
The Role of Christian Education in Building Skills and Instilling Moral Values among Students in Higher Ed Institutions for National Unity and Economic Advancement in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Education is more than the acquisition of knowledge. There are people in society who have acquired expertise but lack the character and skills to impact their community effectively. This situation has distorted national unity and lowered economic growth. “African graduates, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, are victims of frequent ethnic conflicts, corruption, nepotism and industries dependent on outdated technology with low returns and low productivity” (Kigotho 2019). Many students graduate from higher ed institutions to cause unrest in their country because of a lack of skills and morals. To revolutionize the education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa requires an integration of biblical principles in the teaching and learning process to build skills and character for national advancement. The approach used in this paper is library research through critical analysis of empirical studies and library resources, both primary and secondary sources, to describe the phenomenon under study.

Introduction

This paper aims to examine the role of Christian education in imparting knowledge, skill acquisition, and morals in higher education for students' preparedness for national unity and economic advancement. In addition, the aim is to restate the need for the development of a Christian philosophy of education in higher ed institutions through the integration of biblical principles in the teaching and learning process, which helps transform the lives of students to be relevant in society.

The Concept of Christian Education

Christian education recognizes the role of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in the educational process. God is the source of all knowledge; he deserves to be honored. In obedience to His word, an educator lives a life of integrity and serves as a role model to students. They impart knowledge, skills, and values that model student

character to become good citizens of their countries. According to Anthony,

Christian education is steeped in misunderstanding and misconception. Part of the reason for this is the multidisciplinary nature of the field. Its foundation is biblical studies and theology, but it seeks to integrate them with the knowledge gleaned from the social sciences: education, sociology, and psychology. Studying Christian education gives a biblical perspective on how God created us to learn and interact together. With these insights, we are able to more strategically fulfill the Great Commission. (Anthony 2001, 13)

An obvious misconception on Christian education is the dichotomy between Christian education and education in general. Education is holistic. It includes acquiring knowledge, skills, and values that impact students with relevant aptitude to be competent in their area of expertise to contribute positively to national development in their respective countries. This article has used the term Christian education to mean

education that applies Christian values in teaching in higher ed institutions. “Christian values are the principles that a follower of Jesus Christ holds as important—the principles of life that Jesus taught. Christian values don’t change over time. They are consistent from generation to generation since their foundation is found in God’s Word, the Bible” (Compassion International 2021).

In a practical sense, Christian values involve loving God and doing his will as a child of God in an educational setting. It includes respect for human dignity, love, care for students and colleagues, and harmony fostering unity and peace among the learning community. Christian educators participate in the mission of God by their character and the services they render to the community; they become light and salt that brightens and seasons a decaying society into a good and prosperous society. A study was conducted among students in higher education to determine students’ perceptions about an effective teacher. Students who participated in the study included students from Africa. The following is the outcome:

- “She was always prepared.”
- “He was very positive.”
- “She had high expectations for me!”
- “She was the most creative teacher I have ever had!”
- “He was so fair!”
- “I liked her personal touch!”
- “I felt that I was a part of the class.”
- “She showed me compassion when my mother died.”
- “He was so funny!” . . . “She taught her class in a fun way.”
- “I was never bored in his class.”
- “He gave all the students respect and never embarrassed me in front of the class.”
- “She did not hold what I did against me!” (Walker 2008, 63)

An effective teacher is a person of good morals and skill in their teaching engagement. These play a vital role in instilling skills and modelling for students character for national development in their respective countries. The fear of God will enable a teacher not to violate work ethics but maintain good working relationships with fellow colleagues and students as they teach. They give quality time to study hard to offer

quality education that develops students’ skills and instills knowledge that lasts for a long time.

Learning can also be achieved through observation. Students observe teachers and learn from them. They know the teachers that are effective in their teaching engagement. Imagine what happens when teachers do not have good morals as they interact with students daily; how will student lives be shaped positively to make a notable impact in society? Hughes illustrates the point saying,

The term Christian Education does not indicate that the content of religious education is Christianity (though it may be), nor that the explicit aim is the nurturing of Christian faith (though it may have that consequence for some pupils). It does indicate that the character of the school, or more particularly the values generally upheld in it, are Christian values, albeit of a fairly elementary kind (e.g., about commitment to honesty and the care of individuals). (Hughes 1992, 112)

Christian education is holistic because it holds firmly to Christian values of honesty, love for humanity, diligence in service, and building a community of learners to impact society positively. Quantitative research was conducted at River State Universities, Nigeria to determine the causes and effects of academic corruption in higher education. The study revealed that corruption is common among lecturers, administrators, parents, and students. The causes of corruption include poor study habits and poor entry qualifications to higher education. The effects of corruption lead to low morals, delayed absorption of graduates into the labor market, and poor quality of university graduates (Dimkpa 2011).

Corruption in higher education is a global problem that comes in different forms, such as politicians interfering with university functions to receive unearned degrees to run for political office. Also, academic dishonesty is exhibited by lecturers when they award degrees to students who have not completed their course requirements. Some students pay lecturers to pass their examination while some lecturers demand sex from female students in exchange for success in their studies. Students plagiarize their research projects. Plagiarism has become a routine practice in higher education (Kirya 2019). Teachers in higher education should be people with good morals and skills in their teaching engagement. They play a vital role in modelling

students' character, and that affects national development in their respective countries. Educational administrators should be men and women of integrity, void of corruption, so that funds allotted for education infrastructure are used appropriately for suitable space for students' learning.

Christian education integrates biblical principles in the teaching and learning processes. It equips students with basic knowledge in their studies, develops their skills, and instills values that help improve the economy and build students' character to become good citizens. Education is a medium through which national unity can be maintained among people of different ethnicities. In modern society, a school is a place for acquiring new ideas and knowledge. Datta indicates that, "Education contributes to the political socialization of a child which transmits certain values, beliefs, ideas, and patterns of behavior in a child" (Datta 1984, 38). In response to Datta's point, it is essential to note that Christian education contributes immensely to adult political socialization regarding developing skills and instilling values that build character.

According to Bastable, "Three major stage-range factors associated with learner readiness—physical, cognitive, and psychosocial maturation—must be taken into account at each developmental period throughout the life cycle" (Bastable 2017, 2). Higher ed institutions deal with adult learners. Adult physical maturation has already been reached because they have experienced biological growth from childhood to adulthood. On the cognitive aspect, they have received some knowledge that they continue to nurture through learning. Subsequently, psychosocial maturation combines psychology and social behavior, determined through social affiliation with different people. Adult learning focuses on life tasks and social roles concerning employment, family, and other activities.

The prime motivator to learn in adulthood is to apply knowledge and skills to solve the immediate problem of national development. At the beginning of any teaching-learning encounter, adults want to know the benefit of the teaching experience because they have rich resource information based on prior knowledge. Thus, they are more practical, multi-tasking, and self-confident. A Christian philosophy of education can expose students to a rich learning experience where they develop their skills and learn values that can build their character.

The Problem of Skills and Morals among Graduates

Morals and generic life skills contribute immensely to the unity and progress of any nation. The generic skills involve a positive work attitude such as innovation, integrity, motivation, communication, interpersonal relationship, problem-solving, and service orientation. "One debate among business owners and policymakers centres on whether higher education institutions are failing to transform the young generation by reorienting education to develop higher competencies, skills, values and behaviour" (Okolie et al. 2020, 295). The goal of education is defeated when it fails to equip students with necessary skills and morals that help modify their behaviour for competence in their work engagement. An interview conducted in Nigeria among final-year undergraduate students showed that courses taught in some higher education institutions do not focus on equipping students with such generic skills. "During the interviews with final-year students, they had some difficulties in understanding the exact meaning of generic skills such as lifelong learning skills, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, integrity and professional ethics skills, and information management skills, among others" (Okolie et al. 2020, 301). The finding showed that the courses taught in some higher ed institutions do not aim to build students' skills and morals but rather their knowledge acquisition for mental engagement alone.

In contrast, a survey among lecturers and students in 20 selected higher ed institutions in Kenya showed that "students who undertake ethical and critical thinking are more productive because of the high memory comprehension, retention and awareness of reality" (Githui 2021, 86). It implies that teaching was not limited to knowledge acquisition. Christian education offers the opportunity for students to experience a transformation of character and equip them with lifelong skills to be competent and resourceful in society. Many graduates in Sub-Saharan Africa are not employable because they lack adequate life skills and character to compete in the marketplace (Dimkpa 2011). Integrating biblical principles in teaching can build character and expose students to a rich learning experience where their self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and commitment to scholarship are achieved.

Philosophy of Education

This section examines the philosophy of education to understand the role of education in skill-building and instilling moral values. Education is one of our best gifts because it prepares people to be relevant in the world. Education is the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge is about receiving adequate information for relevance in society, most especially in expertise. Also, it includes the processing of data for the proper application of knowledge. Education is the development of skills through a rigorous learning experience. It involves falling, rising, and running towards accomplishing educational goals. It helps to build one's talent in expertise. Education is character formation. Morals are acquired through learning occurrences where students' behavior is modified through teaching and discipline to caution against unruly behavior. It requires a deliberate action by teachers to uphold values that are just and fair.

The philosophy of education is rooted in a branch of philosophy which includes logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology. According to Pazmino, "A philosophy of education attempts to articulate a systematic scheme of thought which can guide practice" (Pazmino 1997, 81). Education is systematic because it incorporates reasoning abilities, worldviews, and values to shape a person. It deals with acquiring knowledge through careful thought and practice in education involving interaction between teachers and students to develop the capacity to reason and make good decisions in life. It also involves skills and character formation for relevance in society. Martin Luther King Jr. examined the misconception of education in his context. He stated the function of education thus: "The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education that stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but with no morals" (Martin Luther King Jr 1948). Christian education offers the opportunity for a well-balanced education that focuses on knowledge and skills acquisition and character formation. Pazmino defines Christian education as,

A deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviors that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith. It fosters the change, renewal, and reformation

of persons, groups, and structures by the Holy Spirit's power to conform to the revealed will of God as expressed in the Scriptures and pre-eminently in the person of Jesus Christ, as well as any outcomes of that effort. (Pazmino 1997, 87)

To acquire knowledge, skills, and values requires a deliberate action through the Holy Spirit's help. Therefore, a Christian educator should make a conscious decision to spend time preparing adequately. Also, a decision must be made to teach the truth of God's word such that students conform to the image of Christ, which is a process that requires patience, action, and the help of the Holy Spirit.

There is a need to understand the goals of Christian education. Gangel and Hendricks stated that "the mandate for Christian teaching assumes a goal. Those who learn about God must respond positively to him. Almost invariably, when the goal of Christian teaching is raised, the word maturity is raised. Maturity manifests itself in relationships, morality and theology" (Gangel and Hendricks 1998, 64). Christian education aims to build individuals till they come to the full knowledge of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christian education has made a significant impact in Nigeria. Ajuzie confirms that "modern education originated from the Christian Missionaries. It is in the era of education that the missionaries made their greatest contribution to Nigeria and which in turn has acted as a catalyst to every other development that has taken place in Nigeria today" (Ajuzie 2001, 48). The Wesleyan Methodist Society introduced formal education in Nigeria in 1842; it established mission schools across the nation.

The primary purpose of establishing mission schools across the country was to evangelize the nations so that Nigerians could embrace Christianity. It remains the core objective of their curriculum. They taught their students how to read and write, to read the Bible and understand the message of Christ. They introduced the system of education called the "The 3Rs's (reading, writing, and arithmetic). They also included in their curriculum moral instruction so that citizens honor God and respect parents, elders, and authorities. In addition, they developed students' skills through drawing, needlework, and agriculture. The early missionaries brought about a system of education that helped to impart knowledge, build skills and morals among students during the early missionary period in Nigeria. But due to the hostility of Islamic Northerners, the system of education was affected.

Christian values were seen as a threat to Muslims (Ajuzie 2001; Ejiogu 2009).

There is hope for a brighter future in Nigeria and other nations in Sub-Saharan Africa that have experienced setbacks in their educational system. Christian education will play a vital role in building skills and instilling values among students in higher education to enhance national unity and economic growth. Nonetheless, it requires more efforts from Christian educators who see teaching not only as a vocation but as a call to fulfill the mission of God on earth. The Christian educators' task is to lead individuals to develop personal relationships with God through Jesus Christ as they accept him as Lord and Savior of their lives. And after that, the task is to understand the presence of the Holy Spirit, who will guide them to every truth until they conform to Christ-like character. Hence, higher education teachers respond to the Great Commission mandate (Mathew 28:18-20) by integrating faith in teaching to transform students through the Holy Spirit's help.

Old Testament Model of Teaching

Lawson (2001, 17-18) explains the teaching model in the Old and New Testaments. It is summarized below:

- *Teaching at the national level:* In the Old Testament period, teaching was done at the national level through the observation of the Torah (Law). Teaching was an institutional aspect of life in the community of God's people. The law was taught by the priests, prophets, and leaders who devoted themselves to telling others about God's nature and instructing people on how to live to please God and work in harmony with one another.
- *Teaching in the family circle:* Teaching was done in the family circle. Family served as a means through which the teaching of God's word was communicated to the children. The parents spent time teaching their children about God's word and ensuring that they lived their lives according to the dictates of what was written in the scriptures. Children saw both father and mother as a source of wisdom because of the quality time they spent teaching and instructing them to follow the teachings of the law of God. Christian education was not limited to the school premises. From this

we can see that a Christian home teaches their children values that help them in life.

- *God taught His chosen people:* God himself instructed people to live their lives to honor him in the Old Testament times. In Psalm 25:8-9, David says: "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice, and he teaches the humble his ways." Teachers were to align themselves to be used by God to transform students' lives as they carried out their duties.
- *Training on one or more vocational skills:* Education was done by training people in particular skills. It could be occupational, specific, or military training, e.g., David's admonition to Solomon in I Chronicle 22:15 was, "You have many workers: stonecutters, masons and carpenters, as well as those skilled in every kind of work." Also, in I Kings 1-2, we see a young king whom his mother trained. Skills development was also an essential part of education. Therefore, the Christian educator should teach a robust system of education that builds skills and character. (Riley 2001)

The New Testament Model of Teaching

In the New Testament, we have the following model:

- *Teaching focuses on the life of Christ:* Teaching in the New Testament is exemplified by the teaching of Jesus Christ, His life and mission. Jesus provides the model for education in the New Testament because He based His instruction on the already revealed truth of God's word in the Old Testament. Jesus' teaching was based on reflection from the Old Testament law. He moved from mere observation of the law ; a shift from behavior to attitude, from legalism to grace. Jesus' teaching is developed in the context of meaningful relationships with the disciples and self-sacrificial obedience to the will of the Father. Building a solid relationship with students helps students to learn and gives them a willingness to accept change. A teacher should love and be willing to sacrifice their time to develop the skills and character of students.

- *Teaching is the primary responsibility of the followers of Christ:* In the New Testament teaching is seen as a primary responsibility and function of those who have chosen to follow the eternal son of God. The early church devoted itself to the teaching of the apostles, which in turn was based on God's revealed truth in the Bible. Teachers in higher education should see teaching as a calling rather than a vocation; this will help them work as unto the Lord (Riley 2001).

Newton (2001, 126-129) has identified five essential elements in the teaching and learning process:

- *The teacher:* The first attempt of the Holy Spirit is to move through the teacher. The Holy Spirit can be involved in teaching if given the opportunity. The involvement can start from the preparation in the closet and move to content delivery in the classroom setting. It can be profound because the Holy Spirit searches human hearts and identifies areas to include in the course that could lead to transformation. There is a difference between teaching and the spiritual gift of teaching. "Spiritually gifted teachers seem to have a holistic ministry in Scripture, teaching God's Word in a way that changes both individual lives and communities" (Newton 2001, 126). Teaching could be seen in general terms. Someone can choose to be trained to teach, but that does not confirm he or she is spiritually gifted. A spiritually gifted teacher is given special abilities from the Lord to teach. Such a person needs to constantly yield to the Holy Spirit to remain more effective in their teaching career (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:7-31; Eph. 4:7-12; I Peter 4:10-11).
- *The learner:* The Holy Spirit works in the learners' lives if only they give him the opportunity. Students can hinder the Holy Spirit's move when they harden their hearts from receiving the truth of God's word.
- *The word:* The Holy Spirit illuminates the hearts of both the teacher and learner to discover the truth found in the Bible. The integration of biblical principles in teaching

becomes effective through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- *Interpersonal interaction:* the Holy Spirit works among teachers and students during class interaction. The Holy Spirit works among groups in the learning environment. He brings the connection between communities of learners to discover the truth of the word of God.
- *The environment:* A conducive environment is required for the Holy Spirit to dwell among his children. It involves good relationships between a teacher and learners. It also entails cleanliness. The classroom should be neat and have adequate lighting for learning to take place. The teaching instructional tools should be determined before the commencement of class. The Holy Spirit can pass through any means for his glory.

Educators need to acknowledge the role of the Holy Spirit in the educational process. The Holy Spirit empowers the teachers to teach effectively. He is also involved in transforming the learner's life through learning experiences in higher education.

Modern Philosophy of Education

This section evaluates the goal of education, its content, environment, and the teacher's and student's roles according to a modern philosophy of Christian education as described by Pazmino (1997).

- *Perennialism:* This is a system of education that is based on the established truth related to God. Thus, a person can encounter truth through reasoning and the special revelation of God. Human beings are rational beings. The great books of western philosophy form the content of the perennials. It includes classics and the traditional liberal arts. The subject taught aims to develop students' reasoning capacities and mental discipline to ethically correct and defend the truth. Teachers are viewed as custodians of knowledge and wisdom. Thus, they are referred to as academic scholars. The purpose of education is to expose students to rigorous reading to increase their ability to have the reasoning capability to do

what is right as they interact with people in society. "It affirms intellectual, spiritual, and ethical purpose in education in guiding the individual to eternal truths. Goals include the transmission and assimilation of the prescribed body of the classical subject matter. Classical advocates of philosophy include Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and others" (Pazmino 1997, 113).

- *Essentialism*: "The educators stress academic excellence, the cultivation of the intellect, and the transmission and assimilation of a prescribed body of subject matter" (Pazmino 1997, 114). Learning is determined through careful observation and reason. It integrates modern scientific and experimental inquiry together with classical studies. "The teacher is considered a person of letters and sciences who has achieved the level of an expert in the area of her or his competence. Students are viewed as rational beings who are gaining command of essential facts and skills that undergird the intellectual disciplines in adjusting to the physical and social environment" (Pazmino 1997, 114). The essentialists believe in specialization in training. The environment of study includes the classroom and research laboratory. They emphasize mastery of necessary learning skills, discipline, and hard work to achieve a meaningful learning experience.
- *Behaviorism*: This focuses on forming a person to function with efficiency, economy, precision, and objectivity through education. "A behaviourist philosophy incorporates a behavioural modification sequence for desired student responses and skills, and uses appropriate reinforcement" (Pazmino 1997, 115). The learning objectives are well stated to guide the teachers to relate with students to achieve the stated goals. Hence, students are exposed to a rewarding environment with the possible use of programmed instruction and other instructional technologies. Teachers are viewed as skilled technicians, sculptors of both person and environment.
- *Progressivism*: Progressivism fosters reflective thinking for social problem solving, democratic relationships and growth. Progressive educators strive to enable students to adapt to a changing world—life adjustment in societal expectations. Proponents include John Dewey, William

Kirkpatrick, Boyd H. Bode, and John L. Childs. Students are exposed to a learning environment to identify a problem and to offer a solution to it. Hence, the teacher is not an authoritarian classroom director, as in perennialism, essentialism, and behaviorism. Instead, the teacher is concerned for progress, committed to society and democratic ideals, and sensitive to the students' needs.

Ethical Consideration in Education

The goal of a Christian philosophy of education is centered on ethics and reverence for God. Roark suggests that:

Christian philosophy sees values as found in God. He is the creator and, as such, has an intimate knowledge of how life should be lived. His commandments are life-affirming. Man has the freedom to reject his commandments, but that rejection is life-denying. God's commands involve obeying, for that is the way of life. Rejecting or disobeying is to deny life and accept irrationality as the model of existence. (Roark 2011, 362)

Moral values are rooted in God. God is holy and just. Therefore, God's expectation for us is high. Huebner (1975) identifies five values: Technical valuing, which focuses on the efficiency of a teacher, and the ability to control disruptive behavior in the classroom. Political valuing addresses the issue of the authority of the teachers in the educational process. Authority is to be used effectively to shape character. Scientific valuing deals with educational activities that result in discoveries through empirical inference. Students can develop critical minds to be innovative, which plays a significant role in community development. Aesthetic valuing describes the beauty of acquiring values noticeable in a person who is educated. It involves the beauty of integrity, harmony, and purity in fitness in work. Lastly, ethical valuing can distinguish between what is ethically right and wrong. The teacher influences the students positively based on the values they uphold.

Pazmino (1997, 115) suggests a sixth category which he calls spiritual valuing. The spiritual dimension is the bedrock in which the other five values can endure. It involves faith integration in teaching and learning processes. The triune God is the model and source for moral life. "Morality is central to the life of every

community. Any society that ignores this important issue as central to its life will crumble and destroy itself” (Nkansah 2013, 2). For a stable society, ethics needs to be addressed. Every community or organization has beliefs and moral values that govern its life and ethos. These beliefs and values explain the moral behavior of that society. Our ethical decisions and choices are based on our convictions about how we perceive God, the world, and ourselves. At the core of these convictions are our biblical, religious, social, moral, and cultural values that shape our character and behavior. Most of our social ethics today are driven by our cultural and moral values. However, it is God’s character that gives grounds for our social ethics. God’s moral laws have implications for our social life.

In Africa, “Learning begins with the organism. It is the means through which we acquire not only skills and knowledge, but values, attitude, and emotional reaction as well” (Taylor 2002, 1). Education is incomplete without the exhibition of good character, and that is rooted in the culture. Africans had a complex system of education before the coming of Europeans. African children were taught to fit into the culture, to care for the animals, to tend their crops. There are various events in the African setting, such as initiation, that offer the opportunity to learn about customs and rules governing the people of a community. As explained by Awoniyi,

African people have various moral and societal values meant to regulate interpersonal relationships and perpetuate the entire community. Africans have specific standards or norms to be observed. These standards or norms are meant for social cohesion and the smooth running of the community. They are to prevent members of the community from becoming rebellious and thereby endanger the welfare of society. (Awoniyi 2015, 5)

African values are based on relationships and reverence for God. Some essential values of African culture can be embraced in all sectors of life. Embracing the richness of African cultural values can help foster national unity and economic advancement in the African continent. The values can be introduced to students in higher education through collaborative learning. Students work together on group projects that sharpen their skills and develop their morals for use in society. Some important Africa values deduced from Awoniyi (2015) are explained thus:

- *Sense of community:* People live in a community where people share common features such as religion, beliefs, culture, and customs. This promotes unity and progress in the community.
- *Sense of good human relationships:* African culture values love and peace between people, despite the difficulty of living this out. Africans respect the value of human life. Members of the community are taught how to live in harmony.
- *Sense of hospitality:* The love shared in the African culture makes it possible for people to show hospitality to one another—the communal life of fellowship, especially during festivals and birth celebrations. Education in Africa culture is holistic. People are not only taught development of skills but also character. They are taught how to show hospitality to one another.
- *Sense of the sacred and of religion.* African values are based on a divine God who is to be feared and worshiped. In school, people are to be taught God’s ways, which will guide their attitude in life.
- *Sense of respect for authority and elders:* Community relations exist where younger men and women respect the elders. In the school setting, students are taught how to respect their parents and the elders in the community.

Personal Philosophy of Education

Developing a personal philosophy of education will keep an educator focused and determined to fulfill educational goals. Aluan stated that,

Your philosophy of education is your beliefs about why, what, and how you teach, whom you teach, and the nature of learning. It is a set of principles that guides professional action through the events and issues teachers face daily. Sources for your educational philosophy are your life experiences, values, the environment in which you live, interactions with others, and awareness of philosophical approaches. Learning about the branches of philosophy, philosophical world views, and different educational philosophies and theories will help you determine and shape your educational philosophy. (Aluan 2014, 3)

A personal philosophy of education demonstrates a sense of creativity. A philosophy of education must be based on personal reflection on educational experiences. It keeps an educator focused on accomplishing academic goals. It incorporates biblical principles, teaching approaches, interpersonal relationships, stated learning outcomes, and specified learning targets in developing skills and instilling values among students that positively impact society.

I believe that education is theocentric because I see God as the source of all knowledge and wisdom. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit play an active role in the educational process. God the Father revealed himself first to humanity by His creative act, showing His power of reasoning and orderliness. Christ came to restore the image of God in man, which was mired by sin, to give new life to all who accept him as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit is a tutor who empowers and guides His children. As a Christian educator, my task of educating others is based upon the fact that God is the source of all knowledge. Therefore, I must work in humility and glorify him for counting me worthy to be among those He will use to transform people's lives. To me, education is both informative and transformative. Therefore, I will dedicate my time to prepare adequately before teaching my students to give valuable and relevant information to their area of interest. I want to encourage my students to read outside what I give them to develop a lifelong reading culture and continue to be relevant in their area of expertise. I will not act as a primary source of materials; instead, I will encourage them to search for knowledge and to apply it in different areas of need. In the aspect of transformation, I will focus on teaching students Christian values by exposing them to the truth in God's word, to discover the truth themselves, and to work according to the Lord's ways. As a Christian educator, I will serve as a model to my students through my lifestyle. Through the Holy Spirit's help, I will live my life conforming to Christian principles and values. Christian values will be highly upheld. Therefore, I will spend time teaching, praying, and rebuking in love when any of my students violate the standard of the Bible. My curriculum for study will be developed based on my general observation from past and present events. It must be something that will motivate student learning and help them overcome their inner struggles in life.

My teaching area is adult education in Christian higher ed institutions. As a Christian educator, I will integrate faith in my teaching profession. This implies

that I will incorporate biblical examples relevant to what is taught. Every class shall begin with a short Bible reflection and prayers before the commencement of any lecture. Subsequently, I will pay attention to the Holy Spirit's leading to see what to include in lessons. I will respect and treat students fairly and motivate them to learn. I see my students as human beings with great potential. Therefore, I must foster a personal relationship with them both in the classroom and outside the classroom. I will treat everyone equally with respect to their learning capacities. I will ensure that I work with individuals till they discover their potential. Notwithstanding, I will apply discipline to control unruly behavior. I will adopt different methods of teaching to meet the interests of diverse learners in the class. Students will freely express themselves in classroom discussions by sharing how a particular topic connects with their life experiences. Practical application of what they learned in the class will be highly encouraged; activities will be given to students outside the classroom to engage their minds and be critical thinkers for national development.

Education in National Unity

In the period just before independence, one major factor bound people together in opposition to colonial rule: nationalism. However, after achieving freedom, this common goal ceased to exist, affecting many countries and leading to internal division and ethnic hostilities. Education became the primary instrument of fostering national identity. Bray and Peter (1986) stated that education promotes horizontal integration in four main ways:

- *Curriculum development:* Curriculum developed to include language studies in which the three major languages—Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa—are included in the school curriculum in Nigeria. Anyone who leaves their state of origin to study in another state must learn a new language. Formal education promotes a common language that permits communication between members of different ethnic groups. In Nigeria, the common language spoken in schools and official gatherings is English, while in Kenya, there are two common languages spoken: English and Kiswahili. Having a common language of education helps to bring unity and peace among ethnic groups.

- *Construction of institutions:* Educational institutions are constructed to accommodate pupils of different countries to interact with other ethnicities and religions. Conflict emerges when there are no common institutions. Institutions are open for employment for professionals. Christian educators can impact the lives of their students through their lifestyles and personal philosophies of education.
- *National service schemes:* The goal of Christian education is to develop skills and instill values that prepare students to build their nation. A national service scheme for graduates, either voluntary or compulsory, allows participants to perform community service outside their home area. In Nigeria, it is referred to as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Every first degree graduate must serve in a state that is not their state of origin. The NYSC was formed after the civil war in Nigeria on the 22nd of May, 1973, to create ties among Nigerian youth, to promote unity among Muslims, Christians, and people of different ethnic groups. The government aims to unite the nation to work in harmony and be a strong and self-reliant nation, to build a dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunities for its citizens.
- *Educational imbalances:* The purpose of education was to give equal opportunity for all people to grow in knowledge and skills to build their nation. The system of education treats students equally. It discourages favoritism and discrimination of students irrespective of their ethnicity and religion. The teachers treat all students with love and respect. Every student is given an equal opportunity to be involved in an educational project where skills are developed. This fosters unity among people of different ethnicities and helps to build the economy of the nation.

Education in Improving National Economy

Christian education helps to develop skills and instill values that boosts the national economy. That is why Ajuzie linked education to Christian missionaries in the quote cited above (Ajuzie 2001, 48). Investment in Christian education can help improve the national economy because students learn morals that help to

sharpen their character and to be good citizens of their respective countries. Also, it develops their skills for innovation to grow the economy of the country. Development in Africa at large requires integration of Christian values in the educational system to improve holistic learning.

Conclusion

We live in a society where people use their skills and intelligence to destroy the nation's economy, oppress the poor, and steal from the nation's treasury to satisfy their very selves. Nkanseh stated that "Ethical decisions and choices are made based on our convictions about how we perceive God, the world, and ourselves. At the core of these convictions are our biblical, religious, social, moral, and cultural values that shape our character and behaviour" (Nkansah 2013, 9). Christian education integrates biblical principles to expose students to a rich learning experience where character is formed and developed to foster national unity and economic innovation.

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