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De-Silencing the Voice of the Christian Teacher via the Societal Curriculum: Applying Lessons towards Solidifying Education and Development in Africa

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Abstract

This study pursued three purposes: Firstly, to discuss what it means for Christian teachers to have a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ's ambassadorial services; secondly, to consider how the silence of Christian teachers in the education system and Public Square of Nigeria is reflecting lack of a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ's ambassadorial services with responsibilities in the education sector; thirdly, to reason-out ways in which the societal curriculum can be deliberately engaged to develop a voice for Christian teachers. The study was done through the documentary research approach component of the historical methodology. The study concludes by noting that Christian teachers have a dual mandate as educationists in Christian-based schools, and also non-Christian schools. It is through this mandate that the voice of Christian teachers in Nigeria can be de-silenced via the societal curriculum, towards solidifying education and transformational development in Nigeria.

Background of the Study

Introduction

This study emerged from a context of hearing the echo of all kinds of voices, many of which claim to be speaking for the good of the African society in the area of education and development. In the middle of such voices, questions

arise as to whether or not Christian teachers, in particular, are voicing out actions towards advancing education and transformational development in various African countries. For example, at the time of writing this paper, the umbrella body of teachers in Nigerian universities, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has been on industrial action for close to eight months, starting from 14th February 2022; are research papers being written from a Christian-based perspective to recommend fresher strategies to address lingering challenges in the Nigerian education system, such as this? In other words, there is a question as to whether or not Christian teachers are speaking at all. Linked to this, there is also a question as to whether or not Christian teachers in Africa are speaking loudly, that is if they are speaking at all; whether or not Christian teachers are speaking loudly enough to be heard; whether or not Christian teachers are being heard by those who need to listen.

A recent curricular matter in Nigeria can be engaged as a miniature example pointing to the questions as to whether or not Christian teachers, in particular, are voicing out actions towards advancing education and transformational development in Africa. It is an example on how all kinds of voices are being raised in the contemporary Nigerian society with a view to consolidating education and transformational development in the country—a country in which Christians in general, but Christian teachers in particular, are also key stakeholders. This is the example: while there are few voices against the re-introduction of “History” as a stand-alone course of study at the basic education level in Nigeria, (which the government terminated over two decades ago), stronger and louder voices are in support of re-introducing it. Some of the official reasons for scrapping “History” as a subject were attributed to lack of teachers of the subject, shrinking job opportunities for graduates of history, and lack of students’ interest on the subject. However, some of the consequences of stopping this subject include the fact that: “To date, Nigeria has no official account of the 1967 to 1970 civil war. The removal has serious bearing on the process of nation building and has continued to widen the gap between the young and the old. Many students are also largely ignorant about Nigeria’s past...” (Adebumiti 2022:2). As at the time of developing this paper, four Southern Nigeria states (Oyo, Ekiti, Lagos and Anambra) have brought back the subject to their primary and secondary schools while no Northern Nigeria state is reported to have done so. Now a question to Christian teachers, as joint-owners of (and key stakeholders in)

Nigeria, is: to which side of history do they belong? In alternative terms, how did Christian teachers in particular spoke or kept silent when the initial decision was processed towards scrapping the subject or how are Christian teachers speaking now as to whether or not it should be reintroduced? This question is significant in view of the fact that scrapping “History” as a subject in Nigerian schools denied learners and citizens the opportunity to know how Christian missions/missionaries, Christian expatriates, and Christian nationalists contributed towards the making of Nigeria in both its pre-amalgamated and post-amalgamated existence. But the question is more noteworthy in view of Christianity being a way of faith with ever-present dimensions of history.

Sequel to the example above, it is notable that questionable involvement of teachers, generally, in unethical conduct in the public square of democracy and governance in Africa is also strengthening the question as to whether or not Christian teachers, in particular, have any impact in such locations. For illustration, it has long been in the Nigerian public domain that a sizeable number of teachers, even those who have attained professorial cadre, (many of whom are also known to be affiliated to Christianity) have facilitated the rigging of elections at all stages of the leadership recruitment process. In a juxtaposed consideration, it would have been a great opportunity for Christian teachers in such situations to be on the side of social-justice, thereby voicing out Christ-like values in the midst of unethical practices in the democratic cosmology.

In a general sense, unethical conduct in the education system (and especially in schools—public, private, Christian, and non-Christian) in Nigeria (although other Africa countries are nto spared) is increasing on an exponential basis, despite the presence of Christian teachers in the system. For instance, it is no longer secret or news that even in many schools where Christian teachers are on the executive seats, there are widespread examination malpractices initiated and/or abetted by the Christian teachers. What is more worrisome is that even some hypothetically Christian schools (whether privately-owned or church-possessed) have become notable centers for all kinds of academic racketeering and examination malpractices, especially with regard to those assessments being administered by the West African Examination Council

(WAEC), and National Examination Council of Nigeria (NECO), just to give an abridged picture.

While the presence of Christian teachers in the Nigerian society is undeniable, it is debatable as to whether such presence constitutes a voice capable of checking or addressing unethical conduct related to education and transformational development in the country. Using a public primary school in Kabene-Surubu zone (a Christian-dominated community in Southern Kaduna State of Nigeria) as a miniature of the larger Nigerian society, in what ways are the Christian teachers in such a school serving as a reference model of professional ethics to other civil servants in the community? In this Kabene-Surubu community, it has been observed to be a regular occurrence for teachers to go to school on an irregular basis, late, close before officially-scheduled times, and even assign unqualified members within their family-and-friends circle to represent them in conducting the teaching process. A few years ago, some teachers like these in Kabene were retrenched from government service under the watch of Mallam Nasir El'rufai, governor of Kaduna State, and being a Muslim, the governor was accused of religious persecution against Christians!

In the face of lack of overwhelming evidence to support that, by virtue of their presence and actions in the education system and Public Square in Nigeria, Christian teachers constitute a voice of reason, authority, order, and leadership, it can be premised that they are generally silent. Christian teachers are silent in the sense that they have conformed to the pattern of the world, thereby questioning their qualification to speak while the world listens. Christian teachers are silent because they are also not proactively confronting the rot in the Nigerian society from a Christian-based educational perspective. In view of this silence, there is a need to initiate actions aimed at encouraging Christian teachers in Nigeria to start speaking with purpose until their voice is heard and becomes effective in integrating education and development in the country. One of such actions is represented by the paper: "De-Silencing the Voice of the Christian Teacher via the Societal Curriculum: Applying Lessons towards Solidifying Education and Development in Nigeria."

De-Silencing the Voice of the Christian Teacher in the Real World

Christian teachers in Africa need to dis-conform to the pattern of the world, and also challenge the accepted norms of contemporary times (Janvier 2005:77), so that their voice can be heard, it can be stated that it is in speaking that they can be real-world problem solvers. The expression “real-world” can be understood in at least four interconnections below.

Firstly, the real world of people is made up of the truly educated people; the phrase “truly educated people” refers to those who are not just educated but have also experienced the saving grace of God, as manifested in Christ Jesus. Christian teachers in this category are people who have experienced the real liberating influence of education and enjoy the freedom of educational exploration which Christ gives. These are teachers whom God uses in bringing change to the world, via the educational process, towards making it free from the bondage of sin and corruption in which it is now.

For the Christian teachers, the meaning of becoming educated definitely supersedes just speaking (in words and actions) towards bringing about sustainable human development to the communities where they reside or wherever developmental challenges exist in the real-world. It involves living a “purpose driven life,” (Warren 2002:Cover Page) as world-class Christians fully committed to the Lordship of Christ, to His call for them to be His agents of positive change in the world, and to the “Master Plan of Evangelism” (Coleman 1993:Cover Page). The desire of every purpose-driven teacher should be to assist the students to learn by applying theories to real-life, as an evidence of having learned. This desire should be stronger in Christian teachers, by virtue of the fact that each individual Christian teacher is called by God to be an “effective minister of education” (Stubblefield 1993:Cover Page) to the students and to the world, with a view to impacting people with the life of Christ.

Secondly, the real-world is also made up of the seemingly educated people; these are people whose educational experiences are limited, so far, only to the realm of God’s common grace; these people are educated but have salvation in Christ (Grudem 1999:274-275). Christian teachers are also

called to serve among (and to) this category of people, whose education is only within the natural realm.

The seemingly educated have no spiritual discernment whatsoever. Their situation is actually pathetic, as noted by Apostle Paul: “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14, NIV). For Christian teachers to serve effectively in the context of this category of people, the Christian teachers concerned need to be aware of the danger of basing educational affairs on theories and principles which have been developed by non-Christian educationists, without any form of filtering. The danger is both clear and present, in the sense that development of biblical values would not form the basis of education.

Thirdly, an immediate aim of education, from a Christian perspective, is to lead people of the world to a true knowledge of God which is a consequence of their having eternal life. Under God’s common grace, “the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation” (Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* 2000:657), a key focus of the Christian teacher in the educational process is to help people to connect to Christ’s salvation, so that they can have enablement of the Holy Spirit to address real-world challenges and to also make positive contribution to the development of the human society. Accordingly, teachers who have experienced God’s saving grace, have a more crucial reason for participating in the educating process—to prepare God’s children for life in the next world, on the other side of eternity. For the Christian teacher, an ultimate significant aim of education is to present every person as a whole in Christ.

Fourthly, the attention of the Christian teacher in the curriculum delivery process, as well as in all matters of education, is really focused on the eternal earth which God will bring into place upon the termination of this present earth. While Christians shall be permanent residents of the real-world that is coming *next*, non-Christians shall experience the other side of eternity in hell, which is the worst place to be. However, it is only in speaking out (in words and actions) that Christian teachers can help make *this* world a better place for all to live profitably, and not be in the semblance of hell on earth. Accordingly,

“men of honour in the public square” (Tushima 2013:1-288) must be produced and empowered to work towards making the world a better place.

Thesis Statement

This study is built on the premise that the silence of Christian teachers in the education system and Public Square of Nigeria reflects lack of a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ’s ambassadorial educational services. As a rejoinder, the societal curriculum can be deliberately engaged to develop a voice for Christian teachers, as well as lessons applicable towards solidifying education and transformational development in Nigeria.

Purpose of Study

This study is being guided by a three point purpose of study. Firstly, the study aims at discussing what it means for Christian teachers to have a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ’s ambassadorial services. Secondly, the study shall also consider how the silence of Christian teachers in the education system and Public Square of Nigeria is reflecting lack of a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ’s ambassadorial services with responsibilities in the education sector. Thirdly, the study shall reason-out ways in which the societal curriculum can be deliberately engaged to develop a voice for Christian teachers, as well as lessons applicable towards solidifying education and transformational development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

In view of the purpose of the study, three research questions are developed. Specifically:

What does it mean for Christian teachers to have a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ’s ambassadorial services?

How does the silence of Christian teachers in the education system and Public Square of Nigeria reflect lack of a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ’s ambassadorial educational services?

In what ways can the societal curriculum be deliberately engaged to develop a voice for Christian teachers, as well as lessons applicable towards solidifying education and transformational development in Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

This study is designed to benefit teachers in two ways. Firstly, the study is designed to serve as a basis for Christian teachers to have a refreshed look of themselves as people whom God has called to serve as His voice of reason, order, authority, and leadership in a chaotic Nigerian society. By this look, Christian teachers cannot afford to withdraw themselves from providing direction in the education system in particular, or the public square in general. Secondly, the study will provide Christian teachers with practical strategies that can be corporately applied towards enhancing their participation as proactive agents of education and general human development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework for De-Silencing the Voice of Christian Teachers

This study is being principled on the framework that the speaking action of Christian teachers is intricately connected to their call and sanctification by Christ for the purpose of engaging them individually and corporately, in His ambassadorial services in the world, particularly as educationists, and generally as His agents of transformational change in the Public Square. As John Stott would put it, as members of the Church, Christian teachers (like all Christians in a general sense) have been called to “Holy-Worldliness”, which is an expression of the double identity of the Church (Stott 1992:242-245). Based on this identity, Christian teachers are called to be holy, yet “worldly” in the sense that Christian teachers have a responsibility of being immersed in the life of the world in all ramifications of the interconnection between education and development, for the purpose of influencing the world, yet without being soiled or swayed by the world. The Christian, Christian teacher specifically, has been *saved* from the world and also *sent* into the world: Mark 16:15, John 17:6–20). Consequently, it is possible for the Christian teacher to facilitate effective change both in the education system and in the larger society, as a result of having personally experienced a radical change in Christ.

Limitation and Delimitations of Study

Limitations

The need to develop this paper was generated by an invitation by a body of students in the education discipline, at a seminary in Nigeria, who requested the researcher to write a paper that addressed the silence of Christian teachers in the Nigerian educational system. Apart from the fact that the invitation did not come at a time long enough for the researcher to explore more areas of concern to the paper, the researcher also went through some health-related challenges that limited him to only a few areas of exploration. Although these limitations did not affect the overall quality of the paper, they constraint the researcher to focus more on documentary research; otherwise, the researcher would have loved to engage in more extensive qualitative studies on the issues surrounding the silence or not of Christian teachers in the Nigerian education system and the Public Square.

Delimitations

Firstly, the study relates only to people called by Christ to service as Christian educationists and/or trained Christian teachers who regularly function in the formal curriculum delivery system, and who engage the societal curriculum either regularly or irregularly in order to support formal curricular goals. By this understanding, this paper is also concerned with Christians who, for various reasons, have found themselves in teaching services although they may not be trained teachers, professional teachers, or Christian educationists, bur who (nevertheless) have become active and direct participants in delivering the formal curriculum in Africa. Secondly, Nigeria and the Nigerian education system are used to constitute an example applicable to Africa. The choice of Nigeria is based on the fact that it is the most populous country in Africa, which also has a very large educational system that can be used to reflect the situation in many African countries, most immediately countries in West Africa.

Operational Definition of Terms

This study defines six operational terms towards providing a better working guide to comprehending it. A conceptual approach is used to define these

terms: Education, Curriculum, Societal Curriculums, Christian Teacher, Development, and Transformational Development.

Education. This term is defined from the perspective of the concern and goals of education, and in formal and non-formal sense. Its definition taken from a fairly recent training document developed by a leader in the field of education in Nigeria. Accordingly:

The primary concern of the process of education is more about the cultivation of learning and character than about the acquisition of specific facts, figures, and theories. The ultimate goal of education consists in the imbibing of the orientation toward and the ongoing development of understanding (of the social, physical, and spiritual worlds) and the making of sound judgment (based on knowledge gained) for living in ways that are beneficial to oneself and one's world. Education, understood in this way takes place both in formal and non-formal settings. A major objective of education, therefore, should be that of providing the right environment and relationships for learning to be cultivated (Tushima 2021:1-8).

Curriculum. This is a term with both prescriptive and descriptive dimensions (Ellis 2004:1-148). Firstly, the term "Curriculum" can be defined *prescriptively*, which is a statement of what "ought" to occur as evidencing the kind of deliberately planned learning experiences that are envisioned and mandated for the student to go through. This statement generally applies to formal teaching-learning processes in which experts in curriculum or a curricular authority decides for the learner what knowledge is worth knowing; it is a pre-existent master-map or a blueprint determined to delimit the formal process of learning, which teachers are assigned to implement. Secondly, the term "curriculum" can be defined *descriptively*. This is a statement of the reality of how things are, not how they ought to be or how they are mandated or influenced (or even "manipulated") to be. In other words, any occurrence that results in immediate or subsequent learning, whatever kind that learning may be, is qualified as curriculum.

For the purpose of this paper, the curriculum shall be defined as made up of both prescriptive and descriptive qualities. Accordingly, “The curriculum can be said to be all the experiences for which the school or education system accepts or assigns to itself direct responsibility; learning still goes on in the daily realities of the student outside the predefined package of learning the formal curriculum is responsible for” (ECWAPECC 2021:5-6). This view allows curriculum to be further considered as a prescription for learning by which learners are guided to reactively, actively, proactively, and interactively respond to the constant experience and imprinting of God’s truth in their lives (Deuteronomy 6:1-9) as well as in the reality which God has created for humans and which exists irrespective of the formal curriculum (ECWAPECC 2021:5-6), “For in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:18, NIV).

Societal Curriculum. This curriculum acknowledges the existence of other facilitators of learning within the larger society, which can be within the education system or outside the formal schooling or formal curriculum system. For example: the Nigeria Bar Association, Nigeria Union of Journalists, or other civil society organizations can be creators of the societal curriculum. In other words, the societal curriculum is being defined operationally as this: “The massive, on-going, informal curriculum of family, peer groups, neighbourhoods, church organizations, occupations, mass-media, and other forces of socialization. These agencies of socialization play a significant role in educating all of us throughout our lives (Dogara 2018:64).

Christian Teacher. For the purposes of this paper, the definition of the term “Christian teacher” is being anchored on the Christian theological foundations of education, based on which what constitutes qualification items of a Christian teacher. It should be noted that Christian teachers have a dual mandate: to serve as a teachers in Christian-based schools as well as in non-Christian schools; the qualification of a Christian teacher also covers this duality of service. In consequence, three areas of qualification are mentioned below.

Firstly, the Christian teacher needs to be truly Christian. To be a Christian is for one to have experienced God’s saving grace in Christ. All other qualities necessary for one to be considered as a Christian teacher are dependent on this particular experience of salvation in Christ, who is the only way, the truth,

and the life. While people follow as many ways as they choose for the purpose of achieving salvation, the Christian teacher staunchly pledges allegiance only to Christ: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

It is true that many people profess to be Christians while, in fact, they are not. The world, based on various non-biblical criteria, also considers many people as Christians, while, in fact, they are not. Only Christian teachers, who are qualified as such from a biblical standpoint, are Christians in the true sense of the word. The only way teachers can have a basis upon which to impact the life of Christ to others around them, at school, or to the society at large, is by being Christians in the true sense of the word.

The Christian church today is, (unfortunately) in many instances engaging in practices which encourage a false sense of salvation. By being involved in such practices, the Christian church is making it possible to have people who bear Christian identity, in the outward sense, but who are not Christians in fact. For example, people are being baptized for having made a "profession" of Christ acceptable to a church concerned; but in reality, some churches are only interested in adding what it considers as "committed" members to their membership roll. In other instances, such baptisms are done in order to allow intending couples to get married in the church, or to make it possible for members to be elected or appointed to church leadership positions, or simply for the minister to have something to satisfy himself or show as progress report to his superiors, or for handing over purposes from one minister to the other. The church, as made of those who subscribe to the basic tenets of evangelical Christianity, needs to call itself to order, so as to address nominalism in Christianity. Moreover, this call to order should help in ensuring that those who represent Christ in non-Christian schools, and indeed all educational establishments, are truly known by Christ. Otherwise, it would be necessary for Christ to deny them at a future day of judgment, just as He said He would do: "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matt 7:22-23, NIV). This pronouncement will not apply to those who are Christians indeed.

Secondly, the Christian teacher needs to have the spiritual gift of teaching. This simply refers to possessing a special ability, not just to teach the Bible but other areas of knowledge, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Teaching is one of the key gifts of the Holy Spirit, clearly stated in many Biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 12:28. It is not enough for those who would teach in schools to possess just academic and professional qualifications—it is also necessary for them to possess the gift of teaching as provided by the Holy Spirit; otherwise, their services as teachers would amount to functioning in services and locations contrary to the directions of the Holy Spirit and the purposes of God for the advancement of his kingdom. The spiritual gift of teaching is given for a specific purpose:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11-13).

Even in non-Christian schools the Christian teacher is still representing Christ and his church. Hence, it is needful for the teacher to be spiritually gifted in teaching.

Thirdly, the Christian needs to be someone who has answered the call to the teaching profession. It is one thing for someone to possess, and to be conscious of possessing, the spiritual gift of teaching, and it is quite another entirely to *agree* to be a teacher and be really committed to teaching. To agree to be a teacher is to answer the call to teaching.

There are many Christian people who have the spiritual gift of teaching but who, for various reasons, have *refused* to be teachers. A key reason for refusing to be teachers, especially in developing societies such as Nigeria, has to do with unsatisfactory conditions of service and welfare in the Nigerian education system. On the other hand, there are Christians in Nigeria who are not spiritually gifted to teach, but who—as a result of desperation for employment or lack of understanding of the meaning of spiritual gift—are *joining* the teaching service. It is also unfortunate, that a large number of

Christians in teaching services in both Christian-based educational establishments and non-Christian-based educational establishments are failing to teach with this divine consciousness: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Col 3:23-24). Christian teachers who teach without recognizing Christ as the most important authority over them are actually rendering a disservice to the cause of Christ (Dogara 2016:50-53).

Development. The term development has different connotations to different categories of people. Politicians, economists, sociologists, environmentalists, ecologists, psychologists, communists, capitalists, scientists, and a host of others describe it from their own professional or ideological perspectives. However, a great number of literatures prefer to describe the term as “a process of changing and becoming larger, stronger or more impressive, successful or advanced, or of causing somebody or something to change in this way” (NOUN 2017:2). This process is viewed in terms of per-capita income, structural transformation, socio-economic and environmental capacity building, and whatever resources can be engaged by the society towards fulfilling its aspirations.

From the perspective of a political state, development refers to: “changes that result to positive benefits to the generality of the citizens and other residents of a country/community/town. It is the ability of a country/town to improve the standard of living, security and welfare of its people” (NOUN 2017:2). In countries such as Nigeria, the ability to improve to the desired standard is dependent on whether or not the government is fulfilling its primary purpose of existence, which is ensuring the security and welfare of the people (Nigeria 1999:Section 14). It is expected that, if the government (Nigerian government in this case) is able to fulfill its primary purpose, the people, from whom government is supposed to derive its authority and power, shall be effective participants in making development possible at personal, community, and national levels.

For the purposes of this paper, several caveats to the term “development” need to be noted as a step in delimiting its engagement. Bryant Myers notes some of these limitations (Myers 2011:3). Apart from the term being heavily

loaded with past meanings, many people look at the term in material sense; the term is wrongly considered as material change, owning more material possessions, or social change in the material world. There are many others who consider the term as being synonymous to Westernization or modernization. There are people, too, who view development, simply as an antonymous term to poverty. Brian E. Woolnough also notes that some Western perspectives on development are misconceptions (Woolnough 2014:2-4). Some Westerners see development as a way of helping underdeveloped or developing regions of the world, such as Africa, to “catch-up” with the West; this has, in many instances, brought about the transfer of vast amounts of money from the more developed countries to the less developed ones. Some people in the world (and even in Africa) consider development as helping individuals to become either richer or less materially poor.

Sequel to limitations concerning engaging the term “development” there are also hindrances associated with the use of the term. If development is about improving the quality of human life, it is evident that some people or humans in some societies enjoy high quality of life while the life of those in some other societies can simply be described as deplorable. Consequently, the question arises: what is hindering development? Woolnough has provided an appropriate Christian perspective in response to this question: “The reasons for the perseverance of such inequalities are many and complex. They include bad governance, corruption and mismanagement in receptor countries, unjust financial systems imposed by donor countries, lack of political will by governments and people, civil wars within countries, money given with inappropriate conditions attached to vested interests, inhospitable physical and climatic conditions, especially with climate changes, and indifference, selfishness and sin throughout the world” (Woolnough 2014:2-4). Woolnough also notes commentaries which indicate situations where aid from the “developed” world has, consequent upon inefficient usage [and corruption], has become “positively detrimental” or done more harm than good to the developing nations; many evidences attest to such aid causing dependency, bad governance, and actively replacing and/or preventing indigenous development. Even Christians, acting based on the best possible motives, have at many times only succeeded in producing a situation when helping hurts (Woolnough 2014:2-4). These hindrances can be addressed through transformational development.

Transformational Development. The term “Transformational Development” is a fusion of two terms: transformation (changing the condition, nature, function, and form of an existing situation) and development. The term “Transformational Development” came into currency consequent upon the need to address the deficiency in the term “development.” Myers’ definition, which is the most commonly referenced source for the concept of transformational development, describes from a Christian perspective as: “the process that helps people to discover their true identity as children of God and to recover their true vocation as faithful and productive stewards of gifts from God for the well-being of all. Transformational development is seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially, and spiritually” (Rahschulte 2010:199-208). Myers sees transformational development as a deliberately-planned never-ending process involving everyone towards enhancing human life and community progress, enabling people-one and all-to find and enjoy quality life as it should be, and as God intended it to be, and as people on the way to recovering their true identity as human beings created in the image of God.

Christian Philosophy of Education versus Philosophy of Christian Education. The phrase “Christian-based education” is used in this document as a term encapsulated in the definition of Christian Philosophy of Education. But the expression “Philosophy of Christian Education” is considered as the term within which Sunday-school, Bible studies, and other Christian nurturing activities within the church and/or para-church bodies (although this study is not primarily concerned with these activities and bodies) are encapsulated. In other words: While Christian philosophy of education concerns itself with education in a wide-ranging sense notwithstanding the terminology (“sacred” or “secular”), philosophy of Christian education contracts education strictly and traditionally to Christian organizations, church educational ministries, Christian family ministries, Christian specialized ministries, para-church agencies, and other Christian nurturing ministries (ECWAPECC 2022:6-7).

Methodology and Procedure of Study

Methodology of Study.

This study engages primary documents, on the basis of the documentary research approach component of the historical methodology. The primary documents in this case are the various passages of the Bible where original words of Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul were recorded verbatim. These passages are considered as constituting primary data for the research.

A hermeneutical strategy is employed in studying and interpreting the data; it is a strategy that moves back and forth within and between the parts and the whole of the Biblical passages in a manner that connects their context, structure, and interpretation to the research questions. This strategy allows investigating, identifying, categorizing, analyzing, and interpreting data from the written texts concerned (Bible passages) and, where necessary, other primary documents and documentary sources that contain information about the event being examined. For efficiency, surgical (not necessarily comprehensive) extractions are made from each passage or set of passages which constitute the data.

For this study, the Biblical texts from Matthew 5:13-16, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Acts 1:8, Romans 12:2, 2 Timothy 1:7, Ephesians 5:15-16, John 3:16 were specifically engaged to generate data for the study. The original words of Jesus Christ are found in Matthew and John, while those of Apostle Paul are found in other passages. Accordingly, inferences are made from the passages in a manner relevant to advancing the purpose of the study. Note that the logic behind the choice of these passages is that direct words of Jesus Christ and apostle Paul are relevant for generating data in so much as they are within (and supportive of) the conceptual framework for the study and can be used, if necessary, to address other passages that might appear opposed to this logic should an oral presentation of this study be needed in due course.

Procedure of Study

The study is being undertaken as a four-step process. Firstly, a general idea of the direction of the study has been provided in the background above.

Secondly, this step (methodology and procedure of study) is designed to connect the background of the study with the main body of the study. Thirdly, presentation and analysis of data constituted the discussion of the study; of course, the discussion proceeds as guided by the three research questions developed for the study. Fourthly, the study is summarized through a conclusion within which recommendations are encapsulated via lessons extracted from the discussion, applicable towards solidifying education and transformational development in Nigeria.

Presentation of Results and Discussion of Research Questions

Understanding the Call to Christ's Ambassadorial Services

Research Question 1: What does it mean for Christian teachers to have a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ's ambassadorial services?

Presentation of Data: Matthew 5:13-16

Verse 13: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. Verse 14: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Verse 15: Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. Verse 16: In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (NIV).

Analysis of Data

Jesus Christ here uses two metaphors "salt" and "light" to describe His disciples.

Verse 13:

Being salt is a present reality, you "are".

The basic quality of salt is in “saltiness”, it is in having “saltiness” that salt is useful in a positive way “good”. In New Testament times, salt was “a seasoning and key preserving element and highly valued” (Zondervan 2014:4323).

It is when the salt is “good” that it can have “saltiness” or be useful.

It is possible for salt to have the texture of salt, but without the “saltiness” of salt, which means it has expired. When it has expired, it has gone through an irreversible process “how can it be made salty again?” At this point, it can only be “thrown out and trampled underfoot”; by application, “Jesus’ point here is that if his disciples are to fail they should then be as worthless as refuse” (Herbert W. Basser and Marsha B. Cohen 2015:130)

Verse 14:

Being light is a present reality, you “are”.

Light does not light “light!” It is to light “others” (verse 16) as a way of consolidating all lights to light the “world”. For the world to be lighted, it is darkness.

Just like a “town built on a hill cannot be hidden”, it is not possible to hide light.

Verse 15:

For light to shine, it cannot be blocked with obstacles “bowl” that would stop or limit it from doing so.

For the light to shine, it must be put in the appropriate place, “stand”.

One lamp can only light “everyone in the house” but not everywhere in the “world” (verse 14). As many lamps as possible are needed in order to be “the light of the world” (verse 14).

Verse 16:

What you are “you are the light” (verse 14) is different from what you do, “your good deeds.”

The aim of shining the light is not so that “everyone in the house” (verse 15) would see you, but so that they can see “your good deeds” as those good deeds direct their focus to “glorify your Father in heaven.”

In Response to Research Question

The call to Christian teachers as Christ ambassadors is to be “good” wherever they are in the education system; they should not outlive their usefulness in any situation. The education system should taste better wherever Christian teachers are found, their “saltiness” should be evident in their communication and action.

The call to Christian teachers as Christ ambassadors requires them to be found in dark places of schools and the education system (for example: in the midst of financial corruption, admission racketeering, bureaucratic injustice, and inefficient service delivery) where their good deeds would be illuminated by the light for the world to see and glorify God.

Element of Silence in Misunderstanding the Call to Christ’s Ambassadorial Services

Research Question 2: How does the silence of Christian teachers in the education system and Public Square of Nigeria reflect lack of a comprehensive working grasp of their calling to Christ’s ambassadorial educational services?

Presentation of Data: 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Verse 18: All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: Verse 19: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. Verse 20: We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (NIV).

Analysis of Data

Christians are mandated by God with the “ministry of reconciliation” (verse 18).

The specific instruction for those involved in the ministry of reconciliation is to deliver “the message of reconciliation” (verse 19).

The contents of the message of reconciliation are these: “that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them” (verse 19).

Having been sent by God with a message of reconciliation, “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors” (verse 20).

In Response to Research Question

When Christians in general, but Christian teachers in particular, are silent, in situations whereby their voices need to be heard in the education system and Public Square, (for example: when Christians are denied promotions and appointments to senior positions) it would amount to failure in their duty as Christ ambassadors called to serve in Nigeria.

The primary allegiance of Christian teachers in schools, education system and Public Square of Nigeria should be to Christ, whose ambassadors they are. For example: primarily Christian teachers are on Christ’s ambassadorial services, while they may be on government civil service secondarily.

Developing a Voice for Christian Teachers via the Societal Curriculum

Research Question 3: In what ways can the societal curriculum be deliberately engaged to develop a voice for Christian teachers, as well as lessons applicable towards solidifying education and transformational development in Nigeria?

Presentation of Data: Acts 1:8, Romans 12:2, 2 Timothy 1:7, Ephesians 5:15-16, John 3:16

Acts 1:8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (NIV).

Romans 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (NIV).

2 Timothy 1:7: For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Ephesians 5:15-16:

Verse 15: Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, Verse 16: making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. (NIV).

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (NIV).

Analysis of Data

The power to be witnesses is accessible to all on whom the Holy Spirit has come (Acts 1:8).

Christians have a command to be different from the world (Romans 12:2), but to also seek to transform it by being transformed people, this is possible through a continuous renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2).

The Spirit God gives bestows “power” on those who, otherwise, would be “timid” or fearful or shy (2 Timothy 1:7)

The wisdom in the life of circumspection is revealed in efficient utilization of prospects, which “making the most of every opportunity”. Such carefulness is necessary because “the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16). In response, what is required is “discerning and acting upon all too scarce opportunities for good and the gospel in the midst of lives which are all too pressurized and constricted” (Dunn 2007:1176).

God's love is an expression of His perfect unselfishness, on the basis of which “He gave his one and only Son” to the world (John 3:16).

In Response to Research Question

Christian teachers, like other Christians, must be different from the world, although seeking to transform it by being transformed people. In furtherance of this, Christian teachers must be proactively involved in the affairs of the world (for example: starting from active campus unionism and/or governance matters of education students, in teachers' unionism, in party politics, in the electoral processes and officiating, in public affairs, in civil society organizations, and in organizing community actions for social change), yet without being tainted by the world. Christian teachers must be "Holy-worldly" teachers (Stott 1992:242-245), having been called by Christ from the world, and also sent back into the world to disciple all nations.

Christian teachers must also be involved in all educational areas empowered by the Holy Spirit, using the Bible as their primary constitutional authority. That means, unless otherwise instructed by the Bible, there should be no "no-go" (forbidden) areas for Christian teachers to explore with the aim of expanding their influence and consolidating their voices. For example, Christians called to Christ's service as educationists in Nigeria should proactively insert themselves in areas which, ordinarily, they are usually not interested: Arabic language education, Hausa language education, political science education, security studies and education, international relations and education, history and education, and other academic disciplines that are capable of solidifying the voice of the Christian teachers in Nigeria. This kind of proactivity is called for as a way of efficiently utilizing every opportunity to advance the cause of Christ, and to challenge the days that are becoming more evil against the Christian faith.

Since Christian teachers are engaged in the service of a global God, they have no option but to be "world-class Christians." World-class Christians are the only fully alive people in the world, who function with full awareness that they are saved by a global God in order to serve a global cause (Warren 189-193:PDF). While the world is constantly changing, although under the sovereignty of a changeless God, those on Christ's ambassadorial services as teachers and/or educationists must be contemporary Christians.

Conclusion

As noted previously in line with the procedures for this study, the paper would be concluded by pooling together items already presented consequent upon extracting lessons drawn from the presentation, to form the recommendations from the study. These lessons are basically drawn from an earlier notation that Christian teachers have a dual mandate as educationists in Christ's ambassadorial services: to serve as a teachers in Christian-based schools as well as in non-Christian schools. Consequent upon this dual mandate, the voice of Christian teachers in Africa can be de-silenced via the societal curriculum, towards solidifying education and transformational development in Nigeria as summarized below.

First: Recommendations for Christian Teachers: Teaching in Christian-Based Schools.

This five-point recommendation condenses lessons in expression of the first mandate of the Christian teacher. The lessons concern teaching in Christian-based schools.

Christian teachers in Christian-based schools are mandated to train people who will become the salt of the world and be effective as agents of change wherever they find themselves in the society. These teachers are involved in training Christian people who will become ministers of God's common grace to the world in need of experiencing God's saving grace.

Christian teachers in Christian-based schools are to work at presenting every person complete in Christ. This mandate basically concerns learners who are already recognized as Christians. The focus is to help learners to have effective experience of progressive sanctification as they move towards conforming to the image of Christ. Hence, the need for Christian teachers to be people who are also growing towards ultimate sanctification.

Christian teachers in Christian-based schools are to equip the saints—that is Christian learners—for various works of service of Christ in the church or in representation of Christ and his church. Consequently, when Christian teachers engage in various aspects of curriculum delivery at all levels, they

should do so for the purpose of equipping Christian people for various works of Christ's service in both the Church and the society.

Christian teachers in Christian-based schools are to train people who will be involved in Christ's ambassadorial services, especially in missions and evangelism. All Christians, having already being reconciled to God, are Christ's ambassadors to the world: "He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Cor. 5:19-20). In line with this ambassadorial mandate, Christian teachers have a duty to present the message of Christ's redemption to those learners who do not have a personal saving relationship with Christ, with a view to leading them to a point whereby they will come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Christian teachers in Christian-based schools are to teach guided by Christian philosophy of education. This means the centrality of the Scripture—the compendium of sixty-six books recognized by the evangelicals—must be affirmed in Christian schools; all Scripture must be taken as preeminent and sufficient for Christian life and practice, as well as authoritative over all educative purposes. Accordingly, Christian worldview must be deliberately emphasized in Christian-based education.

Second: Recommendations for Christian Teachers: Teaching in Non-Christian-Based Schools.

This five-point recommendation condenses lessons in expression of the second mandate of the Christian teacher. The lessons concern teaching in non-Christian-based schools.

Christian teachers are under a biblical mandate to see themselves as "salt" in the non-Christian-based schools they find themselves. As beneficiaries of God's saving grace, they are also ministers of God's common grace in the educational situation they find themselves in. Accordingly, Christian teachers need to be models of truth, effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, creativity, and excellence, in the non-Christian-based educational contexts they are called by God to serve.

Christian teachers in non-Christian-based schools are mandated to be evangelistic in focus. Christian teachers in such contexts need to go about their teaching services with a view to attracting non-Christians in the school to a point whereby they can experience the saving grace of God. In doing so, they would be acting in compliance to this injunction given by Christ: “let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:16). Obedience to this injunction will also serve in attracting non-Christians to the message of God’s redemption in Christ Jesus.

Christian teachers in non-Christian-based schools are also under mandate to act in ways necessary for people to have a greater consciousness of God’s common grace in their lives and the larger global society. Consequently, as they facilitate the learning process among non-Christian students, they should do so praying and trusting that God, by virtue of his common grace, will be pleased to use them in facilitating positive change wherever they find themselves in the society. Christian teachers in this situation need to base their teaching on an understanding that God will, ultimately, use the education acquired by non-Christians for the good of his children, and for the advancement of his purposes.

Christian teachers in non-Christian-based educational contexts need to also be models of how people who have experienced God’s saving grace are supposed to act in non-Christian-based affairs of the human society. Christian teachers concerned, need to be models to learners who are Christians, but who—for one reason or the other—are studying in non-Christian-based educational contexts. In essence, the Christian teachers concerned provide leadership for the Christian community of learners in the non-Christian-schools or establishments concerned. To facilitate the achievement of this mandate, Christian teachers need to be actively involved in such programs as the Fellowship of Christian Students (for example: in Nigerian secondary schools), and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (for example in tertiary schools across Africa).

Christian teachers in non-Christian educational contexts need to demonstrate a deep ability to evaluate non-Christian educational affairs from the perspective of biblically based hermeneutical foundations. They need to be people who understand the world as well as the Word. As such, while teaching

guided by a national policy and curriculum of education, the understanding of the Christian teacher on any such policy or curriculum should be guided by a clear Christian philosophy of education.

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