Interrogation of the Influence of Christian Higher Education Institutions on Spiritual Formation and Liturgical Alignment on Their Staff and Students in Kenya

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Abstract
This paper investigated the role of Christian higher education institutions' (CHEIs) influence on Christian spiritual formation among their staff and students in Kenya. Christian spiritual formation is an essential integral part to intellectual development; therefore, the role of CHEIs in facilitation of Christian spiritual information cannot be overemphasized. Christian spiritual formation has become one of the emergent research fields within Christian CHEIs, however, there are limited studies investigating the role of CHEIs in influencing spiritual formation. But it is widely assumed that CHEIs play a leading role in integration of faith and academic studies and debates. The pathway to spiritual formation has four main approaches: firstly, enhanced spiritual growth leading to positive outcomes in the areas of academic performance and leadership development. Secondly, there is also the adoption of key activities to foster sustainable spiritual development. Thirdly, diverse strategies that my lead to improved spiritual development are employed; fourthly, there is the intentional integration of spiritual formation activities into the classroom. For example integrating faith with academic practices, or simply praying in class before and after the lessons. Spiritual formation is fundamental in the future of development of the students' character, professionalism and most significantly preparation of future leadership. Christian spiritual formation enables the participating stakeholders for both public and a private dynamic role in sustainable leadership. This is a descriptive study and was guided by three objectives, to: investigate the role of the CHEIs in promoting Christian spiritual formation among the staff and students establish the perceptions of Christian spiritual formation among the staff and students among the CHEIs, determine the programmes implemented in the CHEIs to influence Christian spiritual formation for staff and students; finally, investigate the challenges faced by CHEIs in promoting Christian spiritual formation. A qualitative method was adopted to enable the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon; thus data was collected using an interview guide. The findings of the study are as follows: Christian spiritual formation was seen as an opportunity to promote Christ-entered education, preparation for servant leaders, transformation of the world, deepening of spiritual life and character for staff and students, finding God's purpose, preparation for next generation of leaders establishment of dynamic CHEIs where social and intellectual engagement takes place; social involvement and leadership development, the HEIs role is to enhance Chapel attendance to have corporate worship, service and community life, chaplaincy services and personalized meetings to have encounter with God; having evangelistic ministries to facilitate participation in transformational ministries, discipleship and pastoral care.

Keyword's: *Spiritual maturity, higher education institutions, spiritual formation, Christian values, integrating faith with academy, spiritual disciplines.*

Background Information

Historically, it has been challenging to define spiritual formation, thus there is no consensus in conceptualization and definition of the concept. For example, different disciplines tend to define the concept differently, for example those from philosophy, psychology, religion, and other contemporary scholars from social sciences (White and Afrane, 2017). However, common elements in all definitions indicate that: it a process of conforming to the image of Jesus Christ in order to glorify Christ; growing into Christ-likeness, knowing and loving God, loving our neighbour as we love ourselves (Nolt, 2021). The Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) has always undertaken the responsibility to provide a befitting environment to develop spiritual formation for both students and faculty. Up to 16th century, higher education and church institutions efforts and priorities were intertwined; therefore faith and learning were given equal emphasis (Coggin, 2018). In that regard, the students were to undergo a holistic development, by the end of their studies, they were to reflect academic learning, know God and Jesus Christ and demonstrate consistent value in their character. Burgeoning literatures ascertain the increased popularity and demand for spiritual formation in the HEIs, for example (Polley, 2020; Daniels and Murg, 2019). Thus, at the university, the phenomenon of spiritual formation has gained currency among the academia; it has therefore gained space in the academy and by thus has increasingly occupied the public arena. Therefore, the concept is no longer relegated to theological circles, but currently the concept is discussed across all professions in all levels. Teo (2017, p.138) supports the idea,

The concept of spiritual formation in the context of HEIs is understood from two dimensions: biblical and academic dimensions. For example, biblically Jesus declared in (Mrk. 12:29) that "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. The implication is that godly people must hold the same wholeness or integrity reflected in the Bible in their relationship with God. According to (Matt. 22:27), the Bible states "Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." From this biblical text, the basic principles of spiritual formation are wholeness and integrity of heart, the soul, mind, and strength. According to Reed (2011), spiritual formation Christians seek to be more like Christ especially the way they relate with other people; practice godly values in their community life, and finally seek to establish God's the principles of

Kingdom in their day-to-day life. Such life is better captured in the Acts of the Apostles (2:44) "All the believers were together and had everything in common." According to the above bible text, the emphasis is the authentic and ideal humane society marked by godly values; through love the believers exercise self-denial, love, mercy, kindness, sympathy, generosity, and voluntarily having all things in common. All these things reflect Jesus teaching on loving ones neighbour, and God; these therefore are the true pillars of spiritual formation (Mrk. 12:30 – 31),

> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. 'There is no commandment greater than these."

The Bible in (Mrk. 12:30-31) summarizes the key pillars and implications of spiritual formation from biblical or theological scope. CHEIs enable the development of people's love for God and neighbours by practicing spiritual disciplines such as: personal reflections, worship, fasting, spiritual retreats, discipleship and participation in communal or corporate worship (Maddix and Thompson, (2012). Among the CHEIs of higher learning, spiritual formation cannot be overemphasized. Maddix and Thompson (2012) opines that spiritual formation is indeed one of the benchmarks of Christian institutions of higher education, and one of the fundamental requirements for quality and accreditation. Therefore, intentional and purposeful communal commitment to spiritual formation is assumed in the CHEIs. Therefore, to impact the present and future world positively, the CHEIs intent to go through the production of Christ-like men and women uniquely indwelt with values, knowledge, and skills required to influence the world sustainably (Teo, 2017; Bender et al, 2014).

In the 17th century, CHEIs were hit by many challenges that made their efforts in Christian Spiritual formation, for example, secularism and secular values, lack of clear policy to reinforce spiritual formation, and finally multiplicity of faiths and religions promoting their own unique understanding of spiritual formation. One of the key preachers in the 17th century George Whitefield had this to say in 1744 (Rantung et al, 2021),

> As for the Universities, I believe it may be said. Their Light is now become Darkness, Darkness that may be felt. . .. Tutors neglect to pray with and examine the Hearts of the pupils.—Discipline is at too low an Ebb: Bad Books are become fashionable among them.

The environment in the HEIs was morally and intellectually polluted; their passion to shine for Christ was dying, spiritual practices like prayer, evangelism, and practice of Christian disciplines were compromised. It was common to come across books that out rightly opposed the key Christian doctrines in the CHEIs libraries (White and Afrane, 2017; Nolt, 2021).

Research Design

For the current study, the researcher chose a case-study methodology because it gives the best explanation of the motivational issues under examination through discussions of social constructs and experiences. Furthermore, the approach was regarded significantly convenient to employ for the purposes of obtaining an in-depth understanding of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context (Gikward, 2017). Moreover, the researcher also considered other benefits listed by other researchers who adopted the same research design, for example, as stated in (Yin 2018) the design is conducive for answering questions like "why" and how"., according to Heale (2013) the design is helpful in avoidance of manipulating the respondents involved in the study; finally, Gikward (2017) states that the design is significant in seeking an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and context dependent on knowledge about human affairs; and also attempting to discover the essence of the in-depth experience.

The researcher therefore considered a case study approach useful to adopt in order to obtain an in-depth appreciation of the phenomenon under examination, and more so in its natural real-life context. Thus, by using the approach, the researcher was confident to be able to identify the underlying significant motivational factors determining behaviours. Finally the approach allowed an in-depth, multifaceted explorations, thus making the complex issue of spiritual formation simpler for study and analysis (Casson and Cooling, 2019).

Research Methodology

The researcher employed a wide range of techniques to collect data. For example, observation was done during chapel services; data was also collected through an interview guide from the FGD members; interviews with chaplains among the CHEIs; a 360-feedback instrument in which data is collected from the chapel attending students themselves for the purposes of exploring their views, experiences, beliefs and their motivations. Finally, the senior managers in the CHEIs to get their expectations, plans and efforts in facilitating Christian spiritual formation.

Permanent records about chapel and other programmes related to spiritual formation were critically studied. The data will be organized, coded and analyzed using themes.

Review of Related Literature

Definition of the CHEIs

One of the most basic definitions of the CHEIs is the degree granting universities or colleges that publicly acknowledge and embrace the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the authority of the Bible; they are normally affiliated with the major Christian denominations: Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant (Hemmings and Doug, 2014; Daniels et al, 2019). CHEIs are unique institutions of higher education established for the purposes of integrating Christian faith, principles and virtues into their academic programmes. Therefore, through the provision of holistic Christocentric education, CHEIs aspire to enhance wholeness in student education for service to God and humanity in their individual calling whether as medical doctors, teachers, politicians or in business. Moreover, CHEIs believe that through acquisition of excellent academic qualifications, integrated with faith in God, spiritual formation, upright character and morals, make their graduates uniquely prepared to serve, and as agents of change contribute to the positive transformation of the society. The final description of the CHEI foundational pillars higher education namely: a)' teaching b) research, and c) service (Teresa, 2013).

Examination of the Missions of the CHEIs

Generally speaking, the CHEIs tend to have powerful Mission statements that strongly determine the direction of their governance, curriculum, staffing, student body, and campus life according to their religious affiliation (Daniels et al, 2019). For instance, for the purpose of this study, various Mission statements for some key CHEIs locally and globally were picked, analyzed and are presented here. In Liberty University USA it states that: "Liberty University develops Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential for impacting the world" (Liberty University website). In Kenya, the St. Paul's University's mission states that: "To Develop Servant Leaders by Imparting Knowledge, Skills and Values through Creative Methods of Education, Research and Christian Spiritual Formation (St. Paul's University Website). The same sentiments are also found in the Trinity University of Asia's mission: "To promote the formation of integrally-developed, competent, productive and socially responsible

citizens by instilling Christian values in all its academic programs, co-curricular and extracurricular activities; providing excellent services for a quality learning environment; extending our ideals of service learning for our partners by empowering communities to be self-reliant and by collaborating with other institutions; encouraging self-improvement among employees to gain higher competence and better skills towards service excellence; and exercising sound management of our resources (Trinity University of Asia website). Finally, the Christian University of Uganda's mission is interesting to observe: "To equip students for productive, holistic lives of Christian faith and service" (The University Missions were sourced from the universities' Websites in 2022). It is evident that all CHEIs have similar Missions. For example, provision of quality education and training, research, mentorship, for productive, integrative and holistic Christ-centered lives, Christian faith, and service for sustainable positive change in the world. Therefore, CHEIs are committed to:

i) Continual pursuit of truth by generation of knowledge through research, and followed by eventual dissemination of research findings
ii) Acquisition of scholarship both theoretical and practical through teaching and quality learning
iii) Compassionate service through application of truth and guided by Christian values

All the features discussed above form the unique essence of CHEIs; to maintain relevance to the society, CHEIs partner with in complementing the government's efforts to enrollment of students in the higher education sector. Most of the CHEIs offer quality education because they are immune to most of the problems plaguing the public institutions of higher education like over-enrollment, poor infrastructure, and political interference. Therefore, graduates from the CHEIs are in higher demands because beyond the academic qualifications professionalism, their graduates are indwelt with relevant skills, the strong Christian virtues like moral integrity, honesty, ethics, and hard work; such values are assimilated the integration of faith and academic pursuit and the process of spiritual formation (White and Frane, 2017).

CHEIs Mission Statement and Spiritual Formation
According to Steven (2017), the Mission of the CHEIs is critical to the enhancement of the institutional integrity and students' perceptions of tuition worth in matching its Mission claim on paper, and their practice (teaching, research, mentorship, spiritual formation). Unless the CHEIs

walk the talk, they may be missing that mark. Realization of the students' perceptions of the CHEIs integrity and worthiness is good because it enhances student retention, and may also serve as a marketing tool as the students refer the individual CHEI. The same emphasis is made by Stephen (2019) who argues that by walking the talk as tabulated and embodied in the Mission and students' expectations are met through: academic excellence, Christ-centered service, quality teaching and learning, impartation of critical academic skills, and spiritual formation. Finally, White and Frane (2017) proposes fairness and justice in allowing academic freedom to allow people to uphold alternative views despite any controversial view held in the CHEIs Mission statement (Teresa, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on theory of faith development; this theory was founded by James Fowler in 1981 (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2010). According to this theory, as observed by Rantug and Vardik (2021), the phenomenon of faith development is realized incrementally and in stages; or most particularly in levels. For example: the lowest level concerns unity of faith; the next level deals with child's actual knowledge about God, the next level is referred to as full maturity, whilst the final level is about the realization of the spiritual formation or growth as one becomes Christ-centered in all manner of life. The theory of faith development is fully biblically-founded, most specifically it is derived ed from (Ephs. 4:13),

> "*Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ"*.

The verse implies that all Christians are expected to continue with their faith-journey, attain full maturity to become like Christ. Therefore, Christian spiritual formation is about becoming like Christ in the final analysis. One of the critics of faith development theory is Chandler (2014), who observes that the stages are interconnected and theory do not imply any possibility of spiritual hierarchy or individual superiority. Therefore, when the theory is used in the context of CHEIs, or para-church organizations, it only helpful in identification of the spiritual needs that may be unique in its level (Porter et al, 2019).

In some countries like United States of America, higher education has its roots in Christian churches, thus all colleges in America were viewed as Christian colleges. Therefore burgeoning literature plainly confirm the strong association of higher education to church denominations, for

example, Carpenter and Ships (1987, p. 77) attests to the same by saying, "Almost without exception, to be a college in America before the Civil War was to be a Christian college." The same notion is stated in stronger terms by Holmes (1975, p.9) who states that,

> "American higher education was the child of religion, and the history both of the church denominations and the westward expansion can be traced through the history of America's colleges and universities."

Historically the two cannot be divorced, religion/Christian church and CHEIs, in that regard, associating spiritual formation with CHEIs makes sense. According Chandler (2014) in sub-Saharan African countries CHEIs have made remarkable impact in the higher education sector. For example, in Nigeria out of 61 chartered private institutions, 31 are CHEIs. In Kenya, there are 17 chartered CHEIs. According to Stephen (2019),, the trend of the expansion of CHEIs is reasonably dynamic worldwide.

In the Kenyan context, CHEIs as centers of excellence are on the increase (Bonnell, 2015); for example out of the chartered universities in Kenya, 30% of them are Private Christian universities, finally, ranked out of the best 50 universities in the country, 30%   fall in the category of CHEIs (CUE, 2020). In regard to character building and spiritual formation, the commitment of CHEIs is laudable, for instance in an empirical by Teresa (2013), the study underscored the importance of developing moral and spiritual uprightness beyond the academic demands and excellence. The two dimensions that is academic and spiritual formation are intertwined and inseparable. The study concluded that intellectual excellence alone, without character uprightness and moral development undermines the graduates' capacity in service and positive impact in their world.

The perceptions of Christian spiritual formation among the staff and students among the CHEIs

The founders, managers and all the stakeholders in the CHEIs perceive that these unique institutions exist to impart knowledge and skills in diverse disciplines relevant and applicable to local, regional, national and global development visions (White, 2017). Moreover, CHEIs root for holistic or all-round development of staff and student (mentally, physically, socially and

spiritually) guided and based on Christian principles (Stephen, 2019). For example, one of the common denominators in all the CHEIs is that they all seek to be Christ-centered, that is reflected in their Mission and Vision. In that regard, all the activities in the CHEIs (academic, administrative, social and spiritual) whether in the lives of the staff and students must be informed by Christian teachings and values (Teo, 2017). Thus, everybody within the CHEIs integrate their faith within practical life experiences daily: in class, offices, chapel, and sports or in their relationships with one another.

One of the most misunderstood areas of spiritual formation in the HEIs is integration of faith and academic practices. Spirituality is about adopting a personal responsibility to do what right according to God's revealed biblical truth; for example, goodness, accountability, excellence, integrity, honesty, modesty and purity. Thus, the academic practices whether teaching or learning are Christocentric, as guided by Christian principles and virtue (Tennent, 2010). According to White and Afrane (2017), Christ-likeness and academic excellence are of greatest essence among the HEIs,

> What defines a university as a Christian university is that, it must be Christ-centered, mission minded and discipleship focused. These three attributes are in line with the great commission and are the basic principles that will transform the lives of the enrolled students. It also helps them to see their academic training as an opportunity to develop their capacities to become agents of transformation and ambassadors of Christ. It gives students the confidence and assurance that their future is secured.

A holistic view of teaching and learning is critical among the HEIs Christ-centeredness, discipleship, and service. Therefore, the academic training helps the students to develop their capacities to be agents of transformation, and ambassadors of Christ to bring change in the world at present and in the future. Terresa (2013) affirms the same by introducing the idea of discipleship among the HEIs to denote the creation of an enabling environment where both staff and students may experience a sustainable relationship with Jesus Christ. The continuous spiritual formation, growth and development as a result of sustaining an intentional relationship with Christ and other stakeholders leads to spiritual change and growth that is referred to as being Christ-like or Christ-centered (Rieckkhoff, 2014). Opoku et al, (2014) puts this clearly by stating,

> The Christian philosophy of education calls for an educational process that puts the Bible at the center and asks the student and the teacher to evaluate all they see in the world through the eyes of God. It is purposed to return both learners and instructors to God's honour in their lives, for the purpose of education is to build character; it is to mold a life that honours the Lord ('a vessel unto honour, meet for the master's use and prepared for every good work' -II Tim. 2:21). In this sense realizing Christian Education in modern pedagogy primarily brings instructors and learners to the knowledge of God. The teaching of good character, qualities and moral principles provides a framework for successful life, skills, social well-being and protection from certain behavioural consequences. True education, most simply stated, is teaching about God's creation and His providence.

According to Opoku et al (2014), the very essence of CHEIs is to promote Christian worldview in order to enable stakeholders to see things through God's eyes; the learners should seek to serve and honour God with the acquired knowledge, all teaching to go beyond the academic excellence in order to help the learner to know God, good morality, and develop a character that honours God; finally the learners are to honour God's creation and hope in his providence (Stephen, 2019).

The challenges of enhancing spiritual formation among CHEIs

Among the CHEIs spiritual formation is critical, in that it remains as one of the recognized benchmarks of the main purpose, goal, practice, commitment, requirement, and identity of Christian higher education. However, globally organizations and institutions have been heavily impacted by the multi-dimensional changing dynamics that have shifted the social landscape for everybody: for example, Chiroma (2012) cites increased secularization, modernity, technological, while Terresa (2013) lists increased demand for academic and human freedoms, and right.

> White and Afrane (2017) they put emphasis on the assertion by stating,
> Christian universities are established to integrate Christian faith, principles and virtues into their academic programmes with the expectation that through this holistic Christocentric education, students will be well-prepared to serve and to contribute positively to transform society. Although this approach to education is good, it however does not come without the challenge of how to maintain these Christian virtues in light of increasing secularization and permissiveness in contemporary society…as well as issues related to policies and requirements for institutional accreditation.

Thus Christian spiritual formation is viewed amongst the CHEIs as foundational for support, protection, and promotion of the fundamental values for the integration of faith to all curricular

(teaching, learning and research) in the CHEIs (Chiroma, 2012). Despite the strong commitment and intention in enhancement of spiritual formation, CHEIs are faced with diverse barriers to realize this ideal. For example, most recently most of the institutions of higher learning have adopted online mode as the approach in teaching and learning. This sudden change did not prepare the CHEIs to develop adequate theoretical matrix for online spiritual formation, models for spiritual formation uniquely designed for online programmes, and measures of actual Christian maturity (Rieckkhoff, 2014; White, 2017).

Most of the CHEIs are facing an identity crisis (White, 2017); historically, most of these colleges (especially among the Protestants) begun as theological colleges and had an umbrella accreditation with mother the Evangelical colleges in the West especially from the United States of America. Evangelicalism is no longer enjoying wide acceptance as it used to be; critics cite issues like: the term being too confining by tying people to issues that do not reflect their theological neither their political values; the term was also described as being too simplistic because it did not capture the complexities reflected in the Christian public lives and faith (Ngu, 2017). Most CHEIs are therefore dumbing the term Evangelical, the challenge is the local CHEIs are left without an identity, and there are concerns that by dropping the term may lead to instability and lack of clear focus (Jethani, 2018).

Secularization has permeated most of the CHEIs today due to questionable student recruiting methods, and staff hiring (Dessler, 2012). For example, in some countries such as Kenya, the CHEIs receive thousands of students from the Government, for instance, Mount Kenya University received 5,489 students in September 2021 (MKU Website, 2021). Although the CHEIs benefit from a huge student allocation, they however have no control over the religious diverse backgrounds of the students placed in their institutions by the government. The CHEIs have recruited students from non-Christian religions, and churches that are cultic; such eventualities have compromised efforts towards spiritual formation. Although the placement of government students to the CHEIs is good in boosting numbers and financial wellness, it also comes with challenges of the application and maintenance of the Christian virtues; as a result the CHEIs are experiencing increased secularization.

According to Casson and Cooling (2019) despite purposing to promote Christian life and norms in their campuses, the CHEIs are unable to only recruit students who profess and live Christian faith; in most cases they recruit students on their qualification basis only. This is best captured by Carpenter (2017, p.2),

> Yet most of them welcome qualified students regardless of faith. Students might chafe at taking courses in religion and having religious orientations infused into what most of society sees as nonreligious subject. Some are frustrated by chapel or behavior codes. Part-time professors, so common to African universities generally, do not see why their teaching might need to be different in a Christian context. State officials have decided to accommodate religious educational partners, but wonder why hiring criteria, curricular development, or student norms need to be different on Christian campuses.

Against the backdrop of uncontrolled student recruitment in regard to religious diversity and background; CHEIs are now experiencing increasing secularization. Therefore more and more students disregard culture of attending chapels, strict behaviour code, and the activities designed for spiritual formation. For example, in one of the CHEIs, it has a distinctive number of Islamic students who worship differently compared to the Christian traditions, values and teachings in the institution. Even so, the CHEIs trajectory to reform the society through their graduates still shines like a lighthouse (Bender, 2014).

The role of the CHEIs in promoting Christian spiritual formation

According to Sink et al (2007), for the CHEIs, realization of a healthy spiritual formation among the staff and students is critical and indeed fundamental for the realization of a Christ-centered education. One of the traditional strategies employed by the CHEIs to promote Christian formation is chapel services; even though all the CHEIs have chapels, the chapels are not distinctively used for spiritual formation purposes only, they are multiuse buildings for both social, religious, spiritual and secular events. Therefore, they miss the reference attached to a place designated for spiritual or religious services (Cragun et al, 2014). In other words, when the worship place is taken casually, that has a bearing on how the services in that building will be taken. Sub-Saharan Africa is counted as one of the new centers of Christianity (others are Asia and Latin America); however, among the elite and students in the CHEIs a new group is emerging and increasing very fast: the group interested in spirituality; this group has nothing to do with organized religious worship services. Instead they are contented with individual

meditation, and values, therefore chapel attendance to them is not important. Even so, due to declining religiosity among the youth in the vast continent of Africa, the same is replicated among the youth attending the CHEIs, in that regard they do not attend chapel (Edington, 2011). Therefore, chapel as a tool for Christian spiritual formation may only serve up to than 45% of the student body (Morrison, 2014). It is critical for the CHEIs to be more critical about chapel programmes as clearly articulated by Coggin (2018, p.5),

> Today, chapel programs are only relevant at a small, select percentage of faith-based institutions that either require chapel attendance or happen to attract a high number of voluntary attendees. This shift highlights a contrast between the empty architectural wonders that chapel buildings have become, and the heart of Christian campuses still significantly driven by faith. Administrators at Christian colleges face the task of discipling their students in ways that both meet the perceived spiritual needs of their students while also speaking directly to who they are as human beings. To accomplish such a task, administrators must stay engaged and aware of their students' desires and needs. In addition, today's Christian college and university administrators must address the specific purpose of the chapel program at their school.

Even though among the CHEIs, chapel attendance is viewed as an integral to being a student in these institutions; even though, it is no longer popular among them. Actually only a smaller percent of students actually attend chapel. The administration should therefore put efforts to make the chapels relevant and dynamic, for example by focusing on pertinent issues among the students; intentionally inviting outstanding and reputable guests, including campus personalities to participate in the programme. From time to time, popular participation by the students should be highly encouraged and regarded, that makes them to own the chapel, and to add their voices in running the chapels (Sink, 2007). They can also take part in leading the worship services, music and Bible reading; they can showcase special talents like participating in dance, drama, cultural nights, and some special presentations during the chapel services.

Findings

Research Question One: What is the role of the CHEIs in promoting Christian spiritual formation among the staff and students?

The study established that there was consensus among the respondents that Christian spiritual formation among CHEIs was one of their core functions. For instance, it informed their hiring of staff, code of conduct for all, nature of their programmes, and how they carry out their daily

work. This was captured well by one of the senior chaplains in one of the local Christian universities (M4) about the challenges facing chaplaincy in CHEIs,

> The universities are surrounded by a society that is 'sick' and 'aching'; for example, both students and staff are affected negatively by the impacts of individualism, deep seated fear due to growing insecurity in our streets and residential areas, increment of people committing suicides, highest levels of crime rates; against this background, chaplaincy services are urgently needed than in any other time in the recent past. We take it as out mandate and responsibility to promote Christ-centered education; we believe that is necessary for the realization of a holistic development and production of servant leaders who can transform the world. That is why we promote a Christ-centered education to prepare servant leaders equipped with excellent academic qualifications and Christian values, maturity, vision, and excellent character to engage and transform their world. Finally, the spiritual formation among the staff and the students cannot exceed that of the universities' top management; therefore, it will rise and fall around the spirituality of the CEO and the top management. Universities' senior leadership team should lead the way in Christian spiritual formation and faith.

From the respondents it was evident that the CHEIs see themselves as robust communities that exist to purposefully aid both the students and staff to go through their spiritual journey and realize full Christian spiritual formation. Burgeoning literature attests to the same too (Daniels and Murg, 2019; Nolt, 2021). Despite the challenges experienced by the chaplaincy department, their role in Christian spiritual formation was clear in their minds and hearts as expressed by (M10),

> To us as a university, matters of Christian spiritual formation are critical, through the chaplaincy department we endeavor to create an enabling environment where the student staff in our college will hopefully grow into holistic or whole human beings. Therefore, our college recognizes and commits itself to meet the social, physical and spiritual needs not withstanding our obligation to offer excellent academic services for global transformation. In the classrooms, the teachers pray in the beginning of their lessons, and at the end. In the teaching, the students are challenged to integrate academic values and principles with their faith. For example, if they are learning IT, they need to understand how they can use their knowledge to serve God and the citizens.

CHEIs therefore take it as their fundamental role to promote spiritual maturity (Christian spiritual formation) and by this produce men and women of excellent character, servant leaders, who can engage their world through moral values, good character, and intellectual practice for

social transformation. Their sentiments were also echoed by key empirical literature (Michael, 2019; Du Plessis and Nkambule, 2020; Bender, 2014).

Research Question Two: What are the programmes implemented by the CHEIs to influence Christian spiritual formation for staff and students

The CHEIs are very organized in their quest for enhancement of Christian spiritual formation in their communities. In that regard, Christian spiritual formation is in essence the culmination and the final aggregate or purposed product in their roadmap. All activities are keenly tailored for the production of a holistic academic, social, physical and spiritual development and experience for all the community members working or attending the CHEIs. The prominent programmes for implementing and influencing Christian spiritual formation were: the chapel, Bible studies, missions both internal and external, prayer, and personal disciplines. One of the respondents (M3) put it very well,

> *The establishment of robust chaplaincy department by all CHEIs is itself a testament and demonstration of our commitment and mandated promote holistic wellness of staff and students. The chaplaincy programme to us is an acknowledgement and commitment to offer services accessible to the entire university Community. The chapel programmes help to facilitate inclusive and transformational services by offering hope and restoration in the contemporary world and most deliberately in our national, regional and our university's educational landscape. Both students and our staff come from difficult and challenging backgrounds: neglect and broken families, sexual harassment, social rejection and neglect, drug and substance abuse. As chaplaincy, we aim at supporting them to carry out their duties and activities, and to deepen their commitment in their work, moral development, and well-rounded value for driving sustainable development worldwide.*

Admittedly, beneath the routine services and duties of campus' chaplaincy programmes; chaplaincy in the CHEIs is driven by spiritual fundamental principles suitably helpful in life transformation. For example, some of the students and staff have tough backgrounds like broken families, drug abuse, sexual harassment, and other forms of moral decay. The chaplaincy services come along way in shaping the students and staff paradigm in all dimensions, for example, social, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. Probed to mention specific examples of chaplaincy programs, the respondents mentioned the following (M5)

> *Weekly community worship services: in this regard we organize prayers for the university community (students, staff and any other stakeholders). The worship services are special*

moments of prayers and relevant, informative and inspirational messages. Institutional Prayer Days: usually once a semester the prayer day brings together the university staff and students for reflections, worship and presentation of their needs, their community and world at large. Weekly fellowships: these are opportunities that bring the students and staff to access diverse spiritual services, involvement in serving the campus community. Individualized counseling services: through chaplaincy, the CHEIs design and offer and avail professional counselling services to help to improve the students' academic achievement, social development, behavioral change. Besides being helped to cope with individual or institution-related issues, university members may be helped to identify their personal interests, identification of personal strength, weaknesses and embracing of whole life development; finally, but not the least accessing information and education on emerging issues like covid-19, and ever-increasing addiction to alcohol and drug abuse.

Chapel programmes among the CHEIs play a practical, integral, meaningful, and impactful role in the realization of Christian spiritual transformation holistic development of the students and staff accrued as the members maintain continuing interactions with chapel. As a social and religious entity, the chapel brings together a diverse university community and provides a practical framework to work together in promoting social stability, cohesion and solidarity for Christian spiritual transformation (Porter et al, 2021).

Research Question Three: What are the perceptions of Christian spiritual formation among the staff and students among the CHEIs?

The responses on this question were diverse, therefore different answers were given. The office of the chaplain was accepted and respected by all. For example, (M19) stated that "*Some students and staff think chaplains only give services to those people in problems and needing pastoral care. Mostly this is the group that may not attend chapels and other chapel programmes*". But (M11) informed us that,

Lack of access or interest in chaplaincy services cannot be blamed on the students or staff alone. We need to give adequate information during new students' and staff orientation about the existence of these services, how they can be accessed and where to go when needing them. For example, I know a student who went to seek professional counselling services down town in Nairobi. When he came to the counseling room, he was astonished to find me. Now he had to pay the organization that I was consulting for, whereas, if he came to the university counseling center, I would have given him the same services free of charge. He confessed he missed that information during the orientation.

Most of the negative perceptions from the students may be due to misinformation or lack of it altogether. Efforts should therefore be made to popularize the chaplaincy services, and to also inform the students about the qualifications of the chaplains, some of whom hold very high qualifications in counseling, and pastoral care. Where the students and staff do not know what they have, they may not be enthusiastic in using them. One of the strongest perceptions among the staff and students was the importance of chaplains in enhancing Christian spiritual formation. For instance, (M1) stated that,

> *There was consensus among the staff and students that Christian spiritual formation was essential as a strategy for the CHEIs to achieve their overall Vision and Mission to produce transformational leaders.* When probed to elaborate why Christian spiritual formation was critical, one of the chaplains (M9) stated:
> a) *It is fundamental for the realization of individual or personal spiritual maturity*
> b) *Good for character development as one focuses on the areas of personal weaknesses and seeking biblical knowledge, divine grace and power for growth and development.*
> c) *Helps acquisition of ministry skills through service, and caring for others*
> d) *Necessary in building spiritual communities to enhance individual accountability, mentorship and deep fellowship.*
> e) *Produces next generation of quality leaders for global service and transformation.*

Christian Spiritual formation is more strategic, and futuristic in producing the next generation quality leaders, godly men and women of character for global transformation; servant leaders, accountability and transparent. The same conclusion is made by Polley (2020, p.25),

> Spirituality may develop within or outside faith communities. Development may include mentoring, training/instruction…and application of spiritual practices with support from a religious community. In the Christian paradigm, this may also include support from the Holy Spirit or Scripture reading and meditation. Outside of Christianity, there is a growing interest within servant leadership literature in self-awareness and mindfulness training as it may emphasize collectivist ethical values, build character and support the inner journey of the leader. The application of spiritual practices to develop transcendent spirituality is contingent on various factors including the spiritual preference of the aspiring leaders, their religious or spiritual traditions and level of religiosity or spirituality.

The pathway towards development of servant leaders is complex; but most particularly it involves spiritual formation through the Holy Spirit work, Bible knowledge, value development, mentorship and interaction with other believers in a Christian community. Therefore, CHEIs present a unique community for the advancement of Christian Spiritual formation to produce

transformational leaders for global transformation (Du and Nkambule 2020; Casson and Cooling, 2019).

Research Question four: What are the challenges faced by the CHIEs influencing Christian spiritual formation for staff and students

While it was evident that the respondents appreciated the chaplaincy department's capacity to offer great care among the staff and the students for their spiritual development; ironically there was a significant constituency that did not seek chapel services for personal reasons. Respondent (M7) tabulated some of the challenges they face as,

> *Some of the students who don't come do not consider the university as a center for spiritual formation; they see it as a center for academic training and development. Therefore, during chapel meetings, they may be seated somewhere doing private studies. Even when they need counseling services, they may go for private professional counselors while free services are available through chaplaincy.*

The chaplains felt thinly spread due to the number of students needing their services. For example, (M12) stated that "*one of the biggest challenges in my work as a chaplain is lack of adequate time to cover all that I have to do each day; in the advent of Covid-19, there has been much more demands, round the clock there has been someone needing my services and support*". On being probed on what the chaplains do when there are more needs than they can handle, they reported that, *"Some of our universities have employed assistant chaplains, and senior students have also been recruited as peer counselors to handle basic things. The peer counselors are under the work-scholarship, that means the compensation goes to their fees directly. Whatever the peer counselors cannot handle comes to us or the assistant chaplains*". Where the chaplains are on call round the clock there is a big danger of suffering from burnout (Polley, 2020).

Not all the university chapels were faced with operational problems; some reported excellent work and relationships. For example, the universities whose chapel remained popular with the large number of students attending services and seeking chaplaincy services, shared the following information:

> *We are always sensitive of the fact that the chapel program is central to the university. Therefore, we value the interests and needs of the university's student and staff. We involve and engage all the stakeholders when planning the programmes so as to capture*

their interests and to collaborate with the wider stakeholders in order to allow people to have their voice. Despite being sponsored or owned by a particular church denomination, we allow diversity in our corporate worship in order to accommodate members of other churches. All the participants are encouraged to do intellectual engagement because a university community has a higher expectation in their chapel in regard to quality of the services.

Smart chapel management and operations not only kept the chaplaincy department vibrant, but also the students and staff owned the chapel as theirs. For example, the collaboration, sensitivity to diversity, having voice in decision making and problem solving, engagement and participation in planning and running the chapel gave the students and staff ownership (Nolt, 2021). Despite the importance and centrality of the chaplaincy department, chapel attendance in all the universities seemed to be one's choice, therefore the students and teachers could choose not to attend. The respondents were divided in this matter, some wanted to see a clear policy demanding attendance by all, (M 17) said, *"For me I would like to see a strong policy that requires all staff and students equally to attend the weekly corporate worship".* However, there was no consensus because others were of the opinion that attendance should be open, in that regard (M20) opined that "*By open attendance we will be serving those who have decided to use our services. Therefore, let attendance remain open and not compulsory. You can forcefully take a donkey to the river, but you cannot force it to drink water".*

The comments by (M20), are in agreement with the data collected from the literature review. Polley (2020), for instance, is of the opinion that spiritual matters (chaplaincy services included) should remain voluntary to all the people, ad sought by those who are interested with them.

Conclusion

The centrality of the chaplaincy services cannot be over-emphasized more, instead efforts should be made by the CHEIs to improve the services by ensuring diversity, inclusivity, holisticity, and engagement in order to get the desired aggregate product:- Christian spiritual formation. The problems faced by the chaplains, poor chapel attendance and negative perceptions about the chaplaincy department have to be addressed scientifically, for instance by conducting good research for sustainability. The entire chapel framework needs to be reviewed annually or so to maintain relevance and remain contextual.

Recommendations

1) Given the centrality of chaplaincy, the department should be supported to be contextual and relevant

2) Chaplaincy programmes should be holistic, inclusive and participatory

3) Scientific research should be engaged to respond to negative perceptions and challenges faced by chaplaincy department

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