drainages is largely responsible for flooding and erosion in many cases on the African soil. This is in tandem with the recent alarm of impending flood disaster in Lagos, Ogun and other neighbouring states in Nigeria by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The agency predicted a high volume of rainfall in September 2019 and inevitable flood with the failure of the state governments to expand the drainage both in urban and rural areas since “the drainage has been filled up with refuse and other waste” (Bosun, 2019:1).

The different categories of pollutions in the African society are indications of the mismanagement of the environment. This is in consonance with Ogedegbe who identified and discussed indiscriminate burning and release of toxic substances, poor disposal of refuse, poor sewage disposal, poor defecation habits, improper disposal of animal, chemical and industrial wastes, dumping of refuse in drainages, streams and rivers, bush burning and poor personal hygiene as ways of environmental pollutions (2010:287-301). Ban (2019) also observed that the heaps of thrash, polythene products and uncollected garbage in some parts of Ghana necessitated the government spending huge sum of money on waste management (309-325).

In 2019, a survey on the awareness of ecological challenges in Africa among 32 faith leaders in training found that they consider refuse/waste accumulation, as well as forms of land pollution arising from oil spillage and other pollutants as the two prevalent causes and examples of ecological degradation in the Global South. The respondents, drawn from four theological institutions and eight churches spread across four states of Oyo, Ogun, Lagos and Kwara in

Nigeria,¹ indicate high level of awareness (approximately 72 percent) of these ecological concerns in their neighbourhood. Air and noise pollution from generators in religious centres and industries with flooding, erosion and overpopulation were also identified as significant ecological problems ranging from 15.63 to 37.5 percent awareness. All the respondents in the survey were variously concerned about the ecological challenges, probably due to their exposure to the theology of creation and environment (Oloyede 2020:228).

An aggregate of 75 percent of the respondents affirms that the Church as an institution, which consist of individual Christians in the body of Christ, contribute largely to many of the ecological problems in the contemporary environment. These include, but is not limited to, noise pollution from church auditoriums, air and land pollution as a result of indiscriminate dumping of refuse and waste accumulation within and around the church locality. While these opinions seem to concur partly with White's speculation about religious arrogance cum misconception of dominion as a cause of ecological crisis, which has now become global and more sophisticated, there can be no significant and long-lasting impact without the role of faith leaders.

3. Faith Leaders as trusted opinion leaders

It has been established that 84% of the world's population identifies with one religious group or the other (The Guardian 27 Aug 2018). Global development challenges, such as ecological degradation, bother on the values of people and values are usually rooted in faith (Seiple 2016). Considering the rootedness of values in faith, the role of faith (in that of faith leaders, by extension) in tackling global challenges is becoming more and more prominent. The World Economic Forum affirms that "faith plays a dynamic and evolving role in society" and that people of faith ... have profound impacts on community mobilizing for both productive and damaging purposes" (www.weforum.org). Some have even identified faith communities as the third partner (on par with government and business organizations) in tackling global crises (Warren, Stuff and Odendaal

¹ These are the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso, Baptist College of Theology Oyo, Baptist College of Theology Lagos, LIFE Theological Seminary Abeokuta Ogun State. The eight churches are basically from Ibadan, Oyo, Ogbomoso and Ilorin situated in Oyo and Kwara States of Nigeria.

2012). Faith communities take this prominent place because they have a strong network at the grass-root, national and international levels; they have a large volunteer labour force to tackle the development challenge on the globe; they have an enduring history of tried and tested cultural integrity; and they have the capacity of inspiring and motivating the populace for a change of lifestyle (Woodhead and Jackelen 2016; Warren, Stuff and Odendaal 2012).

Consequent upon the role of faith in development as discussed above, faith leaders have a significant role to play in generating awareness and shaping the attitude of community members on environmental sustainability. According to Humaid (2020), “faith leaders are in a uniquely positive position to bring about behavioural change through their teachings and actions” (www.weforum.org). This assertion reiterates the significant role of faith leaders in community education. Seen as opinion leaders with influential roles within, and sometimes beyond, their faith communities, faith leaders enjoy the trust of their followers and “exercise moral authority over members of their local faith community, and shape public opinion in the broader community and even at the national or international level” (UNHCR 2014:2). It is therefore imperative to pay close attention to the training of the faith leaders towards effective utilization of the potentials of the faith community towards driving and supporting development agenda.

4. Assessing the training of faith leaders for ecological issues

The foregoing role of faith leaders in the community affirms their indispensable role as a significant other for influencing their religious followers while tackling and alleviating ecological problems. Based on this background, a group of 20 faith leaders, consisting of 5 theological educators and 15 field ministers, 5 female and 15 male, from the southern and northern parts of Nigeria and Ivory Coast were selected for a survey. A structured interview guide, meant to find out their awareness of, training for and efforts on alleviating ecological degradation was administered to the faith leaders whose previous training span across ten theological institutions and 8 denominational backgrounds. These were intentionally chosen because if they are adequately exposed to ecotheology and equipped to link faith and development, they will embark on environmental projects and influence their community to do so.

4.1 Awareness of ecological crisis

The faith leaders are relatively familiar with prevalent ecological hazards in their neighbourhood which largely reflect the nature of degradation in the African context. However, their awareness of indiscriminate dumping of refuse and household wastes, flooding and erosion, overgrazing, air pollution from bush burning, generators and vehicles as well as land pollution could be regarded as average. The extent of awareness and understanding of ecological problems fundamentally lacks the integrated dimension of these human activities leading to global warming and climate change – being one of the 17 SDGs in the ecological degradation classification. This implies that inadequate equipping of faith leaders will limit their effectiveness in imparting the community for alleviation of environmental degradation to a large extent.

Five factors were identified as prominent causes of ecological degradation by these African faith leaders who are recognized as church, community and opinion leaders in their spheres of influence. While human attitude rated first among the causes identified, ecological illiteracy incidentally comes fifth in the ranking of their responses to the causes of ecological degradation. Poor town planning and management, noise pollution (from religious and economic centres) and overpopulation rank second, third and fourth among the causes of degradation. The five identified causes which can be appropriately subsumed in poverty understood from a holistic perspective (Osawe 2012) also resonate with previous studies on the resultant effect of poverty on ecological degradation, which religion and religious leaders have not given adequate attention to (Murekezi, 2004; Nwagbara et al 2010, Milek and Nel 2010). Faith leaders, therefore, need not only tackle material poverty but also spiritual, aspiration, identity and civic poverty in order to effectively help their followers from their spiritual capital deficiency, ecological illiteracy, identity crisis and ignorance of fundamental rights to life and good environment.

4.2 Training for ecological sustainability

The training and literacy of faith leaders on the need for ecological conservation and sustainability with the basic knowledge of ecological crisis were also investigated in this study. The survey found out that only 55 percent of the faith leaders have been exposed to ecological issues in their previous theological education. Their equipping for environmental awareness and revitalization was also limited to only portions of certain courses namely

Systematic Theology, Christian Worship, Bible Geography, Christian Ethics, Church and society and Theology of Providence. This ecological content reflects intentional training on the part of the course facilitators who understand the critical importance of the subject in ministerial training. This must have been informed by the exposure of the theological educators who had participated in conferences and workshops organized by institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations and other relevant bodies.

The contribution of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary (NBTS), Ogbomoso, Nigeria to environmental awareness and community development since 2000 is quite significant and worthy of mention. This has been enhanced by their collaboration with the Sacred Earth Ministry (SEM) and International Council for Higher Education (ICHE) for two decades, the two religious bodies were founded and coordinated by professionals from various disciplines like Geography, Urban and Regional Planning, Environmental Studies, and Theological Education within and outside the African continent.

Further investigation into the preparation of the selected faith leaders for sustainable development indicates that 65 percent have attended at least one or more academic or security conferences, workshops, practicum, community development programmes or local government orientation aimed at addressing ecological degradation, earth conservation or restoration of the ecosystem. NBTS presents a *minimester* course titled Theology of Creation and Environment annually to equip church leaders and students who are future leaders. SEM organises biennial conferences while ICHE coordinates also textbook writing project and workshops on ecological stewardship among other related topics. Friends of the Earth was another organization that provided environmental literacy for these trusted opinion leaders who have little or no access to government campaigns or support on the alleviation of environmental hazards.

4.3 Efforts in alleviating ecological degradation

The need for more intentional training of current and future faith leaders through formal and informal contexts cannot be overemphasized in order to make remarkable progress towards the achievement of the SDGs related to ecological sustainability by year 2030. All the respondents affirmed that faith leaders can influence their community members and shape their attitude towards creation care. This affirmation, however, did not translate to

commensurate action among the field ministers as only 20% of them engaged in ecological awareness at least once in a year; 53.3%, once in 2 years; and 26.7% never did. Meanwhile, the theological educators, who have received explicit training on environmental issues, are more committed with 80% of them engaging in ecological awareness at least once in a year and the remaining 20%, at least once in 2 years.

5. Highlighting the impact of trained faith leaders on ecological degradation

Perceived as the most trusted members of their communities, faith leaders occupy a strategic position to more effectively influence their community members toward mitigating ecological degradation. Prior debates on religious contribution to the ecological crisis have not adequately explored the effect of intentional training of faith-leaders for combating development challenges. This paper addresses this gap in knowledge.

Though the cumulative level of ecological awareness of faith leaders and their attendance of relevant workshops and conferences is rather below average, their exposure and training at the NBTS and other platforms provided basic impetus to actively engage in the mitigation of ecological degradation in their environment. Their teaching and preaching efforts entail creating awareness of the hazards of ecological creation, enlightening church members on ecology as part of God's gifts that require stewardship responsibility and leading them to engage in environmental care.

While these actions are not regular and intensive enough, the faith leaders have also advocated for inclusion of relevant course in the curriculum of the seminary to abate their ecological ignorance. They also suggested the translation of ecological theory in classroom environment to *practicals* whereby future leaders in training are asked to lead and report ecological campaigns for healthy environment. They also requested for greater promotion of environmental care through workshops and seminars, and intentional training of faith leaders to be involved in creation care both of which will ultimately foster their concerted efforts. Since their good perception of ecological issue have not translated remarkably to expected actions by faith leaders, it is evident that intentional training will equip them to take concerted

efforts towards mitigating the challenges of ecological degradation first with their exemplary leadership as opinion leaders, followed by motivation and encouragement of followers to detest activities that contribute to degradation while consciously and conscientiously pursuing environmental sustainability. These will gradually and ultimately reduce the ecological hazards in the immediate environment, the nation at large and the Global South.

6. Recommendations and Conclusions

This study has shown that faith leaders have a significant role to play in generating awareness and shaping the attitude of community members on environmental sustainability. The strategic position of faith leaders as the most trusted members of their communities can effectively influence their community members toward mitigating ecological degradation. Establishing the relationship between faith and development, and the role of faith leadership in combating development challenges, we assert that intentional training of faith leaders will enable them to be more effective influencers on ecological and sustainability issues. The findings underline the need for, and impact of, intentional training of faith leaders. This will equip them to appropriately engage in creating ecological awareness within the community thereby translating to mitigation of environmental degradation.

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Experience of Integrated Learning Among Theological Students in Jos Metropolis and Environs

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Abstract

Teaching and learning in institutions established by Christians generally reflect the fragmented approach to education that has for long characterized Western education, such that faith and learning are splintered because of dualism which advocates separation of Church and State, subjects are taught as if they are independent of other subjects and often as if they are unrelated to life, thus missing out the connectivity that makes learning meaningful and useful. Consequently, both in Church and secular life Christians often seem unable to apply biblical knowledge to solving life's problems. In the belief that integrated learning, which is gaining recognition globally, can improve the application of knowledge to life to increase productivity and meaningful living among Christians, these researchers investigated the extent to which theological students in Jos and its environs in Nigeria may be experiencing integrated learning, using a descriptive survey method. The research found that integrated learning takes place randomly but without cognitive recognition among the students, and recommends more intentional description and application of its principles in teaching and learning in theological institutions, so that there might be greater evidence of integration of learning in both spiritual and secular life among Christians.

Introduction

The quality of theological training Christian leaders receive, which is likely to be influenced by the dominant approaches to teaching and learning used in

theological institutions, may determine the way leaders respond to prevailing challenges facing churches. Thus Boer's (2009:49) claims may be relevant that Nigerian Christians' "dualistic inheritance" leads them "to make false secular demands of neutrality and objectivity." Christians fail to bring their faith to bear on constitutional debates, which Muslims insist on doing, though their integration of faith and politics fails to cater for things like injustice against women and non-Muslims. Boer believes dualism, which leads to a fragmented view of faith and secular life, has weakened Christianity in facing the Islamic challenge. Moreover, Christians often confuse their arguments against government interference in religious affairs by often making demands in the name of equity for governmental support for religious programs like going on pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem like the Muslims are getting to go to Mecca. Christian demands seem like a double-faced attitude that contradicts their calls for "neutrality." Of course, when it appears obvious that Northern Nigerian governments show no inclination to ever divorce governance from religion, Christians probably feel forced to shift ground from total separation of church and state to ask for what seems fairer – government intervention in Christian affairs like pilgrimage.

Stereotypical responses

Furthermore, because of their fragmented thinking about faith and secular life, Christians seem confused about the real and often violent persecutions they face from Muslims, and easily resort to stereotypes and conspiracy theories in attempting to describe or explain their harrowing experiences. For example, the cover story of *Today's Challenge*, a leading Christian magazine, volume 10, number 3 of June 2016 cites the Federal Government of Nigeria's implementation of the religious education curriculum as "another Islamization ruse in disguise," without acknowledging that the said policy was formulated between 2009 and 2010, when the Nigerian President, the Minister of Education and the Director of the National Education Reform Council were all Christians. Christians fail to account for the failure of fellow Christians in positions of authority to "protect" Christian religious education from interference, but rather serve as tools of such interference (Ango 2019:65). This suggests that the dualistic foundation of Christian thought in Nigeria, probably embedded in theological education, negatively affects their ability to

formulate effective strategies to respond to the Islamic challenge. Integrated education would therefore help Nigerian Christians to grapple with what Fernandez (2017:xvii) calls, “The reality of our highly globalized and religiously diverse global village” which “calls for a serious, respectful, thoughtful and creative response to the issue of religious diversity ... in accord with our faith convictions.” As Hess (2017:38) puts it, “In the context of theological education, a school that explicitly affirms its openness to engaging ‘the neighbour’” needs to teach both explicitly and implicitly that living in the 21st century means living in a multi-faith world. Christian dualistic education makes this difficult.

Failures of the Church

Other evidences of the negative results of the fragmented view of life resulting from Christian dualistic education include the many thinly veiled accusations by Christian scholars of failure of the Church to look after both the spiritual and social needs of her members (Shyllon 2000:43), failure to be productive in order to cater for poor members and non-members of the Church (Sowa 2000:16), “the extensive corruption, looting, greed and avarice that has overwhelmed the socio-economic life of many Christians,” (Dafwang, 2016: 92, 93, and 142). and failure of the Church to totally do away with prejudicial attitudes towards refugees of different faiths (Kemdirim 2000:53). Not only that, the Church has often been accused of an inadequate response to pandemics like HIV and AIDS (Atowoju 2010:128), which can also be said today of the Church’s response to Covid 19; a response that is filled with false prophecies, conspiracy theories and a lackadaisical attitude to safety procedures.

What is more, commenting on environmental challenges, Faniran (2017:47) laments that “participating in an eco-justice future has yet to become important enough to most theological educators, parish pastors, or denominational leaders” and that “Few schools offer more than a couple of elective courses while barely becoming publicly engaged.” On his own part, Asomoah-Gyadu (2019:25) observes that Christians’ “belief in God as creator has not necessarily translated into stewardship of creation.”

All the above instances of poor Christian response to various issues of life point to the inadequacy of the dualistic education of Christian leaders. Mworsho (2017:60-61) argues for education that is “empowering, transforming, engaging students in life’s issues and resulting in service to humanity and the world in general,” through “practical strategies that arise from real community challenges and problems” (p.69). In the same vein, Ango and Rutoro (2020:148) propose “an African education system... (which) will value not only sustainable development and the development of critical skills but ...also nurture honesty, integrity and a God-fearing spirit,” through teaching that will inspire students “to live for greater purposes, combining academic and community mindedness and engaging both the intellect and spirit of the students” (p.150). The writers of this article see the above challenges and proposals as strong motivation to look at what has been called integrated education.

Integrated education

One of the most vocal advocates of integrated education is Ken Gnanakan, whose argument in favour of integration is premised on the postulation that “modern education has been disintegrated to the extent that students do not see connections to real life.” Moreover, “Disciplines such as language, mathematics, science, and religion are all taught separately with no interaction between the concepts” (2007:82-3). This is not a rejection of the need for specialization for the sake of efficiency, but a concern that without ensuring that interconnections are realized, the purposes of the individual disciplines for life easily get lost. Elucidating on his concerns, Gnanakan (2007:13) argues that educational systems in Asia and Africa depend on the disintegrated systems that have prevailed in the West, whose usefulness is being questioned today.

Gnanakan goes on to define integration as “making connections between elements that must be held together in order for their meaning to be explored,” such that “various components of education – the subjects, teacher, classroom, student and real life, etc. – are held together” (2007:18). He cites a strongly related word, holism, which refers to the “theory that parts of any whole cannot exist nor be understood except within their relation to

the whole” (p.19). The justification for pursuing integration is further posited by Gnanakan (2011:25):

The integrated curriculum and the learning experiences that are planned accordingly, not only provide the learners with a unified view of all that he/she is learning, but also motivates and develops the learner’s ability to apply this learning to newer studies, models and systems. Everything learned becomes a tool for further learning and the integration into real life.

Importance of integrated education

The importance of integrated education is therefore that it deliberately shows the interconnections between educational disciplines, and enables intentional interaction among various educational approaches, as well as among specialists in different fields of education. It also enhances understanding of the meaning of each discipline and its relation to life as a whole. This would lead to the development of more thoughtful persons who go through the educational process and most likely increase their creativity and productivity.

Integration in Christian education

The concept of integration, both in purpose and methods of education, has also been much implied in Christian education. For instance, Pazmino (1992:119) sees the need to pursue the implications of the contents of education for the lives of students through dialogue and interaction. The purpose is to ensure connections between orthodoxy (right doctrine) and orthopraxis (right living). Again, Rick and Shera Melick advocate for adult education the working together of knowledge, choices, and power (2010:98). Moreover, Ango (2012:67), while citing Ezra’s integration of learning, doing and teaching God’s word (Ez.7:10), and lamenting that universities and seminaries still teach in a fragmented manner, advocates that “faith, culture and learning should remain integrated,” and that “the Christian teacher should be familiar with technological developments and its application to effective teaching in an integrated manner.” On his own part, Obaje (2012:257-8) alludes to integration in asserting that “Christian education is holistic in nature,” and “covers all areas of life and it takes into consideration all subjects

of enquiry and disciplines of study” (p.263). Furthermore, Janvier (2018:204) calls for integration in theological education:

Students in Bible Colleges and Seminaries are on the way to full time ministry and need to be equipped for the task. The equipping includes outstanding teaching of information and knowledge as a foundation for other learning tasks...includes a godly example of the spiritual life in prayer and love towards God. It includes the development of skills through good teaching, prayer, experiential learning, and the development of competencies for ministry.

The question begged by these indications of attitudes towards integration in education in general, and theological education in particular, is whether students in theological institutions in Nigeria experience these tendencies towards integration, or if they are familiar with the concept of integration at all, or whether integration is intentionally and explicitly used in theological education.

The value of an explicit integrated approach to education

The importance of defining and prescribing integrated education intentionally and explicitly is so that it may be consciously pursued. This might possibly lead to a situation where, “once interdisciplinary connections are made, learners begin to ... creatively explore all kinds of interrelationships,” thus “breaking boundaries and building bridges that can revolutionize their experiential learning process” (Gnanakan 2007:83). Moreover, “true integration will prepare men and women who value education as preparing them for life itself, not just for a livelihood” (Gnanakan 2007:24). It is especially valuable for Christian education, considering Edlin’s statement that

Christian schooling has as its goal the nurturing and equipping of all young people as they respond in faith to Jesus Christ to live as hope-filled, God-enthroning ambassadors in every aspect of life and culture (including promoting justice, being concerned for the outcast, seeking peace, caring for the environment, creating machines, structures and symbols that improve society) (2014: 49).

Edlin captures the essence of integrated education, which will be greatly enhanced by the use of methods that appeal to the head, heart and hands for ministerial training.

Evidences for the efficacy of explicit integrated approaches to education

Many scholars have undertaken research and found results that provide evidence for explicit integrated education. For instance, Neihaus et al, (2017), observing that “educators are failing to fully capitalize on students’ in-classroom and out-of-classroom experiences to promote integrative learning” (p.2), researched service-based alternative breaks (in which students go on short trips to render social services to communities) among students and found “a great deal of evidence that integrative learning was happening before, during and after participants’ alternative breaks” (p.17). This indicates that theological institutions, for instance, could observe how students on intentional service trips to surrounding communities integrate aspects of their theological education in their service activities as a means of developing methods to help students use integration even more deliberately. Moreover, Drake and Reid (2018) carried out extensive reviews of research on integrated curriculum and report that “curriculum integration offers an effective way to teach ... 21st century capabilities” including critical thinking, creative thinking, citizenship, character development, and communication because they “transcend disciplines” as well as “maintain, and possibly boost, academic achievement” (p.25). This implies that theological institutions may deliberately use methods like team teaching or symposia, during which training for specific character or spiritual or ministerial formation could take place, while endeavouring to see how the various participating disciplines work together to form the desired character. Drake and Reid also report that “students experiencing integrated approaches do as well as, or better than, students in traditional classrooms in academic systems” (p.37, citing Aiken 1941, Barr et al, 2015, Drake et al, 2015, and Yoon et al, 2014). Drake and Reid further claim that “students who experience the integration of socio-emotional learning improve their academic scores” (p.37, citing Vega, 2012). This means it should be possible to research if integrated learning may improve the performance of students in theological institutions, especially in relation to spiritual and ministerial formation.

Literature is, in fact, being developed to help teachers make use of integrated approaches effectively. For example, the Professional Development Service of Teachers (PDST) of Dublin (2017) developed a manual entitled *An Integrated Approach to Learning, Teaching and Assessment*, which contains “practical examples of how teachers can use differentiated active learning methodologies, inquiry-based approaches to learning and on-going assessment to enhance the key skills of literacy, numeracy and working with others” (p.4). A study of what kind of integrated learning goes on in theological institutions may help one to suggest what type of tools may be required to strengthen or improve such integrated learning.

Research design

It is our belief that pastors, teachers, missionaries and church leaders or administrators need integrated education to impact the church for effective spirituality and societal transformation in the areas of response to poverty, diseases and conflicts. Such skills are also needed if Christians are to be better influenced to both preach the Gospel and to engage in fruitful dialogue towards peace with people of other faiths. We therefore embarked on a survey of final-year, first-degree students in 4 theological institutions in Jos metropolis and environs, including Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS), Jos; Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Bukuru; Gindiri Theological Seminary (GTS), Gindiri; and Lagos, Western and Northern Area Seminary (LAWNA), Jos. We administered an 11-item questionnaire to 30 students, randomly selected at each of JETS, TCNN, and GTS; and 10 students who were the only ones available at LAWNA, totalling 100. We considered them to have encountered most of the learning experiences an undergraduate student would be exposed to in a theological institution, and adequately representative of the final-year students of the selected institutions. Our aim was to find out how much of their experiences may be described directly or indirectly as integrated education. The questionnaire contained the following questions:

1. How many of your teachers in the theological institution help you to see the connection between each course they teach and other courses offered in the institution?

- A. All the teachers
 - B. Many of the teachers
 - C. Few of the teachers
 - D. None of the teachers
2. The lectures you receive in the theological institution mostly demonstrate the application of each subject of lecture to life and ministry.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Disagree
 - D. Strongly disagree
3. After concepts are discussed in the classroom, teachers in the theological institution often give you opportunities to go out and see the concepts as they are in real life and report back.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Disagree
 - D. Strongly disagree.
4. The teaching you receive in the theological institution often leads you to have information about the subject, passionate love for the subject and ability to practice the subject at the same time.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Disagree
 - D. Strongly disagree.
5. How many teachers combine lecturing while you listen, free interaction among students, and practical exercises in helping you to learn?
- A. All of the teachers
 - B. Many of the teachers
 - C. A few teachers
 - D. None of the teachers.
6. How often have you heard the term “Integrated Learning” during your theological education?
- A. Very often
 - B. Often

- C. Not often
 - D. Not at all.
7. Write in one short sentence (10 to 15 words) your personal definition of “Integrated Learning” if you have any. If not, say you do not have any.
 8. In which course(s) do you remember hearing about integrated learning? (Please, name the course, or list the courses if more than one).
 9. Mention one way you remember that integrated learning was demonstrated in your experience of theological education. If you do not remember, say so.
 10. You came about your understanding of integrated learning through
 - A. Interaction with lecturers
 - B. Personal study
 - C. Interaction with students
 - D. None of the above.
 11. How often have you participated in a conference, workshop or seminar in which integrated learning is the main theme?
 - A. Very often
 - B. Often
 - C. Not often
 - D. Not at all.

The responses were analysed using simple percentages. The responses to the open-ended questions 7 to 9 were sorted and summarized into general themes for the purpose of tabulation and analysis.

Experience of Integrated Education among theological students in Jos Metropolis and environs

Question 1: Number of teachers who show connection between disciplines

Institution	All Teachers		Many Teachers		Few Teachers		No Teachers		No Response		Total	
TCNN	5	16.7%	7	23%	16	53%	1	3%	1	3%	30	100%

JETS	3	10%	14	46.7%	13	43%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
GTS	12	40%	15	50%	3	10%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
LAWNA	1	10%	6	60%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%
Total	21	21%	42	42%	35	35%	1	1%	1	1%	100	100%

Table 1 shows that most respondents believe many teachers show connection between disciplines, with LAWNA having the highest percentage in this regard and only respondents in TCNN mostly saying few teachers show such connection. JETS also has many students saying few teachers show connection between disciplines. Theological students in Jos metropolis and environs appear to generally experience some inter-disciplinary connections in their lectures, though some of the bigger institutions have a noticeable percentage of teachers who may not provide such experience in their teaching.

Question 2: Demonstration by teachers of each subject's connection to life and ministry

Institution	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response		Total	
TCNN	10	33%	16	53%	2	6.7%	2	6.7%	0	0%	30	100%
JETS	11	36.7%	15	50%	4	13%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
GTS	15	50%	12	40%	3	10%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
LAWNA	6	60%	4	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%
Total	42	42%	47	47%	9	9%	2	2%	0	0%	100	100%

Table 2 shows that most respondents agree that most teachers, without institutional exception, show connections between their subjects and life. The overall percentages are higher at GTS and LAWNA, the smaller institutions, indicating a higher though insignificant negative trend in the larger institutions.

Apparently, theological students in Jos metropolis and environs are generally helped by their teachers to experience interconnections between what they learn and life.

Question 3: Opportunities are given to go out and see concepts discussed in real life

Institution	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response		Total	
TCNN	7	23%	14	46.7%	7	23%	1	3%	1	3%	30	100%
JETS	7	23%	15	50%	8	26.7%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
GTS	7	23%	16	53%	1	3%	6	20%	0	0%	30	100%
LAWNA	1	10%	6	60%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%
Total	22	22%	52	52%	19	19%	7	7%	1	1%	100	100%

In Table 3, most respondents, without institutional exception, agree that teachers give them opportunities to see examples in real life of what they discuss in class. There is apparently a significant level of integration to life in the educational experiences of theological students in Jos metropolis and environs, though the indications appear higher in the smaller institutions. The lower percentages in the bigger institutions indicate that not all teachers are aware of or inclined to pursue deliberate integration in teaching and learning.

Question 4: Teaching of each subject leads to information, passion and action

Institution	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response		Total	
TCNN	10	33%	15	50%	3	10%	1	3%	1	3%	30	100%
JETS	13	43%	17	56.7%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
GTS	15	50%	12	40%	2	6.7%	1	3%	0	0%	30	100%

LAWNA	8	80%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%
Total	46	46%	46	46%	5	5%	2	2%	1	1%	100	100%

In Table 4, most respondents, without institutional exception, agree that their teachers help them to experience information, passion and action in their courses. There appears to be integration of the three domains of learning, cognitive, affective and psychomotor, in the experiences of theological students in Jos metropolis and environs, more so in the smaller than the larger institutions. The data does not make it explicit, but a few teachers may be neglecting to address all the domains of learning.

Question 5: Number of lecturers that combine lecturing with free interaction and practical exercises

Institution	All Teachers		Many Teachers		Few Teachers		No Teachers		No Response		Total	
TCNN	4	13%	6	20%	20	66.7%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
JETS	8	26.7%	12	40%	10	33%	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%
GTS	8	26.7%	10	33%	11	36.7%	0	0%	1	3%	30	100%
LAWNA	3	30%	4	40%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%
Total	23	23^	32	32%	44	44%	0	0%	1	1%	100	100%

While most students in TCNN and GTS, according to Table 5, think only few teachers combine lecturing, interaction and practical exercises, most students in JETS and LAWNA think many teachers do such combination. There appears to be a fair amount of integration of approaches to teaching and learning in the experiences of some theological students in Jos metropolis and environs, but there seems to be noticeable absence of such experiences among some other students.

Question 6: How often the term “Integrated Learning” heard by students

Institution	Very Often		Often		Not Often		Not at All		No Response		Total	
TCNN	2	6.7%	1	36.7%	1	36.7%	6	20%	0	0%	30	100%
JETS	1	40%	1	43%	3	10%	2	6.7%	0	0%	30	100%
GTS	7	23%	1	40%	1	33%	1	3%	0	0%	30	100%
LAWNA	0	0%	0	0%	3	30%	6	60%	1	10%	10	100%
Total	2	21%	3	36%	2	27%	1	15%	1	1%	10	100%

According to Table 6, majority of students in JETS and GTS claim to hear the expression “integrated learning” often in class, while students in TCNN seem evenly split between those who often hear the expression and those who do not; but majority of students in LAWNA say they do not hear the expression at all. Integrated learning seems to be used in some institutions as an explicit term but not in others. It implies that integrated education as a teaching strategy may be used either only randomly, or by some other name in many institutions.

Question 7: A personal definition of “Integrated Learning.”

Institution	Holistic Education		Life Applied		Interaction		Learning Process		No Response		Total	
JETS	5	16.7%	6	20%	2	6.7%	1	3%	16	53%	30	100%
TCNN	5	16.7%	3	10%	2	6.7%	1	3%	19	63%	30	100%
GTS	8	26.7%	6	20%	1	3%	0	0%	15	50%	30	100%

LAWNA	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	9	90%	10	100%
Total	19	19%	15	15%	5	5%	2	2%	59	59%	100	100%

While in Table 7, the few students, not higher than 20% in any institution, who offered a personal definition of integrated learning related it to either holistic education or life-related education, majority, not less than 50% in GTS and up to 90% in LAWNA offered no personal definition of integrated learning. This seems to confirm the analysis of responses to question 6 that integrated education may either be used only randomly or by another name in theological institutions. It implies that even where integrated learning takes place, the students are not consciously aware of what is taking place, or have no name for the experience even if they are aware of it.

Question 8: Courses in which integrated learning was recalled as mentioned.

Institution	Social Science	Education		Mission		History		Religion		Administration		No Response		Total		
JETS	4	13%	9	30%	4	13%	3	10%	11	36.7%	0	0%	12	40%	30	100%
TCNN	4	13%	7	23%	3	10%	0	0%	9	30%	1	3%	16	53%	30	100%
GTS	6	20%	7	23%	1	3%	0	0%	4	13%	1	3%	12	40%	30	100%
LAWNA	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	30%	0	0%	8	80%	10	100%

Total	14	14%	23	23%	8	8%	3	3%	27	27%	2	2%	48	48%	100	100%
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Whereas, according to Table 8, most students who mentioned subjects in which they recalled hearing the expression “integrated learning” mentioned courses in Education and Religion, majority of the students, not less than 40% each in JETS and GTS and up to 80% in LAWNA, did not recall any subject in which they heard “integrated learning” mentioned. The use of the expression “integrated learning” does not seem to have had significant impact on the knowledge of theological students in Jos metropolis and environs. This may yet be because the integrated approach to education goes mostly under another name or only randomly. There may be no deliberate policy or intention to follow integration as a concept in teaching and learning. This means that integrated learning often takes place subconsciously, probably due to proximity of experiences of different aspects of life among teachers and students, which naturally manifest themselves in teaching, not counting out those teachers who may point out such interconnections of disciplines and life from time to time, even if randomly.

Question 9: One-way integrated learning was demonstrated

Institution	Interfaith Dialogue	Field Trip		Leadership		Interaction		Preaching or Teaching		No Response		Total		
JETS	1	3%	4	13%	2	6.7%	2	6.7%	1	3%	20	66.7%	30	100%
TCNN	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	4	13%	26	86.7%	30	100%
GTS	0	0%	2	6.7%	0	0%	0	0%	2	6.7%	26	86%	30	100%
LAWNA	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%	10	100%
Total	1	1%	7	7%	2	2%	2	2%	7	7%	82	82%	100	100%

The overwhelming majority of students in all the institutions, according to Table 9, not less than 66.7% in JETS and 100% in LAWNA, could not cite a way in which “integrated learning” was demonstrated in class, while very few mentioned interfaith dialogues, field trips, leadership, interaction, and preaching or teaching. It appears most theological students in Jos metropolis experience integrated learning in their studies without being able to describe how it occurs, most likely because it is an unfamiliar term, even when integration happens. It again strongly points to a lack of deliberate use of the integrated approach to teaching and learning, even when it occurs. Perhaps in its use, whenever it is done, the impact on the students’ understanding of the process or importance of integration remains weak beyond mere proficiency in each discipline.

Question 10: How student came about understanding of integrated learning

Institution	Interaction with Teachers		Personal Study		Interaction with Students		None of the Above		No Response		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
TCNN	12	40%	5	16.7%	7	23%	6	20%	0	0%	30	100%
JETS	15	50%	3	10%	7	23%	3	10%	2	6.7%	30	100%
GTS	17	56.7%	5	16.7%	6	20%	2	6.7%	0	0%	30	100%
LAWNA	2	20%	1	10%	0	0%	7	70%	0	0%	10	100%
Total	46	46%	14	14%	20	20%	18	18%	2	2%	100	100%

Except in LAWNA where 70% of the students neither learnt about integrated learning through interaction with teachers, nor personal studies, nor interaction with other students, according to Table 10, majority of students in all the other institutions, learnt about integrated learning through interaction with teachers. Teachers seem to be the most significant factors in any knowledge about integrated learning that theological students in Jos metropolis and environs may have. Such teachers may however have been few, and may not have made adequate efforts to lead students to an understanding of the term itself, nor the process it takes, nor the importance it has in life and ministry.

Question 11: Frequency of Conferences, Seminars and Workshops on Integrated Learning attended

Institution	Very Often	Often	Not Often	Not at All	No Response	Total

TCNN	1	3%	3	10%	12	40%	12	40%	2	6.7%	30	100%
JETS	2	6.7%	12	40%	5	16.7%	11	36.7%	0	0%	30	100%
GTS	6	20%	3	10%	12	40%	9	30%	0	0%	30	100%
LAWNA	0	0%	1	10%	2	20%	6	60%	1	10%	10	100%
Total	9	9%	19	19%	31	31%	38	38%	3	3%	100	100%

While 40% of students in JETS say they often attend conferences in which integrated learning is mentioned, while 36.7 do not attend at all according to Table 11, in TCNN 40% say they do not often attend such conferences or seminars and 40% say they do not attend at all. In GTS 40% not often attend and 30% do not attend at all. In LAWNA 60% do not attend at all. Apparently, most theological students in Jos metropolis and environs get little or no exposure to the concept of integrated learning through seminars or conferences. This does not tell us how often the students participate in conferences as such, nor how many such conferences have anything to do with integrated teaching and learning.

Inferences

It is apparent that activities in teaching and learning that support integrated education are going on in theological institutions in Jos metropolis and environs, and theological students generally acknowledge these activities. This implies that the students of theological institutions will easily benefit from deliberate, intentional use of integrated teaching and learning approaches. If used in interfaith dialogue, ministry to the poor, the sick and the displaced due to conflict, integrated education has the potential of being a very effective tool, in view of its demonstrable effectiveness in other research cited in the literature.

However, this research shows that the use of the expression “integrated learning or education” seems to be at best random and not deliberate or emphatic. Moreover, theological students do not seem to be getting any training in the use of integrated teaching and learning approaches for future

use in the teaching aspects of their ministry. This is indicated by their lack of significant recollection of the use of the expression in specific learning activities, as well as their lack of significant participation in seminars or conferences dedicated to integrated learning. It also implies that they lack adequate skills in integrating their education with the various issues of life, in spite of their apparent recognition of efforts to integrate courses to life in their educational experiences. It appears such experiences do not have significant impact on their understanding of ministry. The reason for this may be that the teachers themselves may only be randomly applying integrated ideas that seem naturally obvious in the recognizable relatedness of some disciplines and their use in real life situations. It is not because the teachers have been trained or come with a deliberate intention to use integrated approaches to teaching and learning in their interaction with students. Obviously, there is no demonstrable uniformity in the way teachers in the theological institutions surveyed convey the sense of integration among students, perhaps due to variations in the institutions' contexts and philosophies.

These may be contributory factors to the reasons why the Church continues to be weakened by dualistic thinking in response to the challenges posed by the integrated approach of Islam to national issues. It may explain why the Church continues to resort to stereotypical conspiracy theories rather than empirically verifiable presentations of their experiences of perceived persecution by Muslims. It may at least partly explain why the Church continues to be found wanting by researchers in the areas of responses to pandemics, poverty and victims of conflicts.

Recommendations

In view of the experience of activities that seem to hint at integration by theological students in Jos metropolis and environs, the introduction of the concept and intentional use of integrated teaching and learning approaches will not be difficult in those institutions. Theological institutions are therefore encouraged to introduce intentional, rather than random, integrated learning and teaching. All teachers should be required to demonstrate familiarity with and willingness to use integrated learning approaches among other teaching

methods as part of the process of selecting them to teach in theological institutions.

Departments of education in theological institutions should be mandated to carry out orientations, short courses, seminars and workshops among faculty and students on the meaning, usefulness and processes of integrated teaching and learning. The already existing experiences of teaching and learning activities that encourage integrated experiences should be used as foundations for the orientations and other introductory activities on integrated teaching and learning.

Students of theological institutions should be encouraged to intentionally observe integration in their learning activities, with a view to making use of their observations and experiences to enhance their own ministerial impact in the field. They should be exposed to literature on integrated education as part of their ministerial preparation, and encouraged to practice the principles learned. It should be intentionally made clear that integrated learning is not only useful in helping students to understand the applicability of various disciplines to life, but that they need the same approach in ministering to the needs of church members, especially in training them for holistic development.

Deliberate and explicit integration of the learning of competencies of hospitality to persons of other faiths beyond theoretical discussion of inter faith dialogue, integration of holistic ministry for imparting development skills in ministering to the poor beyond mere lectures on holistic ministry, and deliberate integration of competencies for responding to pandemics and displacement due to conflicts beyond mere rhetorical discussions in class, should be part of theological education.

Mechanisms should be set in place to research and document the impact of the intentional, as compared to random, use of integrated approaches to teaching and learning. The findings of such research would serve for the long-term development of teaching and learning approaches in theological education.

Conclusion

The impression that has existed among advocates of integrated education, that the fragmented approach to education inherited from the West is still predominant in the educational systems in the Majority World countries today, has not been fully supported by this research. This is because most respondents seem to observe integrative activities in their theological educational experiences. This is a strong indication that the fragmented educational systems have begun to be modified with telling effects. This may also be because at least some teachers observe and, even if only randomly, use obvious interconnectivity among disciplines, in delivering some of their teaching. However, the trend in the intentional, rather than random, use of integrated educational approaches, supported by reviewed literature and now being adopted by some Western countries, may not yet be taking hold in the Majority World countries, as indicated by our research. It may be beneficial to the future ministries of students of theological education if theological institutions begin to take advantage of the benefits of deliberately defining, describing and utilizing integrated educational approaches to enhance the performances and future impact of theological students.

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The Eschatological Reign of Christ as an Objective for Missions

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Abstract

There has been much dispute about the millennial reign of Christ, yet Jesus spoke as if the kingdom of God was among his listeners and thus also among us, rather than in the distant future. If the kingdom reign of Christ is now in our world, what implications then should this have on missions? We examine the background and approach to missions in the various eschatological perspectives, namely, (1) postmillennialism, (2) premillennialism, and (3) amillennialism to discover how each of these views approaches the call to missions. A study of Luke 17:20-21 reveals the present reality of Christ's kingdom. This paper has three methodological steps, the first is an exploration of history and historical theology for three of the primary eschatological views, the second is a biblical study from Luke 17:20-21, and the third makes a proposal for the objective for missions, grounded in the findings of this research project, namely that mission has an eschatological focus, and more specifically that the amillennial view forms one of the best foundations to proclaim the kingdom of God, which is imperative for a full-bodied praxis for missions.

Introduction

To my knowledge there is little scholarship on eschatology from a Christian African perspective. I, Robert Falconer, ventured some contributions: (1) A section at the end of my doctoral dissertation under, "Africa's Socio-Renewal and Cosmic Harmony" (2013:255–269), and (2) my book chapter in "God and Creation", titled, "A Vision of Eschatological-Environmental Renewal:

Responding to an African Ecological Ethic” (2019:119–142). There is also a helpful chapter at the end of Prof. Samuel Kunhiyop’s (2012:209-247) book, “African Christian Theology”. While Kunhiyop was my supervisor, our eschatological perspectives and approaches are different. This journal article does not address African Christian eschatology specifically, but we consider it a response to some of the experiences we had while being missionaries in East Africa. The theme of Christ’s kingdom reign has a global relevance, including for Africa.

Eschatology has always been a vital component of the Christian faith, shaping our hope for the future and informing our praxis. This is especially true for missiology. With this in mind, we aim in this paper to determine the mission of the church in dialogue with the main eschatological views on the reign of Christ and his kingdom. Christianity has traditionally classified the different perspectives of the millennial reign of Christ in the following: (1) postmillennialism, (2) premillennialism, and (3) amillennialism (Waldron 2003:13-16). Each perspective also has its own set of variations which inevitably make the study of eschatology rather complicated. Historic premillennialism and amillennialism seem to be present in the church’s infancy. Naturally, adherence to both these perspectives has argued that their view first dominated early Christian theology¹. While some Christians still hold to historic premillennialism, this discussion will also include dispensational and progressive premillennialist perspectives, as well as postmillennialism and amillennialism. These discussions will offer an overview of the reign of Christ and are not intended to be exhaustive².

Catherine Falconer has been involved in missions in Africa, notably in South Sudan and Kenya, for many years and discovered that missionaries had little understanding of eschatology and the kingdom of God. We argue, along with

¹ For a detailed discussion on the early eschatological perspectives and its development, cf. Allison (2011:684-88); Horton (2011:923-25); Kelly (1968:459-74).

² For more on: historic premillennialism, cf. Blomberg (2009); dispensational premillennialism, cf. Blaising and Bock (2000); Ryrie (1966); Vlach (2017); amillennialism, cf. Storms (2013); Riddlebarger (2013); Waldron (2003); and for postmillennialism, cf. Boettner (1991); Mathison (1999); Wilson (2008).

Bosch (1980:121), that a better understanding of the salient points may have a greater impact on missions.

We have chosen to focus our Biblical study on Luke 17:20-21 in the fourth section of this paper because it defines the eschatological approach in the context of the kingdom of God and missions. Missions, eschatology, and the kingdom of God are woven throughout the Old and New Testaments, and some of these passages will be referred to throughout this paper. In the OT, mission begins with God being the first missionary with his eschatological objective to bring the nations to Jerusalem to worship him (Bosch 1991:19). God made his first missional covenant with Abraham. He proclaimed that in Abraham's offspring all nations would be blessed (Gen 22:18). Later, God sent several prophets to foreign nations, for example, he sent Jonah to Nineveh, Elijah was sent to a widow in Sidon (1 Kings 17:8-24), and Elisha to Naaman, a commander of a Syrian army (2 Kings 5), and not to mention the exilic prophets. The Synoptic Gospels begin with the family line of Jesus, which includes a hand full of Gentiles (e.g. Rahab and Ruth). God had a missional heart for Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth because they desired him above other gods. It is, therefore, clear that God's missional mandate was often cross-cultural long before Jesus gave the disciples the great commission. We concur with Wright (1996:243) when he said, "God is in the business of turning enemies into friends." Jew or Gentile, God desires that all may be saved.

In our last discussion, we will focus on Jesus's kingdom reign as an objective for missions. Missions exist because there is a present eschatological reality *and* a future hope, and so one might say, "*mission is eschatological action*".

The millennial reign of Christ: postmillennial perspective

The postmillennialist argues that the second coming of Christ occurs after the millennium, the one-thousand-year reign of Christ (Boettner 1991:14). It is said that the kingdom of God is currently being extended into the world through the preaching of the gospel together with the work of the Holy Spirit (Storms 2013:368; Ps 2:6-9, 22:27-28, 102:15, 138:4-5). The aim is to eventually Christianize the world. Once this Christianization has effectively taken place, Jesus Christ will return. This second coming will include a long period of righteousness and peace before the eternal state. Waldron (2003:16) explains

that postmillennialists propose that the millennium will be an age where the Church's mission will be to reach all nations and that as nations are converted there will be a "golden age of spiritual and material blessing." Wilson (2008:10) adds that as more people are converted to Christianity the 'Great Commission' will eventually be completed and then the end³ will come. Gentry (2020:1-2) defends postmillennialism as a historically optimistic view versus other eschatological schools of thought. Although all the eschatological schools are in agreement about the ultimate victory of God in eternity, the other views are somewhat pessimistic. Gentry (2020:5) argues that postmillennialism is the only eschatological view that maintains an optimistic hope for this current age before Christ returns. They teach that Jesus Christ established his kingdom in the first century as a spiritual redemptive reality. As the gospel is proclaimed and believed, Christianity will grow over time until it becomes a dominating influence. The fruit of the kingdom's growth will result in peace, righteousness, and prosperity.

Several historical events encouraged the flourishing of the postmillennial perspective. First, the amillennialism of the early church took on a triumphalist expression at the time of the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great (AD 272-337), looking more like modern-day postmillennialism. Understandably, with Constantine's conversion to Christianity, it brought about a shift in eschatological focus from early amillennialism to postmillennialism (Horton 2011:923-24). Second, in the Middle Ages, the Crusades and its military response to Islamic threats enthused eschatological hopes, not to mention natural disasters, famines, and the bubonic plague which intensified eschatological expectations (Allison 2011:688-89). Third, the American revivalist preacher and philosopher, Jonathan Edwards, during the Great Awakening encouraged missions and the advancement of God's kingdom based upon his postmillennial theology. Edwards advocated the great advancement of God's kingdom in the world and the belief that, as the kingdom is extended through the world, there would be prosperity in the last days. Once the church had achieved its mission of extending God's kingdom,

³ By 'end' we do not mean 'the end of the world', or its annihilation, but the end of 'this present age', cf. Falconer (2019:119-42).

peace and prosperity would rule, and the world could finally be given to Christ (Edwards 1834b:2:285).⁴

Puritans, like Thomas Brightman, John Cotton, and John Owen embraced this postmillennialist view earlier than Edwards. They, together with Edwards, believed that as missionaries were sent out with the gospel, God's kingdom would expand; there would be peace and prosperity for a time and then Christ would return to judge the world after the millennium (Allison 2011:693).

Riddlebarger explained that during the post-reformation era, postmillennialism seemed right, especially considering the circumstances of Cromwell's commonwealth and then the technological growth and advancement in 1870-1915. Unfortunately, this set the stage for unrealistic hopes, placing the responsibility in the hands of the Church to bring peace for Christ to return. When the circumstances changed with World War I and the Great Depression, postmillennialism was no longer popular. Hope turned to pessimism and the stage was set for dispensational premillennialism in the modern era (Riddlebarger 2013:37-39).

For the postmillennialist, evangelism and missions are the church's effort and preparation for the second coming of Christ – so it seems.

The millennial reign of Christ: premillennial perspective

Papias of Hierapolis (c. 60 – c. 130 AD) was the first Apostolic Father to promote premillennialism (Allison 2011:685; Holmes 2007a:722-23). This was called chiliasm (millennialism) at that time and for centuries after.⁵ It is analogous to historic premillennialism. The understanding was that the millennium is a literal period in which Christ will reign on earth in a kind of a golden age before the final judgment. The response to Papias's ideas in *Fragments of Papias*, fragment 3, verses 11-13 (Papias 2007:739) are not complimentary. Neither is fragment 5, verse 4 (Papias 2007:743), which states that Papias is in "error regarding the millennium" and so was the Apostolic

⁴ For a sample of Edward's postmillennial eschatology, cf. Edwards (1834:278-315).

⁵ Cf. Augustine (2009:649).

Father, Irenaeus, who followed his teaching.⁶ According to Jenkins (2020) who has high regard for the writings of Papias, it is surprising that he was not “recalled as a pivotal Church Father.” He highlights that Papias envisioned Christ’s literal and material millennial kingdom and reign on earth. In addition Jenkins (2020) believes that based on Papias’s writings he may have been reflecting views widely held in the church at that time, and notes that Papias was labelled a heretic and by the fourth century, Eusebius dismissed him as “a bumbler of small intelligence”. Unlike dispensational⁷ premillennial theology, the distinction between Israel and the Church is absent in the historic premillennialism of the early church. For them the “Church is the true and New Israel”, and neither did it fathom the unusual secret rapture theory of latter dispensationalism (Blaising and Bock 2000:22-23; Storms 2013:173; Waldron 2003:14-15). Dispensational premillennial theology was a later development from historic premillennial theology⁸ (Blaising and Bock 2000:22).

There are primarily 3 forms of dispensational premillennial theology today. According to Blaising and Bock, they are (1) classical dispensationalism, (2) revised dispensationalism, and (3) progressive dispensationalism.⁹ Dispensational premillennial theology is diverse rather than monolithic (Blaising and Bock 2000:18, 30-32). Dispensationalism began in Britain in the early 1800s among the Plymouth Brethren. John Nelson Darby, an influential

⁶ καὶ Παπίας δὲ περὶ τὴ χιλιονταετηρίδα σφάλλεται, ἐξ οὗ καὶ ὁ Εἰρηναῖος (Frag. 5:4). I credit my colleague, David Woods, for pointing me to Eusebius’s *Church History*, ch. 39 where he discusses *The Writings of Papias* (Eusebius 2014). Here Eusebius seems to offer a more positive response to Papias.

⁷ The word, dispensation, refers to the special way in which God arranges his relationship with humanity. Identifying various dispensations in Scripture, for example, the dispensation of Israel with its laws and ceremonies, and the dispensation of the Christian church. This has been universally common in biblical interpretation (Blaising and Bock 2000:15).

⁸ Nevertheless, Ryrie is emphatic that evidence is available demonstrating that that dispensational concepts existed in the early church as well as throughout her history. He then goes on to provide examples (Ryrie 1966:90; cf. Walvoord 1983:6). For example, Justin Martyr (2014:ch. 80; cf. Kelly 1968:466).

⁹ Progressive dispensationalism is a contemporary form of dispensational theology which is said to be a biblical response to the emphases and concerns of classical dispensationalism, and offers numerous changes to both classical and revised dispensationalism, thus arguably bringing “dispensationalism closer to contemporary evangelical biblical interpretation.” (Blaising and Bock 2000:30-32; cf. Weber 2009).

leader from the Plymouth Brethren promoted and systematized dispensationalism (Ryrie 1966:99). His writings, along with others, enjoyed a wide readership and tremendous impact on evangelicalism, notably in the United States of America. The writings influenced the theology of D.L. Moody, C.I. Scofield,¹⁰ and others (Blaising and Bock 2000:14).¹¹

Dispensationalism has been taught in varying degrees in several reputable American seminaries, for example, Grace Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Denver Seminary, The Master's Seminary, and Dallas Theological Seminary.

Despite dispensationalism in academia, dispensational premillennialism has also had a remarkable influence on pop culture, evident in works like Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* (Lindsey 1970), and Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins's *Left Behind series* (LaHaye and Jenkins 1995).¹² These together with other literary works and films often synthesis "their views of the future with well-organized right-wing and pro-Israel political action" (Weber 2009:26).

Further, dispensationalists encouraged the founding of mission organizations and have also actively participated in them. They have founded the Central American Mission; founded by Scofield, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Navigators, Youth For Christ, and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, not to

¹⁰ Scofield produced the famous *Scofield Reference Bible* loaded with expositional and theological annotations creating a system of biblical interpretation that promoted dispensationalism (Blaising and Bock 2000:15).

¹¹ Dissidents against dispensationalism argue that, "Dispensationalism was formulated by one of the nineteenth-century separatist movements, the Plymouth Brethren." They conclude that because dispensationalism is recent it is surely unorthodox. Further, since it was birthed out of a separatist movement it ought to be discredited. However, Ryrie reflects on these arguments and explains that dispensationalists do recognise that their system was primarily formulated by Darby, but they also recognise that dispensationalist concepts are to be found in Scripture and early Christianity (Ryrie 1966:88). While this may be true in part, in our view, it seems that the weight of Scripture and Christian tradition uphold a different eschatological perspective promoted later in this paper.

¹² For a critical response cf. Middleton (2014:302); Riddlebarger (2013:41, 133, 145, 169, 189 and 273-74); Storms (2013:9, 13, 48-49); Wright (2001).

mention the evangelistic endeavours of Billy Graham who held to dispensational views (Blaising and Bock 2000:16-18; cf. Storms 2013:48-49).

Dispensational premillennial theology is generally systemized by the following dispensations according to Ryrie: (1) Innocency (Gen 1:3-3:6), (2) Conscience (Gen 3:7-8:14), (3) Civil Government (Gen 8:15-11:9), (4) Patriarchal Rule (Gen 11:10-Ex 18:27), (5) Mosaic Law (Ex 19:1-Acts 1:26), (6) Grace (Acts 2:1-Rev 19:21), (7) Millennium (Rev 20:1-15)¹³ (Ryrie 1966:78). The last dispensation is most relevant for this study. Premillennialists place the second coming before the millennium – the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth – and take a literal interpretation of Revelation 20 (Ryrie 1966:78; Walvoord 1983:6). Contrary to the Fragments of Papias mentioned above, Weber (2009:27–28) argues that “Most early Christians interpreted Revelation 20 quite literally and expected a millennial age following Christ’s return.”

There is also the “clear and consistent distinction between Israel and the church” in dispensationalism (Ryrie 1966:277). For pretribulation dispensationalism, this plays an important role, because a distinction between Israel and the church¹⁴ implies that the church will be removed from the earth before the tribulation. This concept is known as the rapture and is a dominant feature of classic dispensational premillennialism (Blaising and Bock 2000:27, 30; Ryrie 1966:78, 228).¹⁵

Practically, premillennialism has also influenced the faith missions movement and has “shaped the identity and missiological approach of evangelicalism” (Campos 2009:260). Mission sponsors and missionaries were convinced of the urgency to spread the gospel before Christ’s second coming (Blaising and Bock 2000:24; Campos 2009:261). Unfortunately, as Campos (2009:262)¹⁶ explains, in Latin America, between 1900 and 1930, this affected missiology and praxis whereby social concerns were avoided having become suspect. Such an attitude was informed by Matthew 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom will

¹³ There are a number of variations and Ryrie provides a number of other ‘representative dispensational schemes’ developed by others (Ryrie 1966:105).

¹⁴ Cf. Blaising and Bock (2000:383).

¹⁵ Cf. Vlach (2017); Walvoord (1983).

¹⁶ Campos writes from a Latin American perspective, but we believe that his observations apply to other parts of the world too, where premillennialism is promoted.

be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (ESV). Evangelism and missions are, therefore, of urgent and prime importance to usher in the kingdom of God. Its establishment is dependent upon our gospel preaching as the church seeks to “transition from mission to kingdom.” (Campos 2009:265-66).

Speaking from the perspective of Latin America – but is no doubt evident in other parts of the world as experienced by ourselves while being missionaries in Kenya – Campos tells of how the emphasis on individual spirituality and transformation in dispensational evangelicalism has led to a disregard for social context and involvement.¹⁷ This missiological approach is, however, changing, but the focus of mission to “prepare for the coming of the Lord to establish his ‘future’ kingdom” is still very much evident (Campos 2009:267, 269-70). As Norberto Saracco (cited in Campos 2009:269) has said, dispensationalist theology has given us a gospel without a kingdom!

On the other hand, the more recent progressive dispensationalism has offered more holistic missiology (Blaising and Bock 2000:387; Campos 2009:279). Campos (2009:280) explains that in this system “an already inaugurated messianic kingdom” is accepted, and while it expects a millennial reign of Christ and the final consummation, it offers “a concept of holistic redemption and a similar understanding of the nature of the church and its mission, reflecting the present aspect of the messianic kingdom”.

The millennial reign of Christ: amillennial perspective

The term amillennialism was not recognized until recently. Before then, amillennialists would have called themselves postmillennial. Although they believed that Jesus would return after the millennial age, they were different from traditional postmillennialists because they did not hold to a literal 1000-year earthly reign of Christ to come (Riddlebarger 2013:39-40; cf. Storms 2013:549-52). Nevertheless, the amillennial eschatological perspective has been the predominant eschatological view of Christianity since Augustine (Riddlebarger 2013:40; Horton 2011:924), if not, before him, as we propose.

¹⁷ Obviously, there are always exceptions.

The “present millennial age manifests in the present reign of Jesus Christ in heaven,” according to amillennialism (Riddlebarger 2013:40). And “the promises made to Israel, David, and Abraham in the Old Testament are fulfilled by Jesus Christ and his church during this present age”¹⁸ (Riddlebarger 2013:40; cf. Storms 2013:553-54).

Amillennialists argue that the millennium is the age between the first and second advents of Christ, the 1000-years in Revelation 20 being symbolic of this entire age (Grudem 1994:1111-12). Christ triumphantly bound Satan at his death and resurrection; the effects of which are evident in the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel and kingdom of God. At present, Satan is not free to deceive all nations (Rev 20:3). John did not say that Satan is bound and is no longer able to persecute Christians, to the contrary, he is still a roaring lion (1 Peter. 5:8) devouring believing men and women and he continues to concoct schemes to disrupt church unity (2 Cor 2:11), but he can no longer deceive the nations. Jesus Christ currently reigns in heaven during this millennial age. At the end of this age, however, some amillennialists believe that Satan will be released bringing about great apostasy, leading up to the general resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the final judgment, and the renewal of creation, almost as one explosive event (Riddlebarger 2013:40; Storms 2013:451-66, 554-56; Waldron 2003:83-92, 101-5).

Contrary to the common understanding that amillennialists hold that there is no millennium, Storms makes it clear that they certainly do believe in a millennium. The millennial reign of Christ is currently present; it is the “age of the Church between the first and second comings of Christ” (Storms 2013:424). Riddlebarger (2013:40) calls amillennialism a “present or realized millennialism.” Similarly, Waldron (2003:15) affirms this idea interpreting Revelation 20:1-10 as a period for the Church between Christ’s first and Second Advent.

The early church held the view that the kingdom of God was inaugurated with Christ’s first advent and they waited in anticipation for its full consummation in the future; this is known as amillennialism today (Horton 2011:923). Considering again the Fragments of Papias, the author writes in fragment 3,

¹⁸ For further discussion, cf. Horton (2011:945-50); Storms (2013:chs. 6, 9-10).

verses 12, “Among other things he (Papias) says that after the resurrection of the dead there will be a period of a thousand years when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth. These ideas, I suppose, he got through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not realizing that the things recorded in figurative language were spoken by them mystically” (Papias 2007:739).

This alludes to a strong possibility, we suggest, that a primordial form of amillennialism existed in the apostolic accounts and was likely the dominant eschatological view before Papias. Similarly, Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, expresses his disagreement with Nepos’s teaching that there will be a temporal earthly reign of Christ¹⁹ (Dionysius 2014, part 1, ch. 1). The Epistle of Barnabas 15:4a also seems to offer a figurative understanding of a thousand years as it relates to ‘the day of the Lord’ (Holmes 2007; cf. Augustine 2009:649; Kelly 1968:462-63, 465-66).

It was Saint Augustine, a Doctor of the Church, in his *City of God*, book 20, chapter 7, who developed and popularized the amillennial perspective. He tells us that the millennium may be understood as either, the sixth millennium correlating to the sixth day of creation followed by an endless Sabbath for the saints, or “as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time” (Augustine 2009:650). In chapter 9 he explains how from Christ’s first coming the devil has been bound and the saints’ reign with Christ during these 1000-years and argues that, “the church could not now be called His kingdom or the kingdom of heaven until His saints were even now reigning with Him”, quoting from Matthew 25:34, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, take position of the Kingdom prepared for you” (p. 654). Even now, Augustine says, the saints of Christ reign with him, citing Colossians 3:1-2 (p. 655). He continues to explain that the believers share in his kingdom reign with him, therefore, “the church, then, begins its reign with Christ now in the living and in the dead” (pp. 655-56).

Augustine’s, *City of God*, offers a more nuanced approach to ancient amillennialism, discerning a “thread of Christ’s kingdom throughout redemptive history”, and “distinguished clearly the ‘two cities’ of this present

¹⁹ Likely referring to the literal 1000-year reign of Christ.

age – each with its own commission, purpose, destiny, and means” (Horton 2011:924; cf. Augustine 2009). Augustine’s amillennial interpretation became the dominant eschatological view up until the present. The three main branches of Christianity in the world today, are Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism. The Catholics consist of 50.1% of the world population, the Eastern Orthodox (including Oriental) consist of 11.9%, the Protestant forms 36.7%, and all other Christian denominations are 1.3% (Pew Research Centre 2011). The Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church and most mainline Protestant denominations, namely, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and many Presbyterian churches, hold to the Amillennial view (Jarrett 2019; New World Encyclopedia 2020).

The reformers, Martin Luther and John Calvin promoted amillennial eschatology. Allison explains that Luther denounced premillennialism and rejected the concept of a future golden age. He, nevertheless, emphasized our hope in the second coming of Christ. Likewise, Calvin was very critical of premillennialism (Allison 2011:690-91). These reformers “articulated the distinction between the heavenly and earthly kingdoms” but rejected “the ‘Christendom’ version of amillennialism” – seen in the Roman Catholic Church at the time – as well as “the millennial literalism of radical sects.” Both of these expressed an over-realized eschatology (Horton 2011:925). Calvin states that Christ in his ascension withdrew his bodily presence so that he might rule both heaven and earth more immediately by his power. He specifically focused on the historical narrative of Jesus Christ’s advent, ascension and future return and held that Jesus had already inaugurated his kingdom and poured out his Spirit. His reign is partially realized and will only be fully consummated on Christ’s return physically to earth (Calvin 2007:Book 2, ch. 16, sec. 14).

But let us not lose sight that this kingdom of God is already present and yet it is also a coming kingdom. As the South African missiologist, David Bosch (1980:236), has said, Mission is an eschatological event that “proceeds from the certainty that the Kingdom of God is not only a future reality but is already present in our midst”. It is hope-in-action, fulfilling Christianity’s “obligations to the world” (p. 237). According to Storms (2013:368), this view differs greatly from postmillennialism and premillennialism because it holds that the Great

Commission will ultimately be successful in the present age and the Church will grow and fill the earth.²⁰

As we live in the 'now-and-not-yet' of the kingdom, the time of the Holy Spirit, mission becomes the most vital part of the church's activity (Bosch 1991:503).

Bosch²¹ is emphatic that "The reign of God has already come, is coming, and will come in fullness" and because he currently rules here and now, we are called to manifest his reign by being ambassadors of his Kingdom" (Bosch 1991:508-9). This is clear after Jesus set towards Jerusalem in Luke 9:51 and commissioned his disciples to announce the arrival of the kingdom of God (10:1-20). Jesus calls us to participate in his mission (Gladd and Harmon 2016:160, 163). Newbigin (1995:64-65) exclaims that "mission is nothing less than this: the Kingdom of God, the sovereign rule of the Father of Jesus of all humankind and over all creation", and describes it this way,

It is the proclamation of the kingdom,²² the presence of the kingdom, and the prevenience of the kingdom. By proclaiming the reign of God over all things the church acts out its faith that the Father of Jesus is indeed ruler of all. The church, by inviting all humankind to share in the mystery of the presence of the kingdom hidden in its life through its union with the crucified and risen life of Jesus, acts out the love of Jesus that took him to the cross (Newbigin 1995:64-65).

Therefore, when we proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God in tangible ways, we give people a taste of what the kingdom now and the kingdom coming is like.²³ For the amillennialist, mission is eschatological to its very core (Gladd and Harmon 2016:168-69).

²⁰ Cf. Ps 2:6-9, 22:27-28, 102:15, 138:4-5.

²¹ As an aside, Bosch makes a critical observation regarding dispensational premillennialism, saying, "Christian eschatology, in particular, seems to lend itself to becoming a playground for fanatical curiosity, as the writings of Hal Lindsey and others witness" (Bosch 1991:504).

²² Cf. Gladd and Harmon (2016:168).

²³ Bosch (1980:238) talks of Christians exerting themselves for the erection of signs of the Kingdom here and now.

Although all the eschatological perspectives emphasize missions, the postmillennial approach seems to work towards establishing the kingdom of God by making the world a better place in preparation for the coming of Christ the king. The premillennial perspective²⁴ appears to involve themselves in missions to fulfil certain criteria, quickening the second coming of Christ and his kingdom. The amillennial perspective understands that Christ reigns on earth from heaven and that we are to proclaim and demonstrate this present kingdom in missions, and so on, and the hope that we have in its final consummation so that others might participate in it. A significant part of this eschatological discussion is the millennial reign of Christ in Revelation 20.²⁵ Amillennial scholars have addressed this topic thoroughly, and we think convincingly. We believe, however, that part of the answer is in Luke 17:20-30, whether “the kingdom of God is in your midst”, within us, or is yet to come.

The Kingdom of God in Luke 17:20-21

You have heard it said, “I am a ‘panmillennialist’; it will all pan out in the end”. The statement is a cop-out because (1) doctrine informs praxis, (2) our hope is shaped by the future, and (3) if the eschatological kingdom of God *is* currently present, then we have a specific responsibility to participate in Christ’s reign and his kingdom.

This discussion will explore the ‘kingdom of God’²⁶ in Luke 17:20-21. These verses are ambiguous: Is the gospel without the present kingdom of God, is it within you, or is it among you?²⁷ Luke narrates how the Pharisees questioned Jesus about when they could expect the kingdom of God²⁸ to come (v. 20). In

²⁴ We acknowledge as stated before, that the premillennial perspective has variations and the following observation might not apply fully to each of them.

²⁵ You might consider consulting Sam Storm’s (2013), *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative*, and Kim Riddlebarger’s (2013), *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*.

²⁶ Sometimes called the Kingdom of heaven, keeping in line with respect for the divine name for Jewish readers.

²⁷ Sometimes rendered as ‘in the midst of you’.

²⁸ Elwell (1984:607) explains that out of all the Gospels, βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is used the most in Luke’s Gospel. According to Verbrugge (2000:87–88), it conveys the essential idea that God rules as king.

the OT, especially in the Psalms, God is said to reign from the heavens upon the earth, and that he rules over the nations.²⁹ In the NT, however, Jesus is given the full right and title of king (Heb 1:1–3). This kingdom which Jesus heralds, he claims as his own (Luke 22:30, cf. John 18:36). And those who participate in it share in the kingdom of God as priests (1 Pet 2:9, Rev 1:6, 5:10).

Luke clarifies to his Gentile readers what he meant by, ‘the kingdom of God’ when he put it in an eschatological context rather than a nationalistic Judean one (Falconer, C. 2019:68). When Luke wrote of God’s kingdom (17:20-21) he was writing about the ‘already now’ aspect of God’s kingdom and that it had already been realized in the person of Jesus Christ. Luke continued and wrote about the second aspect of God’s kingdom, the ‘not yet’, the future of God’s kingdom (17:22-37), extending ultimately to its final consummation.

Jesus responds to the Pharisees question in verses 20b–21, *Οὐκ ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, οὐδὲ ἐροῦσιν· Ἴδου ὧδε ἢ· Ἐκεῖ, ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν*³⁰. Rendered as, “The kingdom of God is not coming in such a way that can be observed, nor will they say, “See, here it is!”, or “There!” Because see, the kingdom of God is among you” (our translation). *ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν* is ambiguous. While it could mean ‘among you’, or ‘in your midst’, it could also mean ‘within you’. The Greek lexicon, BDAG, prefers the sense of “among you, in your midst, either now or suddenly in the near future” (Bauer 2001:340). We concur, taking it to mean ‘is among you’. Hart’s commentary in his NT translation, however, takes this to be wrong, stating, “*Entos* really does properly mean ‘within’ or ‘inside of’, not ‘among’.” and Luke, in both his Gospel and the book of Acts, when meaning to say ‘among’ or ‘amid’, always uses either the phrase *ἐν μέσῳ* (*en mesōi*) or just an *ἐν* (*en*), followed by a dative plural; and his phrase for ‘in your midst’ is *ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν* (*en mesōi hymōn*), as in 22:27” (Hart 2017:167).

Nevertheless, Jesus was either responding directly to the Pharisees which would make the kingdom of God ‘within you’ improbable considering Jesus’s rebuke of the religious group in Luke 11:37-12:3 (Falconer, C. 2019:70). Or the pronoun, *ὑμῶν*, ‘you’, is a distributive, generic reference – not to the Pharisees

²⁹ Cf. Ps 22:28, 93:1-2a, 96:10a, 103:19, and 145:1-13.

³⁰ NA29.

as its intended antecedent but with the sense of all of you people – requiring a non-literal antecedent for ‘you’.³¹ The second option seems preferable. According to BDAG, Luke generally avoided “referring to God’s reign as a psychological reality” (Bauer 2001:341). This makes it likely that Jesus meant, “the kingdom of God is among you”. Further, some verses later, is Jesus’s statement about little children, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16b). Noticeably, the future aspect of God’s kingdom had not yet visibly arrived, hence the statement that the kingdom of God cannot simply be observed (Falconer, C. 2019:74).

Verbrugge has suggested that we ought to understand Jesus’s proclamation of the kingdom of God as being near, as we read in Mark 1:15 (ESV), “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” He says that this is a coming kingdom, it is future, at least according to verse 15 (Verbrugge 2000, 90). Jesus Christ opens a new age by his incarnation into this world. Now, Christ’s reign on the earth from heaven has been realized and has begun (p. 614). Although the Gospels make it explicit that the kingdom of God ‘is at hand’,³² breaking into this world through Jesus’s life and ministry (Storms 2013, 33). We are also told how imminent this is—it would be in the lifetime of his disciples.³³

An alternative would be that this kingdom of God is yet to come, but this conflicts with Jesus’s imminent description of his disciples standing in front of him, as well as the present notion of the kingdom of God already being among them (Luke 17:21).³⁴ It seems fair to say that the kingdom of God came in the person of Jesus Christ and has infiltrated and subverted our lives making us new creations (2 Cor 5:17). His resurrection, ascension and glorification bring in the kingdom of God, that same kingdom that was ‘at hand’. And yet, this

³¹ We attribute these ideas to Kevin Smith, principal of the South African Theological Seminary, during a conversation.

³² Cf. Matt 4:17, 9:35, 10:7; Luke 4:43, 8:1, 9:2, 10:9.

³³ Cf. Matt 16:28 and Mark 9:1.

³⁴ Jesus’s disciples were to pray ‘Your kingdom come’. But did Jesus have in mind the imminence of the kingdom when he crafted this prayer, or are we to pray the same prayer today? While it is hard to know, we argue that this may be a prayer for the manifestation of the Kingdom of God among us, as well as a prayer for its final consummation.

kingdom of Christ is also future and we anticipate its consummation at Jesus's second coming³⁵ (Falconer, C. 2019: 6; cf. Ladd 1990, 18).

If the kingdom of God is among us and the reign of Christ is now in our world, then surely he is our king and we live under "the kingdom of Christ" (Elwell 1984:607). Newbigin (1989:133) proclaimed that God's kingdom has come near to us through Jesus Christ entering our world (Matt 12:28) and thus is present.³⁶ Likewise, Ladd (1990:80) explained that "the kingdom of God is the sovereign rule of God, manifested in the person and work of Christ, creating a people over whom he reigns, and issuing in a realm or realms in which the power of his reign is realized."³⁷ A vital part of making the reign of God known to the world is our response to his eschatological call for missions.

Christ's Kingdom Reign: An Objective for Missions

The kingdom of God as a present reality and eschatological hope has a significant influence on the church's mission to proclaim and demonstrate Christ's kingdom.

The postmillennial perspective believes that its missional role is to Christianize the nations (Boettner 1991:29) to prepare for the second coming of Jesus. This implies that Jesus will only return after the church's concerted effort to transform our world.

From the premillennial perspective, especially in dispensationalism, it seems to promote an escapist approach to missions, "get saved so that you can go to heaven", or to be raptured out of this evil world and into an ethereal, disembodied existence, with little interest for contextual social concerns³⁸ (Wright 2008:118-21). We fear that this may harm missions encouraging people to believe Jesus is yet to reign as king and that he will rescue and remove us from tribulations (pp. 128-33). History and experience tell us that this is untrue. Some premillennialists regard their experience and news media

³⁵ Cf. Matt 5:3, 10, 20, 7:21; Luke 21:31, 22:15,16.

³⁶ Cf. Matt 21:4, 23:13; Mark 10:15; John 18:36, Acts 2:29-36.

³⁷ Cf. Wright (1996:469)

³⁸ Both Robert and Catherine Falconer have served in a mission organisation in Kenya which was largely dispensational (cf. Wright 2008:200).

as an indicator that Satan presently rules this world. Proclaiming the kingdom of God is merely hopeful in the expectation that is yet to come and demonstrating a kingdom that is yet to come is no doubt a challenge.

On the other hand, the amillennialist has a kingdom to proclaim because it already is a present reality even if it is yet to be consummated at the eschaton. Further, it has a kingdom to demonstrate to others, and “to be a sign and foretaste of what God wants to do for the entire cosmos” (Wright 2008:200). Bartholomew (2017:229) says it well when he wrote, “being a missionary involves representing Christ in our vocations and in all that we are involved in. There is room in mission for the most diverse activities.” The objective for missions then is not to establish God’s kingdom—Christ has already done that—but to proclaim the present and eschatological reign of Christ and to demonstrate his kingdom to the world.

Jesus viewed the kingdom of God as his kingdom (Matt 13:41, 16:28) and gives a share of this kingdom to his saints (Verbrugge 2000:88). Peter wrote, “you are a chosen race,³⁹ a royal priesthood...” so that “you may *proclaim* the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9, ESV; italics are ours). John the Revelator used the aorist tense, indicating that he has already “made⁴⁰ us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever” (Rev 1:6). The same is true of Revelation 5:10, “and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” Although this certainly has an eschatological characteristic, the aorist and the present emphasis is undisputable. We are a kingdom, and we are priests unto God, and we are to proclaim⁴¹ and demonstrate the kingdom of God which Jesus has already established in our midst.

Yet, missions did not begin with Jesus sending out his disciples (Matt. 28: 16-20). It began with God being the first missionary with his eschatological work to bring the nations to Jerusalem to worship Him (Bosch 1991:19). God made

³⁹ Although most English translations render this in the present tense, the Greek, Ὑμεῖς δὲ γένος ἐκλεκτόν, “you are a chosen race” omits the verb or state of being, and therefore, any notion of tense is missing.

⁴⁰ ἐποίησεν, ‘he has made’, is in the aorist.

⁴¹ Cf. 1 Pet 2:9.

his first missional covenant with Abraham. He said that in Abraham's offspring all nations would be blessed (Gen 22:18), a covenant that was repeated to Isaac and then later to Jacob (Gen 26, 28). Kaiser (1996:3-7) affirms this, saying, "clearly God intended to use Abraham in such a way that he would be a means of blessing to all the nations of the world" and "an instrument of redemption." In addition to that, we argue that this is the primary objective of missions – to tell all nations that the kingdom of God is here and show them in part what this looks like. Yes, we need to tell people about salvation, this is vital. But proclaiming the kingdom of God is just as important, as Luke makes quite evident, reflecting on Paul's ministry in the very last verse in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Apostle proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus Christ with boldness (Acts 28:31).

Wright (2008:208) offers us a glimpse of what it might look like, as examples, to demonstrate the kingdom, although he is approaching this from a slightly different eschatological angle. He lists the following:

Every act of love, gratitude and kindness; every work of art or music inspired by the love of God and delight in the beauty of his creation; every minute spent teaching a severely handicapped child to read or to walk; every act of care and nurture, of comfort and support, for one's fellow human beings, and for that matter one's fellow non-human creatures; and of course every prayer, all Spirit-led teaching, every deed which spreads the gospel, builds up the church, embraces and embodies holiness (Wright 2008:208).

Throughout this paper, we have discussed that missions have an eschatological focus, and more specifically that the amillennialism view forms one of the best foundations to proclaim the reign of Christ and his kingdom reign in our world. Amillennialism emphasizes the proclamation and demonstration of the kingdom of God for the sake of missions. Having a theology of Christ's kingdom reign – both present and in its consummation – is imperative for a full-bodied praxis for missions, providing the church and believing Christians an objective for missions.

Practical missiological implications of Amillennialism have been discussed by theologians and pastors like Richard Lovelace, Charles Colson and Timothy Keller. Lovelace⁴² directly links the results of renewal movements and revival concern for missions, Christian literature, Christian educational institutions, social reform and social justice to churches that hold an Amillennial perspective (Keylock 1984).

Chuck Colson was the founder of the prison ministry, *Prison Fellowship*. Lovelace mentored Chuck (Gordan Conwell Theological Seminary 2020). The fruits of this ministry began in 1997 in Texas and brought in social reform and justice. The ministry program focuses on the restructuring of values, developing life skills, education, work, and fostering one-on-one mentoring. A study conducted to measure the success of the training found that those who graduated from the training were 17 percent less likely to be rearrested than those who did not attend the training. It became so successful that Prison Fellowship spread to prisons in 27 states and 89 prisons (Pope 2021).

Lovelace also had a profound influence on the ministry of Timothy Keller. Keller (2015) believed the only way to substantially and sustainably grow the body of Christ in a city, was through church plants. He explained the gospel in a way that uses both a 'kingdom' and an 'eternal life'. Keller (2008) finds that "many young people are struggling to make choices in a world of consumer options and are confused about their own identities in a culture of self-creation and self-promotion". Therefore, he uses the "kingdom Gospel", where more liberal people hear and understand the kingdom of God to restore the world, it opens them up to Christ's kingship in their lives (Keller 2008). Summarizing Herman Bavinck, Keller, said, if the eschatological element is left out, Christians develop the impression that nothing in this world matters. However, if they grasp the full outline then this should make Christians interested in both the evangelistic conversions together with service to their neighbour and working towards peace and justice in the world (Keller 2008). The Amillennial perspective is not without practical missiological implications.

⁴² Richard Lovelace served at the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary for decades as the professor of church history.

Conclusion

This paper explored the millennial reign of Christ and its implications for the mission's objective. We began by examining the background and approach to missions of (1) postmillennialism, (2) premillennialism, and its variations; historical premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism; and progressive premillennialism, (3) amillennialism. A study of Luke 17:20–21 provided a context for an eschatological approach to the kingdom of God and missions. Lastly, we argued that missions exist because there is a present eschatological reality of Jesus's kingly reign, and therefore, Jesus's kingdom reign is the primary objective for missions.

Postmillennialism seemed to place the responsibility in the hands of the Church to bring peace: evangelism and missions being the church's effort and preparation for the second coming of Christ. However, this set the stage for unrealistic hopes which eventually led to pessimism especially after World War I and the Great Depression. Many Christians became disillusioned with the postmillennialism perspective and hope turned to pessimism and the stage was set for the development of dispensational premillennialism.

It was argued that dispensational evangelicalism has traditionally emphasized individual spirituality and transformation with little interest in a social context. Dispensationalist theology, it appears, offers us a gospel without a kingdom, evident in their missiological approach where the focus of mission has been to prepare for the coming of the Lord to establish his 'future' kingdom. Their objective in missions is to preach the gospel so that people can avoid hell when they die and enjoy God forever. This is by no means erroneous, but it limits the kingdom of God to a distant future hope. This of course was the concern of the Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize winner, Wangari Maathai (2009:40), that "as Christianity became embedded in Africa, so did the idea that it was the afterlife that was the proper focus of a devotee, rather than this one—a legacy that continues to affect development ... Putting so much emphasis on the delights of heaven and making it the ultimate destination devalues life in the present". Thankfully, this is changing in the more recent development of progressive dispensationalism which offers more holistic missiology. It promotes the idea of an already inaugurated messianic kingdom, holistic redemption, and an understanding of the church and its mission which reflects the present

messianic kingdom of Christ. Yet, we feel that this is still very much a concern in African Christianity.

We are not arguing that other eschatological views yield no objectives for missions. Rather, we are proposing that the amillennial perspective understands that Christ reigns on earth from heaven now and that we are to proclaim and demonstrate this present kingdom in missions so that others might joyfully participate in it. Yet, we also have the hope of the kingdom's final consummation, and thus we wish to avoid any association with 'Kingdom Now Theology'. When we proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God, we give people a foretaste of what the kingdom now and the kingdom coming is like. Mission is eschatological in its essence for amillennialism.

We have argued that Luke 17:21 proclaims that the kingdom of God is among us and the reign of Christ is *now* in our world. The kingdom of God being the sovereign rule of God, manifested in Jesus Christ and his work. He has created a people over whom he reigns and who respond by making the reign of God known to the world. This is the eschatological call for missions. Amillennialism emphasizes the proclamation and demonstration of the kingdom of God. We, therefore, proposed that a theology of Christ's kingdom reign is vital for a full-bodied praxis for missions, especially in Africa, providing the church and Christians an objective for missions.

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Review

Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Perspectives from Theology, Philosophy and Education:

Van den Berg, J.A., (ed.), SunBonani Scholar, Bloemfontein: 2020, ISBN 9781928424512, 234 pp.

Review by Dr Wessel Wessels¹

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is intrinsic to the reality of our contemporary, globalised world. However, sufficient engagement with the Fourth Industrial Revolution and its implications, both in current form and the possible consequences for the future, has thus far been insufficient. In *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, edited by Prof Jan-Albert van den Berg, pioneering work regarding engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution takes place in theology, philosophy, and education.

Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution should be seen as a first engagement with the technologies and implications of the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. One can approach *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution* with only a vague understanding, or no understanding whatsoever, of what the Fourth Industrial Revolution entails and be guided towards both greater understanding and critical contemplation on the theme. In most of the chapters, a comprehensive definition of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is presented. Quoting from Louis Fourie's chapter: "[The Fourth Industrial Revolution] entails a new generation of sophisticated and game-changing technologies [...] such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud technology, smart robotics, the internet of things, and big data [...] that are transforming the world into a highly connected and intelligent place" (12). Even though I am aware of the term Fourth Industrial Revolution and have a decent comprehension of the technologies it comprises, it was only in the

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reading of *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution* that a more significant awareness was developed.

Jan-Albert van den Berg states the goal of the book as follows: “The conversation with technology, and with thinkers on technology, holds the promise of a certain fecundity, the possibility to see deeper into human evolution, but also, maybe, into the future of humankind” (10). On the one hand, this fecundity of technology holds the imagined potential for the complete well-being of human beings. A type of utopia where human existence is re-imagined as eliminating “the need to work, where all humans share in the profusion of resources, and technology solves all problems” (31). On the other hand, a dystopia where privacy becomes void, and our worth is defined by others (56).

To my mind, Rian Venter most vividly articulates the two polarising postures when interacting with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. On the one hand, the embrace of technology towards a theology of technology which “intentionally [...] explore creative postures that suit the sophistication of present technological advances” (74). On the other hand, the resistance to “the dark side of a new axial age” (75). In this instance, theology would take the role of prophetic voice against the underlying systems and potential impacts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Indeed, a third option can be to cultivate a theology that can both embrace and resist as contextual realities and issues arise.

With regards to such issues, *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution* contemplates a myriad of important implications of technology for ontology and theological anthropology: The Imago Dei and being human (23,29,109,132), eschatology (32), ministerial training (171), religious competencies (187-204), and virtual rituals (209-231). However, as Johan Rossouw showcases, the Fourth Industrial Revolution may be a farfetched notion for the South African context with a failing education system, corrupt management in technical parastatals, and the persistent lack of maintenance of city infrastructure (91-92). Thus, as attractive as the implications of technology may be for the community’s well-being, such possibilities are merely a pipe dream in a context where the minimum requirements for technological participation are not being met.

Looking towards the future and further (especially theological) engagement with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, I would expect greater contemplation on the agendas behind the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As was showcased in the Netflix film, *The Social Dilemma*, technology is not sterile and without human interests. Instead, the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are laden with the particularity of interest and perspective. Future engagement with these technologies must contemplate the power dynamics at work within the default usage of these technologies. Who's interests are advanced? Who holds the power of influence in these technologies? What are the economic, social, and political implications? And how can these technologies be reapplied to the advancement of the subaltern – if at all?

Furthermore, because *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution* came into existence before the Covid19 pandemic, there is the necessity for contemplating how government-mandated isolation has exacerbated the relationship between being human and virtual existence. On the one hand, research must be conducted on what has happened, how people's lives and well-being has been affected, and whether virtual existence has become paramount. On the other hand, thorough critical engagement should take place on the implications of Covid19, especially in the South African context (and that of Africa as a whole) where the minimum requirements for virtual life are mostly inaccessible.

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