

Moral Dichotomy Between Christian and Secular Education. A Discourse on Integrity with Reference to Nigeria

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Abstract

The phenomenon of globalization has affected conceptions about how the Christian life should be lived. There is a shift in what to believe, who to believe and how to live. Moreover, these are the bases for the issues of Integrity and honour raised at the International Conference on Theological Education, organized by the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in 2023. The theme of the Conference was “Integrity and Honour in Contemporary Christianity” and it held from 7th to 9th March, 2023. Integrity and honour are concepts upon which human relations are contingent, they determine how we relate to people and how we regard them. The mélange of cultures presently challenges the virtues that were once considered irrevocable absolutes, which Jesus Christ summed up in Matthew 5.48 “be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is also perfect.”

This paper aims at a recourse to practical Christian living and the unflinching obedience to God’s word as the requirement for integrity. Lack of integrity has caused a lot of devastation and loss of lives as in COVID-19, if the conspiracy theory was anything to go by; the present war between Ukraine and Russia or the ongoing genocide in Gaza must have been consequences of lack of integrity; and in like manner issues of lack of integrity have trailed Nigerian politics; international trade; bilateral relations; and governance. It gets bad when funds that are meant for humanitarian purposes are squandered or misappropriated.

The objectives of this presentation are to:

- 1. affirm the inherent lack of integrity in human nature*
- 2. examine that human nature is not compatible with Christian faith so does lack of integrity*
- 3. underscore the fact that the deliberate choice to be like Jesus Christ in all areas of one’s life is the bedrock for a life of integrity*
- 4. highlight that integrity reflects on personal choices that people make and discuss that personal experiences mediate in the demonstration of integrity*
- 5. present that contemporary Christianity is not synonymous with Bible-based Christian counter-culture*
- 6. Honour and shame are dichotomous consequences of the choices that individuals make in human relations.*
- 7. The antithetical love and hate are irreducible factors in the notions of sin, conscience, human relations and perfection.*

The approach adopted is explanatory with a backup of the Bible and internet resources.

The study concludes that no one is inherently good and all efforts to please people by trying hard to be good will always be futile; besides, no human can judge the other person accurately. God the Omniscient knows the cogitations of everybody's mind, He will be the only unbiased and unprejudiced trusted Judge of all humankind. It is therefore imperative to come to Him on His own terms by believing Jesus Christ for cleansing and deliverance from the impeding nature of sin and have a new life filled with the Holy Spirit. Reading, studying, meditating and conscious obedience are spiritual activities that enable imbibing God's word. Christian education can put in place a system that discourages heartless and deadly competition but encourages individuals to believe that success is not about being the best or conforming to worldly and fleeting parameters but it is the resilience that sees a person through the achievement of a goal.

Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization has affected conceptions about how the Christian life should be lived. There is a shift in what to believe, who to believe and how to live, and these are the bases for the issues raised at the Conference of International Baptist Theological on Education; integrity and honour, concepts upon which are contingent human relations. These two notions determine how humans relate and the unconditional mutual positive regard that should bind them. The mélange of cultures presently challenges the virtues that were once considered irrevocable absolutes, which Jesus Christ summed up in Matthew 5.48, therefore, a lot of compromising choices mark the daily experiences of confessing believers in Jesus Christ. This paper aims at a recourse to practical Christian living and the unflinching obedience to God's word. After all, if Jesus came to die for the sin of the whole world and believers have been truly delivered they should not be sinning anymore as implied by the Apostle Paul in Romans 6. 11 & 12 "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." The teaching is also corroborated in 2 Corinthians 5.17 states, "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Colossians 3.10 adds that believers should put on the new man renewed in knowledge and in the image of God, our Maker. If Christian education lays a foundation of integrity and the values of honesty, sincerity, decency as encapsulated in the notion of integrity, most religions of the world (numbering over 4000) do not consider these virtues as intrinsic in human relations, governance and economy. Hence, a lot of tension has developed from this dichotomy and has often resulted into conflicts, civil and international wars and consequent disasters like genocides and massacres of various degrees tagging along gross inhumanity.

Lack of integrity has caused a lot of devastation and loss of life as in COVID-19, Russian Ukraine War the ongoing Hamas/Israeli war, genocides around the world, national politics, international trade, bilateral relations, governance. It gets bad when authorities are indicted for lack of probity and integrity as in the prosecution of the former President to the USA, Donald Trump, who stood trial on charges of corruption, the former Accountant General of Nigeria,

Ahmed Idris who was on a 14-count charge and indicted alongside Olusegun Akindele, Mohammed Kudu Usman and a firm – Gezawa Commodity Market an Exchange Limited, for stealing over 100 billion naira and has been turbaned by the Sokoto Caliphate (*The Cable*: Bolanle Olabimtan: Ahmed Idris: EFCC deceived me to admit involvement in `N109.4bn fraud`, February 1, 2024; *Premium Times*: Ameh Ejekwonyilo: Alleged N109bn Fraud: Court send former Accountant General- Ahmed Idris and others to prison, July 22 2022; *Punch*: Solomon Odeniyi: N109bn fraud: EFCC denies asking ex-accountant general to indict minister, March 21, 2024; *Daily Post Nigeria*: Matthew Atungwu: Alleged N109b fraud: I thought I won't be prosecuted- Ex-AGF Idris, April 15 2024. In Nigeria, the COVID-19 pandemic was an excuse for misappropriation of funds which were meant for humanitarian purposes. Huge sums of money were embezzled and squandered (Siwoku-Awi, 2023). These moral inconsistencies and impasse are insidious acts that have gradually weakened the collective integrity of the Nigerian society, therefore people now talk of cutting corners, doing runs or scam jocularly and almost acceptably. These are negative concepts that we suddenly woke to find are already ingrained in the common psyche of a people with a fragile moral culture due to the multiplicity of religious beliefs. These are concepts that the Bible termed as sin and evil.

To promote integrity is to elevate the well-being of humanity and to make the world better for everyone. It is important for the Christian Church to rise up and proclaim the liberating Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ not only by sermons but by deliberate choices to honour God by the lifestyle of being exactly like the Lord Jesus Christ, who exemplifies God in the physical world.

Contextualization of the Keywords

Moral Dichotomy

The theme of the 2023 International Theological Education Conference (ITEC) organised by the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho was: "Integrity and Honour in Contemporary Christianity". This paper has developed the sub-theme of how integrity and honour play out in the secular education and what the Christian education should be as a beacon of hope and moral uprightness in a decadent world. Therefore, the subject of the paper hinges on the moral dichotomy insinuated by public and private sectors that do not prioritise probity yet lay claims to religious tenets. They may not be particularly religious institutions but they present cases of probabilities to watch against in theological education, because in the long run the intense desire for success cuts across all humans no matter their religions and it matters that those in Christian education keep in clear focus the purpose of world evangelisation and the eternal purpose of God for human salvation. Therefore, it would be abnormal to contribute to the irregularities.

The keywords of this article are Moral dichotomy, Christian and Secular Education and Integrity. The notion of "moral" raises ethical issues about attitudes and comporment that are considered good or bad and that conform to certain laid down rules, standards or codes of conduct. Moral standards are entrenched in religions, cultures or criminal codes and they are as varied as there are religions, cultures and national constitutions of various people groups or countries. The term "honour" is a key word in the conference theme and should never be overlooked, even though the title of this paper has not highlighted it. The Bible is clear on the concept of honour as linked

to the reverence and respect that one gives to the elderly and authorities as stated in Exodus 20.12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” The word honour had only been mentioned earlier in Exodus 14.14 & 18 in the context of God being acknowledged and respected as the Creator, who could not be contended with, by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In both instances, honour is God’s prerogative and the requirement for human connection and relationship with Him. In Proverbs 21.21 it is stated that “He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour”; Proverbs 22.4 “By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour and life.” In Roman 13.7, Paul the Apostle encouraged believers in this manner “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

A person’s honour for God is the bedrock of his or her entire personality and the propelling force in sincere and honest human relations at home, work and the society. The hierarchical structure of most societies leaves no doubt as to who deserves honour; moreover, such acts of reverence and honour for individuals have resulted into disregard for human rights and scandalous excesses of leaders or the “honourables”, who mismanage funds and destroy the moral fabric of the society by their acts of impunity. Meanwhile society encourages the tradition which requires that as a mark of honour the common people should close their eyes to the misdeeds of adults and those in government. Christian education provides a different stance in which the will of God is projected as the priority and not the rationalised wishes of individuals who disregard God’s moral injunctions.

The principles and values of a people or a person determine largely his or her idea of morality. For instance, the idea that students could be assisted to graduate within a short period has led to a lot of crash academic unaccredited programmes with the Nigerian education system so much so that half-baked graduates have become hazardous to the medical profession and educational sectors, very sensitive domains that are foundational to National Development. Lives are lost almost daily because of quack doctors and the incompetence of those who never learned properly.

Makua Ubanagu (25 November 2023) in *The Punch* online wrote in the article titled “Abuja Varsity Banned from Admitting Law Students For Five Years” It was discovered that Baze University Abuja owned by the presidential running mate of the Labour Party, Yusuf Datti-Ahmed has consistently been violating approved quota of 50 students per session as approved by the Council of Legal Education with the result of a backlog of over 347 law students who are waiting to be admitted into the Nigerian Law School. This is evidently lack of integrity as other students across the country are prevented from having a chance to do the final stage of their training. Unfortunately, according to *Premium Times* online (November 27 2023), all Nigerian universities violate the quota.

Premium Times, Qosim Suleiman added in his article titled “Minister criticized for breach of admission rules by university he once administered” that Mamman Tahir, a former Vice Chancellor of the Baze University, Abuja has been indicted for violating the admission regulation by overshooting the admission quota of 50 students per session. He had been the Director General

of the Nigerian Law School (NLS) from 2005 to 2013. It is paradoxical and seriously enervating that the people who make the rule break the rule. This is a proof of the fact that human nature is imperfect. It is worrisome and the situation calls for inquiry as to the reason for such open violation of a decision that seems to uphold quality education and classroom effectiveness. It discredits the whole structure of the Nigerian Education system if the Minister of Education is indicted in this way and if the problem pervades all disciplines as could be observed in the teeming numbers of undergraduates in public universities that do not have sitting spaces for lectures and who are not provided with other indispensable utilities that facilitate learning.

The Baze University was caught in the act, even though other public and private universities commit the infraction; consequently, the Council of Legal Education has banned Baze University from admitting students for the next five years. By admitting 750 law students since 2017, the Baze university has exceeded the allotment of 50 per session and within a period of six years has appropriated spaces of students that should have taken 15 years to fill. While the accredited curriculum is for five years the Baze university violated this benchmark and runs a 3-year law degree, hence, fast-tracking the graduation of law students to be admitted into the already overburdened Nigeria Law School. The backlash is that those who have done the requisite five years of study might not get a place soon enough in the Law School.

Of course several of such unaccredited programmes are conducted in the mushrooming institutes of learning that are not monitored or accredited. Therefore, the standard of education in Nigeria is seriously compromised, particularly when the race of stakeholders is to have as many students in order to have more money to run the programmes as in private universities or more students for courses as in earned allowances of lecturers in public universities, because the more the students the more the remuneration. Moreover, there could be greater effectiveness if the work is spread out among more lecturers, without exceeding the number of students per lecturer. Moreover, most university departments may be understaffed.

There is no known study on whether the situation is similar in faith-based private universities and institutes of learning for all levels, however, it is understood that corruption might take place at every level of learning because people are desperate to achieve the reputation of having the most number of students, a phenomenon deemed as being an index of qualitative learning. In addition, a large number of students tantamounts to more revenue and more money for salary and development.

However, integrity requires curtailing the number of students that are admitted to a course of study in order to ensure effective teaching, mentoring and monitoring. Violating regulations is not peculiar to any religious tenet or country, the excessive desire for recognition and paper qualification has been a huge source of financial stability in such a way that standards could be downplayed. It could be safely assumed that a careful study and investigation of the structure and activities in some faith-based educational establishment could reveal similar contravention of regulation and standards given the cases of indictment against Christian leaders in matters of sex and money.

Making Moral Choices

If there were no choices to make in life, there would not be parametric description of characteristic behaviours as being good, better or best for the validation of others. At some point in life, an individual would be faced with a moral choice about germane issues. In a pluralist society like Nigeria, it is an unwritten code that non indigenes of any state, or believers of some religions might not get some specific posts regardless of professional qualifications or experience except by their religious or political affiliation. This is clearly a misguided choice and could be sinful if some acts of aberration are perpetrated in the process. Unfortunately, those who perpetrate such acts overlook its far reaching implications for national cohesion and integration. In a desperate bid to belong people commit criminal acts of various degrees, but some claim it is a small lie to have changed their names or states of origin for the hot job. The Bible calls such an act deceitful and a lie that attracts serious punishment from God. Psalm 58.3 states: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” Lie is a very common sin that is readily overlooked and explained away especially if no one is hurt. However, with God it is different, lying is a serious sin that foreshadows more evil acts and terrible sins and there is no gradient in the measure of sin in God’s word. Psalms 101.7 pronounces the judgment of God in this manner: “He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.”

Christian Education

Christian education developed from the mission to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Early Church Fathers, Christian Platonists, Clement of Alexandria and Origen made the effort to prove that the Greek thought could be used to prove tenets of Christianity as the ultimate philosophy in explaining the universe, a quest that is fundamental to Greek philosophy. Christianity, therefore, should be taught through liberal education. Since the 5th AD Episcopal schools were developed to inculcate Christian values and virtues. Later the Scholastics between 1050-1350 AD used philosophy to buttress the Christian faith. At the time of the Scholastics, Christian education progressed in providing foundations for studies in Latin, mathematics, logic, languages, music, the science, medicine, technology and economy, and it must be added that Christian doctrines were core in the educational policy.

In the course of time, Education became expanded to include more subjects and methods than the early scholastics deployed, nonetheless, the focus of Christian education at all times and in every part of the world should be to maintain the purpose of representing Christ, bringing people to the knowledge of salvation and persuading them to choose His lifestyle. According to Siwoku-Awi, Omotayo Foluke:

It must be stated clearly and vehemently that Christian education is a mission strategy that enables the Church to carry out the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28.19-20” Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen,” Propagating Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the

Saviour of the world is the essence and ethos of Christian education, therefore, any shift should be carefully avoided so that carnal elements do not get incorporated in the implementation of the policy of Christian education.

Dennis E. Williams (2006, p. 639-643) in his essay in *Portable Seminary* raised some probing questions that could assist in defining what Christian education is. The crux of the posers is that Religious education is not different from Christian education and the nomenclatures are not different and do not have to be separated from the overall school subjects at all levels in a Christian school. In essence, a student who goes to a secondary school or tertiary school daubed Christian must leave the place equipped to change society with the gospel of Christ by his or her hard work, high sense of responsibility, commitment to duty, a high propensity for achievement and productivity, a life of integrity and obvious self-discipline.

Dennis E. Williams (543) buttresses these claims about Christian education:

It includes pre-conversion, conversion, and post-conversion learning experiences. People come to faith in Christ through faithful teaching of God's Word and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. After conversion, the learner moves into the discipleship stage and is to develop and grow as a believer. This is Christian education in action: not a onetime learning experience but a lifetime dedicated to learning more about God and his Word. It includes the application of this truth in the life of the learner so that it can be passed on to others in service and ministry. Christian education is designed to bring people to faith, to develop people in their faith, and to lead people to minister to others through the ministry of the Church.

In essence, the values and virtues learned in a Christian school should be all-pervading, in which every aspect of a person's life is consciously submitted to the authority of Jesus Christ.

Integrity

Integrity is a key word in this discourse as given in the title, and in its common use it connotes a strict compliance with a set of moral rules or ethical code, which include values like honesty, decency, probity, goodness, faithfulness and truthfulness. Several passages of the Bible give the meaning as simplicity, sincerity of heart and intention, truthfulness, uprightness. Genesis 20: 5-6; 1Kings 9.4; Psalms 7.8; 25.21; 26.1,11; 41.12; 78.70-72, Proverbs 19.1; 20.7 In International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, W. L Walker writes that Integrity is one of the words on the breastplate, the Urim and Thummim of the high priest as recorded in Exodus 28.30-37; Deuteronomy 33.8; Ezra 2.63; Nehemiah 7.65. it implies innocence, uprightness, completeness, perfect, sincere, true pure in heart, genuine. As it can be observed, integrity as a moral concept has its origin in the worship of YAHWEH, the Eternal God of creation as recorded in the cited passages of the Scripture.

The purpose of integrity is to close up the gaps between the secular and spiritual, when faced with making difficult moral choices and when pleasure and pain are at stake. Integrity is the perfection of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian and it encapsulates the fruit of the Holy Spirit in all its dimensions. In Galatians 5.16-26, Apostle Paul pitched the proofs of the operations

of the Holy Spirit against the works of the flesh that motivate self-conceited moral choices. Both dichotomous choices determine the subsequent outward display of decency, credibility, honesty and truth that are implied in integrity and the inevitable end of eternal damnation or bliss. Prevalent lifestyle of open defiance to integrity creates the impression that it has become a mythical anticipation to hope for a heavenly reward for being just honest and upright, therefore, the penchant for the extreme pleasure and the rejection of the temporary pain of self-denial and integrity. The anomalous hedonistic lifestyle is amplified by the prevalent doctrine of prosperity in which little effort is required to make quick money.

The purpose of a believer in Jesus Christ is not about being the best at all costs and through violating the rules in order to be first in the race, but rather about being resilient in the face of difficult circumstances. Christians must be able to handle the worst challenges and still finish strong. It is important to remember that success is not just about learning from our mistakes, it is pushing through hardships, and continuing to strive to achieve personal set goals. It is about developing resilience, and having the courage to keep going. Patrick Womack submits that: “Sometimes winning doesn’t matter, what matters is that you finish what you started.”

Although, the path of success may be filled with obstacles, the outcome of persevering and pushing through can be overwhelmingly rewarding. For the Christian it is being able to affirm that God’s will has been accomplished in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, all the glory belongs to God.

Achievement in Education

Traditional education has been premised on a system of evaluation, which streams the best from the poor achievers and it has been extremely merciless to non-achievers. National, tribal or family cultures across the world have been very crucial in determining the success and goals to be achieved. It is not different till date. The quest to be the best, to be superior and conform with superlative evaluations, descriptions and structures erected by some individuals’ imaginations and complexes pervade all aspects of human endeavour. The world does not seem to have a place for low achievers, though they might honestly be living within their capacities and the opportunities tossed at them. According to the Dictionary of American Psychological Association (DPA), achievements should be :

1. the attainment of some goals or the goal attained
2. acquired knowledge (especially in a particular subject), proficiency, or skill. The DPA describes academic achievement as any identifiable success in the areas of scholarship or disciplined study. Furthermore, in educational psychology achievement is a level of proficiency in scholastic work in general or in a specific skill, such as authentic training or reading. Evaluation or academic achievement is usually based on the performance of learners and the results got from standardized ability tests or assessment of performance by a teacher or designated supervisor.

The loss of integrity sets in, when the learner or examiner cheats on some achievement tests or seeks to influence the process of evaluation through various means, Nigerian students use terms like “expo, gbegin (masquerading) or doing runs.” The acceptance and repeated use of these

notions approve the aberration, and endorse the laziness of the users, who no longer work hard but rely heavily on being helped in the examination hall therefore, they would not prepare adequately, some students would skip lectures, anticipate lecturers' magnanimity or get gratified by indecent relationships with them.

Moreover, it should be added that the younger generation that demonstrates lack of integrity are only perpetuating the decaying moral tradition that had been put in place by the older generation that left a legacy of promoting self-honour, at the expense of integrity. Nigeria has developed a moral system in which the most vicious persons are the revered leaders, who also use national resources to make themselves untouchable. Unfortunately, university lecturers have been indicted for awarding marks to non-deserving students in exchange for sexual gratification. Professor Richard Akindele was reported in media vessels, like *Daily Post*, *Punch Newspaper*, *The Cable*, *Premium Times* as being nabbed in a case of Sex-For-Marks Scandal in 2018. The Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Commission reported on December 18, 2018 "ICPC Secures conviction against Sex-for—Marks Lecturer". The professor was arraigned on a four count charge for committing the sexual offence in September 2017. He demanded sexual benefits from Miss Monica Osagie, a post graduate student with the promise to upgrade her marks from fail to pass, thereby committing an offence contrary to and punishable under section 8 (1) a and 2; and 18 (b) of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000.

During investigation, Professor Richard Akindele intentionally deleted some parts of the whatsapp conversation between him and the victim, thereby violating section 15 (1 and 2) of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000. He falsified his age and claimed that he was born in 1961, whereas the record in his personal file obtained from OAU revealed that he was born in April 1959. The falsification of age is an offence contrary to section 25 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000. The Judge, Justice Maureen Onyetenun, of the Federal High Court, Osogbo, Osun state sentenced the ex-lecturer to two years each on three count charge and one year on the last count and the sentences ran concurrently. Amos Abba reported on April 3, 2020 for the International Centre for Investigating Reporting (ICIR) "Disgraced OAU lecturer, released after serving two year jail term for demanding sex from student." He was released on March 19, 2020. Sexual offences are not limited to Nigeria, it is a global malaise. President Bill Clinton of the USA was indicted and impeached as a result of his inappropriate relationship with Monica Samille Lewinsky, when she worked as White House intern between 1995 and 1996. The general pattern in the world is to keep mum over ignominious acts committed by global leaders because of the erroneous idea that their honour should be preserved. The public does not often face the impropriety of mingling personal amorous affairs with public duties, hence, the sexual act becomes a weapon or a means of imposing self-honour or a demeaning method of self-gratification. Sexual gratification has become a norm in the Nigerian society; it is a psychological state of expressing a level of low self-esteem, which considers sex as a way of conquering a resistant or moral upright individual.

The case of Professor Richard Akindele is only a tip of the iceberg, a calamitous example of how deep the Ivory Towers of learning are kneedeep in corruption and concealed sexual malpractices. In cases wherein both the benevolent and beneficiary have acted consensually and the truth of the matter was never discovered both become culprits who are never found out and the

scenario portends a more dangerous catastrophe for the moral fabric of the nation. There are too many accomplices in crimes than whistleblowers, who sincerely desire to put in place justice, equity and integrity. Apparently, the Nigerian judiciary favours discriminating judgment and double standard when corrupt charges against some political figures are swept under the carpet and the process of restitution is jettisoned; where are the misappropriated funds by Diezani Alison-Madueke? She was Nigeria's ex-oil minister, under ex-President Goodluck Ebere Jonathan, and the first female President of OPEC. (<https://punchng.com> Abiodun Sanusi (23rd December, 2023) "EFCC deletes controversial social media post on ex-minister, Diezani"; <https://www.bbc.com>>news Nkechi Ogbonna (22 August 2023 "Nigeria's ex-oil minister Diezani Alison-Madueke charged with bribery in the UK"; www.occpr.org>daily Henry Pope reported for Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (24 August 2023 "UK Lays Bribery Charges On Ex-Nigerian Oil Minister Diezani Alison-Madueke" Even rumours should be properly investigated and the air properly cleared without fear of recriminations as there is no smoke without fire.

Theological education and in particular Religious education in the teeming population of Christian basic, secondary or tertiary institutions should prioritise Christian morality above paper qualification while much effort should be put into producing highly competent graduates. Even though Theological education is fundamentally restricted to the training of clergy men and women who do not have to face the rigours of working in a system that is diametrically opposed to faith in Jesus Christ and principles of holiness, it is mandatory that they stand in the gap for the people. In Ezekiel 22.30, God told the prophet "So I sought for a man among them, who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one." This is achievement in God's scheme, being able to carry out God's purpose in the world. Theological education is supposed to train and inculcate the skills for living like Jesus Christ. It starts with a changed heart and only God can bring that to pass. Unfortunately, some people go into theological training for the honour, prestige and financial possibilities, therefore, much like the secular sector, the achievement is centred on desperate drive for personal gains.

Mediating factors in achievement

Recognizing the mediating factors in achievement provides the facilitator of learning with the bullet solution to learning problems that could raise queries of integrity in any school setting. Learners could therefore be better guided on how to meet the prerequisites as prescribed for the success of their goals. Some germane factors that are responsible for good performance are discussed below.

Motivation

The Nigerian society is propelled by a culture that rates immoderate possession of money, and an excessive desire to outshine others at all costs higher than virtues. The example of the latest elections should not be overlooked, in that in spite of the security measures put in place, buying, rigging of votes, hijacking of ballot boxes, manipulation of scores and other demeaning malpractices took place. The desperate effort to stamp others out in order to overcome them is inherent in every competition, be it football, wrestling, field events, music contests and so on.

Contestants who lack integrity recourse to foul play and violation of rules like drug use or money politics as the case may be, in order to enhance their performance or win. The sheer pleasure of friendly games and relaxing pleasures have been completely jettisoned by the craving for money, like staking and betting and profit making ventures that are attached to a phenomenon that started off as a social activity. Integrity is therefore thrown out in these areas, meanwhile, humanity requires fair play, which purports the practical demonstration of honesty and probity in human relations.

Motivation is fundamental to a productive life, and in this wise, every intending theologian should be motivated by the purpose to do God's will in His world and through Christian education. Hence, the motive is not to be self-seeking, making money, or demanding to be honoured or worshipped. 1 Peter 3.15-16 enjoins the believers as stated below:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

In the same vein, Paul instructed believers to share in the motivation of Jesus Christ in the following manner:

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Competition

The desire to have a good job, and a financially secure future is a major motivation to achieve success, but wherein this looks impossible or difficult, some students resort to dubious methods of achieving their goals and they choose dishonest ways to attain their purposes. In the business world competition could be stiff and no one cares whose ox is gored. Hughes Morgan, Kalin Kolev and Gerry Mcnamara in the Journal of Business Research Volume 85, April 2018, Pages 73-82 ([https:// doi.org/10.1016/j.jusres.2017.10.053](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jusres.2017.10.053)) wrote in the article titled: 'A Meta-Analytic review of competitive aggressiveness research', a perspective definition of competitive aggressiveness as "the propensity to engage in a sustained, diverse, or unique series of actions to challenge rivals and enhance their relative competitive position, is a Gestalt-like sub-construct of competitive dynamics that is compared to several sub-dimensions. Even though this definition developed from the analysis of the antecedents of competitive aggressiveness, its dynamics and consequences, it provides the underlying essence of the act as the challenge of rivals. It connotes the positiveness of competition, its risks and strategies and this discourse adds that as long as it is

not harmful, it provides impetus for better performance, however, it is not often the case when people malign, kill, maim and destroy for what they want.

Mostly, aggressive behaviours that are aimed at harming someone are cultivated from childhood. Four types of aggression emerge in early childhood and could lead to more aberrant behaviours in adulthood. Aggression can be verbal or physical it is however inherent in the personality and psychology of an individual. In children, the types of aggression are four: accidental, expressive, instrumental and hostile (<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu>). The signs and symptoms of aggression/exhibited by children are many, but the concern is if they are not curbed early in life they escalate the underlying excessive ambition, or competition that could lead to some criminal acts, tagged unlawful aggression (a) actual or material unlawful aggression and (b) imminent unlawful aggression. Aggression from childhood has far reaching detrimental effects on adults. Unchecked aggression is the reason for harming others, putting them down, berating them or destroying their properties in order to win in a situation.

Aggressiveness is also implicated in lying, stealing, gossiping, spreading rumours, about people, bullying, cheating, excluding peers or using coercion and manipulation methods to maintain social status and control (Healthcare, March, 2022). Aggressive behavior destroys relationships as highlighted above and it also explains lack of integrity in individuals.

The behavioural patterns that develop from these aggressive choices are extensive and the individuals may not pretend to honour or respect people who they wish to hurt. Aggressive behavior excludes compassion, truthfulness and kindness. In psychology, aggressiveness presents itself as a mental issue to be treated, using cognitive behavior therapy (45) or some other self-control mechanisms.

If lack of integrity is tied to a debilitating behavioural pattern like aggression; in Theological education, lack of integrity should be a repudiated act because it challenges divine law of loving your neighbour according to the following biblical passages Matthew 5. 43, 44, 46; 19.19; John 13. 34-35. Christian Theology is unflinchingly positioned about the study of Jesus Christ as God incarnate and Yahweh's perfect example, therefore, Christian integrity implies strict compliance with moral and ethical principles as entrenched in the Bible and its eternal import, undoubtedly, the essence of human relations with the Eternal God.

There are numerous Bible texts that directly teach integrity, though the notion might be implied in the various synonyms; yet there are also many verses that translate "integrity" as integrity, however, among its synonyms are: honesty, truth, righteousness, equity, probity, moral strength, perfection, moral soundness, non-violence, freedom from corruption influence or motive, uprightness; the list of virtues seems endless just as God's justice and nature are infinite.

Mary Fairchild (Aug. 19, 2019) in her introduction to "17 Bible Verses About Integrity" states that:

The Bible has much to say about spiritual integrity, honesty, and living a blameless life, it also speaks of sincerity, loyalty, obedience, character, and maintaining consistency under pressure. These qualities are all

prerequisites for Christian leadership.” She comments on some of the verses: God demands our loyalty. He seeks people who put him first above everything and everyone also in their life: “To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity you show integrity (2 Samuel 22: 26, NLT).” One of the rewards of integrity is pleasing the heart of God. We show our love to God through obedience: “I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously. (1Chronicles 29:17, NLT).” God singled out Job as an ideal example of a man of integrity. The Lord cherishes followers like Job who choose him and stick with him no matter what: Then the Lord asked Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause.” (Job 2:33, NLT). Integrity should be the hallmark of a Christian. Temptation is all around, but God is our rescuer and refuge. We can depend on God to be victorious in His life: “See how many enemies I have and how viciously they hate me! Protect me! Rescue my life from them! Do not let me be disgraced, for in you I take refuge, for I put my hope in you. (Psalm 25: 19-21, NLT). Our integrity does not earn our salvation but it does bring God’s approval. Know the truth and live it: “Declare me innocent, O Lord, for I have acted with integrity; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Put me on trial, Lord, and cross-examine me. Test my motives and my heart. For I am always aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth. I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites. (Psalm 26: 1-4, NLT).

Integrity is distinctly a life above sin as Paul taught his fellow Christians, let not sin reign as king in your mortal bodies, Romans 6.11&12. These qualities are all prerequisites for Christian leadership and education. But are not Christian and Church leaders caught in the middle of sexual and financial malpractices? It would be too cumbersome in this short essay to cite examples of daily occurrences of the inconsistent double-standard Christian lifestyle that has created a depressingly lack of zeal and motivation to be distinct in character and consequently be a positive influence.

Sinfulness is a psychological state that refutes the normal, social and constitutional order of life; even though the notion of relativity might raise questions about the universality of the normal life. Considered within cultural and religious practices, a person who willfully disobeys the constitutional law, by stealing, lying, eliminating innocent people or making deliberate criminal choices to violate the fundamental human rights of fellow citizens or committing other socially unacceptable aberrant acts, is no doubt sick in the mind. Moreover, respect of human rights should be one of the basic indices in measuring Human Development and more so, the expression of integrity in daily living should be a core index.

Theological and Secular Education

As earlier explained, secular education developed from theological education, which dates back to the medieval times of the scholastics. Christian theological education was motivated by the vision to propagate the principles of the church by the early church fathers and philosophers like Thomas Aquinas as detailed in this works like *Summa Theologica*. Secular education developed to make room for other faiths and democratic principles that favour equal rights.

The objectives of secular education are not necessarily meant to enhance high moral standards as can be seen in the deplorable behavior of some people who do not lay claims to the Christian life heritage of moral integrity or who are only nominal Christians. Moreover, self-proclaiming Christian graduates of secular education may not as well demonstrate the blameless life that integrity requires, if their choice is to do the things that they see others do. After all, one must flow with the world in order to succeed and be acceptable. Furthermore, Paul's injunction to separate oneself from the world is very germane, 1 Corinthians 6.17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." This is a mental and spiritual state in which the Christian does not give room to worldly thoughts and acts that are considered permissible to others.

In a secular state, where Christians and non-Christians coexist, work together and share utilities, integrity becomes vital Christian *modus operandi*; their lives should not be dichotomised by being blameless in certain situations and compromising in others. The unflinching Christian faith imposes a mandate to bring others to Christ and this cannot be done by words alone but by a consistent Christian lifestyle that models the Holy Spirit of Christ and that demonstrates the liberating grace of God Almighty through Jesus Christ. This is the core message of the Christian leader, whose mandate is that lay members should be nurtured, through discipleship training in order to be fully responsible to Jesus Christ and be daily conscious of eternity. Jesus Christ condemned the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and lack of integrity because they did not obey the laws that they imposed on the people, notwithstanding that their level of education should have made them to be better behaved.

Theology taught in a Seminary or Christian University is clearly directed towards the life changing mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereas in the secular university, it is more academic than a spiritual orientation for soul-harvesting for eternity. None the less, academic work is not opposed to spiritual engagement, particularly if individuals have a vision for mission, have an understanding of their essence in life and are clearly focused.

Conclusion

This article has explored the prevalent issues in matters of integrity and how the lack of it plays out in the various strata of the society particularly in the education and public sector. It matters that Christian education should intentionally target restructuring society through adopting and implementing the secular education that is considered a gold mine or the Goose that lays the golden egg that creates possibilities of self-reliance, economic buoyancy, wealth and prosperity, and should build leaders of worth for the society, but sadly it festers with moral stench and deeply rooted corruption. On the other hand Theological education is the light that gives direction to the

human conscience and individuals who choose to navigate human existence by the choice to make God Almighty the Centrepiece of their daily realities.

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