

Theological Education Curriculum for Developing Ethical Leadership

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Abstract

In every organisation, leadership is very important; this is because, its success and failure is traceable to the leadership of such an establishment. Leadership roles cannot be overemphasised in an organisation. This paper argued that in a situation where leaders are frivolous and unethical, the organisation suffers. Meanwhile, the church as an organisation is affected by the kinds of leaders in charge, while ethical leader makes the church; unethical leader mar her. Christian education is a Christ-centred, Bible-based, pulpit-related process of communicating God's written Word through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian education is unique because of its subject matter; the Bible, which is the main curriculum in Christian education. The uniqueness of Christian education reflects through its goals, which is spiritual transformation. Therefore, the paper examined theological education curriculum for developing ethical leadership which is crucial to organisational advancement. Thus, leaders trained and nurtured in ethical principles would be effective and upholding good moral values. This paper adopted survey-research-design; it employed the use of interview guide to collect data and analysed it. The findings revealed that some leaders do not understand what it takes to be ethical, and thereby indulge in unethical behaviours. The paper affirmed that ethical leaders are needed in this contemporary time, more than the olden days. The paper concluded that Christian education curriculum is essential in addressing unethical leadership issue. Therefore, it must not be assumed that leaders are aware of what it takes to be ethical, thus a-distinct-curriculum designed for this purpose is inevitable.

Introduction

In every organisation, leadership is very important because any organisation's success and failure can be traced to the type of leadership in charge of such an establishment. Therefore, the role of an organisational leader cannot be overemphasised; a good leader does everything within his capacity to secure sustainable progress for the organisation he oversees. However, in a situation where the leader is frivolous, with attitudinal defect, the organisation such a leader leads suffer in a great measure. Meanwhile, the church of God as an organisation is affected by the type of leaders in charge; while a good and functional leader makes the church to move forward, a poor or bad leader drags the church backwards. Therefore, leadership development is very vital to the advancement and sustainability of every organisation. Thus, when a leader is trained and nurtured with ethical principles, such would be positioned to be effective and exhibits etiquette in his leadership roles.

The writers were motivated to carry out this study due to their experience with some Christian leaders who, because of their character defects, have been hindering the works of the ministry. Also, flipping through the pages of the national dailies, the researchers have seen stories of some Christian leaders who have been accused of involving in some ungodly exercises such as: sexual immoralities, alchoholism, misappropriation of funds, lies, manipulation and deception in the name of the gospel. Therefore, theological education curriculum for developing ethical leadership is a fundamental issue, and that is the thrust of this paper. This paper examines how a theological curriculum could be developed to foster the development of leaders guided by ethical codes and conducts. Thus, it is expected of an ideal leader to be able to lead himself, and that is the writer's concern; the formation of curriculum to develop ethical leader, who will lead himself with conduct that conforms to an acceptable standard of right and wrong, just like Jesus.

Jesus, during His earthy ministry was ethical, and practical in His leadership approach. He knows what is right and does what is right at all times. Jesus lived by principles and was not ready to compromise the standard. He is not men's pleaser, and His intention is always to please His Father and do the right thing. Luke notes in Acts of the

apostles, chapter one, verse one, that Jesus was doing what He was teaching, He was not teaching one thing and doing another. Hence, Jesus' ethical leadership model should form the basis of Christian leadership in codes and conducts, and that is why the researchers thought it is very important to develop a form of theological education curriculum that will be particular in moulding the so-called leaders to be ethical.

Overview of Christian Education as A Concept

Christian education has been defined as the act or process of developing and cultivating mentally or morally. It is preparing one for a calling through systematic instruction, and it includes teaching, training, discipleship or spiritual formation. It also includes the disciplining of mind or character. In Christian education, the training brings about mental and moral development (Tidwell, 1982, pp. 16-17). Christian Education is the form of education peculiar to the followers of Jesus Christ and is rooted in the Scripture. It is also conscious, intentional and purposeful training to make Jesus' disciples. Christian education is a deliberate systematised and sustained divine-human effort to appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviours that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith (Lawrence, 1977, p. 132).

Christian education is a Christ-centred, Bible-based, pulpit-related process of communicating God's written Word through the power of the Holy Spirit to lead others to Christ and build them up in the faith. It is unique because of its subject matter; the Bible, which is God's written revelation. The uniqueness of Christian education is also reflected through its goals, which are the spiritual transformation of lives and the work of the Holy Spirit because of its spiritual dynamics. Therefore, to neglect the Holy Spirit's ministry in teaching is to overlook one of the most significant aspects of Christian education (Zuck, 1972, p. 9). Christian education centres on biblical writings; thus, the Old and New Testaments are the main manual of Christian education, and for the purpose of transforming lives.

In addition, Christian education aims to imbibe Christian virtues that will make people disposed to act and behave in a godly manner. Every child of God is expected to live the life Jesus portrayed during

His earthly ministry. Therefore, Jesus' followers must engage in this teaching-learning process for spiritual growth and maturity that will reflect in every domain of their lives. Also, the purpose of Christian education is to assist the individual, family and church in the ministry of reconciliation through giving instructions centred upon Jesus Christ and firmly founded upon the absolute truth of His Word. Since Jesus Christ is the centre of all truth, Christian education needs to formulate and embrace the curriculum that keeps Christ at the centre of all learning and the learning process.

Christian education is rooted in the Scriptures and Judaism; the people of the Old Testament times placed a great emphasis on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible – the Books of the Law. The Jews see Torah as the voice of God that needs to be obeyed. The passage of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 known as *Shema* is a biblical injunction given to the children of Israel in particular, to engage them in the most rewarding task of the pursuit of knowledge; it reads thus:

Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one LORD: and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart: And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your houses, and on your gates.

The *Shema* is the responsibility of parents as the first educator of their children, God wants them to teach and train their children in His way, and this marks the starting point of what is known as Christian education among the Jewish people. Tidwell (1982, p. 16) observes that the Hebrews spent quality time on the proper education of their children; the law and history books formed the first main subjects in Hebrew education. The formation of Hebrew education by teaching their children at home, where their teaching focused more on the consequences of sin; virtues of honesty; industry; sobriety; obedience; and the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom. Supporting the principles of *Shema*, Warnock and Norwich (2010, p. 162) observe

that what parents owe their children is an equal set of opportunities to achieve the educational functioning required to participate in society.

In line with *Shema's* rules, Jesus also demonstrated that He was taught at home, as He and His disciples devoted much of their time to educating the people in the Temple, Synagogue, open places, homes, waysides, sea-sides, and mountain sides. Jesus often was called 'Rabbi', which means 'Teacher'. Thus, Jesus possessed the exceptional qualities of the Master-teacher, and He commissioned His disciples to continue the teaching ministry as revealed in the Book of Matthew 28:18-20, where He asked them to go and teach all nations.

Clarifying the Concept of Curriculum Development Process

The term "curriculum" is from the Latin word "currere", which means to run according to Colson and Rigdon (1969, p. 38). They note that curriculum is a running or a race course. Curriculum as a concept is a course of study in an educational institution or the whole body of courses offered by such an institution. The Christian education curriculum covers the total programme of teaching and training. According to Olaniyan (2016, p. 31), curriculum refers to the total educational package which learners experience as they proceed through an educational system, and the package includes planned programmes of educational courses. Meanwhile, in a broader sense, the church curriculum is the "sum of all learning experiences resulting from a curriculum plan used under church guidance and directed toward attaining a church's objective". Colson and Rigdon's definition of curriculum is in line with the thought of Rao (2005, p. 1), who defines curriculum as the "total sum of all of the experiences provided or used by the school in its education of children". Thus, from this explanation, the denominational publishing house does not provide the curriculum, the curriculum is what happens to the learner in the local situation, and the publisher only furnishes a curriculum plan with the material.

Curriculum development is the process through which an institution formulates or adopts a specific plan for a course. Curriculum development comprises many processes of creating and improving a course taught in a school or higher learning institution. While the exact process varies from one institution to another, the broad

framework includes stages of analysing, building, implementation, and evaluation. The curriculum development process should be a continuous improvement rather than linear. Also, plans for instruction are expected to be frequently reviewed and updated as new needs arise. Change may be required due to subject area discoveries, instructional best practices innovations, and course delivery shifts.

Meanwhile, according to the National Institute of Correction (2002), the curriculum development process can be categorised into five basic steps: needs assessment; planning session; content development; pilot delivery and revision; and the completed curriculum package. The ideal situation for effective curriculum development is to have at least a minimum of 12-18 months to design and develop a curriculum. That process will allow sufficient time for a planning session, follow-up meetings and mechanisms for continued work, a pilot of the original programme design, revision based upon the pilots, and another delivery of the revised programme. Curriculum development takes care of the big-picture design required to effectively teach a course, and this is because decisions such as course objectives, content sequencing, and delivery methods are made in advance. Therefore, teachers or instructors can focus on smaller details, such as planning for specific teaching or writing effective assessments. Meanwhile, a repetitive curriculum development process gives educators a structure to improve the course after evaluating students' performance and receiving end-of-semester feedback. Curriculum development is very important; it is a useful structure for learners and benefits teachers.

Curriculum development allows teachers to take a systematic and thoughtful approach to determine what learners would be required to learn. The early stages of the process involve critical research and analysis to ensure that learners get the best possible education. Meanwhile, one of the most effective course development approaches is addressing learners' needs. According to Venkataiah, education has been recognised as an important input for the development of an individual, society, and the nation at large. The main contributions of education to the individual are the basic right types of attitudes, values, adequate knowledge and essential skills. This means that educational institutions can only provide all these basics through their curriculum. Moreover, since the totality of learning experiences

makes the live curriculum, the curriculum being the main instrument of education, is not expected to be static. The curriculum should be updated and restructured to improve the quality and standard of education. Therefore, innovation and review of the curriculum are inevitable with the changes that take place in society (2007, p. 1).

Concept of Theological Education Curriculum

The curriculum does not develop in a vacuum but proceeds based on beliefs about how people learn and what human beings should be like (Hooper 1973, p. 2). Objective of theological education is God-centred, its approach is holistic, and its function is Church-oriented. The theological institution is a community of faith and learning that cultivates theological reflection habits to contribute to the candidates' spiritual formation and moral sensitivity. In this context, the task of theological curriculum is central, as it includes the interrelated activities of learning, teaching and research (Colson and Rigdon, 1969, pp. 33-35).

Therefore, theological curriculum is the means through which learning, teaching, and research are formally ordered to achieve theological educational goals. The theological curriculum has specific goals which need to be attained if theological education is effective and productive. Comprehended in this principal goal are others, such as developing spiritual awareness and growing moral character and sensibility. Also, gaining an intellectual grasp of the tradition of a faith community and acquiring the abilities necessary to exercise ministry in that community of faith. Although, the emphasis placed on particular goals and their configurations will vary from one institution to the other, and these depend on the understanding of the institutional purpose and the variety of educational programmes offered.

The Concept of Ethical Leadership

Ethics is “moral philosophy or the division of philosophy that involves the study of how humans ought to live” (Grenz and Smith, 2003, p. 35). Ethics focuses on the questions of right and wrong and the determination of the human good. Douma sees ethics as a reflection of moral conduct, while Christian ethics reflect upon moral conduct in the light of the perspective offered in the Holy Scripture

(2003, pp. 13-14). However, Grenz and Smith opine that Christian ethics is the study of how humans ought to live as informed by the Bible and Christian convictions (2003, p. 35). In his thought, Stob defines ethics as the science of morality; morality is understood as the set of judgements people make regarding what is right or wrong, good or bad, in the relations between an individual or collective centres of intelligence and will (1978, p. 1).

Consequently, for any human society to grow and experience the needed peace for sustainable development, the moral values of such a community must be given due attention. Its entire social fabric becomes corrupted in any church or society where moral identity is compromised. There is the decadence of moral values in African societies, and Nigeria is not exempted. While the reason behind this may be many, the effect of morality defect is a major factor. Morality and values are sometimes used synonymously, possibly because of the goal they exhibit. Morality is not an abstract phenomenon but a practical means of developing a sense of justice as a prerequisite for societal welfare and happiness (Obasola, 2015, p. 1).

Christians generally, as noted by Rosner (1995, p. 337), have accepted the New Testament as their guide for faith and life, but Christians vary widely in their beliefs as to how the New Testament should be used in moral theory and practice. He notes further that it is essential to take a serious look at various ways through which the New Testament has been understood as a guide to Christian morality and then to highlight certain basic features of biblical ethics that say something about how Christians should resolve their hermeneutical dilemma, and propose a working solution as to how the New Testament should be used in moral theory and practice. Hence, Christian leaders are to be morally upright since leadership according to Wright, is a relationship of trust, where commitments flow from character. It is about adding value to people in an organisation out of the strength of the character and values of the leader (2000, pp. 104-105).

Moreover, McCain (2000, p.16) observes that a man cannot be a true leader without recognising that God has called him to be a leader. McCain sees leadership as a calling, and once it has been established that leadership is rooted in God's calling, moral standards must be

involved if such a leader would function as God's ordinance. Lautor (2016, p. 122) opines that the fact that God delights in a pure life and in men that are committed to the purity of life is very clear as one studies the Scriptures. Morality could be built and developed; 2 Timothy 2:21 notes that if a man purifies himself from the works of the flesh, he will be a vessel of honour and fit for the Master's use.

Meanwhile, Oguntokun (2015, p. 94) maintains that some leaders want to do good, but they never do so because they do not see through to do that which is good for them or that pleases the Lord; and that is the reason why emphasis needs to be placed on the study of Christian moral values. Buttressing the claim of Oguntokun, Oke (2015, pp. 129-130) observes that the world today demands a paradigm shift in how Christian leaders have hitherto exercised their leadership. In response to the Great Commission, Christian leaders must begin to reinvent leadership and create transformation in the communities, organisations, disciplines and sectors and heal what is broken in these areas while retaining moral value. Christian leaders should be ethically sound in their leadership approach. Wilkens (1995, p. 13) notes that the process of how leaders work through moral issues is called an ethical system; hence there is a need for moral leadership formation.

Leadership, Ethical Leaders and Why Develop Ethical Leaders?

Leadership, according to House (2004, p. 15), is the ability of an individual to influence, stimulate, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness, fruitfulness and success of the organisations of which they are members. It means an ideal leader is the one that is willing to change when necessary, remove or institute new thinking, not afraid to break fallow ground and is motivated to challenge his successes and examine his failures to give opportunities for improvement. Ethical leaders are those with an open mind toward making impact, ready to effect positive change. They love to make things happen and are open to hearing how things can be improved. They have a large heart for receiving inputs that may provoke a change. They listen and consider suggestions for doing something differently; they are always in the lead, working with others to

evaluate and not justify their actions (Adedokun, 2019, pp. 26, 33-34).

In the Scripture, the Lord God did not only tell His people about what is ideal and positive, but He also told them where great men have failed to manifest servant-leadership. So that others can learn from their failures, and thread the path of morality (Osei-Mensah, 1990, p. 15). In the meantime, education describes the total process of human learning through which knowledge is imparted, faculties are trained, and skills are developed. Whereas, schooling is the only form through which education is provided. Therefore, education is society's cultural reproductive system in which the society reproduces itself by passing on its main characteristics to the next generation (Moronkola and Babarinde, 2015, pp. 2-3).

In addition, one of the objectives of theological education is to produce men and women of worthy character, those who will boost the image of the institution, family, community, and the nation at large (Babalola, 2006, p. 2). Furthermore, Moronkola and Babarinde (2015, p. 3) reason that the institution system is part of society, and it derives its curriculum content from the previous current and perceived future occurrences in society and by implication, transmits its cultural values. Therefore, leaders transform society by shaping their organisations, and the institution produces leaders.

What Should the Curriculum Do in Developing Ethical Leaders?

In developing ethical leadership therefore, the curriculum should focus on these four cardinal areas: (i) Regeneration of leaders, (ii) Teaching and Training of leaders, (iii) Discipleship or Spiritual Formation and (iv) Inculcating the following courses in the curriculum: Advanced biblical ethics; Principles and dynamics of ethical leadership; Spiritual discipline; Advanced character formation; and Exemplary leadership model. Meanwhile, learning is a lifelong endeavour, and leadership development is a continuous process. Therefore, Christian educators should make the issue of ethical leadership development a topmost priority. The kind of curriculum design for the development of ethical leaders should embrace moral values such as: integrity, honesty, humility, caring, cooperation,

forgiveness, kindness, hard-work, fairness, courage, loyalty, self-control, gratitude, cleanliness, patience, compassion, respect and perseverance which are the hallmark of ethical leadership.

Consequently, the need to develop ethical leaders through theological education curricula cannot be overemphasised. The curriculum has to be relevant to life and the needs and aspirations of the people. Venkataiah (2007, p. 4) observes that a curriculum that would be relevant to the need of the people can only be prepared after assessing the needs of the underprivileged and obtaining suggestions from parents regarding their children's education. Therefore, curriculum development is the tool with which the objective of an institution can be achieved. Venkataiah notes further that the curriculum developed for higher education courses should seek to rectify the identified defects. Therefore, Christian education is responsible for fanning the work of the gospel by equipping leaders for the task of the Great Commission. Christian leaders must reflect the life of Jesus, those who would be demonstrating the kind of morality that God expects, as highlighted in the Levitical precept. Amusan (2020, pp. 22-23) maintains that Christian educators need to focus more on the training and equipping of leaders, because equipping leaders is a task that must be accomplished, as Jesus stated in Matthew 28:18-20.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed what Christian education is all about, which centres on the Word of God. Also, curriculum development processes have been highlighted, ranging from identifying the need for the curriculum to the implementation stage. Moreso, the concept of ethical leadership was discussed. An ethical leader is the one whose life and ministry are guided by biblical codes and conduct. In addition, the need for and how to develop a theological education curriculum was emphasised. Jesus scolded Nicodemus in the book of John 3:10, "You are a leader in Israel, and you do not know these things". It means there are several things leaders need to know to be able to function satisfactorily, of which some of these leaders are not aware. Therefore, it must not be assumed that leaders are aware of what it takes to be ethical; thus, a distinct curriculum designed for this purpose is inevitable. Learning in a theological institution must reflect

the goals of the total curriculum and be appropriate for Christian leadership formation. Learning should foster knowledge acquisition and the capacity to understand the actual purpose of learning in a theological institution, which is spiritual formation and moral transformation, to produce leaders capable of emulating and reflecting the life and the personality of Jesus, and to have positive impact on the populace.

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