Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.7 No.1 March, 2024; p.g. 363 – 373; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

CHARACTER EDUCATION AS CRUCIAL FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores character education as crucial nexus for responsible citizenship in the light of Rom 13: 1-7. The study contends that the present academic curriculum offered by educational institutions has left the first goal of education which is character molding to concentrate on the second goal of education which is cognitive learning. Consequently, our educational industry has failed in the most part to produce responsible, God fearing and patriotic citizenry. Intercultural hermeneutics which bridges cultural gaps that tend to prevent the flow of understanding of texts from one culture to another is adopted as methodology for the investigation and data gathering. The study generated key findings which are pertinent to the African community. First, Character education helps in producing responsible citizens who are obedient to governing authorities. Second, character education aims at bringing up responsible individuals who do not engage in evil practices but rather foster good and honorable conducts in society. Third, character education trains the individual's conscience to become patriotic and altruistic in community. Fourth, Character education is essential in the training of persons to take their civic responsibilities with high sense of honesty and dutifulness. The paper concludes that with influence of secularism and pluralism, it has become an up-hill task to have responsible citizens of any community or country without earnest and effective character education. The study recommends unequivocally that character education not civic education should be taught as independent course of study at all levels of education. In addition, parents and teachers should urgently move beyond teaching and instructing to mentoring and modeling of

children and youth in the process of character education to ensure having responsible citizens in our generation.

Keywords: character education, crucial factor, responsible citizenship, African context.

Introduction

In every age and civilization, the character of individual persons in the society or nation was in direct proportion to the sum of social well-being of the masses. Hence, in the oriental cultures of the Bible and classical civilizations people understood the direct association between the character of individuals and the well-being of the society as a whole. An individual was required to live life of decency, order, patriotism and justice within their public life without it, hardship was not far off (Hunter, 2000).

Furthermore, in Greek Civilization, the association between individual character and general welfare was obviously clear to the ancient Greek philosophers. In the Republic, Plato held up character as the defining qualification of the ruling class. This was for the simple reason that rulers with character were "most likely to devote their lives to doing what they judged to be in the interest of the community" (Hunter, 2000:4).

From the (Moral Education – A Brief History of Moral Education, 2010) the nineteenth century saw the emergence of the schooling being promoted for both secular and moral reasons in the young United States of America. Abraham Lincoln once wrote in 1832 "I desire to see a time when education, and by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise and industry, shall become much more general than at present". Following this statement of Abraham Lincoln, therefore, teachers were hired and trained with the clear expectation to advance the moral mission of the school and attend to character formation.

Martin Luther King in his speech at Morehouse College in 1946 upheld the importance of character education when he asserted "we must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education." He further said that character education is particularly important in today's society since our youth take many opportunities and involved community members must come together to determine societal core values. Continuing, James Madison remarked "to suppose that any government will secure liberty or happiness without virtue in the people is a chimerical idea" (Retrieved from www. fredomforum.org/publication/ first/.../b13.characterEd.pdf). These two great men have added their strong voices to the importance of character education in human development.

In the same development, Saito (2010), remarks that when the Japanese Fundamental Law of Education was crippled, crimes increased all over the country, and in the midst of technologised life people became empty and lost mutual trust. This deplorable state in Japan was averted by advocating character education via men of intelligence.

Statement of the Problem

The world over, Africa inclusive is suffering from unpatriotic and irresponsible citizenship. This is at the heart of insurrection, violence and lack of development in Africa and elsewhere. The study argues that the problem of unpatriotic and irresponsible citizenship

hinges on lack of authentic and adequate character education of the citizens of Africa. Therefore, academic curriculum offered by educational institutions in Africa should amidst other items concentrate on the character education of the African peoples to produce responsible and God fearing citizens. Hence the paper urges that character education with special focus on the Word of God will produce the desired responsible citizenship that will catalyse holistic development in Africa.

Purpose of the Study

Purpose of the study is to call Africans to return to their socio-cultural values of respect for authority, productive, collaborative and altruistic attitude to life which enhanced communal living and egalitarian communities in Africa due to character education embarked by the people. This will bring holistic change and development.

Methodology

The researchers employed African biblical hermeneutics which seeks to interpret the Bible using African cultural lens. It examines the scripture through African cultural values and brings the message of the Bible to African context. It is appropriate for the present study because Africans from the earliest times respected authority and lived productive and collaborative life style that made for peaceful co-existence and accommodation of strangers. Paul in the text of Romans 13:1-7 instructs the Christians in Roman Empire to do the same as a typical Africa sage or parent would teach those under him.

Theoretical Framework

The study was hinged on Sigmund Freud's theory of Personality Development. This theory is appropriate because it teaches that an individual is born depraved and needs care, guidance from parents to be functional, well adjusted person of character in society.

Sigmund Freud's Concept of Moral Theory

In Freudian psychoanalysis, moral development is an integral part of the total process of personality development. The psychoanalytic approach fastens on the dark side of the human condition. Freud thinks that the original nature of humankind is one of depravity. Moral development occurs when the child internalizes the expectations and normative demands of the society as interpreted by the parents and significant others (Clouse, 1985). The optimal time for moral development to occur is between two and six years of age. Freud believes that morality is developed through moral conflict.

Freudian theory teaches that the infant is helpless and depraved. Every child is born "an id, or an it", with irrational instincts and passions" (Clouse 1985: 25). He (Clouse) adds that in order for the child to become a better person an ego that relates to reality and a superego that relates to matters of right and wrong must be formed. The ego and the superego become part of the personality, working to help the child become amoral.

Sigmund Freud's moral development is very important to parents and teachers as well because it teaches these adolescents' caregivers that human beings have depraved nature and therefore need correction, instruction and training from significant others. He stressed the influence of family background on the development of the individual. The principles of the

theory reviewed in the work should be adhered to by parents and teachers for effective character education of individuals in order for them to become responsible citizens.

Concept Clarification and Explication

The concepts used in the paper need to be explicated for better understanding of the study. The first concept to receive attention is the term character. Hornby (2001) defines character as "all the qualities and features that make a person, groups of people, and places different from others:" Character has also been defined as "understanding, caring about and acting upon core ethical values such as respect, honesty, civic mindedness, and responsibility" (Orange County Department of Education – Character Education (2010). In defining the term character further, a look at its etymological root will perhaps be useful. The word character has a Greek root, and comes from the verb (chárasso) which means "to engrave" (Green, Sr., 1987). In the Holy Scripture, it refers to (a) a permanent mark (Revelation 13:16,17; 14:9), (b) a sculptured image (Acts 17:29). Huitt (2004) views character as "engaging in morally relevant conduct or words, or refraining from certain conduct or word"(p.1). Character formation ensures a foundation upon which we can build respect for human dignity and create 21st - century schools capable of empowering students to achieve moral and academic excellence (Character Education, 2010). Furthermore, Berkowitz and Bier (2005,n.p.) assert "character is the composite of those psychological characteristics that impact the child's capacity and tendency to be an effective moral agent, i.e. to be socially and personally responsible, ethical, and self-managed"

To educate means to teach somebody over a period of time at school, university, home etc. On the other hand, education indicates a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skill (Hornby, 2001).

According to Doyle (1997) in Tatman, Edmonson and Slate (2017:3) "education's larger purpose was to shape character, to make men (an later, women) better people." The term crucial means Extremely Significant or important. It also means something vital to the resolution of a Crisis (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 2004). Thus character education is extremely significant in the process of producing citizens that love their communities and nations. This is so because it helps to engrave those behaviors, conducts, attitudes which make for peaceful, progressive and civilized societies.

From the aforesaid, the researchers define character education as that particular education designed to engrave those desirable qualities, conducts, values, skills and knowledge in the minds of individuals to produce persons of integrity and civility. Character education should provide a foundation upon which we can build respect for human dignity, integrity, just society and empower persons to become responsible citizens.

Responsible is another term that need to be explained in course of the study means able to make moral or rational decisions and therefore answerable to one's behavior. It also infers trustworthy or dependable, reliable (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 2004).

In the same manner, the word citizenship denotes "the status of a citizen with its attendant duties, rights and privileges" (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 2004). Similarly, Self (2018) explains citizenship as "a productive, responsible, caring and contributing member

of the society." Additionally, Smist (2006) opines that citizenship "implies active engagement of the individual in an effort to serve the community as well as 'citizens mind' - a set of values and believes that connects an individual in a responsible manner to others. Smist (2006) citing Higher Education Research Institution (1996: 23) writes that citizenship is "the process whereby the individual and the collaborative group become responsible connected to the community and the society… to work for positive change on behalf of others and community."

In the same dimension, Twine (1994:10) in Tshabangu (2006) maintains that responsible citizenship will concern itself with social relationship between people and the institutional arrangement in place. The inter-dependence of self and society is a focal point of citizenship education since individuals cannot abstract themselves from their natural and social bunds and still understand themselves. Tshabangu (2006) further explains that educating towards responsible citizenship explores the notion that individuals have sacred, moral and legal right to participate actively in the search for solutions bedeviling their world of existence.

Consequently, responsible citizenship delineates the ability to make moral and rational decision which will lead to productive and contributive system in the society, where persons will be trustworthy and reliable individuals.

African Context

The African Continent was known from the earliest times by many social values such as peaceful co-existence, respect for elders and those in authorities, accommodating one another and aliens in their midst. The African people exhibited high sense of communal living where individual members of the society were productive, collaborative and altruistic which engendered positive social, holistic and economic change. It is on this premise that God could instrument Joseph and Mary to take the child Jesus to Africa for safety in the midst of terror in Palestine. It should also be remembered that the children of Jacob came also to Africa, Egypt specifically for refuge when there was severe famine in Palestine.

Furthermore, Africa was known in history as one of the earliest civilization in the world. Africa was the home of early Christianity. In these cases, the Ethiopian Eunuch and John Mark who came with the gospel into Africa cannot be easily forgotten by historical and biblical scholars.

At the background of these great feats was character education of the citizenry undertaken by the society, parents and elders in the community. Additionally, was the social structure with serious value maintenance mechanism which ensured character development of children and youth. Thus, persons grew with great sense of responsibility to one's self, family and the large community. There is urgent need for Africans to return to character education as a model and strategy of teaching her people responsible citizenship for rapid holistic change and development.

Exegesis of Romans 13:1-7

The exegesis of a text follows the principles of literary context, historical-cultural background and studying important words to draw out the meaning of the passage. The literary context helps the interpreter in the understanding of the intended meaning of the text. Consequently,

Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard (1993:156) aver that "the intended meaning of any passage is the meaning that is consistent with the sense of the literary context in which it occurs." Similarly, Osborne 1991:21 asserts that "the logical context is the most basic factor in interpretation." For our concern in this study, the literary context extends from Rom. 12:9-21 to 13:8 where the apostle Paul instructs the believers in Rome to be well behaved as Christians. Paul encourages them to love without hypocrisy, give to the needs of the Saints, bless those who persecute them, be of the same mind – unity and live peaceably with all men. After advising them on important Christian Conducts, St. Paul turns his pen in Rom.n13:1-7 to write/teach them how they should behave in the wider Roman society for the furtherance of the gospel. Even in Rom. 13:8ff, Paul continues to urge them to owe no man.
Another principle of hermeneutics that needs to be looked at is the historical-cultural background of the Romans 13:1-7 text. In this wise, Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, Jr. (1993:172) maintain that "the correct interpretation of a biblical passage will be consistent with the historical-cultural background of the passage." Accordingly, Barclay (1957:187) remarks that Paul's immediate cause for stressing civil obedience was that the Jews were notoriously rebellious; adding that Palestine, and especially Galilee, was constantly seething with insurrection. For instance, the sect known as the Zealots was convinced that there was no King for the Jews but God. As a result there should be no tribute paid to anyone except to God.

In the same vein, May (2012) vehemently argues that the context of Romans 13:1-7 suggest nothing to do with Christians' relationship to the government, whether the Roman Empire in the first Century or any other government in time space. He points out that the original Judean context; especially believers worshipping in the Roman Synagogues were to obey Synagogue authority. He adds that "Paul is writing to Gentile believers in Rome to obey, not Roman secular/pagan authority, but to obey the God-ordained synagogue rulers in Rome." Whatever context we approach the text from; the crux of the point is that Paul firmly instructs Christians and perhaps everybody else to be responsible citizen to authorities whether secular or sacred.

In that regard, therefore, Paul writes to definitely disassociate Christianity altogether from insurrectionist Judaism and to state clearly that Christianity and good or responsible citizenship went essentially necessarily hand in hand (Barclay, 1957:188). Supporting the above statement are Guthrie and Motyer (1992:1012) as the write that by the year AD 49 the presence of an active Christian group in the imperial city of Rome is attested by the addict of Claudius in that Year of expelling the Jews from Rome because of disturbances caused by Jewish-Christian debates over one Chrestus – Christ.

It is very necessary perhaps to state that honor and shame were the pivotal values of the first-Century Mediterranean world of which Rome was part of at the time Paul wrote his letter (Malina, 1981:25). Stemming from this is Paul's instruction to the Christians in the city of Rome to "render to all … fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" is due (v. 7c). This background is most probably what urged Paul to instruct the Christians in Rome on Church-state relation taught in Romans 13:1-7. This could be the true position since the letter is written about AD 57, implying that some Jews were back to the city of Rome.

Text Analysis Proper

The text is cited in English here for easy reading and understanding;
Romans 13:1-7:
RSV Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.
RSV Romans 13:2 Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.
RSV Romans 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,
RSV Romans 13:4 For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.
RSV Romans 13:5 Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.
RSV Romans 13:6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.
RSV Romans 13:7 Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Authenticity of the text of Romans 13:1-7 is being contested. Many scholars such as James Kallas in Herrik (2004) argued the authenticity of "Pauliness" of Romans 13:1-7, saying that it is an interpolation. Since the focus of the paper is not on the authenticity of the text being Pauline or not, it is enough to state that Paul's letters are occasional documents and that he wrote on an issue once as claimed by his critics does not make it non Pauline, but could be a response to a felt need at a particular time space. Similarly, Paul wrote as the situations presented themselves. The text can naturally be divided into three portions or parts: Command to submit to civil authorities (1-7), Reason for the injunction – civil authorities or governments are ordained by God (3-4) and Responsibility of the Christian to civil authorities (5-7).

V. 13:1 Pasa Psuche – let every soul or person denotes inclusiveness and imperative mood of address. Paul is making generalized demand on every person – apostasies the to subject or to obey – uperechousais exousiais governing authorities. According to the Herrick (2004:8,9) authorities here does not refer to the domain in which a certain authority is carried out but rather refers to the rulers themselves who carry out such rulership.

Porter in Herrick (2004:9) argues that the stress in the term uperecousais is not superiority in rank as such but qualitative superiority as well (justness). In this vine therefore, Paul is commanding not just obedience to any kind of superior authorities but to authorities' superior in the sense of their justness. Although Herrick argues in the contrary, expressing that obedience in Pau's mind to the state is motivated by fear, praise and inner sense or conscience not in terms of greater justness. It is possible that Porter is influenced by the Judean context in his view and interpretation of the text.

Cullmann in Dyck (1985:3) suggest that the authorities in the text denote angelic or demonic beings that lie behind all human government. The difficulty with Cullmann's view is that

with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, neither the believing Christian nor the Church should be under the rulership of fallen angelic being.

The kind of subjection or submission Paul talks about here is important to explore since he uses the term several times in the present text and elsewhere in his corpuses. According to Herrick who surveyed all the uses of the term in both Paul and other New Testament books suggests that "the term has the idea of curbing one's will to the will of another; in this respect, a higher authority. He explains that only in Luke 10:17, 20 does the term indicate "forced submission." Thus, he goes on to aver that the term is a constantly reminder that there is a divine "order" at work, wherein God values societal order which is part of the goal of redemption. Paul's intention in the text is willing and intelligent submission to authorities, out of humility knowing in one's conscience that it is God that appoints and works through the authorities whether secular (civil) or sacred (Herrick, 2004). This is where the crucial role of character education comes in since the fallen nature of man cannot allow man to willingly submit to any authorities without transformation which character education offers.

13:2 Paul is of the view that Christians should not resist governing authorities on issues that should result in Christian opposition. The Christian should bear in mind that governing authorities are established by God's "ordinance, direction or instruction." Herrick (2004:18) opines that the term diatagn in Romans 13 has the idea of God's order and structuring (design) of human society. The Krima – judgment that those who resist governing authorities as God's order or ordinance will receive on themselves, implies a temporal judgment handed out by the State to the offending person since the focus of Paul here is the State (Herrick, 2004:19).

13:3 For rulers are not phobos Ton agathonergonacca Ton Ka Konlerrow or fear to good works but to bad ones. Good works refers to deeds done within the confines of the law enacted and enforced by the governing authorities. This is proper view of the text given that Paul talks of the governing authority as God's minister for good in verse 4. Although the governing authorities or authority as God's minister bears the sword, it is for the one who Kakonprassonti practices bad or evil. However, if one does good deed, one will receive epainon praise from the governing authority. This indicates whether secular – civil or sacred authorities, good deeds are encouraged and receives praise from which ever authorities.

Paul in 13:5 urged Christians to be submissive not only because of judgment that will be meted out to those who practice bad or evil but for suneidesin conscience. Once more we posit that it is character education that trains the conscience of human beings to align with good deeds or the instructions of God. This training of the conscience is crucially important for any society or nation to produce responsible citizens. It appears like many have their consciences seared with hot iron as Paul would say (I Tim. 4:2); thereby becoming unruly, irresponsible and even noncompliance with the governing authorities, both secular and sacred. The need and urgency of teaching character education to the African Community is more now than ever if there will be hope of having peaceful and responsible citizens who are patriotic, altruistic and God fearing.

Paul thus rounds of this section by enjoining the Roman Christians to be model citizens. This does not mean that they should not work for change by evangelizing and seeking justice from the governing authority (Kleener, 2009). Also as social maintenance mechanism, Christians

should render to all their due, taxes to whom taxes are due which is very essential in supporting and maintaining the amenities such roads, water supply, schools and so on. Custom or tribute should also be given to whom it is due because the society is structured hierarchically for peaceful co-existence. And then Ten Timen Ten Timen honor to whom honor is due because the first Century Mediterranean would had honor and shame as pivotal values that cannot be compromised.

Paul's instruction to the Roman believers is necessary for the furtherance of the gospel in the Roman Empire which was like the capital city of the world at that time. The Christians maintaining peace, showing respect to governing authorities and taking their civic responsibilities seriously are cardinal requirements of those who call on the name of God as their heavenly father. Believers everywhere and time should show examples of good citizens through godly conducts and responsible character that supports peace and progress in both secular and sacred settings.

Lessons for African States

The study teaches the African community many lessons. These lessons are as follows:

Christians in Africa should exhibit attitude of submission to secular or civil and or sacred authorities as taught by Paul in Romans 13:1 and exemplified by Jesus when He submitted to His Father.

Africans should desist from insurrections which are capable of destroying the peace and progress that are much needed in Africa. Instead, the people of this continent are encouraged to engage in good and honorable conduct worthy of praise.

Institutions in Africa, the home, Church, School should foster character education as it is an avenue of educating and training the consciences of the Africans in order to be responsible citizens.

Furthermore, character education should be made compulsory subject in all levels of education as it will help in the teaching and training of Africans to take their civic responsibilities, such as paying of taxes, customs, respect for authorities with high sense of honesty and dutifully.

Africans will experience great and rapid development and civilization when all obey authorities, respect and care for each other and take their civic duties with high sense of honesty and in the fear of God.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated adequate knowledge of the subject under discussion which is Character Education as crucial element in Responsible Citizenship in the light of Romans 13:1-7. The problem the study sought to tackle was that there is urgent need for educational institutions and others to return to the teaching of character education as strategy of achieving responsible citizenship in the African Community. The purpose of the paper is to invite Africans to return to their socio-cultural values of respect for authorities, productive, collaborative and altruistic attitude to life which enhanced communal living and egalitarian

communities in Africa. The method of investigation was African biblical hermeneutics which mirror the biblical text through the African spectacle.

The findings include that obedience to authority, productive, collaborative will bring about accelerated development and progress. The paper concludes that the development and civilization experienced by Rome in the time of Paul was as a result of submission to authority, respect for one another and all taken their civic duties seriously within honesty. Africans should learn from the Romans and the teachings of Paul in Romans 13:1-7.

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