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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 focus of the journal is to contribute 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. Also, it aims at increasing knowledge on themes that best suit 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 academics, theologians, theological educators, researchers, church pastors and other leaders is top-notch for theological developments in Africa. JOCCS also aims at providing 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 which if properly implemented, 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 their mission. Traces of the content of Western curricula is to be reduced to accommodate more of the African realities so that theological institutions in Africa could be more apt in their mission of pastoral formation towards transformative ministry tasks.

John Kpaleh Jusu in his keynote address underscores the importance of contextual curriculum and brings the curriculum used by seminaries and other ministerial formation institutions over centuries under sharp focus and criticism. He continues the discussion by looking at curriculum more as a product of science rather than a work of art. In his view, he did not look at curriculum from the perspective of those who implement it, but from the perspective of those who formulate it using curriculum theories and principles. He examines the assumptions embedded in both uncontextualized and contextualized curricula as well as examines the theoretical foundations of contextualised curricula. Jusu enumerates the benefits of a contextualized curriculum and unleashed how to develop a contextualised curriculum and makes an argument that an uncontextualized curriculum will not lead to transformative ministry, but the contextualized curriculum will.

Isaac Osakpamwan Ibude attempts to rely on historical analysis and historical evidence from sources: primary and secondary, as well as interviews to delineate the cultural, philosophical, religious, social and economic forces that have shaped the development of church music education in Nigeria before and after its establishment. He opines that significant changes in church music education leading to contextualization have been largely driven by the indigenous church

pastors, leaders and music enthusiasts. He adds that renewed effort to contextualize church music education by Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso and accrediting bodies, have led to church music education curriculum reviews and creation of African Church Music Department.

From another historical dimension, Helen Olomu Ishola-Esan examines theological education as it were in Africa, tracing the roots and resemblances of western particularities and finding out their relevance in transforming ministry in the African churches *vis-à-vis* the theological education curriculum currently being operated. She seeks to explore how theological education could be revamped to fit into contextual transformative and impactful ministry in the African landscape. To this end, she sets out implementation strategies and explores the principles that define what content, how and why such content should be delivered. She itemises some pragmatic, proactive concrete actionable steps towards a reconstruction of current curriculum in the light of the vision, mission and core values of an institution while articulating a Theo-biblical basis for transformative ministry.

Reuben Turbi Luka and Ilami Ozegbe came from evangelism and church planting perspectives with some touch of historical reference. Luka narrates the history of theological education in Africa and enunciates that theological education has been engaged by Africans in the mid-20th Century and focuses on a demonstration of how Theological Education connects to evangelism, and how it fits in a Christian philosophy of transformation through knowledge of Jesus Christ. He drives home his point by proposing; “A Transformative Theology” which is an idea that is rooted in the knowledge of Christ in Theological Education, which causes transformation as an act of God’s children expanding the frontiers of God’s kingdom on earth. Ilami Ozegbe examines contextualized theological education for transformative church planting and argues that if the Great Commission is to be fulfilled, the world evangelized, the gospel understood and churches planted then, theological institutions are to design appropriate curriculum which equips the students for the task of contextualization. She narrates that an early attempt which was made by the AICs to contextualize the gospel in the nineteenth

century gained acceptance and resulted in the planting of churches. But, that brand of Christianity was faced with some religious extreme of adding extra-biblical modes to their worship.

Decolonising theological research through innovative disruption and deconstruction is presented by Osbert Uyovwiewovwe Isiorhovoja, Godwin O. Omegwe, Watson Oghenenyehovwome Olonge, and May Afatakpa. They argue that though the beauty of life rests on the dynamism of change, yet, theological research in Africa has remained almost a fixed module as presented by the Missionaries, whose influences were replicated in African curriculum for theological institutions and universities across the continent. They argue that the contexts of the people were not placed in the lime light rather, they were made to see and understand differently from a Western cultural milieu. Hence, the emphasis of research remained Eurocentric in nature; that which is void of the Africentric ideologies. This phenomenon calls for disruption of the tradition through a process of deconstruction; with emphasis on Africentric approach to research that will recognise and situate the people within their cultural context, the basis of effective theological research with emphasis on decolonising the curriculum.

Abraham Olutoye Odeleye and Oluseyi Abiodun Ejikunle identify different challenges in the Nigerian society stating how challenges have caused pain to individuals, families, and groups of people at large. They present that with this experience, God-called persons are expected to bring relief and comfort to the hurting by discharging their responsibilities. However, these challenges facing the Nigerian society do not exempt the God-called persons, who do not only have similar experience of economic instability and insecurity among others, but are also faced with dangers of threat to their lives as they discharge their responsibilities as pastoral caregivers. They identified the dimensions of pastoral care to engage so as to ameliorate the plight of those affected.

Omolar A. Areo and Akinwumi Julius Akinleye discusses prophetism as a recurrent religious phenomenon that characterizes the Christian faith. They examine prophetism in African Christianity and its implications for Christian Education Curriculum and argue that the prophetic gift in African Christianity has been a subject of immense

controversy leading to unbiblical practices and questionable characters in the name of prophecy. Though, prophetism poses a challenge yet it offers hope to African Christianity due to its ability to respond to the soteriological and pastoral needs of the people in the midst of its unique nature and unconventional operation or practices. However, the Church needs to rearticulate the biblical truths that will enhance a scriptural understanding and practice of prophetism among African Christians through the Christian education curriculum that will emphasize biblical truths and principles for developing a worldview that will help prevent unbiblical prophetic practices.

Orimisan Agboifo sees the building of children's curriculum into theological education as very important in this contemporary time to catch them young before they get out of their parent's tutelage. She gives the reminder that children are the future leaders of the Christian denomination, as such nurturing them in fear of the Lord is the best bet for any denomination. She ascertained the dangers of lack of children's ministry and discusses some necessities for building children's ministry curriculum in the theological education system. She posits that theological schools are to design curriculum that will include children's ministry and explain how such curriculum can be administered in a way that the children can benefit from it in order to impact their world, the church and their family.

Davis Akpobome Oweh attempts to examine how a Theological Education Curriculum can bring about transformative leadership in the society. He posits that Curriculum is a vital instrument in the teaching and learning process, that a well designed curriculum takes into consideration what need to be taught and learned by learners which will lead to acquisition of desired knowledge and formation of better social behaviour in the learner. He argues that there appears to be a dearth in theological education curriculum which is due to observed poor behaviour of learners who have undergone theological education. He also argues that there seem to be gaps in the curriculum and mode of delivery which shows a breach in the domains of learning. Hence, the need to design a curriculum that will stretch beyond the institution to the field as that will be akin to the informal way of learning and practice as it is among indigenous people. The need by theological institutions to design the curriculum that will suit

the African context and which will be more transformative be emphasised.

Stephen Olusegun Abioye discuss Christian education as a cardinal aspect of Church life that engenders growth and development. They posit that curriculum implementation is one of the critical areas to ensure effective Christian education. They opine that without effective implementation of a Christian education Curriculum, the realization of transformation the Church is craving may be far from reality. Hence, the examination of the roles of church leaders in implementing Christian education curricula in the Church is a necessity. They present a synopsis of Christian education, the biblical basis for curriculum implementation, and how Christian leaders who play a pivotal role in implementing the Christian education curriculum can help in implementing the Christian education curriculum to bring about a positive change in the entire system.

From morality perspective, John O. Emokpe, Felix Ajedokun and Frank Ogheneochuko Philip and Edith Oghenevwoke Kpogho note some moral lapses and proffers solutions. John Emokpe decrys that the society today appears to be corrupted as a result of various vices which appear to be controlling the life of some products of theological education who would have been transformative agents. He therefore proposes that integrating some godly African cultural moral values in theological education via a curriculum redesign will go a long way in reducing those vices in her product to the bearest minimum. The benefiting produce will then be the vessels of transformative ministry to be more guided in cultural moral values and to inculcate same upon their congregation that will then translate the same into the society. Felix Ajedokun and Frank Philip attempt to address the challenge of moral relativism, examine other issues leading to moral degeneration in society, and affirms a biblical cum theological viewpoints on human ethical conduct. They stated that biblical and theological views of human moral life are the foundation for transformative theological education. Edith Kpogho discusses the rapid moral decadence experienced daily in the society and calls for a parallel advancement in the equipping of leaders who will be able to bring about godly transformation. She avers that theological education is one of the tools for transformative leadership and that

pastors should not forget or ignore the training they obtained during their years in the theological institution.

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 out cry for a re-examination of current school's curriculum to produce a contextual curriculum that is fit for the African context and that will help a school's prophetic voice to sound loud and clear.

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