

THE ROLES OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN PROMOTING NATIONAL UNITY

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ABSTRACTS

This paper critically engages the importance of Theological Education by assessing its roles towards the promotion of National unity in Nigeria. The church itself is not left out of the politics of tribalism as well as ethnicity which appears very rampant in the church where some specific areas are demanding for their son of the soil to pastor them or even to be their chief shepherds in some dioceses. Theological education is sacrosanct to Church's leadership because it is the factory where soldiers of Christ to wage war against Satan and its agents are being trained. It appears difficult to separate the Church from the State. The roles that theological education should play in fostering national unity cannot be overemphasized because it is the theological educators that will eventually become leaders of the church tomorrow. It is the church that is expected to preach unity and oneness; so to promote national unity should start from theological institutions. As part of promoting national unity, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) started a non-geographical programme for postulants in the third year of their ministerial training for all the seven theological colleges in Nigeria devoid of ethnicity and cultural boundaries; this promotes national unity through interaction among each other. The church through this medium sets a good example for the nation to follow. The Methodist Church as well as African Church could send their priests to any part of the country not minding their nativity. Using historical approach, this paper submits that theological education has got a lot of influences to exert positively through its roles in promoting national unity in Nigeria by discouraging ethnicity among all the six geo-political zones in Nigeria preaching unity and not unity in diversity among the postulants and this can translate to the nation.

Key Words: Roles, Theological Education, Promoting and National Unity

Introduction

This paper examines the importance of Theological Education/training to the growth of the church as well as its contributions to fostering national unity. First and foremost, its importance to the life of the church and secondly to the community; and thirdly to the nation most especially its role in the promotion of national unity cannot be over-emphasized. Theological education is seen as a veritable tool in promoting national unity because it holds a key to national development. It can be a panacea to the problem of the nation as a whole and the society/community in which we live in particular through the acquisition of a better knowledge about God, life, creation and the oneness of the society. It is equally believed that if we have a very sound theological education it can assist in instilling good and sound moral and ethical understanding of life which will in turn help in transformation process from home, to church and to society at large. This paper tries to examine the roles expected of the theological education in promoting national unity.

We discovered that the church itself is not left out of the problem of ethnicity as most of the time we hear from many parts of this country when there are vacancies in the bishopric of dioceses the kind of politics that go in to it or with it whereby there is agitation that we want the son of the soil. There have been occasions when the church refuses to yield to their pressure; the attendant problems that come with it are not always palatable. The idea of cross-cultural transfer or location was conceived by our leaders in this church so that anyone can be located into any part of the country to serve and can from there serve in any

capacity of the leadership cadre of the church. A case in hand of the clamour for sons of the soil to be made their bishop is that of Benin diocese after the retirement of Bishop J.K. George in 1995 and Bishop Peter Onekpe was elected for them and the people refused bluntly to have him and they went ahead to pronounce Provost Matthew Igbinosa as their bishop and the church put their feet down on the election of Onekpe as substantive bishop of that diocese. We are all living witness to the attendant crisis that Benin community was plunged to at that time which became a shame to the church in the propagation of the gospel. This paper believes strongly that where we are failing politically as a nation, the church should set a good standard through its theological education so that it can serve as a reference point to national unity.

What is Theological Education?

Theology is coined from two Greek words – *theos* and *logos* meaning God and His Word which can be referred to as an human attempt to understand God's nature and His relationship with His creatures who are human beings made in His image and likeness – Genesis 1:26. The motive behind the establishment of theological institutions is to enable people to have an in-depth knowledge of God and to have a firm belief in Him through their worship in truth and in spirit. If we go down the memory lane, we discover that the first institution established for ministerial training by the Anglican Church in Nigeria was Church Missionary Society Training Institute in Abeokuta in 1853 which was purely meant for training of Church Agents and Catechists.

This institute was later shifted to Lagos before it was moved to Oyo in 1896. However, by 1924 a department of Divinity to prepare students for full ministerial training as preparation for full time ministry in the Anglican Church was established at St. Andrew's College, Oyo named after Bishop Melville Jones who was bishop of Lagos between 1919 and 1940. This college of Divinity was then affiliated to Durham University in United Kingdom. The products of the seminary came out with the certificate of Licentiate of Theology (L.TH.). Trinity College Umuahia was founded as a joint institution by the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations as part of the efforts towards the Church Union.

According to W.O. Aladekugbe, theological education can be said to be the leading of human souls into the best perception of the word of God and make what is best out of it. It is reorganization and reconstruction of understanding, thought and idea of God and about God with the view to bringing into the most possible reality the existence and supremacy of the invisible Being.¹ According to Abraham Adebo, "Theological education can equally be defined as educational endeavour that seeks the acquisition of knowledge on the things pertaining to God, God's dealings with creation, and how creation relates to God. It is a wide and deep are of study, and teaches about life, morality, ethical conduct, as well as human spirituality."²

Anglican Ministerial Training in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is one of the largest Religious Institutions and Missionary Agencies with about one hundred and twenty-two Dioceses; spread over ten Ecclesiastical Provinces, with over twenty million memberships. The Church is still growing and expanding in numerical strength and infrastructure.

During the period of 1846-1867, the African Workers in the Yoruba Mission consisted chiefly of Schoolmasters and Catechists from Sierra-Leone who had received their training in Sierra-Leone. Some of these workers had been given additional training in England by Rev. Henry Venn in accordance with his policy of training Africans for the ministry. Messrs Thomas King and T.B. Macauley who had received additional training were ordained at Abeokuta in 1854 by the Bishop of Sierra-Leone who visited the Yoruba Mission which at that time formed part of his Diocese.³

The rapid growth of the Church and the establishment of schools demanded an increase of the African staff of the Mission. The need for the training of indigenous Christians as Catechists, Teachers and Evangelists arose because of their usefulness. It was asserted that the training must not be purely or mainly academic but should also be industrial. Hence, a Training and Industrial Institution was established at Ake, Abeokuta

in 1853.⁴ The Institution flourished for some time at Ake but was transferred to Igbein, Abeokuta in 1855. Rev. Henry Venn wrote on this Institution as follows:

We are not to educate a few young gentlemen but to make a model, self-supporting educational Institution by combining industrial labour with book learning.⁵

The departure of the C.M.S. missionaries from Abeokuta in 1867 led to the transfer of the Training and Industrial Institution to Lagos. There it was re-organized and relieved of the Industrial part of its curriculum. It was then re-named "C.M.S. Training Institution, Lagos."⁶ Due provision was made for the training of teachers, catechists and prospective ordinands. The course of training covered a period of three years, after which the students were supplied with books for further studies and were posted as Schoolmasters or Catechists in the different parts of the Mission area. Suitable and successful ones among them were selected for further training and were later admitted into the Ministry.⁷

The College provided instruction and training for three sections of students. The normal section dealt with the training of Schoolmasters, whilst the second and the third sections dealt with Catechists and Ordinands respectively. Catechists were later removed to Catechists Training classes elsewhere in the Diocese. The third section – the Divinity or Theological section – provided a two or three year course according to the academic standard on admission or the ability of the respective students.⁸

Reference must be made here to the Training Institution at Osogbo where Catechists were given intensive training. Some of the Catechists trained there were later selected for ministerial training. A proposal was made in 1926 by C.M.S. authorities of St. Andrew's College that Durham University be approached to affiliate Melville Hall at Oyo for degrees in Arts and Theology on the same lines as Fourah Bay College. This proposal resulted in a scheme by which the full course for the Durham License in Theology could be taken at Oyo and the additional two year-course required for the full Theological special Arts Course could later be taken at Fourah Bay College. Full advantage was taken of this arrangement and four students took the L.Th. course at Oyo and later proceeded to Fourah Bay College for the final Arts course.⁹

The division of the large Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa into two Dioceses, viz: Diocese of Lagos and the Diocese on the Niger led to the establishment of a Ministerial Training section as a part of the Institution known as Awka College and run on the same lines as St. Andrew's College. The Divinity section joined two other institutions to form a Theological Training College at Umuahia known as Trinity College, an Institution jointly run by the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian authorities.¹⁰ The establishment of the University College at Ibadan in 1948 led to the desire that Melville Hall be moved to Ibadan. The site selected at Ibadan was the Kudeti Church compound which was formerly the Church Missionary Society Headquarters at Ibadan.

Between 1940 and 1945, talks had commenced between the Anglicans and the Methodists regarding the possibility of merging their training institutions at Kudeti and Elekuro respectively. Co-operation between them, especially on the platform of the Christian Council of Nigeria, had yielded fruitful results, a shining example of which is Igbobi College, a Secondary Boarding School for Boys jointly run by the Church Missionary Society and the Methodist Missionary Society.¹¹ Negotiations proceeded in the true spirit of comity of Missions. An agreement was reached for the merging of the two training Institutions on the Kudeti site. Each of the co-operating Bodies agreed to provide its own share of the required buildings, equipments, staffing and general maintenance of the Institution. The merging took place in 1957 and the Institution was named IMMANUEL COLLEGE, IBADAN. It soon became obvious that Immanuel College required a bigger site and better buildings than those available at Kudeti. Besides, it was felt that territorial nearness to the University would be an advantageous factor facilitating contact and co-operation with the University. The co-operating Bodies therefore decided to evolve a scheme for moving the College to another site. A site near the University was obtained and the amount required for its purchase and erection of buildings on it and also for equipment was raised. The College moved to its present site in 1962.¹²

Other Theological Institutions established by the Anglican authorities include Archbishop Vining College of Theology, Akure which took off as a Leadership Centre in 1917 and later graduated to Catechetical

College in the early 1960's but graduated to full-fledged Theological Training Institution in 1983. Bishop Crowther College, Okenne, was established by retired Bishop H.A. Haruna of the Kwara Diocese to cater for the disadvantaged candidates from the Northern zones. Other Theological Colleges in Nigeria are listed in this section.¹³

With this fact, the task of training the people (the faithful) in the doctrine of the Church, as well as selecting and training the staff to man these Churches is simply too enormous. Recalling the words of the Primate and Metropolitan of the Church of Nigeria His Grace, the Most Rev. Dr. Peter Jasper Akinola, DD., to the opening session of the Episcopal Conference on Theology and Liturgy – June 19 to 22, 2003 which read inter alia:

This Church (that is, Church of Nigeria) has a lot to offer the world. But there are issues that must be faced first:

- Critical review of those we train, where we do the training and for how long.
- Staffing the training institutions, funding them and empowering the laity plus continuing education for the entire LAOS.
- How do we regain and become more faithful to our Liturgical tradition?
- Discipline in all facets of our common life, effecting changes only through due process.¹⁴

Purpose of Theological Education

The Theological Colleges are factories where priests are trained for the spiritual life of the Churches. Before someone could qualify to be trained as a priest in the Anglican Church, such a person is expected to be fully convinced of his calling as he has to pass through series of selection conferences ranging from the parish to the district, the archdeaconry to the diocese before finally facing the hurdles of the college itself. As customary of the Anglican practice, the college selection conference begins on Easter Monday through Maundy Thursday of every year.¹⁵ However, one discovers that the way and manner through which priests are screened does not give room for thoroughness as the panel of interviewers from the parish to diocesan levels wouldn't want them to be accused of being too rigid on admission process. The history and what the college life looks like in the following recognized and adopted Theological Colleges by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) was examined.

Theological Education (TE) is in a state of crisis in many parts of the world. The interrelated question of means and ends as well as aims and purposes continue to be raised. Issues of resources and governance, of priorities and faculty development seem to dominate the debates. According to Banks, only intermittently and in a limited way did discussion revolve around the aims and purposes of theological education – whether TE institution is attaining its primary goal? Does it need to strike a better balance between spiritual formation, professional development, and academic excellence?¹⁶

Attempts to define the purpose of theological education have been influenced by the 'unity-in-diversity' nature of Christian theology. While we talk of 'one faith, one Lord, one baptism', this oneness is perceived differently in different contexts. So is theological education. Sometimes its purpose is defined by historical understanding of Christianity: that Christianity is *paideia*, given by God in Jesus Christ, turning on a radical conversion possible only by the Holy Spirit's help, and taught only indirectly by study of divinely inspired Scriptures in the social context of the church understood to be in some ways a school.¹⁷ The goal will be knowledge of God – forming person's souls to be holy. Often it is defined by the nature, needs and mission of the Church, - preparing those who will lead the work of the Church. At other times, the purpose of theological education is defined as academic activity. Whether the objective is academic, spiritual or ministerial, theological education must seek to provide the theological and educational environment that would facilitate the formation and transformation of those with the divine call to love and serve God in his mission to the world through the Church.

Contemporary Challenges facing Theological Education

A sound theological education is expected to bring about meaningful joy in worship and glorification of God which will eventually translate to promotion of national unity. If a missionary is not theologically sound and biblically equipped, he will not be able to explain the Christian faith to someone who is scientifically or philosophically minded in our society in such a way that the gospel would be seen as relevant to the contemporary world. W.P. Wahi stated that “Theological education in Africa is currently facing a number of challenges and those that are tasked to develop its curricula, programmes, institutions and methodologies are compelled to critically reflect on the relevance of the models used.”¹⁸

It was unarguably assumed that Africa which is the black man soil has become the nexus of global Christianity today because it plays many/several roles which made it to be adjudged the heartland of global Christianity. Some of the roles African Christianity plays are:

- Significant prophetic role in the global Christianity as far as theological matters are concerned
- African theologians were in the frontline of theological development at inception with Christian divines like Augustine of Hippo

However, there is a strong view that a new and alternative framework for theological education in Africa is needed such that would produce church leaders that are competent to meet the contextual challenges of this continent morally and spiritually.¹⁹ For theological education to be relevant as well as achieve the expected goal in the church and society, it has to overcome some of the challenges that it is being faced today, some of which I am itemising as follows:

- Reconstructing the theological education curriculum which was partly implemented
- The need to have spiritual formation right from the first day of our students entry into the theological college because many of them don't have a calling come into the ministry for lack of jobs in the society
- Staffing situation is a major challenge because the system in the past was to just second any priest from the diocese most especially those ones that are not needed by their bishops but this has been addressed by the church by putting in place A&P in all theological colleges
- Funding is a major challenge facing all theological institutions in the Church of Nigeria today. The staff are being staffed of funds as their payments are not commensurate to their counterparts in sister theological institutions from other denomination
- Career path for all theological institutions is another challenge facing all institutions, but we learnt that this is being looked into by a committee of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

What is a Nation?

A nation may be described as a “spiritual society built upon common memories of the past, common ideas of the present, common hopes for the future and above all, a common will issuing from these.”²⁰ Is Nigeria qualified as a nation in this sense? This is because what Nigeria appears to have is multi-nations in one. Each ethnic group has its own patriotism rather than to the centre which is the nation. Arising from this, we discover that national unity becomes an aberration. President Olusegun Obasanjo in one of his visits outside the country specifically to Ireland stated that:

“we have country to live in, and a country to live for, and one day by the grace of God, we hope to have a country to die for.”²¹

It is the opinion of many that the Nigeria of the present is incapable of inspiring patriotism in her citizens, and then the survival of the nation depends on working assiduously to bring to birth the Nigeria of our dreams. Theological education has the capacity to assist in bringing about unity in the nation. They can play key role to preach against politics of mediocrity, self-perpetuation, and self- thuggery.

What is National Unity?

National Unity is dated to the 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by Sir Lord Lugard. Nigeria did not fall from the sky, it existed somewhere but the name Nigeria emerged in through amalgamation. Though events of recent have made people to think the 1914 amalgamation was the greatest mistake that has been committed by Lord Lugard. Some were equally of the opinion that God does not

make mistakes; that if God didn't allow it, it would not have been possible. Before the divisive politics of the North and South was being fuelled by policy shifts and sometimes outright breach of the 1999 constitution by later day political leaders now threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria, as it has been since 1914, people of the North and South co-existed harmoniously. Promoting National Unity should be the work of everyone in the country which includes individuals, corporate organizations and governments.²²

National Unity is purely Biblical because it is very dear to the heart of God. It is the source of spirituality and culture. Martin Luther opened up the scriptures which gave civilizations. John Calvin Christianizing organs of government which brought unity and Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the greatest apostle of unity who became Bishop on the Niger/delta in Bonny could speak thirteen languages across the length and breadth of Nigeria. He was the one that equally translated the whole Bible into major Nigerian languages. Ethiopianism is another major factor of National Unity. Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah were agents of National Unity while Immanuel College of Theology and Christian Education is a typical example of Ecumenical Unity which in turn promotes National Unity.

The United States Ambassador to Nigeria, Stuart Symington in a goodwill message to the 2017 annual Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) lecture titled: "The Role of the Media in promoting National Unity and productivity" as reported in the Sun newspapers on 7th November, 2017 stated in part:

"That Nigerians should eschew hate speech and violence. The future was very bright for Nigeria as a united country. The United States feels very strong that Nigeria has a very bright future; and we hope Nigerians feel the same way. Time and time again that the great resource in Nigeria are the Nigerian people. Nigerians should have the freedom to debate the important problematic issues in the country but they should have the freedom to debate the important problematic issues in the country but they should do so within the context of unity; that there is no place for hate speech, no place for threat of violence, there is no place for violence."²³

Theological education is not only a study but a way of life. It offers a glorious opportunity to examine, clarify and isolate the needs, assets and problems of the society. Theological education through proper development, implementation and utilization of the knowledge that it provides about the society, the right environment could be created for evolving the right ethics and values for the society in a way far superior to what could be obtained via the application of any knowledge attainable from any of its component subject parts. It also touches the very heart of the society as it deals with important problems of national unity and economic development, international understanding and ethnic tolerance.

The students are being prepared for the task ahead of them with attendant problems they are likely to face as adult citizens in their own communities. It provides training in critical thinking, problem solving and the progress of the nation. Through theological education we will be able to:

- Develop a capacity to learn and to acquire certain basic skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Ensure the acquisition of relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential prerequisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind
- Develop a sympathetic appreciation of diversity and interdependence of all members of the local community and the wider national and international community
- Develop in students positive attitude of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation; the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty; integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation; the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation.

The environment where students are being taught should be where the students are able to:

- Gain self confidence and initiative based on an understanding of one's own accomplishments, potentialities and one's own worth
- Develop their power of imagination and resourcefulness

- Fulfil their desires for knowledge and continued intellectual growth
- Develop their appreciation for the dignity of man and labour
- Sharpen their sense of compassion for the less fortunate
- Increase their sense of respect for and a tolerance of the opinion of others even in utter disagreement
- Maintaining such attitudes that are conducive and favourable to social, physical, cultural and economic development which will enable students to participate in the life community, and on leaving school, be able to still function as motivators and doers of good in society
- Develop an increasing awareness and spirit of national consciousness and patriotism through interest and involvement in local, national and world heritage

Nigeria as a pluralistic society: Deep knowledge of various religious and ethnic backgrounds in the country is a veritable tool for promoting peace and harmony among Nigerians. Nigeria is a plural society in terms of its multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature. It is an obvious fact that the major cause of religious crisis in Nigeria is that many adherents of the three major religions in the country (Islam, Christianity and Traditional), do not have sufficient information on what each other's religion or faith or beliefs preach. The Muslims are poorly educated about Christianity and Christians are poorly educated about Islam and the two are equally poorly educated about the traditional religion and the traditional religion adherents are poorly educated on the other two religions.

The ethnic and religious conflicts in the country affect all aspects of Nigeria's national life, most especially resource allocation and management of public institutions which has produced several bloody crises across the country in addition to 1967-1970 Nigerian Civil Wars. The national crisis negatively affects higher education in terms of how ethnic groups compete for the location and management of Federal Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Colleges of Technology, and Colleges of Agriculture. Even the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), National Board for Technical Education Council (NABTEC), National Universities Commission (NUC), Pilgrims Welfare Board for Christians and Muslims and many other parastatals have been polarized by government politicking under the guise of federal quota.

Policies to foster National Unity:

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme: This programme was put in place by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1973 to bring about unity among graduates from different institutions, educated fellows to come together from different states to serve their nation for a period of one year only. Postings of the Nigerian youth through this scheme is to blend culturally by being posted to areas different from their cultural habitats, was aimed at getting them to understand and appreciate the lifestyles of fellow Nigerians in distant locations from home. Policies introduced in the 1980's now appear to have been compromised as youths now dodge it by bribing government officials who supervise the scheme. The corpsers are also dragged into the conduct of political office election processes. This exercise exposed the lives of youths to danger and they have consequently faced the risk of being lynched and other untold murderous incidents during and after elections in some Northern States. As a result of this, many parents are not willing to release their children to serve in environments where their lives are endangered by intolerant religious bigots and some politicians who are sore losers.²⁴

Unity Schools: Unity schools were established for this purpose in order to give room for students from across the geopolitical zones to be admitted into schools from home in order to encourage cultural integration amongst Nigerian youths and to promote unity in the country through accommodating children from any part of the country and giving them opportunity to learn. However, all those noble objectives of the golden days of Nigeria have now become memories of the distant past.

National Languages: Despite about the 350 different ethnic groups in Nigeria with different dialects, efforts are being made to promote a national or an official language. For instance, English language has been recognized as the official or national language called *lingua Franca*.

Employment and Labour mobility: The Federal Government employs and transfers workers from different cultural groups to work elsewhere in the country

Trading activities: The opening of markets in cities and local areas have made people to exchange goods and services together and therefore help to encourage integration

Federal Character clause: The Federal Character clause as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution should be applied conscientiously at the national level to ensure that no ethnic group feels alienated or marginalized. A deliberate effort should be made to be equitable in appointments and distribution of amenities.²⁵ The national integrative policies such as the NYSC, Federal Character Clause in terms of admission to Federal Unity schools and Universities should be consolidated and expanded instead of the current retrogressive policy of reducing the “Catchment areas” for federal institutions. The issue of quota in the body politic of Nigeria is targeted at addressing the imbalance among groups especially those identified as marginalized in the society.

Transport and Communication: Road Network, Railway lines, Telecommunication, Bridges and Airways were built and constructed by government at various levels to link up rural with urban areas and to ease movement of the people from one place to another, thereby promoting national unity and integration.

Relevance of Theological Education

Theology, they say is the Queen of all Sciences simply because it gave birth to all other fields²⁶. One question that arises from this paper is “Is Theological education relevant to the promotion of National Unity?” If one looks at it critically, one may wonder if there is any relevance between theological education and national unity most especially in Nigeria. Does what we teach in theological institutions helps in the promotion of national unity? Is there any gain attached to going in for theological education and what loss occurs for those not privileged to attend theological education? The so-called roadside preachers, prophets and evangelists, some of whom are stark illiterates who never had access to formal education not to talk of privilege of seeing the four walls of theological institutions; are they relevant to promoting national unity?

Despite all that I have raised above, one thing is still sacrosanct about the relevance of theological education in the promotion of national unity. This paper tries to address the key role that theological education can play in the successful implementation of our national goals. The theological education is a major key to national goals because without its active involvement, it would not have been possible to realize our national goals of promoting national unity. However, theological education is not given a place of prominence in our society today. It is in theological education that we can have all that it takes to build a virile and versatile nation whereby we can promote national unity.

As far as we can see today, hardly can we see any theological where we don't have qualified academia and seasoned theologians who combine morals with sound spirituality as well as quality university academic qualifications. Theological education is capable of building up skills in their students which they can use for articulate citizenship, participation in politics and for social responsibility. This can be done through drawing positive moral lessons in the subjects they teach and they should emphasize that the moral revival of Nigeria is in our hands and there is plenty of opportunity in theological studies to realize these objectives.

J.A. Ilori asserted that every society needs sound theological education and moral instruction to create for peace, harmony, unity, stability, progress and prosperity. The increasingly deplorable spiritual and moral climate in the nation makes the teaching and learning of theological studies a matter of urgent necessity. There is a lack of discipline in the body politic and this manifests itself in the absence of moral integrity, lack of commitment in personal and public life, disregard for rules, regulations and laws of the land at home, schools, offices as well as the community; stealing of private and public property, pen and armed robbery, arson, assassination, widespread discrimination in the form of tribalism, nepotism, favouritism and statism, bribery, corruption, forgery, impersonation and trade as well as examination malpractices. Insatiable lust to get rich quick by unscrupulous means including fraud, cheating and exploitation is

equally rife. There is in addition rampant sexual immorality and the use of political and religious intolerance.²⁷

Roles played or expected to be played towards promoting National Unity

What kind of programme can theological education put in place to promote national unity when in actual fact there is a threat to national unity like Boko Haram attacks, Independent people of Biafra (IPOB), the Fulani herdsmen attack, kidnapping exercise all over the country, insecurity everywhere in the land, lack of employment opportunities for the teeming youths all over the country? Sound theological education and moral instructions curriculum will go a long way in providing the right type of values and attitudes that will rid the society of its social evils and bring about a mature, disciplined and patriotic individual, who would place God and his/her country above all other considerations. Postulants from various theological institutions benefit significantly from education that takes place within a diverse setting. In the course of their theological education, they encounter and learn from others who have backgrounds and characteristics very different from their own.

The programme put in place by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) for language students in the third year of their theological education was commenced in September 2009 at Crowther Language and Ministerial Studies which has metamorphosed into Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta which comprises of many programmes for postulants and post-graduate students across the length and breadth of Nigeria. This Language and Ministerial studies is for all the seven theological colleges of Anglican extraction. This programme affords them the opportunity of interaction beyond their geo-political zones as Yoruba's, Hausas, Ibos, Ijaws, Itsekiri, Efik and Nupe are able to interact among each other. They make friendship among themselves which strengthens mutual relationship among them.

As part of their language and ministerial studies, these postulants go for acculturation to one geo-political zone other than where they come from for four months to learn any of the three major languages of Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. In Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta, the staffing position reflects the entire six geo-political zones of Nigeria as we have Hausas, Ibos, Yorubas, Benue among the non academic and academic staff of the college. So, through this kind programme, national unity is encouraged. The purpose for which late Archbishop Abiodun Adetiloye conceived the idea of language and ministerial studies was to adopt the idea of posting postulants after training to any part of the country so that there can be unity among all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Methodist and African churches' leadership and few other denominations send their priests after training to any part of the country for their pastoral and sacerdotal duties. The same also applies to their bishops who can also be posted across their geographical boundaries.

Conclusion

The major focus of this paper is that the theological education is still relevant for the promotion of national unity. In order to do this, it has attempted a definition of theological education and how relevant it was in the past and applying it to our contemporary society of today proffering that the church should set a standard for the political class to follow so that this syndrome of ethnicity, quota system and other vices in our country can be checked if not totally eradicated. Before the theological education can be relevant to the promotion of national unity, the postulants from the various theological institutions should be well grounded in theology and spirituality as theology without spirituality amounts to nothingness.

Someone said that the danger of attending schools of theology in preparation for ministry is that the curriculum of theological schools can sometimes erode faith in the heart of him whose mind is not made up about the Lordship of Christ. Theology Students can end up suffering from *Theo-phobia*. They can get to hate God (or at least to lose belief in Him). From that point, they begin to do violence to the Gospel. So, the church needs to impute holiness and purity with Godliness in the life of our postulants' right from their Seminary training.

Recommendations

In promoting national unity therefore, the following should manifest:

- Tolerate other people
- Should be hospitable by showing warmth and affection to others
- Avoid discrimination
- Develop relationship with others
- Showing love and concern for others
- Peace cannot come by accident, all efforts must be channeled towards using the media to promote peace
- The inter-religious conference aimed at enabling various religions particularly Islam and Christianity interface and gender peace, unity and tolerance should be resuscitated

¹ W.O. Aladekugbe, Anglican Understanding of Theological Education and the Mission of the Church In CATIN Supra West Journal, Ibadan, Text Links Publishers, 21

² A.O. Adebo, *Theological Education as a tool for the Reformation of Church and Society* In Dapo Asaju, Theological Education and Christian Ministry in the Modern Day, Abeokuta, Crowther Publishers, 2015, 79

³ Gilbert W. Olson: *Christian Growth in Sierra Leone* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 269

⁴ Eleanor, Johnson, Clark & John (eds.): *Anglicans in Mission: A Transforming Journey* (London: SPCK, 2000), p. 127

⁵ Eleanor, Johnson, Clark & John (eds.)

⁶ M.A. Adetunmbi, *Growth and Change in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) 1979-2006*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, O.A.U., Ife, 2008, 278

⁷ M.A. Adetunmbi

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⁹ H.R. Niebuhr

¹⁰ G.E. Igwe, *Church Union in Nigeria*, Umuahia Enugu, Ark Publication, 2000, 7

¹¹ B.O. Adediran, "Funding Theological Education in Nigeria, the Anglican Experience" In Theological Education for Anglicans in the 21st Century Nigeria, J.D. Adewale & W.O. Aladekugbe compiled, 2009, 35

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¹⁴ P.J Akinola.: An Address at the Episcopal Conference on Theology and Liturgy, June 2003, 8

¹⁵ P.J Akinola.:, 9

¹⁶ Banks, Robert, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999, 9ff. Other interrelated questions being asked about TE are: Is it relating properly and realistically to its contemporary context, especially its immediate local and wider church setting? Is it creating the proper ethos for its members, an experience of community that is Spirit controlled? Is it providing an appropriate curriculum that integrates theory and practice and relates to contemporary issues facing the church? See also Kelsey, D., *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About A Theological School*, Louisville, John Knox Press, 1992, (who poses similar questions and explains that these signify real difficulties and deep ones, which if not addressed will result in the schools' future being seriously compromised)

¹⁷ Kelsey, D., *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993, 11

¹⁸ W.P. Wahl, "Towards Relevant Theological Education in Africa: Comparing the International Discourse with Contextual Challenges", ACTA Theological, Vol. 33: Number 1, January 2013

¹⁹ James T. Flynn, Wie L. Tjong, Rousel W. West, *A Well-Furnished Heart: Restoring the Spirit's Place in the Leadership Classroom*, USA: Xulon Press, 2002, 69

²⁰ John Enyinnaya, The Role of the Church in Nation – Building in the 21st Century In Ogbomosho Journal of Theology, Number 9, December 2004, 67

²¹ John Enyinnaya, 68

²² M.O. Oladeji, “*Relevance of Christian Higher Education in Nigeria*”, *The Development of Christian Higher Education in Africa: Essays in Honour of Prof Joseph Abiodun Ilori*, eds. Samuel B. Ango & Olusayo B. Oladejo, Ibadan, Baptist Press, 109

²³ Stuart Symingbon, The Role of the Media in promoting National Unity and productivity, In the Sun Newspapers of 7th November, 2017

²⁴ Magnus Enyibe is a Development Strategist, Alumnus of Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA and former member of Delta State Cabinet in the Vanguard Newspapers of September 9, 2017

²⁵ Prof Eddy Erhagbe is a Professor of History and International Studies of the University of Benin in Vanguard Newspapers of December 21, 2017, 16

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²⁷ J.A. Ilori, The Relevance of Theological Education for Nation Building, In Ogbomosho Journal of Theology, Theological Education and Nation Building Number 9, December 2004, 12

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