

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL EMANCIPATION: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS ON SOUTH SUDANESE SOCIETY

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Abstract

From the inception of Christianity, theological education in South Sudan has played a significant role in the transformation of Church life and society. Following the expulsion of the Missionaries in 1964 in the country and the general massacre of Christians in the major cities and towns in 1965, the Church did not relent in preaching the Gospel. Although most of theological schools have been destroyed, training of local pastors was going on even in the bush under trees or in the refugee camps. It has been the tool for social emancipation. The war though was somehow brought under control in 2005 by the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement and the successful referendum of July 2011, the country has not gained total peace. Today, so many rebel groups are at large fighting the government. Many South Sudanese citizens are displaced internally and many others had fled the country and are being hosted by the neighbouring countries in refugee camps. This study is undertaken to examine the role of theological education as a tool that brings about change in human lives and societies. The method employed in the study is historical method where primary and secondary materials are used. The study found out that theological education in South Sudan has done well despite the numerous challenges of man-power, war, lack of relevant books and so on. It is also to be noted that the war though seen as a challenge to the efforts of spreading the Gospel, it helped greatly in making people turn massively to God for safety of their lives. Its achievements and implications are also discussed and recommendations given.

Key Words: Theological Education, Tool, Emancipation, Society, Implications

Introduction

Historical Background of Theological Education

Theological education from the beginning of Christianity has been and still is the concern of the Church to raise men of reputable character for the work and ministry of the Church in the society, but this has been a neglected field according to Rowdon (1971) who explains that the structure of the ministry has attracted wide attention; but preparation for its exercise has excited little interest. He argues that within the four centuries of the existence of Christianity within the Roman Empire, little evidence of concern for anything like formal training for Christian leadership was seen. One reason for this probably was the marked character of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit which outlasted the Apostolic Age. The Didache gives evidence of the charismatic nature of the ministry which hardly called for formal training.

However, the conscious beginning of regular clerical training may well have come with the sub-division of clerical orders and the practice of raising a minister to higher order only after being tested and proved in the lower one. Already, in the Pastoral letters there are the

possibilities that the office of a deacon was a “Stepping-stone” to the office of an elder. Rowdon (1971) opines that with the introduction of minor orders, it became customary for an individual to be tested before being advanced to a higher position.

The need for ministerial training along more formal lines seems to have been borne upon the Church during the course of the second century. The growing self consciousness of the Church locked in debate with pagans and Jews on the other hand, and heretical schools of Gnostics on the other undoubtedly called for systematic and concentrated mental discipline on the part of those who would undertake leadership.

The Catechetical School of Alexandria is a prime example. It was founded by Panteanus around AD180 towards the close of the second century. It grew to its heights under the leadership of the famous Origen. Its scope has been well summarized as “an encyclopedic teaching”, presenting in the first place the whole series of profane sciences and then finally to Christian theology, set forth in the form of a commentary on the sacred books.

The Catechetical School was not impersonal, coldly academic institution, its administration revolved around the master in whose house learning took place, and who provided the lion’s share of the instruction. In the case of Origen, at least, it is clear that the force of his Christian Character, the strength of his devotion to Christian, and the rigours of his personal standards of behavior formed an important part of the training. Lebreton and Zeilier (1948) say that, Origen “transformed his disciples more by his personal influence than by his scholarship. He was not a lecturer who merely appeared from time to time before an audience; he was a tutor and master who lived constantly with his disciples”.

The Alexandrian School was not the only one there were other prominent ones such as Antioch and Edessa, these Greek Catechetical Schools solely focused on the training of leaders for the Church. They demonstrated the best of classical culture that could find a future within the Church. They helped the apologists to defend the Christian faith during persecution and heretical teachings and wrote apologies to Emperors to prove that Christians were innocent believers and loyal citizens to the Roman government, (Shaji 2010).

At the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, these schools died. George (1994) observes that with the changing circumstances, Christian training found refuge in the seclusion and relative environment in the monasteries. As monastic movements blossomed, theological spiritual training became more confined to the monasteries, and the teacher disciple relationship was maintained. It was the major element in the transmission of teaching and learning in the ancient Christian tradition, master-disciple relationship. We have seen this in Gamaliel – Saul relationship and in Paul -Timothy and Paul -Titus relationships.

Theological education continued to develop and grow. By eighth century, Cathedral schools for training of clergy came into being and by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Cathedral schools gave birth to Medieval Universities. The major task of these universities

was to understand and explain the light of God's revealed truth. These were regarded as the primary place of training for the ministry of the Church.

Lane (1992) observes that in the late Medieval period, John Wycliffe and John Hus both became the moving spirits of the Protestant Reformation. Wycliffe's accomplishments paved the way for the subsequent reformation of England. He translated the Bible into English and created the Lollards groups; with a view of theological education to them so as to proclaim the evangelical faith all over England among the common people. They based their teachings on personal faith, divine election, and the Bible. Bohemian students in England carried his ideas to Bohemia where they became the foundation for the teachings of John Hus in the University of Prague. John Hus was very influential; his teachings were mainly on the Law of Christ and the New Testament, which were sufficient guidance for the Church. His teachings were accepted by the Bohemians which later became a source of revolt against papacy. This led to the formation of the Moravian Church.

In the sixteenth century the Catholic Church became profoundly corrupt, negligent, sexually immoral, worldly and flamboyant. This was in contrast to the poverty of the population attacked by plague, famine, war, death and lack of care and protection. Martin Luther emerged as a reformer within the Catholic Church to reform and make necessary transformations within the Church, but his ideas and teachings were rejected by the Pope who also sought to terminate Luther's life and to bring an end to his teachings, However, Luther escaped, and while in hiding, he translated the Bible into German. This marked the beginning of the Lutheran denomination which was firmly established by his followers after his death. Protestantism began at this time. It spread like wild fire in Europe and America during the Evangelical Movement known as "Great Awakening". The Great Awakening influenced the revolutionary war in America by encouraging the movements of nationalism and individual rights. It also led to the growth of Churches, establishment of religious schools, and life holiness in society.

As seen in the historical background above, the main thrust of this paper is to critically examine the aims of theological education in South Sudan and its role as a tool/agent for emancipation of society, its achievements and the impact in Church life and society, challenges, solutions and recommendations will be discussed.

Definition of Terms

Theological Education: Noelliste (1995) defines theological education as: "The process of formation that leads to the transformation of the world through individuals and the collective participation of God's Mission." David, on the other hand views theological education as: "The training of religious technicians for ministry skills and formation of religious leaders". He pointed out three different sets of formation for those engaged in various types of ministry, namely:

- a. A Biblical and theological basis that give them deep understanding of the word to draw from;

- b. A Spiritual formation that enables them to be and to continue to develop as the type of person who can minister long-term as is appropriate for others to follow and emulate; and
- c. A set of ministry skills that make the person (efficient) and effective at serving others in ministry.

These definitions point to the fact that certain category of people should be set apart, trained appropriately to acquire knowledge which would transform them first into effective agents God would use in his Church to bring about positive change and transformation of Church life and the society.

Education: Noah (1828) an American Scholar defines Education as that which “Comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations”.

Noah Webster’s definition is itself a demonstration of the Chief aim of Christian education-a biblical world view. Apostle Paul, in his treatise on the value and authenticity of Scripture, explains that: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for correction, for reproof, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

TOOL: A tool is any instrument or simple piece of equipment that you hold in your hands and use to do a particular kind of work. For example, spades, hammers, and knives are used for a particular purpose as a particular type of tool.

SOCIAL: This is an adjective which means seeking or enjoying the companionship of others; the act of being friendly; sociable; gregarious, of relating to, connected with, or suited to polite or fashionable society; living or disposed to live in companionship with others or in community, rather than in isolation.

Emancipation: Emancipation is defined as the fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberation. It is the process of giving people social or political freedom or rights.

Implications: An implication is something that is suggested, or happens, indirectly. For example, when somebody left the gate open and the dog escaped, the person is guilty by implication. Implication has many different senses. Usually, when used in the plural, it means the effects or the consequences that may happen in the future.

Society: VandeBos (2007), gives five definitions of the word society:

- i. An enduring social group living in a particular place whose members are mutually interdependent and share political, religious and other institutions, laws and mores and a common culture;

- ii. Any well-established group of individuals (human or animals) that typically obtain new members at least in part through sexual reproduction and has relatively self-sufficient systems or actions;
- iii. An organization formed for particular purposes or to further a common interest or activity;
- iv. The companionship of other people; and
- v. Popularly and loosely, an elite social level, typically comprising those of high social economic status who possess money, power, and prestige and are considered in some ways fashionable.

Concept of Theological Education in Church of South Sudan

The theological education system in South Sudan generally has been unsteady due to conflicts between North and South. When Sudan got its independency in 1956 from the British Government, there had already been a guerilla movement in the South against the policies of the North. This movement known as “*Anyanya Movement*” started in 1955 to oppose the British policy of amalgamation South Sudan to the North to become one country under Muslim administration. From the beginning, the British had wanted South Sudan to be a separate country from the North. As they were preparing the two parts-North and South for independency, a decision was passed in 1947 to amalgamate South to the North. The decision of amalgamation of the two parts did not favour the people of South Sudan, hence a mutiny broke out in one of the army garrisons in South Sudan. Many of the northern officers were brutally killed. This marked the beginning of Anyanya Movement. This war continued from that time until 1972 when a peace agreement was signed between South and North in Addis-Ababa by President Jafaar Mohammad Niemeri and Joseph Lagu, leader of the movement. This peace did not last long and in 1983, a second movement began, led by Dr. John Garang De Mabior. In 2005, peace agreement was again signed and in July 9, 2011, South Sudan, in a referendum won the ticket for self-determination and became independent from the North. Hopes were high and there were celebrations everywhere in the country. But this joy was short-lived. In 2013 a fight broke out within Southern army between forces loyal to the President and those of his deputy, Dr. Riak Machar. Riak and his forces were driven out of capital, Juba. This again marked a beginning of another war, South against South. To cut it short, peace agreement was signed in 2015, but virtually few months after the agreement, disagreement ensued, and fighting broke-out again between the forces of the two men, the president and his deputy. At this time there were so many break-away of army personnel to form rival movements against the government. Many of these rebel factions are still at large. They refused to sign the 2018 peace agreement between Machar and the president claiming that the two men should not be allowed any opportunity to govern the country because both have failed their mandate and commitment to hold the country together. These rebels today are a thorn in the government flesh. This means permanent peace in South Sudan is not achievable as long as these two men, the president and his deputy remain in power and many rebel groups still remained outside in the bush.

As the war continues, development has been hampered and jeopardized including the education system. Corruption and tribalism gained its foot-hold. Donor countries have

withdrawn their staff and assistance. Many international agencies and embassies have closed down. The country is on its knees struggling to cope with the situation but could not. Killings and armed robbery have become the order of the day in the capital Juba and other major towns in the country.

The theological education that was to generate the man-power for the churches and church leadership became almost non-operational. Many theological schools in the country had been destroyed, the teaching staff have left the country and the few that are present could not handle the situation, worse still many do not possess higher degrees for the job. However, the remaining few teachers did not give up. In their little effort they continued to train certificated pastors to man the Churches.

Aims of Theological Education in South Sudan

The aims of theological education in South Sudan remain the task of the Church in fulfilling the Great Commission, (Matthew 28:19-20). To achieve this task, three factors should be considered:

- (i) The lifestyle and condition of the trainer whether he has acquired sufficient knowledge academically, spiritually, and practically to impart to the trainees.
- (ii) The curriculum whether it is richly loaded with relevant courses that would give the students sufficient spiritual knowledge and room to fashion their own lives in accordance with the word of God.
- (iii) Finally the impact the trainees would make in the Church and society. This training is purposely meant to overhaul or emancipate the whole being, body, soul, and spirit.

The emancipation and transformation of individuals, the Church and the society depends on the knowledge and ministry skills the men of God have acquired during the course of their training. The aims of theological education are intentionally intended to prepare individuals for the ministry of the Church. These aims include:

- i. To develop the full potentialities of every pastor while at the same time taking into consideration the needs and welfare of the Church and society.
- ii. For the preparation and training of young people to correct the ills and the problems in the society through the Gospel, (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- iii. To develop discipline of body, mind, and spirit.
- iv. To meet the emotional, socio-political, cultural, and religious needs of individuals for development of an integrated personality.
- v. For development of moral and spiritual character of the pastor to do ministry.
- vi. For the development of critical thinking and awakening of spiritual and intellectual curiosity (Ukeje, 1992).

Ferdinando (2008) says that: "The goal of theological education must always be formation and transformation of lives leading to transform communities and the society at large". The idea behind this statement is the insistence and persistence in the formation process of people in the truth, knowledge, and wisdom of God for the purpose of personal renewal and

meaningful participation in the fulfillment of the purpose of God in the Church and society as stipulated in the Great Commission, (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18). Noelliste (1995) on his part adds that one of the objectives of theological education is to equip the Church to participate in God's mission in this world. It is about following Jesus, learning from him, growing to be like him, and so becoming fishers of men wherever he sends," (Matthew 4:19). The above statements fit in well with Noelliste's definition of "theological education which according to him is "The process of formation that leads to the transformation of the world through the individual and the collective participation of God's people in God's mission".

From every indication, the Church of South Sudan is rapidly growing and expanding despite the challenges of wars, inadequate man-power to man the Churches and leadership position in theological colleges, and the low literacy percentage of its congregations. It remains true that there is very large and growing Christian membership in the Churches. This growth of the churches is also attributed to the conflict. It could be said that the conflict brought in misery but on the other hand it did more good than harm for the more lives that were turned over to God during this time. The Church in South Sudan can be compared with persecuted Church of the Apostolic Era. The indigenous priests like Jesus' disciples who had no any formal theological education, after the expulsion of the missionaries in 1964 took over the mantle of the Church throughout the turbulent periods of the conflict and without failure brought it to the state where it is now.

Ferdinando describes the Church as being "a mile wide and an inch deep". This could be true for so many reasons. For example, in evangelistic campaigns everywhere in South Sudan crowds often hear that true faith will bring them the good things of this life, which include good health, prosperity, economic success, academic success, long life and so on. There is no doubt faith can bring all these, but life is described as a combination of joy and suffering. Life without suffering is half life according to the Bible. Life must carry the two. They are two sides of the same coin. Ferdinando call such messages as "fraudulent, a cruelly misleading parody of the Gospel truth. Prosperity preachers do much harm by pointing people to materialistic acquisition than pointing them to Christ for salvation. True Gospel includes successes and failures as holistic truth of God's message of salvation. Suffering experiences in fact, play a major role in strengthening Christians to remain faithful to Christ and to their faith even if it demands their lives. The Bible says: "He who endures to the end will be saved, (Matthew 24:13). Jesus predicted that his followers would be severely persecuted by those who hated what he stood for. In the midst of terrible persecution, however, they could have hope knowing that salvation was theirs. Times of trial serve to sift true Christians from false or fair-weather Christians. This is true of Christian congregation in South Sudan in the midst of their trial. Secondly, lack of properly trained pastors constituted a problem in the interpretation of Bible texts or passages. Thirdly, regular intake into theological colleges has been hampered by the conflict. Almost all theological institutions including schools in the country have been destroyed. From 1965-1972 there was no any theological school operating in South Sudan. After the Addis-Ababa agreement in 1972, the Church tried to establish herself, but conflict broke out again in 1983 which destroyed all that

had been put in place. Fourthly, knowledgeable tutors who succeeded in obtaining good theological education remain outside the country because of the ongoing conflict.

Theological education as a tool for social emancipation:

Treating the issue of theological education in South Sudan, there is need to ask the following questions: Are theological colleges in South Sudan measuring up to the task expected of them to produce sound and spiritually balanced ministers/theologians for the Church ministry and mission, given the situation in the country? What about those who teach in the Seminaries, are they academically and spiritually qualified to raise-up men of reputable academic and theological standing to face the challenges of the ministry in the twenty-first century Church? Does the curriculum contain relevant courses to the challenges of today's Church both in theory and practical work? These questions point us to either the success or failure in church growth in South Sudan. However, we may not be able to go into all details given the fact that the country has not recovered from the history of its conflicts. The study does not aspect all to be well as has been pointed out in the historical review of the history of the country. What is to be asserted here is that there are indeed enormous challenges the church faces and is unable to cope to meet these challenges. For the church to meet all the above it demands to have billions of dollars to set the machinery of the Church and the theological colleges running smoothly. For now, things are at stand still. The revenue generated locally could even not furnish a good library for the colleges, leave alone payment of staff. Secondly, some theological institutions have been abandoned in hot war zone areas and their teachers have been displaced or sought refuge in some neighbouring countries. This is a huge problem for Church institutions including the government. Permanent peace could only be the solution.

The purpose of theological education should be to share something of the education. Exploring the purpose of education might inform our expectations. Bromiley (2009) says that in the educational tradition of pre-Christian Africa, character formation and learning of specific skills are inseparably related. The relevance of education arises from societal needs, the sharing and transmission of collective spiritual and moral values and the close relation of education to work.

Education in today's secular state is basically anthropocentric with a humanistic purpose while theological education is theocentric with a God-centred purpose. The greatest challenge theologians and theological educators face according to Volf (2005) is to keep God at the centre of what we do. For Volf, God is true God, creator and redeemer. Theological education must not be robbed of its nuclear centre and purpose. "The main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing. And the main thing is God." Theological education concerns itself with the formation of leadership for the Church of Christ in its Biblical mission. This formation combines spiritual and practical with academic objectives in one holistic integrated education approach.

Robinson (2000) opines that: "Theological education should seek to liberate (or emancipate) the oppressed and the down-trodden especially in several African countries (like South

Sudan) where tribalism, corruption, and bad governance have become the order of the day”. Theological education must as a point of duty prepare church leaders that are passionate and committed to their pastoral care to lead churches that are exemplary, churches that will be light and salt to the nation. But it is very unfortunate that some of our Church leaders who are expected to be the voice for the voiceless, have compromised their prophetic roles and have become partakers in the ills of the society. Take for example a highly placed church leader who possess a pistol and carries it along wherever he goes. Such leaders have lost focus of their mandate as transformers of society.

Carroll (1985) has given three dimensions of expertise that are required of ministers of the word and which should be cultivated right from theological colleges. Ministers of the word should be:

- i. As “definers of meaning” especially in their roles of preacher, teacher, counselor, bringing the word of God to meet the needs of peoples’ situations.
- ii. As “builders of community,” bring theological insight into the nature of Christians who would be able to defend their faith when confronted with opposition.
- iii. As “Mediators” in the Church, mediating not only between individuals and God but also between individuals and society.

This kind of professional clergy is needed for Churches in South Sudan and in Africa. A more urgent need, according to Fletcher (1985), is for ‘religious authenticity’ based on membership of a religious group. Fletcher argues that it is important to keep together the authority of expertise and the authority of divine call.

According to him, calling and professionalism must go together. However, Cheesman cautions that in the rush to respectability, it would be easy to lose the positive Bible College ideas of humble service in an ordinary capacity without seeking the public admiration of society. Furthermore, John (1996) argues that Bible College teachers whose attitudes focus on the perks of professional status would reproduce similar discontent detrimental to their students’ future service. It is however suggested that the professional or vocation of Church leadership must remain a by-product as it were not the *raison d’être* of theological education.

Fitzmier (2005) states that: “Loving God with the mind is one of the great ends we seek in theological education”. The command to holistically love God and neighbor builds theology and theological education on Biblical grounds. Our cognitive abilities according to educational psychology include: Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Therefore, there are different dimensions and levels of doing theology and wide scope for using our mind in theological education.

Making enquires about Christian’s tradition is a valid cognitive component of theological education. This enquiry be based on the truth claims of Scripture and carried out `by a believing member of a Bible school or university. The negative attitude of the location of theological institution within circular academia has some of its roots in deviations from cardinal truth claims of Scripture, as well as neglect of the purpose of the enquiry. According

to Cheesman (2005), “The rise of Bible college movement from 1870’s was partly a protest at the questioning of the authority of the Bible and the secularization of studies (in theological institutions)”. Prior to this, theological education was for those with high academic qualifications. Brereton (1990) out-cries his regret over this issue of qualification in these words:

I think of those we hesitated over and at first rejected because of a want of (higher) qualifications which we considered of first importance. And then to see how God has rebuked us by showing how wonderfully he could use them... God is building windows for the Cathedral of the skies out of the rejected lives and fragments of consecrated service for which the wisdom of the world has no room.

Many students coming to theological seminaries in South Sudan are not well prepared academically. This however, is not to suggest that theological education is solely by an academic enterprise, it is a call. Academic rigour is a channel perhaps the chief channel, to thinking about God in the context of theological education. Any model of theological education that glorifies the intellect at the expense of faith and love of God cannot be truly Christian. Loving the Lord with all our hearts and mind is a response to his prior redemptive love and cannot be carried out in contradiction to that love. So the purpose of theological education cannot be detached from this cognitive love.

The basic overriding goal of evangelical education according to Sergeant (2001) is spiritual formation with a view to communicating with clarity and power the historic faith we inherited from our forefathers. This spiritual formation carries with it the power of the word through which the world is transform. Westerhoff (1988) on his part argues that the major weakness of contemporary theological education in South Sudan and other African theological institutions is the emphasis upon knowledge and skills rather than upon the spiritual development of the priest and the formation of his character. Spiritual development and character formation of theological students is very important for Church and society transformation.

Spiritual formation refers to “an intentional process by which the marks of an authentic Christian spirituality is being formed and integrated over anew”. It is a life-long, open-ended process of being formed in the image of God in Christ, through each and all of the daily experiences as people submit to the divine help of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is a human as well as a divine process which on our part cannot be left to chance.

The Iona document makes it clear that spiritual formation should be seen as a “responsibility which must be shared and involves three main elements all of which are of equal importance: the person in formation; the training institution; and the Church”. Theological institutions in South Sudan must therefore consider spiritual formation as one of the primary task if they want to turn the whole society to Christ. This should involve all of the institution – the students, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the governing body. The whole community, its life, curriculum relationships, everything involved. Furthermore, the college

alone is not able to accomplish the task of spiritual formation but with the help of the sending Church in supervising and keeping a close eye at what goes on there, the impact on student spirituality would be accomplished. Indeed, spiritual maturity according to Chessman is “more important for good theology than good theology is for spiritual maturity and it is the spiritually mature, all other things being equal, who make the best theologians”.

If formation is as important to the purpose of theological education, the study of the culture of seminaries may provide some insight into factors that promote this formation. These factors according to Fitzmier (1997) include:

- i. A school's culture is its most powerful instrument of formation and transformation;
- ii. The faculty of a school is responsible for shaping student experiences of theological education;
- iii. Formative theological education requires prolonged and intensive exposure to a particular education institution.

Achievement of Theological Education in South Sudan

Theological education has from time immemorial influenced the teachings of Christianity on issues of human life and practices. Christianity in South Sudan played a leading role especially in ending practices such as human sacrifice, idolatry, polygamy, slavery, killing of twins, burying of slaves or servants alive with their dead masters or kings. Practices such as idolatry, slavery and polygamy though not completely stopped, their practice today in South Sudan has been minimized to say the least. They could be seen in very remote isolated rural areas where Christianity has not taken root coupled with the war situation in the country. On the other hand people carrying guns, rebels or government soldiers forcefully engage in marrying many women. Other areas affected by the teachings of Christianity include: divorce, incest, birth control, abortion, adultery, and female genital mutilation.

The Church through its long history according to Feddes (2002) has been a major source and contributor to social services such as schooling and health services. With the efforts of Christian missionaries, some of South Sudanese dialects have been reduced to writing and reading. This is one of the major achievements the Church has ever made. Some tribes in South Sudan are able to read the Bible in their own languages. Translation work on the Bible into other languages in the South was greatly hampered by the long civil wars, but efforts are on the way to revive the project.

Most of the Old schools and hospitals were built by the missionaries. These were later taken over by the government and until today they are not returned to the Church but remain government property till date. The Church could not claim the return of these institutions probably due to lack of funds to support them. The Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion had fought this battle with the government, and today all missionary schools and hospitals are in the hands of the Church. These hospitals and schools have become source of income and major boost to the Church. This income generated is used to pay salaries of teachers and

workers. Several schools and universities, health centres and hospitals are being established by the Church in addition to the former missionary founded schools and hospitals.

The Church in South Sudan could be in the same footing with Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion if not because of the long wars that disrupted development and efforts of the Church to measure up to a certain level. In various ways the Church in South Sudan has sought to affect Sudanese attitudes to vice and virtue in diverse ways. It has over many years tried to promulgate the teachings of Jesus Christ within Sudanese perspectives to meet the aspirations of the people and to remain a source of continuity for generation to come.

Christian teachings on sexuality and marriage have also been influential in family life. On the cultural aspect, the influence of the Church on culture has great impact. Fetish festivals in some cultures have been condemned by the Church. Using witchcraft practice to seek solution for healing, family problems and so on has almost diminished. People are encouraged to seek the face of God in every situation they find themselves. This has become effective more especially in the dark years of the conflict where one could not find help from anywhere, no medical services but only from God. The Church succeeded during that period in getting many converts for God. Jesus became the reliable source for people to depend on.

Theological education to say the least has brought with it dramatic and tremendous changes and transformations to human cultures and lives. Great men of God, following the command of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) went out to transform the world for Christ. This practice began with the immediate disciples of Jesus Christ and continued by their associates and later passed unto us by the Missionaries. Great reformers, like Martin Luther, the architect of the Reformation, and George Whitefield, the great revivalist played great roles in their own time. The reforms of Martin Luther brought about the beginnings of denominationalism in Christendom, while George Whitefield in his evangelistic out-reach known as the “Great Awakening” brought about consciousness in the minds of American people and the desire for freedom in all areas of human life. The Great Awakening inspired the American people to fight for their independence of which they succeeded. All these achievements have been brought about by personalities that have passed through powerful theological formation.

Education generally is an eye-opener to individuals as well as to societies. The Missionary education in Africa and more particularly in South Sudan for example, opened the eyes of South Sudanese people to realize the need to be independent from the Colonists and later from the Arab North Sudan. The freedom people have today is attributed to the missionary education which they brought to Africa. Therefore, education be it theological or circular has a positive purpose to achieve in human lives and societies. The fight for independence in African countries and elsewhere is attributed to education. Education opened the eyes and minds of nationalists to prepare the ground and to demand for independence to free them from the bondage of colonial masters.

Challenges and Implications

The future of the Church of South Sudan looks bright with its tremendous numerical growth, but careful assessment reveals that it is on the losing side to match numerical growth with human development of its work-force. This is true and is related to the war situation and corruption in the country. This study shows that theological system of the Church in South Sudan is in crisis due to lack of enough qualified personnel to man the theological colleges. The few that are operational lack the capacity to employ better qualified staff. Funding from foreign Churches is not forthcoming because of fear of war and corrupt Church leaders who would divert such funds for personal use. If the Church of South Sudan is thinking about its future, it must think of boosting of its theological education system through which Church leaders are trained and equipped for leadership position and theological tutors/teachers for teaching profession.

The Church currently has a feeble theological education system characterized by:

- a. Unviable theological institutions;
- b. Unmodified curriculum;
- c. Low enrollment of both students and teachers;
- d. Less qualified teachers to man the colleges;
- e. Disruption of development of theological education due to conflict and
- f. Low literacy percentage because of (e) above.

For the Church in South Sudan to take the right path and position as it moves to the future, it must be revitalized and improve its theological education system so as to prepare and produce sufficient number of well-trained leaders and teachers to match the rapidly changing Sudanese society and the world around it.

The Missionary Society Act of 1962 established strong control on missionary activities in the South. This was one of North Sudan policies to control the growth of the Church in the South. Preaching, teaching or baptizing children under 18 years could be considered an offence, and in any case required an annual license. This was used to harass the activities of the Sudanese Church in the South. The missionaries in the South were accused of collaborating with the guerilla movement in the South which eventually led to their expulsion from the country in 1964. Although such measures were meant to advance Islam in the South, it failed and only succeeded in alienating many Southerners including those who would have considered themselves moderate and non-political to a common cause.

The year following the expulsion of the Christian missionaries in 1964 according to Aruma (2015), were years of great suffering and turmoil for South Sudanese people, yet they were the years in which the Church experienced growth from the hands of vernacular pastors who were only taught to read and write. The Church grew to maturity both as an institution and in the quality of its faith and life.

The “Social dislocation” was undoubtedly an important factor in the rapid growth of the Church during this time. Traditional patterns and structures everywhere were thrown into confusion. Young people taking refuge in the towns were opened to new world-views and new commitments of faith. This was particularly evident among the pastoral Nilotic tribes

(Dinka, Nuer, Shillik, Mundari) who had previously shown little interest in Christian teaching because of their involvement in cattle rearing. Following their displacement from their original locations, they found themselves in new environments where Christianity was in full swing. The refugee camps in neighbouring countries and the camps for the displaced persons within the country became breaking grounds for Christian evangelism and fellowship. These young men met Christ in these camps.

The Church is indeed large in terms of numbers, but most of the pastors have had no theological training of any kind. Most of them were people chosen from the laity who have been seen to have certain good leadership qualities and having accepted their choice and eager to serve, were then licensed lay-readers or ordained pastors having been tested. Many of them are only qualified to read the Bible in vernacular and write. This is the greatest challenge for the Church in South Sudan.

Apart from the Roman Catholic Church, most of the denominations face the same problems more particularly the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. But today hopes are high as it tries to upgrade and raise the standard of one of its oldest theological college to a University level. The leadership of the Church in the country is working very hard for this dream to be realized, though there are still many obstacles to surmount. It is our hope and prayer that this will soon come to pass by the grace of God.

Findings and Recommendations

The achievements made in any organization always depend on or is measured by the staff's performance, the supervisory role of the leadership and the strict adherence to achieve the desired goals. For the Church in South Sudan to measure up to its desired goals for spiritual formation of its priests and leaders and transformation of society, the study presents the following remedies and recommendations;

- i. Spiritual formation of the postulants must be of first priority;
- ii. Spirituality of persons teaching in theological college must be considered of highest priority when employing them while academic qualifications should come in the second place;
- iii. Theological curriculum should be reviewed from time to time and practicum should be given priority so as to expose students/postulants to the gifts of the Holy Spirits;
- iv. There should be a supervisory body headed by a "Bishop theologian" whose role and responsibility is to oversee and supervise the smooth running of the theological Colleges. He should not be assigned to a Diocese;
- v. Theological colleges should be isolated from secular University environment and the curriculum of those theological colleges affiliated to secular universities, if any should be thoroughly checked by Bishop theologian and his committee to ensure uniformity;
- vi. Rectors/Directors of these colleges should exercise strict disciplinary measures on both staff and postulants/students to forestall obedience and loyalty to the authority of the college and the Church;

- vii. The governing Council or Board of Directors should be given the responsibility of finding ways and means of raising funds for the Colleges;
- viii. All teaching and non-teaching staff should be resident to form the college community; their presence would help check accesses and ensure observance of school regulations;
- ix. Colleges should be fully staffed to ensure fair allocation of courses in a Semester.
- x. A better international grading system should be adopted for assessing students' Cumulative Great Point (see diagram below)

% Scores	Letter Grades	Grade Points	Interpretation
70 – 100	A	5	Excellent
60 – 69	B	4	Very Good
50 – 59	C	3	Good
45 – 49	D	2	Fair
40 – 44	E	1	Poor
0 - 39	F	0	Fail

- xi. All lecturers should be full-time and well-paid to enable them put in much effort to avoid looking for greener pastures elsewhere.

It is believed that if these recommendations are put into practice, the outcome should be great and a blessing to the Church of South Sudan. The objectives of producing men of excellence and of reputable character would be achieved and the mission of the Church of transforming society would also be realized.

Conclusion

Theological education in South Sudan has experienced and suffered a long period of under-development and neglect. This in part was due to the civil strife which has rampaged and destroyed most of South Sudan's institutions and where thousands and thousands of people were rendered homeless and many others died. Theological education begins in the heart of the triune God, who sees the people he has created in desperate need. He meets this need in the Good Shepherd who is also paradoxically the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Otakala, 2017). Jesus after his ministry on earth mandated his disciples to go into all parts of the world, (Matthew 28: 19 – 20; Mark 16: 15-18). This mandate became the basis for establishment of theological institutions to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the Church and society today.

Theological education therefore, is the vehicle by which institutions and communities convey to their members the attitudes, values and appropriate behavior for life within those communities. In any case education, be it religious or secular must involve the passing on of content. Effective theological education to the changing world must see its goal, the formation of values and attitudes according to the teaching of Scripture as well as the communication of knowledge and skills. Effective theological education for the changing

world and for South Sudan in particular must, therefore, be transformational. It must have unique capacity to assist people and communities in their God-given mandate to “raise their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” (Ephesians 6:4). This education takes place in the context of a biblical philosophy and a Christ-centred curriculum by loving and mature Christian teachers who minister to the whole community of God’s people using Christ-honouring and effective methods for the transformation of Church and society.

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