

## **Christian Education as a Solution for a Lack of Discipline and Growing Moral Decadence Among Students**

**Yisa Segun Zubairu**

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria as a nation is at the verge of destruction as a result of lack of discipline, moral decadence such as cultism, examination malpractices, gambling, and lack of religious teachings in the schools, homes, churches, and the society at large. The spirituality of children is at stake because many parents do not have time for their children and the church of Christ have shifted her focus from teachings that will affect the lives of children to her own selfish interest. What about secondary schools where Christian Religious Studies which is supposed to inculcate morals is no longer reckoned with? The aforementioned issues demonstrate the need for church intervention through Christian theological education. This is because the responsibility of theological education in Nigeria is the training of ministers who work for the church. Christian theological education curriculum is to facilitate and to promote change in the lives of the students; it also aims at promoting good relationship in the life of an individual to his or her creator (God). This paper looked at the Christian theological education as a panacea for indiscipline and moral decadence among students to ascertain the implications of students' indiscipline and moral decadence among secondary school students. In specific terms the objectives of the study were to: (i) Identify the prevalent acts of indiscipline among the students; (ii) assess the level of indiscipline and moral decadence among the students; (iii) find out the negative implications (or long – term consequences) of students' indiscipline and moral decadence on

students' academic performance, prospects for completing secondary education and tendency for justification of indiscipline. The researcher made use of phenomenological, historical, and descriptive research design for effective achievement of his goal.

**KEY WORDS:** Christian, Theological, Indiscipline, Moral Decadence, Students

## **1.0 Introduction**

The falling standard of morality and increase in indiscipline which leads to social vices among the youths is very alarming and calls for special attention if we are truly concerned about the bright future of the younger generation. An adage says, "it is only a fool that goes on to sleep inside his house when the roof is on fire". Indiscipline in Nigerian schools is a perennial problem today and has attracted comments from members of the public and academicians at seminars, conferences and workshops (Nwokeji, 2011). One of the objectives of the Federal Government of Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004:27) is the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes into school children for the survival of the children and the Nigerian Society as a whole. Despite this awareness, it seems that school administrators are at a loss in combating indiscipline in schools. The manifestation of indiscipline in the school system is a reflection of the absence of moral values in the society as a whole. Indiscipline among secondary school students manifest in many ways. These include: fighting, stealing, bullying, lying, truancy, lateness to school, using dirty language, noise making, laziness, repeated disobedience, conspiracy cheating, falsification, drug abuse, use of charms and cultism (Oniyama and Oniyama, 2005). All these deviant behaviors disrupt the school system.

The age range of students in the junior and senior secondary schools is between 11 and 19 years. This period of human development is regarded as adolescence or youth (Uba, 2012). In Nigeria and in other parts of the globe, there is the constant reminder through the

media, religious organizations and government agencies of the need for people to be self-disciplined, law abiding, honest, respectful and hardworking. It however appears as if these echoes often fall on deaf ears. Nigeria has seemingly reached a level which is generally referred to as a “state of amorality and emptiness”. That is the state of moral decay and valuelessness; many have asserted through the media that Nigeria has become the second most corrupt nation in the world. Although, we have no statistics to buttress this claim, the high degree of corruption and indiscipline that pervade the present Nigerian society rightly confirms the assertion. Evidence of moral decadence and the adverse effects on our society are no longer subject to debate. For instance, “the get rich quick syndrome” in Nigeria, has driven many people particularly the youths into various kinds of unwholesome activities such as: armed robbery, theft, cheating, kidnapping, cultism, white collar crime and the much orchestrated ‘419’ fraudulent practices. Most political parties have institutionalized thuggery and sycophancy. In the civil service, hard work is determined by how much one is able to ‘grab’.

The popular view today is that grabbing or taking government property without permission is no stealing but a share of the national cake. Ritual killings have become more rampant than ever while examination malpractices have taken a more sophisticated dimension. The sanity and discipline which the school was known for, has suddenly become history. Consequently, security in Nigeria can no longer be guaranteed. Agreeing to this view Ejiogu (2000:6) asserts that:

*Since the mid-1980s, this country has been sliding dangerously into a bottomless pit of moral decrepitude. Every other Nigeria is fast losing faith in himself or herself, in her or his neighbors, and in the fatherland. “Cry, beloved Nigerians”! One might proclaim. To a great many Nigerians, hard work has become anathema. Today, it is permissible to steal public fund, use it to build*

*castles and buy chieftaincy titles and bogus doctorate degree awards from dubious foreign (and even Nigerian) institutions. It is no longer necessary to study hard for examinations since it is easier to buy fake certificates and testimonials from Oluwole Street, behind Tinubu Square in Lagos or in some fairy "Toronto".*

Unfortunately, highly placed men and women in the society cooperate with these culprits and sometimes go extra miles to hate and victimize those who dare to challenge them. Schools are a miniature of the society. The norm of the society is carried over to the school system in order to ensure the smooth running of the school. The school has norms which are called rules and regulations, design for peaceful co-existence of the indwellers of the school. Any member of the school community found to be violating any of the norms of the school is said to be indisciplined (Oludipe, 1998).

Many acts of indiscipline manifested by the students are school-related. They include truancy, bullying, examination malpractices and others. Other manifestations are society-related and include robbery, drug abuse, rape and fraud which are imported into the school system. In both cases students have gone far in moral laxity that they often have sense of crime neutralization. They do not see anything wrong in criminally neutralizing crimes such as: computer hacking, embezzlement, illegal immigration and examination malpractice. Crime neutralization is a cognitive exercise of justifying criminal acts as necessary and non-criminal (Ayorinde, Yahaya and Iyekolo, 2011). Crime neutralization is one of reasoning that a committed crime is justifiable, unavailable and a necessary innovation (Conklin, 2007). This development may be regarded as one of the consequences of indiscipline among adolescents, including students in the secondary schools.

## **1. Analyzing the Problems**

There are different forms of indiscipline in schools. These are anti-social acts like: destruction of public property and rioting, hooliganism and robbery; acts of defiance like breaking school rules and regulations, and acts of negligence including lateness to school, and careless handling of school properties. The causes of indiscipline may be external to the school or may stem from within the school, or a combination of both external and internal factors (Abdullahi, 1980). Researchers have worked on the implications of indiscipline in the schools. For example, Aluede and Adejoke (2010) investigated bullying in some Nigerian secondary schools. They found that bullying is commonly evident in schools and often lead to the potential of causing either physical or psychological harm to the victim. Beran (2009) has described the association between bullying by peers and a number of different dimensions of internal distress and social problems. The bullies create a climate of fear and intimidation. The victim is affected by depression, anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, poor academic achievement and mistrust of others.

The types of drugs that adolescents commonly abuse resulting in dependence are: alcohol, stimulants, nicotine sedatives and even narcotics. Adolescents who abuse drugs create risk of a wide variety of harms that may interfere with their physical, social, psychological and intellectual development. Drug abuses have lasting consequences on adolescents and may interfere with a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood (Adedo, 2009). Adolescence is a developmental period in which the human brain is still developing and substance abuse has the potential to inhibit healthy neurological development. Ongoing substance abuse can place an individual at greater risk of addiction in adulthood (Uba, 2012). Youth or adolescents who commit crimes have criminal intent, and the intent itself is enriched by having belief that committing crimes are justifiable. (Agbonna, 2009; Agbonna, 2010; Conklin, 2007) argued that the recruitment into a criminal career begins during adolescence

while still in their teens, future career offenders learn criminal skills and motives. They have wild perceptions of crimes and often assume that no crime is completely wrong, since they have justifiable precedence. Having a low value orientation concerning crimes depict a high sense of moral decay. Low value orientation may be illustrated thus: (i) Embezzlement is seen as one's share of the national wealth; (ii) Cultism as loyalty to a beneficial group; and (iii) Prostitution and victimless crime. This is the low value on the implications or impact of indiscipline.

The schools where morals are to be taught to complement what some parents have done over the years are not also left out of these errors. The school standards are becoming ineffective to change or transform the average moral life of the student. Christian education in the National Policy on Education of 1977 section (II) states that: "apart of unity which will be made available for religious instruction, no child will be made available for religious instruction which is contrary to the wishes of his or her parents" (Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy of Education, 1979: sec II). Based on this educational policy, religious knowledge have been playing its role training children and bringing them up socially, physiologically and morally and has brought the knowledge of god to the students. Gudigbe (1981: 9) has this to say about education:

*Education without the true knowledge of God is like yeast without sugar. Without religious knowledge we can only produce academic devils. As a noble man once said: "educate men without religion and you make them clever devils". It is evident in our society today that people in authority like the politicians and academicians have disappointed many people who confide in them because of their moral laxity and godlessness.*

To buttress the assertion above, Isiramen (2010) asserts that, "in Nigeria, religion occupies a formidable position in the lives of the people as reflected in the national constitution". Successive

governments have always called on religious leaders to create a positive path for Nigeria as a nation. Therefore, importance of religion cannot be overshadowed. Again in her opinion, she stated that, “the government treaded on the path of contradictions when it removed religious knowledge as a compulsory subject in Primary and Secondary School’s Curricula”. The writer agrees with her to some certain degrees because the government focuses on Scientific/ Technological developments without a complimentary zeal for the study of religion as a compulsory subject in Nigerian Schools which is an error. Christian religious studies and its usefulness in the schools must be understood by the teachers and the students. Many schools and churches were established by the early Christian missionaries for the purpose of teaching the word of God to build character and spiritual development of humanity. The achievement of this purpose is greatly dependent on having the fear of God through the sound teaching and studying of the Bible.

If the aim of education is to be achieved (which is to have the right development of the physical, mental and spiritual activities of students), the teaching of Christian religious knowledge should be taken with all seriousness in the Nigeria schools.

## **2. Concepts of Indiscipline**

Idu (2001) asserted that most schools in the past were voluntary agency schools. As at then, there was high degree of discipline in schools. There was harmony as principals, teachers and students demonstrated awareness of their responsibilities in the schools. More so, parents and teachers shared the same view of students’ desirable behaviors. The quality of school system as regards to discipline was very high up till the end of Nigerian civil war in January 1970. Discipline in Nigeria School has fallen drastically due to a lot of factors; moral decadence in the society is the direct consequences of some behavior which the society has embossed upon in the past. It is therefore necessary to examine what exactly is implied by discipline and the various indices of indiscipline.

After the civil war, things began to change. All forms of indiscipline were manifested by the students. Indiscipline is the negative form of discipline. Zubaidia (2009) citing Dare, Hashim, Sweinan and Ofie (2004) defined discipline in schools as respect for school laws and regulations and the maintenance of an established standard of behavior and implies self-control, restraint, respect for oneself and others. A behavior that contradicts the above becomes indiscipline. According to Truners (2002), if students cultivate the habit of discipline in schools, there will be a smooth running in the school system but reverse will be the case if students are not disciplined. Discipline has different connotations depending on different situations. In a military sense for instance, it is seen as a command which a superior officer gives to his subordinate which must be obeyed immediately. Amuforo (2007) opined that, in the school or classroom situation, discipline goes beyond giving instructions which must be obeyed in order to avoid punishment. It involves the active participation of both the teacher and the learners in the teaching/learning process. Discipline can be determined by the extent to which the learners are convinced in what they are doing and willingly submit themselves to the authority of the teacher. There will be discipline if teachers and the learners see themselves as friends and agree to work together to achieve a common goal. Christopher and Gungel (2008) asserted that at its most basic level, discipline simply means the submission to rules and kind of order.

Akintoye (2003) citing Rukare (1979) submitted that the definition of discipline is manifold but he opined that “discipline is an exercise train or practices of the mental, moral and physical powers to promote order, regularity and efficient obedience”. Again, Zubaidia (2009) citing Dare, Hashim, Sweinan and Ofie (2004) defined discipline in schools as respect for school laws and regulations and the maintenance of an established standard of behavior and implies self-control, restraint, respect for oneself and others. Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2014) defined discipline as “to train or develop by instruction and exercise especially in self-control” and it is also a



training that corrects, molds or perfects the mental faculties or moral character” Amuforo (2007) opined that, Discipline does not mean punishment or the use of force to command respect. It involves the application of self-control and the submission of oneself to certain desirable influences without coercion, the fear of punishment or the expectation of reward. It involves obedience, cooperation; recognition of authority and cordial relationship between the teachers.

According to Lyn Overall and Margaret Sangster (2003) discipline helps children behave acceptably in school, it is intended to repress and redirect misbehavior. Over time, the goal is to reduce the need for teacher intervention so that children learn to control themselves. Discipline is about the ways children behave towards each other and to their teachers and the ways teachers behave towards children. In the opinion of Opakunle:

*Discipline comes from within unlike order, it is not imposed. It is not easy to define discipline but you can notice it in a person's speech and behavior. A discipline child, for example, speaks politely and acts with consideration and courtesy not necessarily out of fear of punishment, but more because he believes it is right to be good and to do good. It comes from within and therefore it is spontaneous. It is not borne of force or coercion (Opakune, 2002:26).*

Kochhar (1970) asserts that, discipline consists in the submission of one's impulses and power to a regulation which imposes from upon chaos and brings efficiency and economy where there would otherwise be ineffectiveness and waste.

### **3. Lack of Discipline in Schools**

Taking a step further, Adesina (1980), identifies that discipline is a national problem. Thus, in recent past, particularly since 1975, there has been an increase in public attention to the problem of indiscipline

in the country in general and in the school system in particular. Generally, there is tendency to link the problem of student unrest in schools with the problem of discipline. Early in 1977, the issue reached a critical point when the then Military Government in the country concluded that military personnel should be posted to schools in order to maintain discipline in these institutions. In July 1977, the National Policy Development Center 'think thank' organized a conference workshop on discipline in schools as part of its own study on national discipline.

The participants at the national conference on discipline and motivation in schools numbered 249 with school administrators drawn from Secondary Schools, Teacher Training Colleges and Federal Schools of Arts and Science. The importance of the conference was manifested in the fact that the then Head of State, Major General Olusegun Obasanjo did not only attended its opening session but also expressed his personal concern over the declining state of affairs in schools with special reference to cases of indiscipline. It was his opinion that the current lowering of educational standards had its roots which in turn allowed both students and some teachers to prevent the whole aim of education, examinations and public morality. He said inter alia:

*Not a day passes without some media report of examination leakages, student unrest, cases of indiscipline, drug abuse and other issues reflecting the unsatisfactory state of our institutions. This has now become an all pervading national issue. I would go as far as calling it a national emergency and I would wish that those of you gathered here today treat this with all the seriousness it deserves. You as heads of institutions are the people more directly connected with this problem and it is proper that you as the experts should first and foremost be given the opportunity to address your minds collectively to this serious situation. I am perfectly aware*

*that it is a problem, the solution to which does not lie in your own hands alone.*

The chairman of the conference, Fafunwa made the following remarks as his contribution:

*We all agree that our society is passing through a very difficult time and the incidence of indiscipline permeates our entire social, economic, and political life as a nation. The guiltiest segments of our community are the educated and the half educated elements. Specifically, this group is represented by parents, teachers, professors, lecturers, principals, the press, ministry of education officials, other civil servants, lawyers, doctors, employers of labor, labor unions, professional organizations, business men and women, police, the armed forces and finally the pupils and students (Adesina, 1980).*

So grave was the concern expressed about discipline that the theme continued to recall in public speeches, seminars, and conferences. Our leaders in the past have tried to remedy this situation but the problem proved abortive. One of the cardinal objectives of education as spelt out in the National Policy on Education (2004) revised, is to inculcate right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society.

Adesina (1980) with special reference to the school system, refer to discipline as when students are taught to respect the school authorities, to observe the school laws and regulations and to maintain an established standard of behavior. Discipline therefore, can be defined as readiness or ability to respect authority and observe conventional or established laws of the society or of any other organization. It implies self-control, restraint respect for self and respect for others. It calls for sacrifice, perseverance, tolerance and cognition of human dignity. Two major kinds of discipline can be identified: The first is that which is imposed by an external authority

or laws, in which case sense of discipline is demonstrated because of the fear of punishment. This type of discipline appears superficial because it means that the individual breaks down to his natural behavior once the authority imposed upon him is removed. The second type of discipline is that in which the ability to distinguish the right from the wrong, the helpful from the hateful, the good from the bad, is basically recognized by individuals or groups of individuals.

However, in the school context, the purpose of discipline would appear to be to produce a breed of well cultivated boys and girls who will develop not only respect for themselves and the society at large, but also respect for school authorities and school regulations. Mishra (2007) asserts that discipline is the public's primary educational concern; problems with discipline have been rated as second only to problems with drug use. Teachers have been reported to view lack of school discipline as a serious problem, often blaming the problem first on lack of discipline at home, second on lack of educational resources. The words of Christopher and John (2008) see discipline at its most basic level, simply means the submission to rules or some kind of order.

#### **4. Origin of Anti-Social Behaviors**

Most parents notice undesirable behavior(s) among adolescents especially in their teens. They increase in bad behavior(s) from the age of eleven to probably age fourteen when such behavior(s) as delinquency, emotional apathy, waywardness, irritability and answering back are exhibited (Onyelalu, 1986). All these behaviors come up as a result of developments which make the individual want to have his/her own identity. Literarily, adolescence means 'growing to maturity or becoming an adult'. There has been no consensus about the definition of adolescents. The result is that each author attempts a description based on his own ideas and the focus of his study (Owuamannam 1991). However, Jaiyeoba (1991) sees adolescence as a stage of mind or a combination of all these. It is a time when a teenager is struggling to find a place for himself in his own society.

Furthermore, Akinboye (1985), in a report of findings of psychological studies of adolescents, contends that the adolescent period is of great interest to people of all ages because the period represents dramatic physical, psychological and sociological changes in the growing child. This period has been variously labeled as that of stress and conflicts. Newman and Newman (1976) report that individual experiences in early adolescence (13-17) psychological crises of group identity versus alienation, while in the late adolescence (18-22), he experiences individual identity versus diffusion.

## **5. Characteristics of Adolescents/Youth**

The period of adolescence is when physical development reaches its peak. As a result, the adolescent gets to realize he is strong and comes to rely on his physical strength. For him/her physical strength becomes the power which regulates his/her life. This is the reason some of them challenge the authority of their teachers and parents (Okafor, 1992).

**5.1 Increased Intellectual Ability:** Like physical strength, mental ability matures in adolescence. As a result, the adolescent gains increased power to identify problems and takes decisions by himself. Realizing this intellectual power, the adolescent develops the tendency to rely on his own judgment and acts in line with his own decisions (Okafor, 1992). Armed with this knowledge, counselors, teachers and parents should not force their decisions on them but carry them along in decision making process especially if it affects them.

**5.2 Increase Emotional Capacity:** In adolescence, human emotions become more central, as a result the adolescent become more sensitive to what happens to him/her and reacts to it more promptly. He/She protects himself/herself at all times. This is the reason for fights and sibling scuffle. Parents and adults should handle their emotional problems with care.

**5.3 Social Interest:** Social interest increases in adolescence far beyond what obtains in childhood. The adolescent is not only more interested in chats, discussions and arguments but also in recreational activities or hobbies which differ from those of his childhood days. He makes friends with others of similar personality and with opposite sex. In selecting his friends, he would like to be left free by his parents (Okafor, 1992). Parental and teacher guidance is however advised here.

**5.4 Youth Exuberance:** The increase in physical characteristic of adolescent often results in excess energy which pushes the adolescent to over eat, over-play and over react. The adolescent seizes every opportunity to display his or her strength and often does so in a wrong place, time and against a wrong person. This explains why they are used for riots.

**5.5 Intellectual Arrogance:** The increase in intellectual ability in adolescent makes him rebel against those in authority in an attempt to resolve the numerous problems of adjustment that confront him. He over-exercises his power of reasoning, decision-making and of passing judgment on others including his superiors and even his parents (Okafor, 1992). The adolescent is always right and every other person is always wrong.

## **6. Theories on Moral development**

A critical look at the definition of morality reveals the fact that it has to do with conformity to the rule of one's social group. The individual who conforms is regarded as having good morals whereas the person who refuses to conform is seen as amoral or immoral (Oladele, 1989). Three basic theories on moral development have been propounded. They are the social learning theory, the psychoanalytic theory and the cognitive theory. Their central themes are moral behavior, moral feelings and moral judgment respectively. The social learning theory believes that morals are social learning behaviors transmitted by direct teaching and imitation of appropriate role models. The theorists

argue that environmental influence is of critical importance for the internalization of cultural values. The psychoanalytic model, suggests that morality is intricately bound to personality development where much emphasis is laid on the internalization of standards and values. The cognitive theory focuses attention on the kind of reasoning or moral judgment that people use in making their decisions and on their understanding of justice (Mambula, 2000). It has been observed to our dismay that certain people in our society refuse deliberately to conform to the norms of the society basically because of their contact with, and acceptance of other cultures which are at pal with our indigenous culture. For instance, many people in Nigeria who are exposed to western cultures have imbibed such cultures at the detriment of our own culture.

### **7 Causes of Indiscipline in Schools**

Indiscipline in our educational institutions is a serious problem. In the Society, there are several manifestations of indiscipline which has serious repercussions on the educational institutions as well. Dipe (2003) citing Folayan (1982) in his own studies reveals that the causes of indiscipline in the school are many; some of these are: insufficient or inadequate food, harsh and inflexible school rules, bad teaching, poor school organization, uncontrolled staff behavior, harsh or unsatisfactory home conditions, lack of communication between the Head master, staff and pupils, lack of understanding or poor adjustment to the onset of adolescence. Ayanriola (2002) in his opinion says that when children do not develop as they should either Socially or academically, they can be aggressive and be a disturbance to their classmates, parents and teachers when they feel unloved and feel insecure.

In the opinion of Chaube (1995), the following may be some of the important causes of indiscipline in our schools:

**7.1 Lack of Leadership skills in Teachers:** Today, teachers do not enjoy respect in society as they did in the past. Consequently, students also do not show due respect to their teachers because some teachers get involved in the cesspool of politics and self-interest, lose their ideals and do not show any interest in the development of the students. Very often these teachers extort the students and use them as tools for the realization of their selfish ends.

**7.2 The Current education System:** The current system of education is being criticized at all levels. Hence, the students have begun to feel that the education which is being given to them is not standard and as a result, they have no regard for this education. They consider it as merely a means of getting employment.

**7.3 Lack of Sustaining Ideal Values:** At present, the condition of the society is pitiable. Many people because of their self-interest attach greater importance to the ends rather than to the means to achieve them. The social values are undergoing rapid changes so people err in fixing moral standards which has shaken the foundation of the society. Consequently, people are not sure about the security of his life and property.

**7.4 Economic Difficulties:** The economic situation of the country has deteriorated to a deplorable degree because the population has increased. Hence, unemployment is a national problem. As a result the students are always hunted by fear of unknown and engage in the act of indiscipline.

From the above discussion, we may conclude that the responsibility of indiscipline does not rest only with the school but also with the home, the society and the government. Hence, for its eradication, the cooperation of all the concerned agencies is necessary. Akintoye (2003) citing Jimoh (1987) attributed the cause of indiscipline to lack of adequate planning. In his opinion, the educational endeavors of



Nigeria as a nation have been characterized by inadequate planning or no planning at all. This has affected the educational sector greatly to the extent that the period after schooling witnesses a period of frustration through joblessness. Funmi (2010) opines that Peer Pressure is another cause of indiscipline in the society. Peer Pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer or peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her values, attitudes and behaviors. It is the pressure people of similar age group place on their peers to encourage them to behave in certain ways or make certain decisions which they really do not want to do. Peer pressure is one of the difficult things a teen has to deal with in schools, colleges, universities, and even later in life.

Dealing with peer pressure is more than a phase people go through; it is something that could affect one throughout one's life if one does not learn to deal with it and it can even have a lot of bearing on one's mental health especially in the younger and insecure ones. An example of situation where peer pressure may be exerted is influence to take: Alcohol, Cigarettes, Diet pills, Drugs, Pornography, Stealing or Shoplifting, Sexual Intercourse, Sneaking out of School, Examinational Malpractice. In lieu of the above, it causes indiscipline among the students of all levels

### **8. Crime Neutralization among Adolescents**

Every society, primitive or modern, has written and unwritten laws that govern its members behavior and define acceptable social values. Social values are ideas held by human individuals or groups about what is desirable, proper, good or bad. Through socialization, young members of every society are oriented about series of values and are expected to act in conformity to them. As every child interacts with his physical and social environments, he becomes informed about socially approved and valued activities (Ayorinde, Yahaya and Iyekolo (2011). Though, the ideas of what is right or wrong vary from one society to another, there are some crimes or delinquencies that are globally immoral and condemned. In every society, for example,

crimes such as computer hacking, car theft, embezzlement, prostitution, tribal violence, child abuse, illegal immigration, examination malpractice, stealing and sexual harassments are condemned and sanctioned by national and international laws. In the religious circles, such crimes are seen as offence to God and humanity.

However, with the growing incidences of socio-economic problems and the inability of the judicial system to deliver justice and deter crimes in our society, the youths in the society are daily confronted with negative role models and are faced with dilemma of taking moral decisions about what is right or wrong. Steinberg (2002) is of the opinion that youths of today are exposed to series of crimes that put their value orientation in question than the youths of past generations. Exposure to such array of crimes no doubt forms their ideas of what is right or wrong. Conklin (2007) emphatically referred to adolescents of today as those most susceptible to learning criminal and delinquent acts and as those whose value orientation about crime can be very weird. Adolescents are susceptible to complex moral reasoning because of being semi-adults; they are capable of embarking on inductive and deductive reasoning. They are capable of drawing logical and illogical conclusions from general set of premises. In addition to this, adolescents' social agility, sensitivity, autonomy and cognitive development expose them to learning that transform their orientation and sometimes make it different and contradictory to adults' social expectations. Adolescents are not ignorant of societal crimes and are capable of having varied sense of crime neutralization. Their social and biological statuses afford them the means of rationalizing crimes and arriving at complex justification of involvement in crimes. In fact, Conklin (2007:180) writes that 'for some adolescents, delinquency involves less risk of failure and more potential gains than school work'. This may be why they would readily engage in delinquent behavior or crimes after neutralizing the crime.

## 9. Managing Students' Indiscipline

- a. In order to create in the teachers a spirit of leadership, their living standard and emoluments should be sufficiently increased. This will afford them opportunities for self-development and their moral strength will be increased. It will also develop in them the power of leadership to give correct guidance to the students (Chaube, 1995).
- b. In order to develop contact between the teachers and the students the number of students in a class should be within reasonable limits.
- c. Vocational education should be included in the school curriculum.
- d. Each student should be given equal opportunity in the scheme of education according to his ability (Ajuzie, 2004).
- e. The researcher is of the opinion that, the need for moral education is very essential to curb indiscipline among the students.

## 10. Christian Theological Educations as an Agent to Moral Transformation

Theology, from the viewpoint of etymology, is derived from the Greek words *theos* (God) and *logos* (discourse or reason). Therefore, literally, theology means “discourse or reason concerning God” or in another way, it means thinking about God (Nihinlola, 2013:15) If at any time in the history of Africa there have been great theological challenges, it is today. Therefore, the need for sound theologians and sound theological education cannot be over – emphasized.

*Kato repeatedly warned that the major problem of Christianity in Africa is a theological one. A Church without a Theology or with a weak understanding of God's word stands on quicksand and yet, African evangelicals while they perceive the danger, seem so reluctant to engage in real theological work (Kato, 1975:91)*

The aftermath of the historical, socio – cultural and political experience of Africa since her encounter with the western imperialist and western Christian missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, leaves Christianity with the burden of interpreting and unveiling the true message of Christianity to Africans. To effectively do this, there is a great need for sound and enterprising theologians in modern Africa. This need calls for sound and solid theological training for the African Church (Onyenechehie, 2008). Theological education came to Nigeria as a result of the coming of missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They brought the good news of the resurrected Messiah to this part of the world. As a result, many Nigerians became followers of Christ. As converts grew in numbers, the burden of teaching new members the rudiments of Christianity became too much for the foreign missionaries who did not understand the culture, particularly the language of the people, but were only using few Nigerians who happened to have minimum understanding of the missionaries' language as interpreters (Lawal, 2006, 2007).

In order to make their work lighter, there was the need to train more natives in the rudiments of Christianity and this they started with the basic, the four 'Rs', which eventually led to the establishment of vernacular Bible schools which were later upgraded to full scale Bible schools. Missionaries used the opportunity (establishment of schools) at their disposal very well as a means of teaching young converts the rudiments of Christian religion and these young believers, in turn, became the instruments for converting others. Atowoju states that:

*Various measures without inner change will lead to promotion of falsehood to cover up evils by corrupt people; it forces people to wear what do not fit them. The truth from Bible is a revelation from God to all mankind. Theological institutions where the knowledge of the Bible is imparted has and will continue to help in the moral transformation of the society through its activities, knowledge imparted and the students produced. However, theological schools in Nigeria should see it as their responsibility to make this truth known, relevant, inspiring and soul transforming today (2006:48)*

This can be actualised by producing ‘well baked’ ministers and theologians who will go out to the society to implement what has been learnt. Therefore, the curriculum of theological schools need to be dynamic, reflecting the needs and values of the society since curriculum could be said to be all the experiences the child has regardless of when and how they take place. There is a need to review the objectives of setting up theological institutions in a country like ours. The conception of the goal of one’s educational pursuit determines the type of materials to use so as to achieve the desired objective. In addition, Julius quoting Ralph Tyler says: these educational objectives ‘become the criteria by which materials are selected, content is outlined, instructional procedures are developed and test and examinations are prepared’ (Lawal, 2007) According to Emiola Nihinlola:

*The curriculum of theological education for training of Pastors, religious educationists, church musicians, evangelists and missionaries should include more courses in the practice of moral theology. There must be a conscious effort to produce kingdom ministers who are not spiritual giants and moral dwarfs as is the case in the contemporary scene (2006, 2007)*

Furthermore, Lawal (2007) said theologians should develop in their students a new orientation of critical thinking; a critical way of analysing issues would give studies the ability to see problems and be able to find ways of solving them. Also every theologian should also take up the challenge to reform the society. The task of theologians is to get down to the biblical root, the Old and New Testament prophets provided appropriate platform on which to build such theology. Theologians should take it upon themselves to address immoral behaviours in our society.

## **11. Transformation and the Role of the Church**

First, the church should preach a message of moral and spiritual regeneration. The God we serve is a God of truth, righteousness, holiness and justice (Lev. 19:2; Exodus. 22:8; Isaiah 33:15; Micah 6:8). The Christian message must focus on the moral development of the human person. It is only through the experience of new birth that a person is saved from the world's social vices (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17). The Nigerian church needs to balance preaching on prosperity, blessing, healing and miracles with self-sacrifice, perseverance, holiness and righteousness.

Second, discipleship training of Christians should include civic responsibility, patriotic citizenship and honest living. The church can make a tangible contribution to the war against immoral acts such as corruption and bribery through exemplary living of Christians in their places of work. How else can people be delivered from the evils of bribery if there are no courageous Christians in the society who will refuse to participate in this sinful practice?... if all the Christians in the country refuse to practice bribery, it would change the culture of that country. Church members who are politicians should be counselled, prayed for, encouraged and supported to remain faithful to God in political involvement (Nihinlola, 2007:15).

Third, as an agent of social transformation, the church in Nigeria via her ministers has also responded variedly to social ills and the needs in the country. The ministers of God in Nigeria have been offering conceptual platforms through motivational and ethical teachings with the hope of re-orientating the mentality of individuals in order to enhance their productivity, efficiency, and wealth. These are done through Sunday services, Bible studies, seminars, literature ministries, Bible Schools and theological education and other such programs using various medium including print and electronic media. The ministers of God in Nigeria through various Church agencies and activities have over the years engaged in feeding and providing financial assistance and other basic needs to thousands of people and ministering through their outreach programs to hundreds of needy street and abandoned children (Boyi, 2009:44-45).

Fourth, the church should lead in an objective critique of the entertainment media, Newspapers, radio and television who promote materialism. Nigeria is bombarded with series of advertisement and promotion of quick ways of becoming rich without hard work but just through mere luck. Recently, there was series of TV episodes of the ultimate search leading to the award of five million naira. Nihinlola citing Oguniyi, rightly commented on the implication of such monetization of our values: “the desperate quest for money and wealth in our society is obnoxious and in many ways our television programmes tacitly endorsed this.” When money becomes the ultimate search of a society the logical result is greed and moral decay.

Fifth, the church should influence the society to recognise and reward honesty. The system of recognition and award should be geared towards the promotion of a positive value system. When achievements of people ignore ethical consideration it cannot enrich the society like conferring chieftaincy titles on wealthy persons known to be thieves and awarding honorary doctoral degrees to fraudsters. Every year people are selected in Nigeria for national merit

awards which have nothing to do with the morals of the awardees. Nigerian society must consciously appreciate citizens who demonstrate integrity: people found faithful when probed, people who return lost but found money, etc (Nihinlola 2006: 23)

## 12. Conclusions

Today, everybody complains about indiscipline among the youths because the schools breed rogues, cult members, and idlers. For a balance human and societal development, the teaching of morals and religion to the young is essential. The preferential attention to the sciences at the detriment of religious courses seems to have produced one-sided effect on the educational output.

*Osokoya (1989) making reference to Comenius statements warned that man should learn to control him-self first, then, to control things. In other words, for science and technology to be really beneficial to the society, it has to be handled by individuals with well-regulated patterns of behavior and people of sufficient moral integrity. Otherwise, despite the intellectual sophistication gained in the process and the level of socio-economic development attained, our electric poles will continue to be vandalized as soon as they are mounted, the rails of the express roads dislodged, the goods of public utility dismantled and hooted.*

There seems to be gross dissipation of every effort towards the same scientific and technological advancement in the Nigerian society resulting from lack of good morals in the operators of these national fortunes. That is to say that, it is not enough to teach the young how to read, write, operate, invent and to manufacture goods, there is also the need to get them learn the virtues through the dynamism of all agencies of education. Education for moral responsibility was fundamental among the objectives of the pioneer missionaries when



they introduced education to West Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They had to move into the field with the slate on the left hand and the Bible on the other in order to transform their society which practiced human sacrifice, cannibalism, killing of the twins, and the buying and selling of fellow human beings as slaves. They aimed at severing the Africans from their crude morality and to introduce to them the more civilized western-type of economic, cultural and integral human development (Osokoya, 1989).

Ajuzie (2004) further opines that; traditional Nigerians lived with sound social values, which they bequeathed, to the present generation. The latter, tends to be losing this legacy of good moral order in all its socio-cultural and economic spheres on account of inadequacies in moral upbringing of children. One is not to despair over it. If Nigeria is actually interested in fighting moral decadence or indiscipline, the home, school, government, the church and mosque, have vital roles to play in achieving the goal. A program on moral instruction in addition to religion needs to be incorporated into the primary and secondary school curriculum, and both programs should be of compulsory status. Adult Nigerians have to become exemplary actors of social virtues in addition to these measures, government should relax her monopoly on school control to enable the missions (church and mosque) to contribute their quota in raising the moral standard of the Nigerian Society.

Folawi (2011) asserts that moral education is to encourage individuals to develop to the next level of moral uprightness. Consequently, he defines the concept of moral education as the aggregate of all the process by means of which a child develops ability, attitude and other form of behavior of positive value in the society in which he lives. He further added that education cannot be loosely equated to schooling because schooling is just an integral part of education. Folawi, citing, Rubinstein, (2003) postulated that since an individual is a social animal, therefore, a child cannot interact alone, but with other people in this regard.

To crown it all, It is important to acknowledge the fact that the Africa (Nigeria inclusive), which was talked about yesterday, is not the same as the Africa that we are talking about today. There has been a change in all spheres of life in modern Africa, forced by the changing time. However, be it social, economic, political, scientific or technological changes, the central place of a sound Christian theology in modern Africa cannot be overemphasized. Theology is human-centred; it is the revelation and application of godly principles. Hence, theological education will help the Church and the society to take the biblical position on such issues as: indiscipline, tribalism, poverty, injustice, sexual immorality, abortion, corruption in the church and the government, the responsible use of money, self-sustainable development, materialism, secularism, overpopulation, the needs of youth, family life teaching, women in the church and other matters related to modernity and urban life in Africa. The church must be ready to offer solutions based on the Bible (Rom. 12:2; Tit. 2:11-12; 1 Jn. 2:15-17). Only when the church responds to the call to be salt and light in a corrupt and evil world (Mt. 5:13-14), then will she see God's intervention in answer to her prayers (O' Donovan, 2000:167) Christians have to change their attitudes to the problems of the society and the state. This will make it possible for them to understand social problems in the church and the society at large.

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