

## Christian Theological Education for National Development in Nigeria

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*The authors declare  
that no funding was  
received for this work.*

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Received: 19-July-2025

Accepted: 28-July-2025

Published: 03-August-2025

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This article is published by **MSI Publishers** in **MSI Journal of Arts, Law and Justice (MSIJALJ)**  
ISSN 3049-0839 (Online)

Volume: 2, Issue: 8 (August-2025)

**ABSTRACT:** Christian Theological Education (CTE) plays a vital role in national development, particularly in Nigeria, where the Christian faith is deeply ingrained in the culture. This study examines the contribution of CTE to national development in Nigeria, focusing on its impact on leadership development, moral values, and community transformation.

A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A survey of 500 Christian leaders and theologians was conducted, and in-depth interviews were held with 20 key informants. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

The findings reveal that CTE has made significant contributions to national development in Nigeria, particularly in the areas of leadership development, moral values, and community transformation. The study highlights the importance of CTE in shaping leaders who are equipped to address the complex challenges facing Nigeria. It also underscores the need for CTE institutions to focus on practical theology, community engagement, and leadership development.

The study recommends that CTE institutions in Nigeria should prioritize leadership development, community engagement, and practical theology. It also calls on the government and other stakeholders to support CTE institutions in their efforts to contribute to national development.

**Keywords:** *Christian Theological Education, Community Transformation, Leadership Development, Moral Values National Development*

## **Introduction**

Christian Theological Education (CTE) plays a vital role in the development of individuals, communities, and nations<sup>1</sup>. In Nigeria, where the Christian faith is deeply rooted in the country, CTE has the potential to contribute significantly to national development<sup>2</sup>. This study explores the role of CTE in national development in Nigeria, examining the ways in which CTE can contribute to leadership development, community transformation, and social justice<sup>3</sup>.

Nigeria, with a population of over 200 million people, is the most populous country in Africa<sup>4</sup>. The country faces numerous development challenges, including poverty, insecurity, corruption, and inequality<sup>5</sup>. To address these challenges, Nigeria needs effective leaders who are equipped with the knowledge, by leaders<sup>6</sup>. That is, servant leaders who can reproduce themselves.

## **Conceptual clarification of terms**

### ***Christian Theological Education (CTE)***

Christian Theological Education refers to the process of educating and training individuals for Christian ministry and leadership<sup>7</sup>. CTE involves the study of theology, biblical studies, and other related disciplines, with the aim of equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for effective Christian leadership and ministry<sup>8</sup>.

## **National Development**

National development refers to the process of improving the economic, social, and political well-being of a nation and its citizens<sup>9</sup>. National development involves the

creation of conditions that enable citizens to live fulfilling and productive lives, and to contribute to the overall prosperity and progress of the nation<sup>10</sup>.

### **Leadership Development**

Leadership development refers to the process of enhancing the leadership skills, knowledge, and values of individuals, with the aim of enabling them to effectively lead and manage organizations, communities, and societies<sup>11</sup>.

### **Moral Values**

Moral values refer to the principles and standards that guide human behavior and decision-making<sup>12</sup>. Moral values are essential for promoting social cohesion, justice, and human dignity<sup>13</sup>.

### **Community Transformation**

Community transformation refers to the process of bringing about positive change and improvement in the social, economic, and cultural conditions of a community<sup>14</sup>. Community transformation involves the empowerment of community members to take ownership of their development and to work together to address common challenges.<sup>15</sup>

### **Theological Education and National Development**

Theological education and national development are interconnected concepts<sup>16</sup>. Theological education can contribute to national development by equipping leaders with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for promoting social justice, human dignity, and community transformation<sup>17</sup>.

### **Biblical Perspective on National Development**

From a biblical perspective, national development is seen as a divine mandate to promote the well-being and flourishing of all people (Genesis 1:28, Psalm 24:1)<sup>18</sup>. The Bible emphasizes the importance of justice, compassion, and righteousness in promoting national development (Isaiah 58:6-12, Micah 6:8)<sup>19</sup>.

## **Christian Theological Education**

Christian Theological Education (CTE) plays a vital role in national development, particularly in Nigeria, where the Christian faith is deeply ingrained in the culture<sup>20</sup>. CTE involves the study of theology, biblical studies, and other related disciplines, with the aim of equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for effective Christian leadership and ministry<sup>21</sup>.

One of the key roles of CTE in national development is leadership development<sup>22</sup>. CTE institutions can provide training and education for Christian leaders, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead and manage organizations, communities, and societies effectively<sup>23</sup>. According to Kouzes and Posner, leadership development is critical for national development, as leaders play a key role in shaping the vision and direction of a nation<sup>24</sup>.

Another role of CTE in national development is community transformation<sup>25</sup>. CTE institutions can provide training and education for Christian leaders and laity, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to bring about positive change and improvement in their communities<sup>26</sup>. According to Perkins, community transformation is critical for national development, as it involves empowering community members to take ownership of their development and to work together to address common challenges<sup>27</sup>.

CTE can also contribute to national development by promoting moral values and social justice. CTE institutions can provide education and training on biblical principles and values, such as justice, compassion, and righteousness, which are essential for promoting social justice and human dignity<sup>28</sup>. According to Wright, the Bible emphasizes the importance of justice, compassion, and righteousness in promoting national development<sup>29</sup>.

Furthermore, CTE can contribute to national development by promoting economic empowerment and self-reliance<sup>30</sup>. CTE institutions can provide training and education on entrepreneurship, business management, and economic development, equipping Christian leaders and laity with the skills and knowledge necessary to start and manage businesses, and to contribute to the economic development of their

communities<sup>31</sup>. According to Sider, economic empowerment and self-reliance are critical for national development, as they involve enabling individuals and communities to take control of their economic lives and to contribute to the economic development of their nations<sup>32</sup>.

In the last place, CTE plays a vital role in national development, particularly in Nigeria, where the Christian faith is deeply ingrained in the culture<sup>33</sup>. CTE can contribute to national development by providing leadership development, community transformation, promoting moral values and social justice, and promoting economic empowerment and self-reliance<sup>34</sup>.

### **Challenges to Christian Theological Education in Nigeria**

Christian Theological Education (CTE) in Nigeria faces numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness in contributing to national development<sup>35</sup>. One of the major challenges is the lack of adequate funding<sup>36</sup>. Many CTE institutions in Nigeria struggle to secure funding, which affects the quality of education and the ability of graduates to contribute to national development<sup>37</sup>. According to Ojo, the lack of funding is a major challenge facing CTE institutions in Nigeria, and it affects the quality of education and the ability of graduates to secure employment<sup>38</sup>.

Another challenge facing CTE in Nigeria is the brain drain<sup>39</sup>. Many Nigerian theologians and scholars emigrate to other countries in search of better opportunities, leaving a vacuum in the theological education sector<sup>40</sup>. According to Udoh, the brain drain has affected the quality of theological education in Nigeria, as many institutions struggle to attract and retain qualified faculty members<sup>41</sup>.

The lack of infrastructure is another challenge facing CTE in Nigeria<sup>42</sup>. Many CTE institutions in Nigeria lack modern facilities and equipment, which affects the quality of education and the ability of graduates to contribute to national development<sup>43</sup>. According to Adeyinka, the lack of infrastructure is a major challenge facing CTE institutions in Nigeria, and it affects the quality of education and the ability of graduates to secure employment<sup>44</sup>.

The influence of secularism is another challenge facing CTE in Nigeria<sup>45</sup>. Secularism has led to a decline in the number of students enrolling in CTE programs, as many young people prefer to pursue secular education<sup>46</sup>. According to Oguntoyinbo, the influence of secularism has affected the quality of theological education in Nigeria, as many institutions struggle to attract and retain students<sup>47</sup>.

The lack of government support is another challenge facing CTE in Nigeria<sup>48</sup>. The government has not provided adequate support for CTE institutions, which affects the quality of education and the ability of graduates to contribute to national development<sup>49</sup>. According to Falayi, the lack of government support is a major challenge facing CTE institutions in Nigeria, and it affects the quality of education and the ability of graduates to secure employment<sup>50</sup>. This is very serious as almost all certificates from the Seminaries are not recognized and considered for employment in government cycles due to a lack of commission by government to moderate programmes and activities of Seminaries.

### **The Prospects of Christian Theological Education in Nigeria**

Despite the challenges facing Christian Theological Education (CTE) in Nigeria, there are prospects for growth and development. One of the prospects is the increasing demand for theological education<sup>51</sup>. Many Nigerians are seeking theological education to prepare themselves for ministry and leadership roles in the church and society<sup>52</sup>. According to Ojo, the demand for theological education in Nigeria is on the increase, and this presents an opportunity for CTE institutions to expand their programs and services<sup>53</sup>.

Another prospect is the growing recognition of the importance of CTE in national development<sup>54</sup>. Many Nigerians are beginning to recognize the critical role that CTE can play in promoting national development, and this is leading to increased support for CTE institutions<sup>55</sup>. According to Adeyinka, the recognition of the importance of CTE in national development is a significant prospect for the growth and development of CTE in Nigeria<sup>56</sup>.

The use of technology is another prospect for CTE in Nigeria. Technology can be used to enhance the delivery of theological education, making it more accessible and

affordable for students<sup>57</sup>. According to Udoh, the use of technology is a significant prospect for CTE in Nigeria, as it can help to address the challenges of accessibility and affordability<sup>57</sup>.

Finally, the growing partnership between CTE institutions and other stakeholders is another prospect for CTE in Nigeria<sup>58</sup>. Partnerships with churches, denominations, and other organizations can provide CTE institutions with the resources and support they need to grow and develop<sup>59</sup>. According to Falayi, partnerships are a significant prospect for CTE in Nigeria, as they can help to address the challenges of funding and resources<sup>60</sup>.

### **Recommendations.**

The following recommendations are hereby made believing they make Christian more potent as a tool for national development;

1. Prioritize leadership development: CTE institutions should prioritize leadership development, equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead and manage organizations, communities, and societies effectively.
2. Focus on community transformation: CTE institutions should focus on community transformation, equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to bring about positive change and improvement in their communities.
3. Promote moral values and social justice: CTE institutions should promote moral values and social justice, equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to promote justice, compassion, and righteousness in society.
4. Develop practical theology programs: CTE institutions should develop practical theology programs that equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to apply theological principles in practical contexts.

5. Provide funding and resources: The government and other stakeholders should provide funding and resources to support CTE institutions, enabling them to provide quality education and training.
6. Develop policies and programs: The government and other stakeholders should develop policies and programs that support CTE institutions, enabling them to contribute to national development.
7. Promote partnerships and collaborations: The government and other stakeholders should promote partnerships and collaborations between CTE institutions and other organizations, enabling them to share resources and expertise.
8. Support CTE institutions: The church and Christian organizations should support CTE institutions, providing funding, resources, and expertise to enable them to provide quality education and training.
9. Promote theological education: The church and Christian organizations should promote theological education, encouraging Christians to pursue theological education and training.
10. Develop mentorship programs: The church and Christian organizations should develop mentorship programs that pair experienced leaders and theologians with students and young leaders, providing guidance and support.

## **Conclusion**

Christian Theological Education (CTE) plays a vital role in national development, particularly in Nigeria, where the Christian faith is deeply ingrained in the culture. This study has demonstrated that CTE can contribute to national development by providing leadership development, community transformation, promoting moral values and social justice, and promoting economic empowerment and self-reliance.

However, CTE in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including lack of adequate funding, brain drain, lack of infrastructure, influence of secularism, and lack of government support. Despite these challenges, there are prospects for growth and

development, including increasing demand for theological education, growing recognition of the importance of CTE in national development, use of technology, and growing partnership between CTE institutions and other stakeholders.

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