

APPLICATION OF CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIAN

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.15971.99366

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.15971.99366

Abstract

This work is meant to examine the application of Catholic Principles in the Management of Catholic Secondary Schools in Nigerian. The Catholic School is a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole person. It forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith. The research methodology adopted for this study is Qualitative Research approach using descriptive method and instrument used for data collection are primary and secondary data. These include interview (primary source) as well as textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers and library (secondary sources). The main issue of this study, therefore, is to identify how best to go about in the effective application of catholic principles in management of secondary schools in Nigerian church among teachers within and outside the catholic faith who find it difficult to accept the principles the church projects in the education her young ones. The work shows that Catholic Schools who are based on catholic principles emphasize faith, academic rigor, self discipline, and high moral standards and it recommends that only a person supportive of Catholic Education Principles may be a teacher in a Catholic school because the teacher is to bear witness to Christ and Christian values in their own lives and by personally supporting, evaluating, developing and disseminating the Catholic School principles to develop strong moral characters among students.

Keywords: Catholic, Principles, Management, Education, Moral Character

Introduction

Catholic schools are an integral part of the church and are Christ centered communities based on gospel values. A Diocese of Cairns' Publication (2020), comments that Catholic education strives to make a difference in the lives of the individuals and in the wider community by challenging young people through God, to find meaning and value in their lives and reach their full

potentials as compassionate, contributing, life-giving members of society who are highly skilled, informed, tolerant, open, and just.

They seek to develop in students, communal obligations and aspirations, to espouse values which unite society and to promote citizenship infused by commitment to social justice. Catholic schools seek to instill students with faith, values and knowledge to guide and support them through their lives, to provide them with preparation for a life of worth, not merely a life of work. Catholic schools seek to provide a high quality academic and vocational education for all their students, giving emphasis to the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills required for both learning and life. Hence, to effectively actualize all these aims, the church in her wisdom formulates principles to guide the education of her young ones. Thus giving rise to the catholic principles on education as we have them today. Catholic principles on education are derived from Church documents related to education, including the documents of Vatican II, documents from the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, and the writings of various Popes. The principles embraces all the elements the Church expects to find in all Catholic schools and which distinguish them from other schools.

The call to revisit the application the catholic principles on the management of secondary schools in Nigeria becomes paramount now that the modern society is losing grip of what one can rightly describe as loss of identity. A very close look at what is happening in our society today reveals a strong crisis of identity especially among the youth. The growing phenomenon "identity crisis" becomes a challenge to catholic schools in Nigeria where they are expected to re-double effort in creating once again a culture that promotes catholic principles (ethos) in catholic schools and also in public schools where catholic teachers teach.

Going by the above scenario, the major factor for the application of catholic principles on management of secondary schools in Nigeria is the professional preparation of both the management and teachers in these schools. The inculcation of catholic principles into the students demands a lot of competencies on the side of both the teachers and management. This is so because excellence is required in manipulating instructional aids, assessment and management of instruction to ensure that the desired impact is made on the learner. It thus means that teachers in catholic secondary schools are required to develop coherent understanding of the pedagogical aims of catholic principles in education. It is only a teacher with appropriate religious/catholic professional formation or one who has clear vision of the Christian milieu: and one who lives in accordance with it that would be able to give the required inspiration needed to put into practice what they have

learnt. This implies that the commitment of the management and teachers is of immense importance in the application of catholic principle on the management of secondary schools in Nigerian church.

Statement of the Problem

The Catholic education philosophy reveals a concern for an education that combines sound knowledge and skills with an overall personal development rooted in Christian values. Such an education involves a high level of interpersonal relationships between teacher and student. History shows that the church started very early to invest heavily and fruitfully in quality of education in what is known as Nigeria today (CBCN, 2014). This is evident in all the principles the church uphold in ensuring to the proper education of the young ones. However, it has been observed that these principles which the church mapped out have not received the full implementation of them in the various catholic secondary schools around the country. This is mostly the case in some institutions whereby individuals are employed to work but fail to completely adhere fully to the principles of the institutions and organizations they are employed to work for. Going by what we can see in some institutions today especially in catholic schools which is the main focus of this work. We observe that individuals from different denominational Christian and religious backgrounds are employed to teach in these catholic owned schools. But unfortunately, most of the teachers outside the catholic faith find it difficult to accept the principles the church projects in the education her young ones talk less of working to ensuring the inculcation of these principles in the students they are teaching. This thus makes it difficult in the application of the catholic principles on the management of catholic secondary schools in Nigeria. This is clearly seen in the numerous problems affecting our country Nigeria in areas of corruption, abuse of power, insecurity, poverty and discrimination. The problem of this study, therefore, is to identify how best to go about in the effective application of catholic principles in management of secondary schools in Nigerian church to build credible moral character among student who tomorrow will take up leadership positions in the country.

Importance of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools exist to make God known and they are instruments of the Church, reaching out to young people of our communities with Christ's teachings about life, death, and resurrection. Next to the family, schools are the most important institutions in the development of the child. Catholic schools are designed not only to develop the intellectual abilities of children but also to teach them to love others, to make good judgments, and to develop good work habits and skills for getting along with other people. Catholic school activities, policies, discipline, and rules should be based on the gospel

message of Jesus Christ, a message of unconditional love. Generally Catholic schools reflect the following beliefs in religion classes and in the daily life of the school:

- God is presently active in our lives;
- We attempt to see God's work on earth through the actions of others;
- We talk of personal faith journey;
- Teachers attempt to be living examples of God's influence;
- We view young people not as empty vessels to be filled, but as candles to be lit.

However, any person, regardless of church affiliation who believes in the teachings of Jesus Christ and in His life, death and resurrection, should feel comfortable in Catholic Schools as will others who value His message in our curriculum, teaching and example (Yellowknife Catholic Schools).

Methodology

The research methodology adopted for this study is Qualitative Research approach using descriptive method and instrument used for data collection are primary and secondary data. These include interview (primary source) as well as textbooks, journals, magazines and library (secondary sources). The study is meant to describe certain variable in relation to the management using catholic principles. This is appropriate for the study since it described situation concerning management of Catholic Secondary Schools in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Catholic

The word catholic literally means "universal," as in "the universal church." It originally was applied to all Christians because we are all part of the universal church in the way we are all members of the body of Christ. The Latin word is *catholicus*, and in Greek it is *katholikos*, from the Greek phrase meaning "on the whole, according to the whole or in general. Catholic was first used to describe the Christian Church in the early 2nd century to emphasize the universal scope.

The word catholic is a translation of the western Christian church, as differentiated from the Orthodox Church. It's also seen as the church of the sacred heart (Jesus Christ). The Roman Catholic Church is one of the world's largest religious denominations, with about 1.2 billion believers worldwide. From her spiritual center in Vatican City, the world's smallest independent country and the only country surrounded completely by a city (Rome), the

leader of the Catholic Church is the Pope, the spiritual life of the entire nations. The Catholic Church, being the world's largest religious denomination has influenced greatly every aspect human with her teachings and doctrines; the educational sector being inclusive.

Concept of Principle

According to Cambridge Dictionary, a principle is a basic idea or rule that explains or controls how something happens or works. It is a moral rule or standard of good behavior. Furthermore, a principle is a proposition or value that is a guide for behavior or evaluation. The principles of a system are understood by its users as the essential characteristics of the system, or reflecting designed purpose, and the effective operation or use of which would be impossible if any one of the principles was to be ignored (Alpha, 1994). However, someone who agrees to something in principle agrees with the idea, but may not agree with using the idea to bring about practical changes.

Catholic Principles on Education

The Catholic Church like any other institution has her own fundamental beliefs (principles) which in this context and in the catholic perspective regarded as ethos. Catholic ethos (principles), thus refer to the fundamental values of the Catholic Church. However, due to the scope of this research work, we have to limit our discussion on the principles of the church as it pertains to the field of education.

The Lineamenta (2014) says that at the heart of catholic education there is always Jesus Christ, everything that happens in Catholic Schools and even Universities lead to an encounter with Christ. Based on this premier statement, catholic schools ethos could be described as those outward signs and experiences of the teachings of Christ and Catholic Church in the whole daily life in all catholic schools. Better still, catholic ethos means the fundamental values of the catholic church exemplified by Jesus Christ in his short ministry on earth which includes faith, prayers, honesty, patience, tolerance, endurance, perseverance, scarifies, respect, humility and discipline which is based on love and care. These principles (ethos) the church implements through her schools and various institutions of learning that the church handles.

Catholic school in the context of this research work refers to those institutions which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical juridical person or one which in a written document is acknowledge as a catholic by the ecclesiastical authority (Canon 803). As a service agency, a catholic school is one which seeks the integral development and formation of pupils and

students into full maturity in Christ under the guidance of the Catholic Church. Catholic schools in their unique identity are usually adored with crucifixes, holy pictures, prayers of Stations of the Cross and angelus and these contribute to catholic school culture and identity and speak loudly as catholic ethos. A catholic teacher therefore must be one who is in consonance with catholic ethos in practice whether in a catholic or public schools.

The Major Principles of Catholic Education

1. *Catholic Education is Inspired by Divine Mission*

This principle as derived from the church's documents posits that Catholic education is an expression of the Church's mission of salvation and an instrument of evangelization to make disciples of Christ and to teach them to observe all that He has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). Through Catholic education, students encounter God, "who in Jesus Christ reveals His transforming love and truth" (Benedict XVI, 2008). Christ is the foundation of Catholic education; He journeys with students through school and life as "genuine Teacher" and "perfect Man." The Congregation for Catholic Education has it that "as a faith community in unity with the Church and in fidelity to the Magisterium, students, parents, and educators give witness to Christ's loving communion in the Holy Trinity." With this Christian vision, Catholic education fulfills its purpose of "critical, systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith" (The Catholic School, (1977) and the integral formation of the human person by developing each student's physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual gifts in harmony, teaching responsibility and right use of freedom, and preparing students to fulfill God's calling in this world and to attain the eternal kingdom for which they were created. Catholic education is sustained by the frequent experience of prayer, Sacred Scripture, and the Church's liturgical and sacramental tradition (The Catholic School, 1977).

2. *Catholic Education Models Christian Communion and Identity*

Catholic education teaches communion with Christ, by living communion with Christ and imitating the love and freedom of the Trinity (Educating Together 10, 12-14). This communion begins in the home – with the divinely ordered right and responsibility of parents to educate their children – and extends to the school community in support and service to the needs of the family. It unites families and educators with a shared educational philosophy to form students for a relationship with God and with others. The educational community is united to the universal Church in fidelity to the Magisterium, to

the local Church, and to other schools and community organizations.(*Educating Together 50; The Religious Dimension of Education 44*).

Buttressing this point further the Congregation for Catholic Education maintains that the school community is a place of ecclesial experience, in which the members model confident and joyful public witness in both word and action and teach students to live the Catholic faith in their daily lives. In an environment “humanly and spiritually rich,” everyone is aware of the living presence of Jesus evidenced by a Christian way of thought and life, expressed in “Word and Sacrament, in individual behavior, [and] in friendly and harmonious interpersonal relationships” (*The Religious Dimension of Education 26, 28*). The school climate reproduces, as far as possible, the “warm and intimate atmosphere of family life” (*The Religious Dimension of Education 25-26, 28-29, 40; Educating Together 48*). As members of the Church community, students experience what it means to live a life of prayer, personal responsibility, and freedom reflective of Gospel values. This, in turn, leads them to grow in their commitment to serve God, one another, the Church, and society.

All teachers and leaders possess adequate skills, preparation, and religious formation and possess special qualities of mind and heart as well as the sensitivity necessary for authentic witness to the gospel and the task of human formation (*Code of Canon Law 803 §2*). Therefore, teachers and leaders of the educational community should be practicing Catholics, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school’s Catholic identity and apostolic goals.

3. *Catholic Education Encounters Christ in Prayer, Scripture and Sacrament*

Rooted in Christ, Catholic education is continually fed and stimulated by Him in the frequent experience of prayer, Sacred Scripture, and the Church’s liturgical and sacramental tradition Pius XI, (1929). The transmission of faith, catechesis, is intrinsically linked to these living encounters with Christ, by which He nurtures and educates souls in the divine life of grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. By their witness and sharing in these encounters, educators help students grow in understanding of what it means to be a member of the Church (*The Religious Dimension of Education 78; Educating Together 26*). Students discover the real value of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, in accompanying the Christian in the journey

through life. They learn “to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer”, which makes the mystery of Christ present to students (The Religious Dimension of Education 79, 83).

4. Catholic Education Integrally Forms the Human Person

A complex task of Catholic education is the integral formation of students as physical, intellectual, and spiritual beings called to perfect humanity in the fullness of Christ. The human person is “created in ‘the image and likeness’ of God; elevated by God to the dignity of a child of God; unfaithful to God in original sin, but redeemed by Christ; a temple of the Holy Spirit; a member of the Church; destined to eternal life.” Catholic education assists students to become aware of the gift of Faith, worship God the Father, develop into mature adults who bear witness to the Mystical Body of Christ, respect the dignity of the human person, provide service, lead apostolic lives, and build the Kingdom of God (The Religious Dimension of Education 95).

Catholic education forms the conscience through commitment to authentic Catholic doctrine. It develops the virtues and characteristics associated with what it means to be Christian so as to resist relativism, overcome individualism, and discover vocations to serve God and others. “Intellectual development and growth as a Christian go forward hand in hand” where faith, culture, and life are integrated throughout the school’s program to provide students a personal closeness to Christ enriched by virtues, values, and supernatural gifts. As a child of God, made in his image, human formation includes the development of personal Christian ethics and respect for the body by promoting healthy development, physical activity, and chastity (The Religious Dimension of Education 84, 112).

In Catholic education, “There is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom”; education and pedagogy, inspired by Gospel values and distinguished by the “illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith” allows formation to become living, conscious and active. The atmosphere is characterized by discovery and awareness that enkindles a love for truth and a desire to know the universe as God’s creation. The Christian educational program facilitates critical thinking that is ordered, precise, and responsible as it builds strength and perseverance in pursuit of the truth (The Religious Dimension of Education 49).

5 Catholic Education Impart a Christian Understanding of the World

In the light of faith, Catholic education critically and systematically transmits the secular and religious “cultural patrimony handed down from previous generations,” especially that which makes a person more human and contributes to the integral formation of students (Lay Catholics in Schools 12). Both educator and student are called to participate in the dialogue of culture and to pursue “the integration of culture with faith and of faith with living” (The Catholic School, 1977). Catholic education imparts “a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture, and of history,” ordering “the whole of human culture to the news of salvation.” This hallmark of Catholic education, to “bring human wisdom into an encounter with divine wisdom,” cultivates “in students the intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties of the human person,” introduces a cultural heritage, and prepares them for professional life and to take on the responsibilities and duties of society and the Church. Students are prepared to work for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of society (John Paul II, 1998).

Concept of Management

Management is the process of organizing and directing human and physical resources within an organization so as to meet defined objectives. According to Hartzell (2006), management is the process of organizing, using, and controlling human activities and other resources towards specific ends. Management is the coordination of the resources of an organization through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling activities in an organization in order to attain organizational goals. It is the supervising, controlling of activities to achieve optimum results with organizational resources. Adesina (1990), it is the organization and mobilization of all human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives. This implies that management is the art of making the most effective use of available resources, whether in form of machine, money or people.

Management is the effective organization and utilization of the human and material resources in a particular system for achievement of identified objectives. According to Ogunu (2001), it is a social process which is designed to ensure the cooperation, participation, intervention and involvement of others in effective achievement of predetermined objectives. However, it is the art of getting things done through people. Management is concerned with developing people, working with them, reacting objectively towards them and achieving results (Laurie, 2002). It is the process by which human and non-human resources are coordinated to accomplish a given set of objectives.

In line with this, Obi (2013) asserts that management is a process of planning, organizing operations, in order to achieve a coordination of human and material resources essential to the efficient attainment of set objectives. However, it is the art of purposeful action of planning, organizing, directing, communicating, and controlling scarce human and material resources to achieve organizational goals.

Management is the organizational process that includes strategic planning, setting objectives, managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve objectives, and measuring results (Hissom, 2009). Management also includes recording and storing facts and information for later use or for others within the organization.

Bringing the idea of management to the context of our study, an ideal catholic school management thus refers to the management style that enthrones catholic principles (ethos) in the school system that also creates enabling environment for the smooth functioning and sustenance of the fundamental values of the Catholic Church (culture) in the school system.

Concept of Secondary Education

Secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before tertiary stage (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). According to Oboegbulam and Onwurah (2011), secondary school is into two, three (3) years Junior Secondary School (JSS) and three years (3) Senior Secondary School (SSS). The JSS emphasizes both academic and vocational (technical) curriculum. Students who complete junior secondary school enter into senior secondary school, technical college, out-of-school vocational training center and apprentice scheme. The SSS is comprehensive with a core curriculum designed to broaden the students' knowledge and out-look. Education at this stage has two broad aims: preparation for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education (FRN, 2014).

The broad goals of secondary education are to prepare the individuals for useful living within the society, and for higher education. Specifically, secondary education according to FRN (2014) shall:

Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social state, religion or ethnic background, offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles, provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades, develop and promote Nigerian languages, arts and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage, inspire students with the desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence, foster

national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity; raise a generation of people who can think of themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciates those values specified under broad national goals and live as good citizens, provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. (P.14).

The aims and objectives of secondary education make it clear that the future of any nation depends quite considerably on the quality of education it provides for its citizens. To achieve these aims and objectives of the education system, effective application of catholic principles in the management of secondary schools becomes a necessity that should be considered.

Application of Catholic Principles (Ethos) on School Management

It's instructive to explain in details the meaning and place of leadership in the context of school management. Maile (2002, p42) situates the background of leadership for better understanding by firstly dispelling the myth that prevailed in the school environment. Furthermore, there are myths and preconception about leadership. For instance, there is a myth that unless you are a principal, deputy principal head of department or inspector, you are not really a leader. This is not really true. Therefore leadership is not an exclusive preserve for selected managers. As a complex field, leadership requires that different skills, attitudes and knowledge be channeled into a common vision therefore leadership should unleash people's creativity and innovation to enable individuals to make full contributions in the school.

As we have in our discuss so far, we still hold that Catholic Schools Principles (ethos) is to be understood to be the outward signs and experience of the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church in the totality of daily life in a Catholic School. In other words, Catholic Principles (ethos) are lived experiences which permeate every aspect of school life. In addition, for the Catholic Principles to impact positively on the school leadership, it presupposes that majority of teachers and non-teaching staff should be strong practicing Catholics or those grounded in catholic system of education. When principals, Vice principals, inspectors and other non-teaching staff have been trained in catholic schools under catholic environment, they become influenced by catholic ethos which they help to propagate where ever they are. Like Christ the ideal and ultimate leader who went about teaching, touching people's lives and leading to the heavenly father, there teachers imitate Christ as servant leaders. The most authentic and powerful way catholic ethos impact on school leadership is through the Christ like "servant leadership".

Servant leadership is the main way forward in impacting catholic principles in secondary schools because is rooted on the background of the servant leadership of Jesus is (John 13:2-15) known as Jesus washed his disciples feet. Firstly Waffort cited in D'souza (2009, p23) that 'servant leaders do not try to pull along reluctant followers, instead they stimulate with their enthusiasm. They inspire with their humble dedication, they provoke through by sharing and listening to others and they empower other with confidence in what God would do through them.

The church's position or view on education reveals a concern for an education that combines sound knowledge and skills with an overall personal development rooted in Christian values. Such an education involves a high level of inter-personal relationships between teacher and student. For this to work out, both the management and teachers in catholic secondary schools should be well informed and grounded in the knowledge of the church's principles in education.

Pope John Paul II points out the key implications for this for teachers who work in Catholic schools thus:

The Church looks upon you as co-workers with an important measure of shared responsibility ... To you it is given to create the future and give it direction by offering your students a set of values with which to assess their newly discovered knowledge ... (The changing times) demand that educators be open to new cultural influences and interpret them for young pupils in the light of Christian faith. You are called to bring professional competence and a high standard of excellence to your teaching ... But your responsibilities make demands on you that are far beyond the need for professional skills and competence ... Through you, as through a clear window on a sunny day, students must come to see and know the richness and the joy of life lived in accordance with Christ's teaching, in response to his challenging demands. To teach means not only to impart what we know, but also to reveal who we are by living what we believe. It is this latter lesson which tends to last the longest (Address to Catholic Educators September 12, 1987).

Conclusion

Judging from what we have seen so far in our discussion, we can say that Catholic Schools who are based on catholic principles emphasize faith, academic rigor, self discipline, and high moral standards. Catholic Schools develop the whole person, challenging each student to reach his or her full, God-given potential. This research also shows that Catholic Schools are

committed to preparing spiritual, moral leaders for the future of our Church and society because it stresses the value of self-discipline and commitment. The top reason that parents choose to send their children to Catholic Schools is because of these principles that encourages family input and involvement in the ongoing education of their children and the “strong moral values,” that Catholic faith creates on the lives of their children.

In conclusion, the objectives of these principles which teachers undertake to support and promote during their term of employment require them:

1. To give regular and efficient instruction for the academic, physical and spiritual development of the pupils
2. To participate in worship and prayer in the school in co-operation with the head as appointed by ecclesia authorities.
3. To adhere to Catholic principles and at all times by personal example, integrity and behavior, to support Catholic moral standards.

Recommendations

This research therefore recommends that, individuals employed to teach in various catholic schools should be properly guided by these principles. These Teachers in the Catholic Schools are more than employees. They minister in the name of the Church and of the Gospel in one way or another and as such participate actively in Church life and should have a pastoral concern for each individual student.

It is expected that all teachers employed in a Catholic school will perform conscientiously and competently the duties, both teaching and non-teaching, that they are assigned by the principal in accordance with normal practice in Catholic schools.

Teachers should help maintain an atmosphere of charity and justice within the school as would be expected in a Catholic community and help ensure the provision, as far as possible, of the Catholic religious perspective in the teaching and learning process and in all the activities of the school in which staff and students engage.

All teachers have a responsibility to develop and maintain an adequate understanding of those aspects of Catholic teaching that relate to their subject areas and by their own example provide a Christian leadership role for all members of the school community.

Only a person supportive of Catholic education philosophy may be a teacher in a Catholic school. Teachers bear witness to Christ and Christian values in their own lives and by personally supporting, evaluating, developing and

disseminating the Catholic School philosophy to build strong moral values among the students.

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