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## **Integrating Public Theology into African Theological Institutions' Curricula**

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### **Abstract**

The primary aim of this article is to argue that the curricula of many African evangelical theological seminaries are devoid of Public Theology. This lack has made it extremely difficult for the church in Africa to collapse the sacred-secular divide. As a result, our public faith does not tally with our private faith, beliefs and practices. The curriculum that our evangelical pastors get trained in lacking an important ingredient: Public Theology. As such it does not address and help its graduates to collapse the sacred-secular divide. Thus, although year in and year out our evangelical seminaries are turning out graduates, they are in much cases incapable of overcoming ethnic differences. They do not know how to reposition and transform their communities into vibrant Christian communities. They largely tend to have no clear-cut understanding of the public relevance of their Christian faith, talk less of helping their members to collapse the sacred-secular divide and become effective Christians in every sphere of public life and human endeavours.

To address this abnormality in our African theological training, Public Theology needs to be introduced in our evangelical seminaries. In a continent a in transition with shaky moral and ethical foundations we can afford to continue turning blind eyes to the faulty lines of our theological education in Africa. African theological enterprise owes the continent a solution to some of the destructive and systemic structures of injustice, corruption and impunity. To address this salient problem, the article discusses the

role of Public Theology in theological education; the challenge of theological seminaries in Africa; Why Africa needs integrative curricula; the urgent needs and the challenges of integrative curricula theological education; the parochial nature of theological schools: the sacred-secular divide; Why public theology is important for integrative curricula in theological education; the salient relevance of public theology to African educational integrative curricula; and concludes with a narrative of Nigerian seminaries modelling integrative curricula through public theology.

## Introduction

The Instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul.  
The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.  
The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are pure, lasting for ever.  
The laws of the LORD are true, each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them.<sup>1</sup>

No wonder, this is said about the Bible:

The Bible brought its view of God, the universe, and mankind into all the leading Western languages and thus into the intellectual process of Western man [sic]... Since the invention of printing, the Bible has become more than the translation of an ancient Oriental literature. It has not seemed a foreign book, and it has been the most available, familiar and dependable source and arbiter of intellectual, moral, and spiritual ideals in the West (H. Grady Davis<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 19:7–11 NLT

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilisation*, (Nashville, Dallas, Mexico City, Rio De Janeiro, Beijing: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 1.

If this is what African Christians find and read in the Bible, why is Africa still a continent in transition with many shaky foundations? This is an important question. It is the motivation for this article. The question shows that there are matters arising in our theological educational curricula in the continent which need urgent attention. Undoubtedly, it can rightly be said that all theological enterprise in the world is public theology in nature and scope. Yet in Africa there is little or no sign that theological ideas about public theology are being integrated in African theological educational curricula by African theological educators.

With the myriad of problems currently bedeviling the continent, public theology as an important aspect of African Christian theology has to be given a top priority. For the problems facing Africa today require a multidimensional approach. In other words, to address the myriad of social, spiritual, political, economic and intellectual problems facing Africa today, theological educators need to take integrative curricula seriously. Based on the words of the psalmist quoted above, theological institutions are in a better position to engage in curricula integration.

As such, this article argues that no integrated curricula of theological higher education will be complete without it including Public Theology. Public Theology gives theological curricula a focus on the reign of God or kingdom-of-God theology. So, in this article, I explore the strategic role public theology plays in the quest for an integrative curriculum in African evangelical theological seminaries. That is, I draw the attention of theological educators across Africa to the significance of public theology vis-a-vis the effort to create a culture and a form of integration that is all-embracing so that our theological graduates grasp God's kingdom morality and ethical perspective for the common good of church and society.<sup>3</sup> That is, a perspective that will become the true source of our continent's repositioning and transformation; a fountain "and arbiter of intellectual, moral, and spiritual ideals" in Africa.

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:10.

I address the challenges that theological educators in Africa have to radically overcome in order to be able to enshrine public theology in their institutional curricula. I numerate the peculiar benefits of having public theology in Africa's theological curricula and then conclude with some empirical examples of two Evangelical theological seminaries in Nigeria who have seen the significant need and the enormous benefit of including public theology in their curricula. Consequently, they have been able to move theological reflection and discussions out from academic circles into the streets by engaging in robust informal discussions, active engagement in newspapers, electronic media press, social media, communication media and the marketplace in general.

## **The role of Public Theology in theological education**

Public theology is important in the schemes of things because it is a subject that helps us to comprehend how God is the God of faith and reason, theology, communication, entrepreneurship, science, technology and so on. Public theology can enable African Christians to make sense of their world. It is the medium through which African Christians can grasp and wrestle with the issues involved in human and societal transformation and development. One of the issues that is very critical to nation building is character virtues. Developing virtuous character in any given society is a significant feature of public theology.<sup>4</sup> For it gives us rich insights for living a holistic life that impacts deeply on the way we think, see and act in all spheres of life in our society. It also takes a holistic approach to educational content, which includes curricula delivery and the whole gamut of the milieu of a theological seminary, Christian university or college.<sup>5</sup> By "curricula", as Zamani Buki Kafang explains, we mean the "type of courses, programme, and instructional plan designed to achieve the philosophy and objective of each institution. This includes the type of method

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<sup>4</sup> Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World*, 181.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan S. Raymond, *Higher Education: Integrating Holiness into all of Campus Life*, (Spring Valley, CA: Aldersgate Press, 2015), 14.

used, subjects taught, and number of credit hours required for each course of study.”<sup>6</sup>

## **The challenge of theological seminaries in Africa**

Integrated curricula bring faith and reason, theology and science/technology together. The implementers of integrated curricula, undoubtedly, recognise that God is both the God of the sacred and the secular spheres. God is the God of faith and reason. God is the God of the private and the public spheres. Thus, a revelatory education was started by the church in its quest to fulfil the mission of God. Vishal Mangalwadi asserted, “...[T]he university was invented and established by Christians ... Education was a Christian missionary enterprise. It was integral to Christian mission because modern education is a fruit of the Bible. The Biblical Reformation, born in European universities, took education out of the cloister and spread it around the globe.”<sup>7</sup> Yet, given that many of the African evangelical seminaries were started by missionaries who came out of the tension between faith and reason, which the Enlightenment proponents created and distorted the intrinsic and symbiotic connection between faith and reason, making that connection today is not a simple possibility. Prior to the Enlightenment, Christians did not think they must choose between faith and reason. Both were essential.

However, during the Enlightenment’s wave of onslaught on the Christian faith,<sup>8</sup> the Bible and tradition, evangelical Christians decided to take the route of faith while the proponents of Enlightenment took the route of logic and reason, and promoted human reasons characterised by logic, science and technology. That attitude brought about the present problem the African church and its theological institutions now have: viewing life from the perspective of a sacred-

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<sup>6</sup> Kafang Zamani, Buki, *Higher Theological Education*, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made Your World*, 194.

<sup>8</sup> Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made the Soul of your Civilisation*, 260.

secular divide. Zamani Buki Kafang has explained that, “The curricula designed and used by the theological institutions are the engines and road maps.” Yet these so-called “engines and road maps” are not holistic enough. He pointed to the fact that, “[T]he early theological institutions were started by the missionaries with the aim of producing well-disciplined and committed evangelists, pastors, church planters and other church related ministry workers.”<sup>9</sup> From Kafang’s statement we can clearly see that there is a huge challenge today: This goal/aim was parochial in nature and scope. It was not integrative enough. Given the present circumstances where Africans are sick and tired of getting leaders whose mind-set is completely on self-interest rather than the common good of society, evangelical theological institutions have to re-evaluate and review their curricula in such a way that they become wholly integrated.<sup>10</sup>

## **Why Africa needs integrative curricula**

Higher theological education has a goal: moving from only emphasizing saving souls (evangelism) to also emphasizing saving minds (social action that brings human renewal and transformation for the common good of society). To achieve higher education’s goal of producing graduates who excel in learning, knowledge and character, evangelical curricula have to be integrative so that our graduates become bearers of intellectual, scientific, technological, social, political, economic and moral light, which is capable of bringing gladness, joy, and honour to the African peoples. To bring joy, gladness and honour to a broken and decaying society like Africa, our task as public theologians is to help them develop mental representations of the subject matter that will provide a basis for further learning, thinking, and use.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, an integrated curricula implies

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<sup>9</sup> Zamani Buki Kafang, *Higher Theological Education: An Overview of Six Protestant Theological Institutions in Nigeria* (Jos, Plateau: Pyria-mark Services Ltd, 2009), 43.

<sup>10</sup> Kafang, *Higher Theological Education*, 45-46.

<sup>11</sup> Wilbert J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College*

knowledge acquisition that involves correlation and synthesis, and cross-fertilisation of ideas within the confines of the different intellectual fields of human inquiry and learning. Public theology fits the goal of higher education. For as we are aware in Christian theological seminaries, universities and colleges of higher learning, “The noble intent of many for centuries has been to develop godly Christian graduates of competence and character at first for church service, but then also to impact the various marketplaces of life.”<sup>12</sup>

The term “integration” refers to a situation in which a subject becomes a dialogue partner to other subjects, a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach to knowledge acquisition and dissemination. The integration model of theological education, which this article envisages, places premium on advance content-knowledge, relies on higher order, skills, and focuses learning on major issues that cut-across fields of multidimensional intellectual disciplines.<sup>13</sup> It is a model that fits squarely with the aspiration of all institutions of higher learning: Globally, all Christian higher education is expected to holistically prepare men and women to be agents of transformation in church and society. Thus, unlike public higher education, whose primary concern is to give the graduates a good grasp of various specialized areas (science, economics, technology, etc.), African evangelical theological seminaries need to go beyond such a parochial curricula to include also the belief in the universal Christ, the one who has been given power and authority in heaven and on earth; power over all of life, the sacred and secular.<sup>14</sup> By so doing, the graduates of such an integrated educational curricula will experience a higher form of education, one that not only integrates, but also infuses the head and the heart with the idea of Kingdom ethical character virtues and moral vision, which Africa

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*and university Teachers*, Tenth Edition, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond, *Higher Higher Education*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond, *Higher Higher Education*, 15

<sup>14</sup> Raymond, *Higher Higher Education*, 9.

desperately needs at this period of confusion and despair. This educational perspective will enable the graduates of such integrated curricula to reject and go beyond the sacred-secular divide.

## **Integrative curricula education in Africa: The needs and challenges**

Why we badly need public theology in our institutions is primarily because Africa is a continent that is still in transition with shaky foundations. In this context, for Africans to enjoy social, economic, political, and spiritual vitality, our educational curricula have to be integrative enough to include public theology. All disciplines and subject matter have to be taken seriously so that they can be repositioned for the qualitative and quantitative transformation of every sphere of our nations across the continent.

Furthermore, integrative curricula that include public theology are needed today more than ever because of the explosive growth of Christianity in the continent. Robert J. Priest writes:

The remarkable expansion of Christianity in Africa in the context of massive social challenges has created unprecedented opportunities for leadership by Christians. Hundreds of thousands of young congregations now provide local platforms for the development and exercise of spiritual and social leadership. And because many of African's countries are majority Christians, African Christians also find themselves exercising leadership in a wide variety of business, educational, media, social-services, and governmental venues.<sup>15</sup>

This development, where leadership is needed, makes it extremely necessary to have an integrative educational curricula that include public theology in order to help our theological institutions provide a holistic training that will adequately prepare men and women for

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<sup>15</sup> Robert J. Priest, "The Genesis and Growth of the African Christian Leadership Study" in *African Christian Leadership: Realities, Opportunities, and Impact*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 1.



effective and active participation in affairs of their society, particularly, life in both church and society, without falling into the snare of the modern and post-modern sacred-secular divide.

African theological enterprise is public theology both in its nature and scope. Therefore, it requires an integrative curricular which will help in the collapsing of the sacred-secular divide, which is still a huge setback to the development of a holistic theological perspective. For instance, Benezet Bujo catalogued the challenges that African theological education faces, which to my mind, necessitate an integrative theological curricula education to overcome the impasses. He observed that since "modern African theology began in 1956 with the publication of *Les Pretres hours interrogent*, African theologians have been making every effort to have a more genuinely African way of theologising. However,

Many things have happened in Africa ... 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.<sup>16</sup>

We live in a colonised social context with unprecedented consequences. Gender-based violence, economic exploitation, corruption at all levels of society and so on. We assumed that when we got independence from our colonisers who denied us our human dignity, we would truly be free. We did not know that we would only take off the colonialists and replace them with our cousins who have learned how to use us to help them maintain the status quo. Like the colonialists, they made sure that we do not have integrative

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<sup>16</sup> Benezet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1992), 5.

educational curricula that is humane and self-conscious and a radical liberation. Integrative educational curricula, which African public theology promotes, is one that reaffirms the sacredness of every sphere of human endeavours and the restoration of the dignity of the Africa peoples which they have been deprived, not only at the economic, political or social level, but also at the intellectual and spiritual dimensions.<sup>17</sup>

## **The parochial nature of theological schools: The sacred-secular divide**

All African evangelical Christians believe that Christ is Lord of all of life. Yet there are also many of them who tend to believe in what is called the *sacred-secular divide*, the dichotomy between private and public faith or the separation between evangelism and social action. This contradiction has continued to create a *thin* instead of a *thick*.<sup>18</sup> Christian ethics and morality in a continent which is in transition with shaky (moral, ethical, religious, cultural, political, social, scientific, technological and economic) foundations. In God's economy, he has purposed and planned that all those who belong to Christ Jesus through faith will be his conduit of spreading the life of a radical and transforming moral and ethical life. According to St. Paul, God has decided that "through us [he will] spread the fragrance of the knowledge of him [Christ] everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (2 Cor 2:14–16). How then can we be a fragrance to our corrupt society and generation if we do not fully participate in the activity of the community or city? To permeate every sphere of life we need to see all of life as the Lord's. As the psalmist

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<sup>17</sup> Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context*, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 85.

prayed, “May your glory shine over all the earth” (Ps 57:11). Therefore, Christians who compartmentalised their faith, reducing faith to a private and “otherworldly” thing, have failed to grasp the full meaning of personal faith in Christ. They have fallen prey to the unnecessary separation of faith and reason. To address these enormous theological lacunas, African theological seminaries need to include public theology in their curricula.

## **Integrative curricula and the two tasks of the church**

The church has two essential tasks: *saving the soul and saving the mind*.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the essence of curricula integrative is to provide a holistic and transformative education to our people to enable them to develop their God-given potential. It is also so that they can be able to positively reposition and transform their families, communities and the society at large for human and environmental flourishing. So, our students acquire the extraordinary insights, understanding, knowledge, wisdom and broad breadth of mind with which to bring the needed social, political, moral and economic justice in their societies and the African continent at large, African theological institutional curricula have to be integrative.

## **Why Public Theology is important for integrative curricula in theological education**

Theology is traditionally defined as the study of God or speaking about God. In our book, *African Public Theology*, I defined theology not only as the study of God, or the language about God, but also as the study of how God interacts with his creation, as already noted above. That is, public theology is a theology that recognises that God is interacting with all sphere of human life and the non-human creation. For instance, Paul tells us in Romans 11:36 that, “Everything comes from God, everything exists by his power and everything is intended for his glory”

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<sup>19</sup> Charles H. Malik’s Dedication message at the Billy Graham Centre at Wheaton, 1993.

(NLT). Public theology by its nature and scope does not only recognise that Christ is the Lord of all of life and all of its spheres, but also it defines theology as “the study of God and how he interacts with all of his creation.”<sup>20</sup> As such it collapses the dichotomy between private and public faith, the sacred-secular divide, and the separation between evangelism and social action. It gives all its students a theological education that is capable of helping them to reposition and transform every sphere of church and society to the praise of God’s glory. Public theology helps Christians to live a life of goodness, peace, justice and joy in all spheres of life. Therefore, I argue that a socially, politically, religiously and economically divisive and hostile society like Africa needs public theology. I attempt to delineate how public theology is gradually becoming part and parcel of the curricula of some of Africa’s theological institutions, particularly in West Africa. And given the expressed desire of African youth, which is captured by the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, I stress the importance of public theology in a continent that is increasingly being ravaged by corruption and impunity and being turned into a theatre of insecurity and fields of blood.

Public theology gives theological education a biblical outlook that is comprehensive and all-embracing. For example, Mangalwadi explained, “The global spread of Western education made...[the]scientific way of seeing nature so common that most educated people do not realise that the scientific outlook is a peculiar way of observing the world –an objective (“secular”) method moulded by a biblical worldview. Science uses objective methods to observe, organize, and understand the natural world.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, the need for integrative curricula is overdue in Africa, particularly as we see the African people yearning for a new spirit of Africa, which has resulted in

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<sup>20</sup> Sunday Agang, Dion Foster, J Jurgens Hendriks, *African Public Theology*, (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Literature, 2020),

<sup>21</sup> Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made the Soul of your Civilisation*, 223

the African Union coming up with what it calls, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Achieving this agenda definitely requires integrative curricula in our institutions of higher education, especially the theological seminaries and colleges across Africa. The Africa we want can only come to fruition if we have an integrated curricula in our African evangelical theological seminaries who are willing to avoid their parochialism and fundamentalism and embrace what Philip Dow calls, "virtuous minds character development," which is characterised by intellectual fair-mindedness, intellectual curiosity, intellectual tenacity, intellectual carefulness, intellectual courage, intellectual honesty and intellectual humility.<sup>22</sup> By nature and scope, public theology provides the whole gamut of theological education. It argues that "the theological educator's task goes far beyond cognitive articulation of biblical truth to living it out." Undoubtedly, "This task is not new, for the practical life of the theological educator has always been paramount in undergirding, or otherwise, underlining his effectiveness as interpreter and communicator of divine revelation."<sup>23</sup> Therefore, public theology is critically needed in Africa's theologian's quest for integrated theological educational curricula. For instance, public theology is capable of helping our theological graduates to be able to critically reflect on the religious, political, social, intellectual, economic and spiritual landscape of Africa. Or like Jurgen Moltmann asserts, it will help our theologians to "think critically about the religious and moral values of the societies in which they exist, and present their reflections as carefully reasoned positions."<sup>24</sup> Integrating public theology into

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<sup>22</sup> Philip E. Dow, *Virtuous Minds: Intellectual Character Development for Students, Educators & Parents*, (Downers Groves, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2013), 25.

<sup>23</sup> Annang Asumang, "The Theological Educator's Incarnation of Biblical Truth in a Post-Truth World" in *Priorities for Evangelical Education: Essays in Honour of Reuben van Rensburg, Festschrift*, edited by Zaltan Erdey, (Johannesburg, South Africa: SATS Press, n.d.), 143.

<sup>24</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology*, (St. Alban Place London: SCM Press, 1999), 2.

African theological educational curricula will undoubtedly help African theologians to overcome the snare of the sacred-secular divide. Thus, the urgent task facing African theologians is to engage in a transformative theological enterprise.<sup>25</sup>

## **The salient relevance of Public Theology to African educational integrative curricula**

Public theology is very integrative in its nature and scope. It gives Christian educators a broader and more holistic perspective than what is usually obtainable in many traditional ways of curricula instruction. By its nature and scope, public theology is an all-embracing theology. It provides educational practitioners with a praxis model of engagement with the society in which they live, work and have their livelihood and being. It has to be part of Africa's quest for curricula integration because an integrated curriculum, as the name implies, connects the different fields of intellectual inquiry. It cuts-across subject-matter lines and concerns itself with the unification of concepts therein. Curricula integration is very necessary, particularly in our theological institutions because it can help our students and graduates to make the necessary connections which will allow them to become whole persons in a whole world. In other words, integrative curricula are the pivotal hope for Africa's holistic transformation. Generally speaking, "Integration focuses on making connections for students, allowing them to engage in relevant, meaningful activities that can be connected to real life."<sup>26</sup> That real life is what public theology is primarily concerned about.

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<sup>25</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Transforming the Landscape of Theology in Africa: Women's Agency" in *African Christian Theologies in Transformation*, edited by Ernst M. Conradie, (Matieland, Stellenbosch, SA: EFGA, 2004), 68–69.

<sup>26</sup> "Integrated Curriculum: definition, benefits, and examples". [Online]. Available: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/integrated-curriculum-definition-benefits-examples.html> [8 June 8 2020].

However, over the years, the challenge that Christians, particularly in the West have had and continue to have is the Enlightenment celebration of human reason and logic and its disconnection from Christian faith. In other words, the discovery of scientific and technological powers over nature by humans caused Christians to leave reason and logic to the scientists and only pursue faith, resulting in the creation of a dichotomy between secular and sacred spheres. To rediscover the connection between the sacred and the secular will necessitate the inclusion of public theology in our quest to integrate African theological educational curricula.

Integration is our Christian badge. As the German theologian, Jurgen Moltmann aptly argues, “There is no Christian identity without public relevance, and no public relevance without theology’s Christian identity, since for Christ’s sake theology is kingdom-of-God ...”<sup>27</sup> Similarly, he argued that by virtue of Jesus’ declaration (Mt 28:18–19), public theology has always been in existence since the beginning of the mission of God in the world. However, it has not been critically paid attention to nor critically thought through by this generation Christian theologians, particularly in Africa. Public theology must be seen as worthy of being considered as part of an integrated curriculum in our theological seminaries across the continent. Given the socio-political, socioeconomic, sociocultural and spiritual challenges facing our continent today, public theology now demands an explicit integration. Christ’s declaration in Matthew 28:18-19 demands integrative theology, which public theology offers. As Moltmann puts it, public theology is the theological enterprise that gets us profoundly and actively involved in the public affairs of our God-given society. Specifically speaking, public theology helps Christians to think about “what is of general concern in the light of hope in Christ for the kingdom of God.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, in its quest to disciple all spheres of a nation,

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<sup>27</sup> Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 1.

public theology pays critical attention to the matters of love, justice, human rights and tries to reposition and transform systemic socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-religious injustices by replacing them with justice that serves the common good of all.

## **A narrative of Nigerian seminaries: The implication of integrating Public Theology in their curricula**

The dichotomy between faith and reason emerged with the separation between evangelism and social action, particularly during the 20th century social gospel crisis. Consequently, many evangelical theological institutions focus today on training men and women who will go out and evangelise an unsaved world, plant churches and pastor already established churches and/or lead new or established ministries. They rarely see any connection between evangelism and social action. As a result, they are not able to (like Ronald J. Sider says in *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), hold evangelism and social action in total balance. Today, however, there is a gradual paradigm shift. Things are beginning to take dramatically new shape in theological education. We now have theological institutions in Nigeria, for example, that are making intentional effort to bridge the gap between evangelism and social action and collapse the sacred-secular divide. These institutions realised that the church's vocation is fundamentally twofold: saving souls and saving minds (or transforming minds for holistic development of society.) For instance, about three to four years ago, ECWA Theological Seminary, Kagoro (ETSK) in Kaduna State, where I was the President for six years; and Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) Bukuru, in Plateau State separately saw the need to take public theology seriously. So, they have now included public theology in their curricula from the master's to the PhD levels. This is a very important development. They realised that theological institutions have not been making the deep impact in our society that they have the potential of making because they have curricula that do not integrate public theology or have no public outlook. Consequently, these institutions



decided that they will have to produce graduates whose theological reflection will move out from academic circles into the streets and engage in robust discussions about the marketplace – indeed, the whole gamut of moral, social, economic, and political, spheres of human endeavours . With this new theological key, the prophetic voice that is much desired in a continent of systemic injustice, economic exploitation and gender abuse and oppression will be heard. As a result, the ordinary Christians that we disciple in our local churches will have a faith that has a public outlook and they will be able to make a deeper impact in their different vocations in the whole of public life.

As ETSK integrated public theology in its curriculum, we have suddenly witnessed unprecedented change in the kind of graduates we produce. Today our graduates are becoming actively and intentionally involved in interfaith dialogue, debate on gender issues, entrepreneurial education, the marketplace, communications (electronic and social media) and so on. Presently, my daughter, Esther Paul Moses, is writing her Master thesis on, Domestic Gender Abuse: The Church’s Inaction at ETSK. Another graduate of ETSK ECWA has successfully established a ministry and counselling programme for community and church youths who are struggling with the challenge of drug addiction. In sum, as the result of integrating public theology in ETSK’s curriculum, we are seeing a whole array of our graduates involved in seeking to transform both church and society.

Therefore, by way of conclusion, I will argue that to succeed in the task of an integrative educational curricula in Africa, we have to take Jesus’ pronouncement seriously: “All authority in heaven and on earth have been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...”<sup>29</sup> The issue of public theology is the issue of looking at ministry from the point of God’s kingdom, God’s reign over all of life, not just the confines of the church walls. For as Moltmann succinctly argued, “Theology has only one problem [concern]: God. We are theologians for God’s sake.

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<sup>29</sup> Matthews 28:18, 19a.

God is our dignity. God is our suffering. God is our hope.”<sup>30</sup> Thus public theology, “As the theology of God’s kingdom [the rule or reign of God], has to be public theology: public, critical and prophetic complaint to God—public, critical and prophetic hope in God. In its public character is constitutive for the theology, for the kingdom of God’s sake.”<sup>31</sup> Jesus Christ, our theological teacher, radically engaged his social context and its political and economic challenges. His approach to ministry was holistic and he has sent the church to disciple all spheres of our nations.

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<sup>30</sup> Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 5.

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