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Eku Journal of Contextual Christian Studies is published once in a year by the Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku. The primary aim and foci of the journal are to contribute as and promote discourses that are contextual to Christian Studies in its varied nature in a theological education context. It engages discourses with other scholars particularly on the African landscape so as to stimulate intellectual thinking across the domains of education and learning. It aims at increasing knowledge on themes that best suits theological education in the African context. Thereby, promoting cross fertilisation of ideas in the field of theological education and Christian ministry that would impact the church's ministry in the African Continent and beyond. Building bridges for theological reflection and scholarship via scholarly collaborations and networks with academicians, theologians, theological educators, researchers, church pastors and other leaders is top-notch: for theological developments in Africa and to provide theological resources for alumni, other theological institutions and Departments of Religious Studies in the Universities.

* The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors, the editorial committee or of the BTS Eku.

Editorial

At the heart and centre of theological education is having a contextual curriculum and when implemented, it will yield the dividends of a transforming leadership and ministry endeavours. Contextual curriculum is core in ensuring that pastoral formation towards a transformative ministry of those trained by theological institutions is actualised.

Significant and informed voices argue in this issue that a contextual curriculum is indeed a dire need for theological institutions to fulfil her mission. Traces of the content of Western curricula is to be reduced to accommodate more of the African realities so theological institutions in Africa could be more transformative in her mission of pastoral formation towards transformative ministry tasks. Marilyn Naidoo in her lead paper underscores how formative education can take place within curriculum integration across disciplines, by using a praxis methodology that brings together being and doing, and innovative pedagogical methods that engages the student in learning, thereby forming the individual holistically. She discusses the holistic 'formation' of theological students as focused on cultivating the whole person to learn and live more consciously. Naidoo enunciates that formation of theological students is the commitment to living a Christ-like life in relationships, behaviours and possession central to the calling and vocation of the Christian leader. She states that formation invites students to study theology which can serve as a lifetime tool for ongoing conversion and transformation. A major presentation of her ideas is that for formative education to become a reality it must first have an educational strategy that is significantly related to African context.

David Tarus comes up with the issue that Theological Education (TE) has undergone rapid shifts in recent years and the current uncertainties and insecurities surrounding it are unsettling yet inspiring various innovative solutions to meet the needs of the church and society. He presents that it is no longer guaranteed that a seminary would flourish. He argues that seminaries are barely surviving and consequently, he and other persons are forced to ask, if TE is in exile or on a pilgrimage? Is it dying or reviving? These are

pertinent questions, especially considering the realities facing post-COVID institutions that are pooled in his article.

John O. Enyinnaya explores the issues related to the concern of contextualising curriculum to suit a context and makes proposals for remediating perceived shortcomings in the curriculum content and delivery of theological schools in the African context. He reports the outcome of a research which then forms the basis for the recommendations that are made for contextualising theological education curriculum for the African context and brief rehash of the historical perspective of this concern in theological education and then he suggests some pillars that he considers to be important in crafting a relevant curriculum that can help theological education fulfil its responsibility to the church in contemporary African context.

GoodFriday NwaChuku Aghawenu discusses the issue of character development in theological education; and it posits that God has His own curriculum to mould chosen and gifted students as well as lecturers for holy living and loving service using training that is informal, non-formal and formal. He explores the methodology of God's curriculum for theological educators to learn how to equip others to do the work so that everyone is adequately equipped to use the gifts he or she has in the ministry. He posits that the law of love that is holy and just, is a fusion of God's character and therefore, should be integrated as the cornerstone in curricular plans in theological education institutions.

William A. Adegbosin and Helen Ishola-Esan underscore the significance of leadership in every organisation since the success and failure of an organisation is traceable to the leadership of such an establishment. They argued that in a situation where leaders are frivolous and unethical, the organisation suffers and the church as an organisation is affected by the kinds of leaders in charge; while ethical leader makes the church; unethical leader mars her. A major emphasis made by Adegbosin and Ishola-Esan is that Christian education is unique because of its subject matter; the Bible, which is the main curriculum in Christian education and that the uniqueness of Christian education reflects through its goals, which is spiritual transformation. They affirm that Christian education curriculum is essential in addressing unethical leadership issues.

Ovuoke Godswill Eruotor and Ebenezer Fai explore the impact of Christian education in curbing the attitude of 21st Century pastoral trainers who neglect recognized theological training. They assert that theological training, an arm of education, is committed to building spiritual and cognitive capacity. They postulate that Christian education objective is to win a total man for a total Christ and it aims at helping to develop and build Christian values. They also opine that any goal separated from the development of Christ-like living and Christian character formation makes Christian education secular. They claim that some pastoral trainers do not see learning as dynamic, hence the decision to neglect recognized theological education and hold on to traditions learned over the years within the church setting.

Godwin Omegwe promotes that over a hundred years ago, the missionaries brought western education to where we know today as Nigeria and induced in their student's moral education, making many of the students to grow to become not just clergies but also teachers in other schools and some even scholars. He posits that these teachers produced by the western mission, as well as their students became nation builders. He examines the role of churches in qualitative moral education in Nigeria, which will be an alternative source to supplement the efforts of the government, parents and local communities. He establishes a better relationship between the church and sustainable moral education in Nigeria and highlights the roles the church has played and is still playing at fostering moral education.

Victor Ifatokun and Ebiegbere Zaccheaus Wilcox examine the dynamics of contextualized theological education toward transformative cross-cultural communication in the framework of modern missions. They discovered that transformative cross-cultural Gospel communication in missions requires a theological education that is contextually grounded, linguistically inclined, and worldview focused.

Benjamin Isola Akano attests that when African people found answers to most of their life questions in the contextualised gospel, global Christianity experienced phenomenal growth from four million, in 1900 A.D., to 300 million, in 2000 A. D. Today, the context has changed considerably due to different factors. He posits that for the Church in contemporary Africa to fulfil and sustain its

transformative mission of bringing *shalom* to its hurting world, its theological education (TE) curriculum must be adequate and possess sharp edges to equip its ministers for integrating the gospel proclamation into all facets of the African life and amid the changing and challenging contexts. He emphasises integral missional strategy and highlights characteristics of such curriculum. Consequently, he suggested that church pastors, as local theological educators, must create awareness on individual Christian integral missional role in *Missio Dei*, equipping their members accordingly.

Anyam Pog-Osia decries that there have been calls to end biblical studies the way it is that stems from a major premise being the irrelevance of the Bible in the 21st century based on the discoveries of biblical scholarship and the response of biblical scholars to these discoveries. He further states that among these findings is the fact that the Bible is a product of cultures whose values and beliefs about the origin, nature and purpose of our world are quite alien to us, as such no longer relevant. He therefore, attempts to argue for the modification of Biblical studies through engaged learning which is characterised to be holistic, developmental, contextual and integrative.

Rachael 'Funke Ojo discusses curriculum as an integral aspect of an educational process that contributes to the formation of learners in a secular or theological context. She argues that for a curriculum to adequately prepare its product for effectiveness in the field, contextualizing its content is inevitable. She enunciates that in the context of theological education, which is an essential tool for preparing believers whom God calls into a full-time ministry, contextualization of the curriculum of training is needed for effective and impactful ministry in the Church and society.

Ambrose Akpotor comes from an African traditional perspective by emphasising Ughievwen culture of the sacredness, centrality and the binding force of the bride price on the Ughievwen woman. He promotes that the Urhobos resist and prevent anything capable of inflicting pains, frustrations, disgrace as well as disregard to the married woman especially in the promotion and maintenance of a life-long marriage irrespective of pleasant and unpleasant circumstances. He expresses that to achieve the aforementioned value of life-long

marriage, some values and taboos are put in place via developing an educational curriculum to enhance and evaluate the value of bride price in Ughievwen culture. He also calls on the marriage hopefuls to be careful in the choice of marriage partners in the light of modernity and Biblical theology.

Grace E. Eiterebhe spectacles the issue of broken homes and its effects both on the family and the larger society which are unpalatable. She asserts that it is no longer a minor problem but a societal concern and constitutes a major challenge in our present day society. She explains that it has also placed a burden on some professionals or individuals such as psychologist, counsellors and theologians. She presents transformative responses such as biblical, guidance and counselling, theological and Christian educator's response via an ACRONYM for Christian home in resolving issues of broken homes and these could be embedded into the curriculum of theological institutions.

Consequently, the consensus in this serial publication is that a contextual curriculum is needed to be designed and implemented by theological institutions. This will enable them produce pastors and church leaders who will engage a transforming ministry in their society and be effective in their pastoral leadership. Transformative ministry would engage the transforming of persons, context, and the society at large thereby fulfilling the vision and mission of the institutions. Hence, there seems to be a general outcry for a re-examination of current school's curriculum to produce a contextual curriculum that is fit for the African context and that which will help a school's prophetic voice to sound loud and clear.

Danjuma L. Byang discloses that the practice of neo-paganism among Christian clergy in Nigeria is a troubling reality that is ubiquitous and beyond contention. He argues that the roots of this phenomenon which foreshadows a new age and postmodern spirituality can be traced to the biblical narrative of the temptation and fall of Adam in Genesis chapter 3 and articulates it to be the foundation of which all human spirituality in its pagan, neo-pagan and occult origin would eventually developed. Theological education is explained to be seminal in unearthing the genesis, the trajectory and the eventualities

of this phenomenon in the Nigerian church as well as how theological education is invaluable in helping to understand and to checkmate the downward spiral among God's servants in Nigeria.

Danjuma L. Byang

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