

The Influence of Campus Christian Chaplaincy on the Moral Transformation of Selected Faith-Based Universities in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

Traditionally, a chaplain is a cleric such as a priest or imam of a religious tradition, who provides spiritual support, and care to secular institution, workplace or private chapel. Faith based universities are institutions of higher learning that integrate religious beliefs and values into their campus life. Globally, institutions of higher learning experience several activities every day and some bring severe challenges to the development of the institutions and the personalities involved. Scholars in various academic fields have carried out research on these activities, which include the decline of morality, drug abuse, examination malpractices, gangsterism culture, cultism, obscene dressing and sexual promiscuity, harassment, unruly behaviours to lecturers and other constituted authority. However, adequate attention has not been paid to the influence of religious programmes and activities of the chaplaincy in the tertiary institutions. This is the onus of this paper in attempting to fill the gap in literature by exploring the influence of Chaplaincy activities on Moral and spiritual transformations of selected Faith based Universities in Southwest Nigeria as well as evaluate the impact of chaplaincy activities on the ethos of the university community.

Through the administration of questionnaire, interviews and review of literatures, hinged on the application of structural theory of functionalism, this paper argues that there are inbuilt personality traits seen in students who experience psychological and behavioural challenges. These traits impeded their learning and moral development. The findings further revealed religious activities in the campuses through the activities of the Chaplain have moderated the major moral challenges facing students therefore, the chaplaincy pastoral, care and counselling should be applied in intervening and remedying these obnoxious challenges. This paper recommends that all faith-based institutions of higher learning in the south west of Nigeria should improve the services of chaplains and develop new paradigms for effective whole-person development of students in their institutions through chaplaincy ministry in the institutions of higher learning.

Keywords: *Chaplaincy, Faith-based Universities, Morality, Students*

Introduction

As learning and training institution, the university constitutes both a moral space and a social fabric (Nafziger and Strong, 2020; Ndofirepi and Cross, 2017). Historically, university campuses have been at the heart of socio-political imaginations and experiences, and for transformative of aspirations, living conditions and power relations across the world. In Europe and America, university campuses offered the breeding grounds for political ideas and aspirations that radically transformed social dynamics, especially in the 1960s; in both colonial and post-colonial Africa, universities emerged as the building sites of the state and the central piece of the political economy of the newly set polities, as they trained the backbone of the state administration, promised social advancement and even development (Mellanby, 1958; Ike, 1977; Assie-Lumumba, 2011; Livsey, 2017). In contemporary India, university campuses breed and feed nationalism, exclusionary and identity politics; at the global level, the branching out of universities have become a trend and a model for a knowledge economy that is conquering the world, drawing interest from various fabrics of the society, but also prompting reconsideration of the added-value of University education and campus experience today (Connell, 2019; Gueye, 2017; Mellanby, 1958). While university education can be defined as a social asset, the campus emerges as a political arena (Stanley Hauerwas, 2007) that often hosts rival and competing ideas and actors working to offer visions of the world, models of social status and even divine salvation. In many countries, as a state institution, the university is at the centre of public policies and affects governance, especially since its funding, for example, has implications for political stability, youth aspirations, economic performance and social coexistence. Such a position has turned university campuses into moral spaces, sites of contestations and arenas where various moral agents be they leftist, secular or religious, take roles, acquire influence, and engage in competitions that shape the experience of being student, lecturer, or staff member. skills and expertise become valued, sought for, and promoted, social engineering initiatives, moral entrepreneurship and political agendas unfold and mobilize on university campuses today. The consequences of the secular dismissal of religion and religiosity, when intellectual culture is built on acute scepticism, evolutionism and even atheism stares us in the face today as observed in educational institutions where moral rectitude is down played. University campuses offer a site of a critical examination of morality, aspirations and normative orders. In the quest for social becoming, students in particular, have to deal with a conjunction of moral and knowledge economies often at odds with each other, forcing them to be creative and modular, as they navigate the requirements of an academic curriculum, the constraints of everyday life and the expectations of their broader socio-political environment.

University Campuses in Africa and Beyond as Training Grounds, Moral Spaces and Political Arenas

The world is currently inundated with high-level social issues characterized by growing insecurities, individualism, suicides, and a high crime rate. The University system is not immune to these developments. More than ever before, there is an urgent need to augment faith based campuses with Chaplaincy services. Undoubtedly, a nation's tertiary institutions are microcosms of the larger society and could undeniably, be classified as incubators for the upcoming generation (Assie-Lumumba, 2011). To reiterate, it is no gainsaying that the educational sector, as epitomised by the tertiary institutions, in the Nigerian society, is

confronted with myriad of problems, and if caution is not taken, the tertiary institutions, are fast becoming beehives for the perpetration of immoral acts. In view of this, Chaplaincy has been specifically chosen for this research as a means of restoring stability to the contemporary Nigerian educational landscape. As a measure of eradicating these immoral acts, there is an urgent need for institutions to incorporate Chaplaincy activities. Ideally, a country's learning institutions serve as the microcosms of the whole society as it is classified as the incubator of the country's future generation. In this regard, Chaplaincy in schools has been considered a means of helping restore stability to the contemporary learning landscape. Richardson in (2019) examined the fundamental role of Chaplaincy in the school environment and the concept of integrating faith with learning. In his examination, he defined Chaplaincy as the process of integrating the entire school environment, both curricular and co-curricular aspects, to entail Christian perspectives (Bateye, B.O, 2010) and holds the same views regarding Chaplaincy being referred to as a representative of the Christian faith. However, he raises new sentiments about Chaplaincy, arguing that people from different philosophical or religious traditions can have Chaplaincy playing different roles in the military force or in learning institutions. The role of Chaplaincy in a school environment is to support students and staff to engage in activities that will deepen student's studies to enhance their moral value development. Chaplaincy is a significant aspect of university life. The chaplaincy is often the first port of call for students of faith, as well as for non-religious students, staff, international students and those seeking a supportive, listening ear. Moreover, chaplains often play an important role in the management of on-campus challenges concerning religious discrimination, religious extremism and freedom of speech (Equality Act, 2010) their work increasingly framed by legal obligation (Act, 2015). In the 21st century, university chaplaincy is often organised around a multi-faith model, under the auspices of a full-time coordinating chaplain. Chaplains are found to have significant positive impact on life of university students. University chaplains have a significant impact on individual students. Academics from Coventry, Durham and Canterbury Christ Church Universities found that chaplains and university managers agreed that pastoral and religious work were the primary aims of chaplains, and that they typically focussed on exploring faith, providing pastoral support, and building community in their day to day activities (Aune K, M.Guest, J.Law, 2019). This paper will thus examine the Theoretical framework of Structural Functionalism and its relationship on Chaplaincy, the influence of Chaplaincy ministry on students and staff Religious/Spiritual life, influence of Chaplaincy services on students and staff moral life, the influence of Chaplaincy ministry on academic standard and commitment of students as well as Chaplaincy services and prevalent social vices in universities.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frame work is hinged on Structural Functionalism. The basic principles of Structural Functionalism can be comprehended in three simple terms: maintenance of social stability, collective functioning, and social evolution. The theory of functionalism sees the society to be a complex setting or system having every part of it working together for the promotion of stability and solidarity even security. The father of structural functionalism was Herbert Spencer. Spencer, a British Victorian philosopher who lived from 1820-1903, held some revolutionary theories for the times in which he lived. This work being sociological in nature and appraising one of the vital arms of the society which is educational, Robert Merton and Herbert Spencer being one of the strong adherents of structural functionalism and trusted disciples of the great sociologist Emile Durkheim, an outstanding proponent of functionalism,

maintain that the society is a structure that has inter-related faculties like the human body. Structural Functionalism is a sociological theory that explains how societies and social institutions function and maintain social order. The theory posits that:

1. Societies are systems with interconnected parts (structures) , 2. Each structure (e.g., family, religion, education) has a specific function, 3. These functions contribute to the overall stability and well-being of society. The Key concepts are - Social solidarity that is the shared values and norms that unite the society , Social integration that has to do with how individuals and groups fit into society , Functional prerequisites which entails the basic needs society must meet to survive , Manifest and latent functions that is intended and unintended consequences of social structures. Critics argue that Structural Functionalism overlooks conflict, power dynamics, and social change. This theory was influential in the development of sociology, but has largely been replaced by more contemporary theories like Conflict Theory and Symbolic Interactionism. A modern-day example of functionalism would be the education system. Education plays a major role in the function of society in many ways. Besides providing an academic education to make children functional members of society, education also serves to teach children socialization skills.

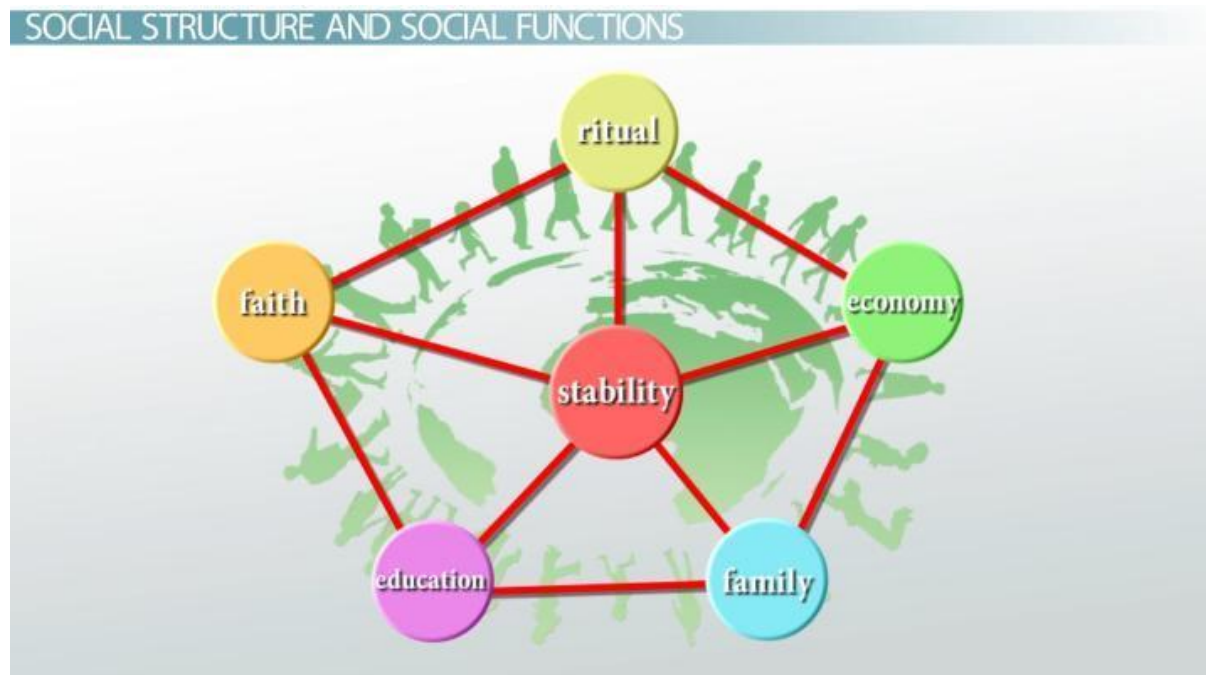


Fig 1

These grafted inter-related parts are designed to work together to achieve the societal and biological necessities of the individuals existing society. Structural functional theory suggests that a society is like an organism made of different social institutions that perform diverse functions on behalf of it. Similarly, this theory highlights that most organizations such as universities are large and have complex social units which more often than not are in diametric opposition to each other. Hence, the success of the chaplaincy program debatably depends on competency and interest of the school Vice-Chancellor and concerned personnel in guidance and counselling departments. Structural functionalism theory therefore, advocate for the concept of the order irrespective of the changes of human resource which constantly take place

within an organization. This can only take place when there is a strong policy framework guiding the chaplaincy program in tertiary institutions. Equally, the theory will be used to identify courses of conflicts of interest among the various departments that ultimately affect chaplaincy services. This is particularly important as Durkheim suggests that for a society to have a continuing existence over time; all sub-units (department) must work in harmony

Literature Review

Influence of Chaplaincy ministry on Students and Staff Religious/Spiritual Life

In essence, both religion and spirituality seek to bring answer and stipulate relevant ideas and practices towards achieving a wholesome development of the social, the mental and physical dimensions of humans. According to Andresen, “specific religious doctrines are sometimes promoted in order to strengthen individual and institutional agendas”(Andresen,2001). This scholarly position is true even when analysed in the context of the functions of campus life chaplaincy services. Chaplains in tertiary institutions provide counselling and spiritual guidance for students in tandem with doctrinal and institutional polity. What they provide do not only enrich the religious or spiritual life of students and members of the staff, their spiritual services also translates into the preparation of emotional atmosphere that enhance improved educational performance of students. Education in its proper context involves spiritual, emotional and physical development that learning within the confines of the classroom cannot satisfy in all sense of absoluteness (Humphrey,et al 2018). Education is often used as an avenue to obtain a certificate in other to enable those who have it to gain employment and job promotion. Chaplaincy is a vital component that can be successfully used in re-awakening the spiritual and moral consciousness of students (Egbert,2013;464-470), a renowned campus chaplain and a professor of education and psychology opined that genuine spirituality requires more than mere teaching doctrine by inserting it into the various disciplines and asking students to ‘behave in a Christian way, but to practically show them how to do it.’¹⁴ observed that chaplaincy in schools faces a myriad of challenges that hinder them from achieving their set objectives. Chaplaincy role often revolve around liturgy teaching and pastoral care. Pickard and Mungai argued that some refer chaplaincy services to as old-time religious values when they are trying to alleviate students’ problems which counteract the real intention of chaplaincy. Mungai opines that the wholistic challenges of students on an academic environment increase due to transference of parental responsibilities to surrogate parents who are understandably teachers and house helps. This complacent attitude is as a result busy culture of many parents because they are majorly preoccupied by work schedules which invariably lead to the neglect of children emotional need which result to imbalanced brought up. When parents neglect their responsibilities of instilling values in to their children especially during their formative years, it cannot but have damaging consequences of unimaginable magnitude in their future and this reflect on the comportment and keeping of values in the society. Surrogate parents like teachers and house helps cannot be trusted in proper upbringing of any child, because they themselves have some personal life issues they are fighting with and appears unresolved and often time make them compromise their value system.

Influence of Chaplaincy services on Students and Staff Moral Life

In their quest to elucidate the importance of sound moral integration in educational curricular, Warren Nord and Charles Haynes argue that “education is a moral enterprise”. In their position, the basic task in accepted moral education is to provide students with the intellectual resources that enable them to make informed and responsible judgments about difficult matters of moral

importance (Warren,2019:464-470). In an academic environment that is destitute of moral standard, learning is exposed to jeopardy, making education a social snare and threatening than of the expected personal and social development. In most developed countries, like in the United Kingdom, Chaplains are required to be highly educated. Research shows that 97.5% had at least a Bachelors' degree and 26.5% a PhD.18 60.8% had undertaken religious training (e.g. were an ordained minister). They are tested on moral level and should exhibit a high sense of morality and display professionalism as they discharge their duties as they must be of religious leadership understanding (Aune,2019:464-470).

Influence of Chaplaincy ministry on Academic Standard and Commitment of Students

In faith based universities, the operational terms often times hang on the concept of integration of faith and learning, with its coordination forming the bedrock of the function of campus life chaplaincy services in such institutions. Thus this endeavour does not seek to impose any beliefs or persuade an individual towards set of beliefs, but brings the needful to the understanding of students. In a true education, students are to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other people's opinion(White,2001:464-470). In a related development, it is discovered that if universities and other educational institutions make Chaplains a vital part of their lives, they will realize that sooner than later that the spirituality of the environment will be well coordinated and most cancerous and debilitating effects of moral decadence will be substantially than later become a home away from home, a place where parents can be sure that their children are offered the right measure of morality to inoculate them against academic fraud.

Chaplaincy Services and Prevalent Social Vices in Universities

It is a norm on campus that students in the university do make social interactions resulting in making of new friends and relationships and thereby develop a sense of autonomy. However, the reality of this development of new interpersonal, academic as well as the expectation and demands of the society and parents often time lead students to the exhibition of some kinds of dysfunctional characters as drug trafficking and abuse , causing behaviour that encourages gangsterism causing disturbances on campus resulting in emotional and physical assaults as well as breaking several university rules and regulations on a consistent basis. Educational psychologists have realized that transition to university in Nigeria has peculiar social challenges and behavioural consequences traceable to poor and inadequate accommodation facilities. The resultant effects of these development is that the available residential accommodations and lecture halls which in most cases are overcrowded, dilapidated and non-conducive for learning and living becomes a breeding ground for diverse unethical activities. Olaore A and Ola J.O,(2013) maintained that prior to gaining of admissions into universities, the youth was under the control of the parents and guardians, who must have had great influence in their decision making and monitored their activities. However, such youth finds himself or herself in a new environment, the university environment where the gates are widely open for sudden independence, coupled with barrage of campus questionable activities such as drug and substance abuse, night clubs around, cults and fraternities and other things of such nature, hence the student is faced with moral challenges that could make or ruin the expectation of the student, the parents and the society activities.

Ethical Issues in Nigerian Educational Institutions

Generally, when tertiary institutions graduate students they affirm that the students have been

found worthy in character and learning. Unfortunately, educational institutions are challenged with numerous ethical issues that the managers of educational institutions must address to remain relevant in a global economy. Ethical issues in university education are centred on indiscipline. Indiscipline in educational institutions connotes the inability of the students and teachers to adhere to a legal framework that guides the attainment of educational goals. It is a life not in conformity with educational rules that hamper the smooth and orderly functioning of educational institutions (Jekayinfa,2013). The author affirmed that indiscipline breeds corruption and other related social vices. Should this be the case of an institution that produce students who have been found worthy in character and learning? Ngonso, (2022) opines that ethical issues in Nigerian higher education are indiscriminate absence from class and non-availability of project supervisors, late commencement of lectures and non-completion of course outlines, the setting of difficult tests and examinations, campus prostitution, cultism, drug/substance abuse, monetization of intellectual propriety/lecturers' involvement in the writing of students' projects, examination malpractices, falsifying research data and plagiarism. Others are sexual harassment and molestation related to abuse of office, corruption and embezzlement (Ogunleye,2000). The list of ethical issues as it relates to university education is inexhaustible but suffice it to say that the study is interested in indecent dressing and sexual harassment.

Indecent Dressing

Indecent dressing is one of the ethical issues that has ravaged educational institutions and most scholars are agitated that if no appropriate action is taken will likely destroy the serenity and ambience of university education. The public university education in Nigeria is faced with this nauseating problem that is gradually becoming a norm rather than an exception. The highest citadel of learning is becoming brothels where females wear seductive dresses or nudity all in the name of fashion. Immoral and seductive dressing in university education is morally offensive and sexually provocative that onlookers hardly differentiate between male and female students and street thugs and prostitutes respectively (Ekwukoma & Osamiro,2021). Indecent dressing is dressing that offend others sensibilities; appears sensuous provocative or stimulating and unveils the sensitive parts of the body to attract the attention of the opposite sex (Ekwukoma & Osamiro, 2021; Omede, 2011). It is enlightening to note that the University of Ibadan on Ethics Policy opined that one of the responsibilities of students to an educational institution is that the students must “dress appropriately or follow the school dressing code in such a way that protects the respect for persons within a learning environment”. Indecent dressing at times called immodest dressing comes in various forms and shapes. They are sleeveless tops, body hugs, bum shorts, transparent clothing, bogus fashion, spaghetti tops, off shoulders, wicket straps, low neck blouses, mono straps, hot pants, low slug snacks, backless, miniskirts, dresses, attires printed with offensive or obscene words, and skirts with slits above the knees(Omede,2011;Okafor &Uwalaka,2020;Sola,2018). The cause of indecent dressing in educational institutions is a manifestation of what is happening in society. It gradually encroached into tertiary education as a result of environmental influence as a result of modernization and globalization. It is pertinent to note that the first point of emphasis related to indecent dressing is the parent who by all standards should be a role model and the first agent of socialization. Poor parenting plays a significant role in the upbringing of the children. It is argued that the first nine years of a child is very vital in the modelling of the child. It is either won or lost within this age bracket. The parent's decisions in the life of a child may make or mar the child; children live or die depending on the decision of their parents (Egbule,2013:464-

470) .However there are cases of youths who had no parenting but eventually turned out good .The latter are few exceptions to the case.

Another significant factor that influences students in educational institutions to be indulged in this unpalatable attitude is peer group influence(Ajiboye J.O,&Chukwu C.L,2015), which invariably affect their academic performance (Olusolami B.Okunlola, Jonathan A. Odukoya, Elizabeth I.Olowookere; Dare O.Omonijo& Michael C.Anyaegbunam, 2021). It exposes them to new religious ideas, practices(socialization), support and encouragement in the form of provision of a sense of belonging and support, encouraging individuals to deepen their faith (support and encouragement) , role modelling dimension in respect of religious behaviours such as praying,attending worship services regularly or community service(role modelling) and distractions as well in the form of discouraging individuals from deepening their faith or engaging in spiritual practices. However the fear of being isolated and the desire to belong and be like their mates have caused them to join the bandwagon of immodest dressing. This is more aggravating if the child lacks good parenting. The influence of modernization and globalization are contributing factors to why students in educational institutions copied other ways of life. The up turn of digital technology has contributed to the dissemination of vulgar content that is repulsive and alien to Nigerian culture. Through digital technology, students exchange obscure pictures that promote indecent and immoral practices that are inimical to the development of educational institutions. The effect of Western civilization have eroded the cherished core values of Nigerian tradition and students in Universities in south west Nigeria desired to be associated with Western values like smoking, drug abuse, immodest dressing and prostitution among other vices. It is important to mention that there are consequences associated with indecent dressing in educational institutions. Some of the consequences are sexual harassment, unwanted pregnancy, ritual killing, stealing and poor academic performance. Indecent dressing is a prelude to sexual harassment, sexual harassment will necessitate disturbance which will lead to poor academic performance. A scholar averred that it will lead to students' frustration and they may become deviants in society(Oli,2018) . There is the likelihood that ladies who dress indecently or provocatively could be prone to sexual harassment or rape (Okafor &Uwalaka,2020)

Significance of University Chaplain Services

William Cox defines the chaplaincy's fundamental task on campus and concept of faith and learning integration to be a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise-both curricular and co-curricular from a Christian perspective and letting it be expressed in various academic disciplines (William C,2014). From Cox's point of view, one of the core duties of campus chaplaincy services is support students, as well as the staff of institutions in carrying out co- curricular activities that will assist the students in deepening their studies toward an all-round core value development. Giles Legood notes that although originally the word chaplain referred to representatives of the Christian faith. It is now also applied to people of other religions or philosophical traditions, such as the case of chaplains serving with military forces and universities (Giles Legood,1999). J. Norman observed that: in recent times, many lay people have received professional training in chaplaincy and are now appointed as chaplains in schools, hospitals, companies, universities, prisons and elsewhere to work alongside, or instead of, official members of the clergy (Norman J,2004). In addition, a study on Multi Faith Spaces, by the University of Manchester, established that the concept of a multi-faith team, secular, generic or humanist chaplaincy are

also gaining increasing use, particularly within healthcare and educational settings (University of Manchester, 'Multi-Faith Spaces', 2012).

It is a truism that school chaplains are a fixture in religious and more recently, secular schools. The responsibility of chaplaincy is to counsel students who have psychological, social, spiritual and academics challenges. Research shows that in religious (faith) schools, the role of the chaplain tends to be educational and liturgical. On the other hand, in secular schools, the role of the chaplain tends to be that of a mentor and a provider of pastoral care services. Chaplains provide care for students by supporting them during times of crisis or need. Many chaplains run programs to promote the welfare of students, staff and parents, including programs to help students deal with grief, anger or depression. Chaplains, also build relationships with students by participating in extracurricular activities, such as breakfast programs, lunchtime groups and sports groups. School chaplains can also liaise with external organizations providing support services for the school (Lakes, 2013)

In view of the clearly undefined concept, chaplaincy has been designated to be representative of the Christian faith, or other religious traditions, functioning in the capacity of rendering spiritual advice to prison inmates, hospital patients, or conducting devotional talks to employees of companies. Brian Daly referred to Chaplains as spiritual animators (faith animators or pastoral animators) based on the French concept of *animation spirituelle* or spiritual care (Dallaire Michael, 2018).

Conclusion

The importance of chaplaincy service is enormous in the development of the school communities and the nation at large and should not be neglected but rather be accepted, implemented and sustained in all educational institutions. The current wave of secularism, which advocates a state of obvious dichotomy between religion and social life, is casting a lot of influence on the factors that determine the life setting and the formulation of priority and moral level among students of tertiary institutions; hence the need for committed spiritual care in the tertiary institutions exists. There is need for the revitalization of a paradigm for instilling moral and academic wholeness now brought to a clearer view and the utmost need for the functions of campus chaplaincy services (Thaddeus G.S, 2021).

Recommendations

1. Faith-based Universities should be encouraged to hire more qualified as well as skilled chaplains of diverse fields in order to invest a well-defined and specialized area of chaplaincy Services in their institutions
2. It is advised that Government owned higher institutions should seek to borrow a leaf from what is obtainable in some private universities in terms of whole-person care; engage the Services of trained and qualified chaplains in order to curb the prevalent behavioural disorders in the tertiary instructions.
3. Faith-based institutions should intensify on facilitating relevant training programmes to improve the services of chaplains and develop new paradigms for effective whole-person development of students in their institutions.
4. Chaplains in today's post traditional and post-modern societies are expected to be prepared to provide spiritual care to everyone that is associated with the institution of their employment, to students, staff and even extending to the parents and guardians in every possible method.

5. Chaplaincy programmes that will impact positively on the spiritual, moral and psychological stability of university community should be well structured and implemented on campus such as connecting with other Christians through seminars, workshops and revival programmes organised on either weekly or monthly basis. Carrying out in-depth interactive bible studies, organising prayer conferences as well as night vigils with fasting to transform the souls on campus, monthly evangelism outreaches within and outside the university communities, organising of love feast programmes to further demonstrate the love of God to others.

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