

Pedagogy in Africa Traditional Religion as a Tool for Transmitting Theological Training in Nigeria.

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Abstract

This paper addresses Pedagogy in Africa's Traditional Religion as a Tool for Transmitting Theological Training. Generally, there is a decline in our churches to how the Africans need to worship God and how they should be responsible to their God in all matters. The work also shows concern for some of our preachers and gospel teachers to transmit the Bible in an African context instead of copying Western ideas about God. These beliefs of the westerners have disvalued the African belief system about the existence of God, that without them, the Africans cannot serve God the way it should be. This work has looked at the concept of African pedagogy, challenges such as denominationalism, culturalism, inheritance, and so on. The researcher also looked at how can enhance African Pedagogy through Theological schools, churches, families, and society. Through this means, pedagogy can increase in the community. Due to the essential nature of this research, this research used historical and analytical methods as well as personal communication (interview), books, journals, and internet sources. The researcher recommends, amongst others, that African Pedagogy be used to teach the people to remind us of our inheritance.

Keywords: Pedagogy, African Traditional Religion, Theology

Introduction

The African theological institution needs conceptualization because that would help portray the understanding of the gospel and the Jesus of the good news as universal, incorporating, biblical and evangelical. In this concept, the universal truth of the Biblical message should adapt to a different region or local culture expressed in their language.

In defining contextualization, Africa Traditional Religion is essential in transmitting teaching and learning in the theological setting because today's theology should be based on Africa Oriented style of living due to its nature of writing. If theology gains ground in Nigeria or Africa, it should be done using traditional methods of the people to train and teach them. These could be seen from the leadership example of Jesus Christ to the Apostles who learned under the fit as a good master, mentor, and teacher of His days. Many today who claim to be theologians do not look into their African context in the usage of the theological materials to ascertain if what they are transmitting is the right way of getting the people to believe and be interested in their theological teaching. Hearing the word Africa Traditional Religion, it seems to some people that it teaches and talks about traditional belief systems like rituals that involve killing animals for scarifying. Belief is a very wrong style of conclusion that everything in Africa Traditional Religion has to do with fetch things. According to S.D.



Shishima, "African religion is considered traditional due to many factors. African religions are traditional because they are religions and cultures based on African life".¹This research work is made to orient the readers that everything in Africa Traditional Religion is not all about sacrifices or fetch things. The most significant part of Africa's traditional religion has to do with the ways, manner, and behavior of the people, which we inherited from generation to generation; for instance, your method of greeting, eating, and doing things is African traditional religion in nature. To get the word across to the people, the theologians should apply African conventional methods in teaching the people proper understanding and using the Bible.

This work defines African traditional religion thus: It is the practice and behavioral pattern inherited from generation to generation to pass the instruction to both young and old, which becomes the norm and value of the people. Based on this definition, if the theologians will impact society, they should use the pedagogy of African traditional religion to transmit their theological training.

Keywords: Pedagogy, African, Tradition, Religion, Theology, Nigeria

Finds:

Due to the essential nature of this work, the following was discovered as the findings:

1. Due to the modernizations of Theological training, those in rural areas find it challenging to assess theological training.
2. The researchers also have it that those who would have contributed to passing the message theologically to the people have no theological training.
3. The researchers also discovered that churches are now going digital, forgetting the place of African pedagogy to transmit the message to the people.
4. Based on the digitalization and translation of the Bible into different versions, pedagogy is not introduced into theological training.
5. Due to the lack of African pedagogy in theological training, some pastors now hypnotize members in order to exploit them for their self-centeredness.

Concept of pedagogy in African Traditional Religion (CPATR)

Pedagogy is generally the activities of educating, teaching or giving instructions to a person concerning what they need to do. This teaching or education has to come from an African traditional religious point of view that will enable the recipients to get the meaning of each word from the knowledge of African standard viewpoint, and this could help the people who will receive instruction from the theologians to apply each word from the Africa cultural point. Can quickly pass on the vital message to the people, an example of this could draw from the scripture where female child take after their mother, and male child

¹Shishima S.D *African Religion: A Bird's Eye View*. Published by Obata Continental Press, (Nig), 2014, 3

takes after their father in order to know the rudiment of African traditional religion, which must teach into their lives as they are growing up to their responsibility. Should be this in every Christian home to learn the rudiments of African traditional religion as a lifestyle to enhance the teaching of the faith base Christians to understand the Holy Bible in their language because the Bible was not written in an English language but in the language of the people Greek and Hebrew. The concept of Africa Pedagogy in the African tradition is fundamental in modeling our character from childhood to adulthood. The essence of many Christian in this 21st century is a trait of Christianity because the majority has become money-conscious instead of Christ-conscious. As a result, Africa's pedagogy is becoming not necessary to the society, instead enslaved in another's man language.

Challenges facing pedagogy in African traditional religion (CFPATR)

Several challenges occur in the process of theological training, and these challenges are:

1. Denominationalism- pedagogy in African traditional religion, many missions that came to Africa years ago have encouraged dichotomy in an African community. According to Moses Audi, "the mission bodies divided the Land to them sometimes and established groups estranged to each other."² This statement is true to the fact that the missionaries that came during the 10-15th century did not unite to look at the pedagogy of the Africans in establishing Churches and theological educations for the Africans. Due to this, most denominations did not look at it from the traditional African angle even to date. According to Good Friday, "denomination emerges as a result of differences in historical growth, theological orientation, liturgical practices, and sociopolitical orientation. There are many denominations and quasi-denominations in Christianity. Many more are springing up everyday, and each of them claimed superiority".³

Denominationalism has influenced theological education that pedagogy in African tradition has been forgotten so profoundly that it will take time before it can rectify it. We could also see in our churches that indigenous songs are not frequent other than English songs, coupled with the different translations of the Bible into different English versions, only a few in some languages. All these puts together have made many Africans doubt God's existence because God is not being presented to them in their local dialect. According to Wilbur, "Africans sometimes wonder why so many different Churches and mission agencies have started work

²Moses Adui. Living with Inherited Denomination: An African Perspective. In *Indigenization of the Church in Africa: the Nigeria Situation* edited by, A.A Akande, M. Audi, O.B Oladejo; Ibadan: Baptist Press(Nig) LTD, 2012, 174

³Goodfriday N Aghawenu *Ministerial Ethics: A Devotional Ethics For Pastors Christian Leaders*. Published By Mongraphics L.T.D 2003, 102-103

in the same country or even in the same local area, disregarding what others are doing or have already done....this kind of duplication can cause confusion and doubt about Christianity among local non-Christian people".⁴Only the missionaries who came many years ago did establish African indigenous pedagogy as theological training. The conversion rate to Christianity would have increased more than we are today. According to Wilbur, "Many Africans found that the presentation of Western issues in theology did not answer their deepest questions or solve some of the spiritual problems related to African culture. Western methods of thinking and learning were often unsuited to African ways".⁵ Looking at these denominations that operate, theological schools still do not practice or accept pedagogy in African tradition as a means of training people who will, in turn, lead others to Christ. The denomination has brought barer to pedagogy in Africa.

2. Inheritance: This is another severe challenge of practicing pedagogy in African traditional religion. Many denominations and theological institutions would like to maintain what they inherited and follow the legacy. They will improve on it but negate African pedagogy, which they would have introduced to enhance Christianity's growth in Africa. There are known theological training where African pedagogy is a curse for studies, but curses have to do with knowing foreign knowledge that is not African oriented. It has shown that most seminaries are moving in line with what they inherited from their predecessor, the initiator of the seminary.
3. Challenges of Culturalism: this is an apparent dichotomy between culture and theology which has posed a significant challenge to the issue of pedagogy in African traditional religion. According to Mac Jatto, "the meaning of culture varies with the individual group, and it is difficult to define culture in the truest sense."⁶ The question is who create this dichotomy between culture and theology. The theologians preach the Bible has succeeded in brainwashing the people, making them fill their culture is no more of a value than the Bible. The Christian Bible was written based on Culture, History, and philosophy, hermeneutics. The culture and the history of the then-Jewish are what the whole world is reading today that becomes the philosophy and way of life. Some of these Biblical cultures are synonymous with our African pedagogy, which emphasizes our theological training. Instead, some preachers and teachers of the Bible are now separating it. It has brought serious controversy to the society in

⁴Wilbur O. Donovan *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*: Paternoster Press, 1996,166

⁵Ibid 166

⁶Mac Jatto: *Elements of Pastoral Care Tradition and Culture of Edo and Benin Kingdom of Nigeria*. Quadro Press Publisher LTD London, United Kingdom.2011, 26

practicing their culture that does not negate the Biblical standard for the people. It is happening because of a lack of pedagogy in African traditional religion, which the theologians have refused. James states, "Cultural ignorance enfeebles ministerial efforts. The word culture identifies ideas, emotional responses, customs, traditions, and patterns of behavior shared by people in a given society. If pastors fail to discern and appreciate these things, they cannot relate the gospel effectively to their communities. Many modern Pastors suffer from the basic irrelevance of cultural insensitivity."⁷. Supporting the view above, Nweke, "Man, the summit of creation is a Religious and cultural animal. Hence religion and culture are natural to man that they both form the pivot of his social life."⁸. David Augsburg quoted Edward Hall, "Culture Culture is dictatorial unless understood and examined. It is not that humans must be in sync with or adapt to the culture, but that cultures grow out of sync with us".⁹

4. *Separation of Family*: Enlightenments bring freedom to every family in society. At the same time, en-darken brings the family to failure and problems. Most families are separated because of a lack of pedagogy in the African context, which the theologian has downplayed. Some families are no longer united because of miss-doctrine or wrong indoctrination that some theological teacher or preachers has wrongly passed into them, causing a family crisis. For instance, there are homes where the father, mother, and children attend different denominations with different doctrines. This alone is capable of separating or disuniting the family. African pedagogy, which auto to have been the source of family unity and enlightenment, has now en-darkened family.

Enhance African traditional pedagogy (ATP).

1. *Enhance African Traditional Pedagogy Through Theological Training*: The issue of pedagogy in the African tradition is best enhanced through the theological sectors. It is true because most pastors or preachers of the word of God have gone through theological training to transmit the message to their recipients. If these theological educators can incorporate it into their school curriculum for everyone, it goes a long way to solve and make indigenes embrace Christ. According to Osazuwa (personal interview 2022), "the theological institutions has a lot to do in enhancing African pedagogy in the society because they are the ones producing teacher, preacher and pastor that end up becoming leaders of churches in our societies, and

⁷James. E Means *Effective Pastors for a New Century*. Baker Books.1993, 28

⁸Nweke R.A *Reading in Religious and Moral Education*; Nweke R.A Expressions and Experiences in Religion.Jodie publishing Company.1992, 68.

⁹David. W Augsburg: *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*;The Westminster Press Philadelphia.1986, 68

the best way to start it through seminaries."¹⁰ Marvin states, "Theology affects Christian teaching is methodology. Method and process are closely related, yet not identical. Method grows out of the process, and both grow out of theology. Generally, Christian educators still borrow their methods from general education and its cognate disciplines, and consequently, this area of our subject is an unexplored one."¹¹ From this statement of Marvin, one could see that theological educators have a lot in transmitting African Pedagogy.

2. *Enhance African Traditional Pedagogy In Churches (EATPC)*

Another way to enhance African Pedagogy is through the Church. It is the best way to solve this problem because the congregation comprises African people. Igbinova (personal interview 2022) expressed his dissatisfaction that many pastors have not helped in this regard; instead of teaching the people using the traditional ways, they prepare the white man's method. He went as far as complaining that whatever was done on the church day was done in the white man's manner, such as singing, preaching, teaching, and so on."¹² He further concluded that if African Pedagogy will be effective, the Church has a significant role to play".¹³ Because of the preceding, John (personal interview 2022) also supports the view of Igbinova that Church pastors should be trained using African Pedagogy so that they, in turn, can teach their congregations using the same African Pedagogy".¹⁴

3. *Enhance African Traditional Pedagogy Through Family System:*

According to David Augsburger, "the family system is best understood as a living system, composed of members who do not function independently but as a unified whole. A central sense of oneness connects the parts. This oneness can be a healthy balancing of affectionate connectedness and respectful separateness, or it can be an unhealthy stuck togetherness at one pole--- the emotionally distant abandonment at the other extreme".¹⁵ It is why an enhanced African Pedagogy through the family unit. Every family has culture and religion that are not inherited, which can serve as a growth and good legacy for the upcoming generation, which this generation cannot disregard. This teaching can also be a tool for church growth. David Augsburger further opines, "the socio-cultural orientation of family systems theory recognizes that the family system is a subsystem of the

¹⁰Paul Osazuwa (Personal interview 2022) *Enhancing African Pedagogy Through Theological Training*. 150sagie Street of T.V. Road, Benin City.

¹¹Marvin J Taylor: *An Introduction to Christian Education*. Abingdon Press Nashville New York. 1966, 33.

¹²Igbinova Osahon: *Enhancing African Pedagogy through Church*. NO 9, Osadolor Avenue off Osarodion Street off Isuloko, Benin City, Nigeria. Personal interview 2022

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴John Obasuyi, *Enhancing African Pedagogy Church*. No 1, Oredo line Urhonigbe Town, Edo State, Nigeria. (Personal interview 2022)

¹⁵David. W Augsburger: *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*; The Westminster Press Philadelphia. 1986, 179

community, the community is a subsystem of the society."¹⁶ Suppose African Pedagogy takes its root in the family. In that case, the African pedagogy can become part of the society, a subsystem of the community, and the community, which is also a subsystem of the organization.

4. *Enhance African Traditional Pedagogy Our Society:*
Religion is significant in the lives of people around the world. And religious practices are evident in all societies. In trying to understand something, it is often helpful to break it down into its essential elements. The basic elements of society are population, territory, and social organization. These three fundamental elements of the culture are another serious means of transmitting African Pedagogy both in the school, Church, and the community.

Recommendations

1. African Pedagogy should be used in teaching the people to remind us of our inheritance.
2. Theological educators should enforce African Pedagogy in their schools
3. Members should be taught within African pedagogy in their local churches.
4. African pedagogy makes the African original instead of been fake
5. It helps us to serve, worship, and understand God better in our language.

Conclusion:

African Pedagogy is one of the best tools to promote the gospel of Christ to the world. If our people understand and embrace God through their local language, they too must be taught using African means. Although, in implementing this, there are many challenges, such as denominationalism, culturalism, and inheritance. But the positive aspect is more encouraging by enhancing it through the various means listed above. The teacher and preacher of the gospel should devote their time to teaching their faith-based adherent through the Pedagogy of African Traditional Religion. It's the only way people can embrace Christianity and reach to others using their local language as a means of evangelism to populate the kingdom of God.

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