

PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM FOR MODERN AFRICA

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Abstract

This paper reviews George Ayittey's work on 'Africa in Chaos' which is an epitome of the narrative of failure, blame and accusation, in light of Yusuf Turaki's work on 'Christian vision for Africa' an embodiment of a Bible-centered vision for development. It is to be anchored on a Bible-centered narrative from which a Christian vision for development in Africa must proceed. The paper proposes a biblical conception of transformational development for Africa as a model that will emancipate Africa. Observation method with concentration on the literature review done on the two books in focus was used. Most of the narratives underlying Africa's quest for transformational development are those of failure, blame, and accusation. By exploring the various aspects that each of the two author presents, the study compares and contrasts some of the fronted ideas and concepts showing how they can be utilised to enhance transformational development in Africa. This study recommends that these concerns demand more concrete responses, which Ayittey does not provide. Turaki becomes very helpful to these concerns when he addresses the issue of a new vision for humanity and society anchored in God.

Key terms: Africa in chaos, transformational development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the exit of colonial masters, the colonial waves from the African soil, and the waning Western missionary insinuations, Africa has constantly been battling endless issues and problems. Africa has indeed gotten into a vicious cycle. These endless issues and problems have left some scholars and theologians wondering if Africa was cursed, doomed, or an inferior nation. In seeking to show the reality of Africa's problems and issues, Aneke (2014) observes, "While even Asia, an ex-colonised part of the world, has evolved into tigers, Africa remains the epicenter for bad policies, corruption, financial insolvency, poor governance and poverty. Out of every ten most unequal countries in the world, seven are in Africa." Attempts to understand and respond appropriately to the respective issues affecting Africa have attracted scholars from different academic disciplines and nationalities into rigorous conversations regarding Africa and her plight. The issues facing Africa are complex. They can be described as multi-dimensional or multifaceted in nature. This means they also need a multi-dimensional or multi-disciplinary approach to address and resolve them amicably.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Some concerns that have continued to emerge from this unrelenting struggle include: What is ailing Africa? What are the causes of Africa's crisis? Can Africa experience a real transformation? Is there hope for Africa? How do we really understand and appropriately address the real issues facing Africa? Who is to blame for the plight of Africa? Who needs to be in the roundtable conversation regarding Africa? These and many other concerns call for proper and in-depth diagnosis and reflection of Africa to provide transformational solutions to her plight.

In response to the complex nature of Africa's problems, various scholars from different disciplines of study and contexts have attempted to add their voices to the ongoing conversations. All of these participants attempt to give their views on what they think is ailing Africa and what needs to be done. The study will critically review one of these writers regarding Africa, namely, George Ayittey's '*Africa in Chaos*' in light of Turaki's work on '*A Christian vision for Africa: Towards a conception of development and transformation*'. This will be done from a Christian point of view.

3.0 FINDINGS

The Prevailing Status of Africa

Ayittey (1999, 6), on his part, begins his work by first outlining the reality of the prevailing situation in Africa, which he believes reflects some deep underlying causation. Ayittey observes that Africa is a continent that is bestowed with enormous resources, a talented population and abundance. But he quickly raises concern by saying, "Yet, paradoxically, a continent with such abundance and potential is inexorably mired in steaming squalor, misery, deprivation, and chaos." In other words, Ayittey is pointing out an unfortunate mismatch in Africa. With such a heavy endowment, Africa should be seen thriving in the various dimensions of her being, which, unfortunately, is not the case. One wonders why other ex-colonised nations like Asia have moved on the path of progress while Africa seems to be on the path of collapse.

Some obvious indicators of Africa's increasing problems that Ayittey (1999, 10) identifies include weak agricultural growth, poor export, a decline in industrial output performance and deteriorating social institutions and environment. While Ayittey does good work in attempting to identify and briefly describe

the prevailing situation in Africa, there is the danger of overlooking some important issues based on his method of describing them, and this is where Turaki's work becomes extremely helpful.

Turaki (2011) in his article on '*A Christian vision for Africa: Towards a conception of development and transformation*', does more excellent and detailed work when it comes to outlining the issues facing Africa, especially in the part that he describes as 'An African profile of the socio-political issues. Turaki gives a detailed breakdown of the respective issues and categorises them to show the magnitude and nature of issues that Africa is grappling with. This categorisation of the issues is a more useful approach for it allows inclusivity. Furthermore, Turaki highlights the specific categories of issues facing Africa, such as social, cultural, political, economic, judicial, religious, and others. Although he admits this is not an exhaustive list of the issues, Turaki categorises and places the respective issues in major categories. Such categorisation takes care of the danger of overlooking what might be seen as obvious yet potentially a setback. This is something that Ayittey can borrow or learn from Turaki's work which gives a more comprehensive picture of the issues on the ground.

Causes of Africa's Problems

Various scholars have given various views and explanations regarding the perceived causes of Africa's unrelenting problems. The views are as many as the scholars. For Ayittey, whatever seemed to have been the root cause of Africa's problems was not as obvious as it might have been assumed in many quarters and by many scholars. He sees the root causes of Africa's problems as deeper than the most shouted issue of colonial menace and the colonial actors. For instance, Ayittey (1999, 7) seems to agree with one of Africa's founding fathers, the late Nkurumah when he says, ... 'and we shall not rest content until we demolish these miserable colonial structures and erect in their place a veritable paradise' (Nkurumah, 1957, 34). This shows how the independence generation perceived Africa's plight and problems as externally instigated. In other words, they saw only an external cause to their plight. Unfortunately, this same notion has continued to be held by the post-independence people. It is a notion that promotes the idea of looking out there and leaving it here untouched. Hence, it falsely glorifies 'here' at the expense of 'there'. This is such an enslaving and blinding aspect to the possibilities of any meaningful progress. Ayittey has made a helpful move toward taking a different viewpoint on the causes of Africa's problems. He has acted as an eye-opener to new perspectives. For his part, Ayittey sees a deeper and internal oriented cause to Africa's relentless problems. He sees a fourfold cause underlying the escalating problems facing Africa.

Ayittey (1999, 3) raises the first issue when he says, 'It is intellectual barbarism, perhaps more than anything else that lies at the heart of Africa's crises.' He is arguing that Africans are not intellectually inferior; rather, it is the continual frustrations of any intellectual attempts or efforts by the Africans to provide ideas and solutions to their problems. Unfortunately, this frustration is being done by African governments and not by any external forces. Ayittey argues that Africa has the intellectual capital to articulate and prescribe amicable solutions to her problems. Still, the respective African governments have continued to be geared towards frustrating such indigenous or local efforts through avenues of arrests, detentions and death. Such attempts deny Africa the intrinsic potential help, forcing her to external or out-dated ideas or notions unhelpful to addressing contemporary issues and problems. "Intolerance of alternative viewpoints is a disease that afflicts the ruling elites of Africa" Ayittey (1999, 37). This does not, however, mean that Ayittey overlooks the external causes of Africa's problems. On the contrary, it is

prudent to argue that the incursion of colonial masters, as well as the early European missionary agents, among other forces, into the story and life of Africa, obviously introduced a new socio-economic, cultural, political and religious dent with which Africa must grapple.

Secondly, Ayittey (1999, 83) sees the neglect and shunning of the native institutions of conflict resolution for foreign approaches as another serious cause of Africa's problems and crises. He says, 'After independence, African nationalists and elites abjured their native institutions and rushed to copy foreign systems they did not understand blindly. Had they looked into their backyard, they would have found the solutions to many of Africa's recurrent crises there'. Conflicts are inevitable in every human context, but the nature and magnitude of conflicts that Africa is undergoing are wearisome and worrisome. "Disputes arise in all societies" (Ayittey, 1999, 83). African countries have become synonymous with destructive conflicts, which have continued tearing down the African moral, social, economic, and cultural fibre. Ayittey is thinking of what has occurred in some African countries like Angola, Ethiopia and Somalia, just to mention. Ayittey's point is that the neglect of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms or the reliance upon foreign conflict resolution mechanisms has allowed for the escalation of what would have been a minor political conflict into a full-blown conflict. In other words, Africa's problems and conflicts do not require external or imported approaches and solutions to resolve them. They would be resolved easily using indigenous familiar and affordable approaches and mechanisms.

The third issue is using flawed approaches to resolve Africa's problems. Ayittey (1999, 34) observes that "Africa's crises have remained intractable not so much because of the dearth of solutions but rather because of the flawed approaches its leaders took to solve them." By talking about 'flawed approaches', Ayittey is making a great assumption that there is a standardised and accepted approach to problem-solving. This is what he describes as the scientific approach to resolving problems. Ayittey gives the fivefold criterion that constitutes this scientific approach to problem-solving: exposing the problem, diagnosing the causes, prescribing a solution, implementing the solution and monitoring to see if it is working. It follows, therefore, that these principles are culturally determined. But then, culture is not universal. On the contrary, culture is usually specific, raising a potential cultural superiority problem. However, Ayittey does not stop there. He moves on to try and show how some of these principles were in play in the African traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Ayittey shows how most of these scientific principles of problem-solving were muzzled by African elites and nationalists when they took over power after independence. For instance, Africa failed terribly in exposing the problems because the avenues and sources of exposing the problems [newspapers, radios, TV and now social media, among others] became the target of attack and suppression by the African governments.

Ayittey (1999, 37) rightly observes that "even when a problem was finally exposed in Africa, the second and crucial step of diagnosis was usually mishandled." In other words, exposing the problem did not help because the diagnosis would be wrong or unhelpful. Moreover, the diagnosis produced many scholars or voices – namely externalists and internalists which again settled for the blame-shifting stance. Ayittey (1999, 40) observes that "the constant wailing over colonial legacies was disingenuous and attributing much of Africa's crisis to external factors alone was intellectually deficient." Unfortunately, such an

argument or diagnostic approach would become the scapegoat of many misbehaving African governments.

In a nutshell, Ayittey is simply saying that, even with the availability of scientifically viable criteria for problem-solving, Africa suffers from using flawed approaches to problem-solving such as suppression, blame-shifting, concealing issues, sultanism, statism and so forth. So the problems abide and will continue to wreck Africa. The fourth major cause of Africa's problems that Ayittey (1999, 47) mentions is poor leadership. He says, "Africa's biggest problem today lies with the leadership." No wonder Adeyemo (2009), in his book *'Africa's Enigma and leadership solutions'* says, "Leadership is everything. Nations rise or fall depending on the caliber of their leaders." The question of leadership is central to everything. Here Ayittey is thinking about the abuse of political power and the disconnect of leaders with the reality of their constituencies and the oppressive models of leadership they practice. Ayittey (1999, 157) also mentions the issue of exclusion as a political survival mechanism by many African leaders. The leadership notions that ruled and shaped leadership practice by the African governments after independence include African Socialism, Political pragmatism, Military nationalism, and Afro-Marxism. Ayittey sees these leadership ideologies as part of what escalated Africa's problems. This is because they were all infused with the ethos of anticolonial and dependence theories and tendencies. The greatest obstacle with these leadership ideologies is that they got the African leaders preoccupied not with addressing Africa's problems but rather trying to assert an independent stance. This meant that issues facing Africans were shelved at the expense of pursuing an independent African stance. Additionally, Ayittey points out that several African leaders embraced dictatorial or patriarchal models of leadership styles with the single interest of maintaining power. Otieno and McCullum (2005), in their book *'Journey of Hope: Towards a New Ecumenical Africa'*, talking about African leaders, observes, "Some leaders would drive their people to ethnic animosity to stay in power." This is an echo of the same concerns that Ayittey has about African leadership. It clarifies the claim that poor leadership by African leaders became a key factor in the problems hailing Africa.

Intertwined with poor leadership was the elite factor. Ayittey (1999, 142) sees the elite as key factors in promoting anti-indigenous notions, foods, housing, beliefs and practices. In other words, anything Western is better. Local things were indicators of backwardness. How did the elites and leaders promote these unfortunate notions? They did this through the education systems. Ayittey observes, "The educational curricula, however, followed the colonial pattern. The thought of restructuring them toward instruction in farming or vocational skills was anathema to the new leaders." This explains the negative notion toward anything local that Africans were subjected to by the elites and the leaders. Africa became pre-occupied with what was viewed as *'the best'* found in the West and neglected and overlooked any indigenous ideas, attempts or resources. Hence, the problem of borrowing and dependence leads to heavy debts that continue to cripple and enslave Africa.

On the causes of Africa's crisis and problems, Turaki, in his article, *'Christian vision for Africa: Towards a conception of Development and Transformation'*, does a much more helpful work in moving beyond just the internal and external paradigms. Turaki takes a paradigm shift in looking at the real cause of Africa's problems. He introduces the idea of the lack of a correct and viable vision of humanity and society as the baseline cause of Africa's problems. For his part, Turaki sees the root cause of Africa's problems as either the lack of a correct vision of humanity and society or operating on a corrupted vision of the same. Turaki

remarks: "Since independence in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, Africa seems not to have a concrete vision of a good or sustainable and participatory society, but one plagued with many problems and challenges. These problems and challenges result from a lack of a good vision of society that can lead to better development and transformation of humanity and society" (Ayittey, 1999).

Unlike Ayittey, who concentrates on the internal causes of Africa's problems, Turaki goes deeper to focus on something that is more like a double-edged sword. A double-edged sword for it cuts across both the internal and external factors and the forces of social transformation in Africa. The kind of vision that the social transformers then and now housed plunked Africa into the endless problems she is grappling with. Turaki is concerned with the underlying vision that produced Africa then and now. The study concurs with Turaki in asking, what kind of vision or Africa did the social transformers have in mind? Or we could ask it differently; what kind of vision did the postcolonial African leaders [social transformers] have as they propelled Africa ahead? Or even further, what kind of a vision do our contemporary African leaders have for humanity and society at large? It must be admitted that these categories' visions played a key role in shaping and forming the contemporary Africa we see and experience. For instance, Otieno and McCullum (2005, 6), in highlighting the vision of early social transformers of Africa, notes that "The bitter rivalries between European states led to the Berlin Conference (1884 -1885) at which the Europeans agreed on the partitioning of Africa among themselves. As a result, the continent became the source of raw materials for European industrialisation." This says it all. The vision these factors of social transformation had by then were one of gaining raw materials for their industrialisation purpose and self-enrichment. They saw raw materials more than they saw human beings and their well-being. It can be said that they focused on their material well-being at the expense of other human beings. Here is probably why the Europeans were more interested in getting the raw materials from Africa at any cost.

Admittedly, Turaki acknowledges that Africa has been and continues to be in bad shape in every sphere of her being. But, according to Turaki, two things were in play underneath the vision of the social transformers. One was the kind of education that was not transformative, and the second was the development models put in place or the development models they promoted.

The Solutions to Africa's Problem

A lot of what has been proposed and suggested as solutions to Africa's problems has unfortunately ended up becoming either part of the problems or a subject of debate among scholars. This keeps Africa in the unfortunate vicious cycle. Ayittey on his part, first looks at some quarters which are providing a proposal for solutions to Africa's problem. It is important to note that Ayittey (1999, 301-310) is not committal to the helpfulness of these quarters in the long run. For instance, he identifies three of these quarters, namely: African governments who are mainly preoccupied with blaming the West for their woes; Black American proposals, which are preoccupied with asking African leaders who had stolen first to return the loot; and finally, Western proposals which are busy demanding better governance to rule the seemingly collapsing Africa. Ayittey is saying that these opinions will not likely provide Africa with the desperately needed solution. This is because they are all voices demanding certain actions by others, not by themselves. They are more of finger-pointing than providing solutions. No wonder he notes, "The solutions to Africa's crisis lie in Africa itself, not in the West. Africa does not have to copy the American, French or Asian model" (Ayittey, 1999, 311).

The first radical solution Ayittey advocates for is the return to Africa's roots model. Here Ayittey argues that any attempt to assist Africa that does not utilise the indigenous aspects or roots is bound to fail. In other words, Africa's roots offer an unavoidable starting point and support for meaningful transformation and development. They cannot be ignored or overlooked. We either should seek to modernise or revamp those indigenous aspects and dynamics into something constructive and useful for our time. But, he says, "Institutions that have helped Africans survive for centuries cannot be deficient" (Ayittey, 1999, 312).

The second solution that Ayittey offers is dealing with the African leadership problem. If Africa experiences meaningful change and solutions to her plight, then some major reforms are required. Reforms require good leadership. And leadership, for this matter, has to do with political will, among other things. Ayittey's observation paints the picture of a wanting African leadership when he says, "Delusions of omnipotence, fear and anxiety from sycophants impel African despots to resist reform wholeheartedly" (Ayittey, 1999, 315). If reforms are resisted, then according to Ayittey, problems that are reform-related or based will persist, hence keeping Africa in trouble for as long as the reforms are not done. Again, Ayittey advocates for leadership change, but again he assumes that those leaders are readily available without showing what kind of preparation and training these leaders need.

A third suggestion is that of bypassing the African autocrats. Ayittey has in mind here a rebuilding of the informal /indigenous sector. He sees the masses of the African population as found here. According to Ayittey, rebuilding these informal sectors is cost-friendly. Since on the ground, African artisans have already been inventive in breaking down European imported devices and producing from their commodities, which lays the premise for focusing on the informal sector. Ayittey further sees the need for building markets for this invention. He says, "The nerve centre of every indigenous African society was the market where women always dominated the activity" (Ayittey, 1999, 318). Ayittey is simply trying to argue for the need to bypass some of the autocratic processes that have benefitted the minority, especially the ruling elite, leaving the masses out. However, this concern is the availability of systems and structures that can initiate such a move. The masses in Africa are and continue to be under the undue control of the elite.

Other options Ayittey mentions include buying out those African military leaders and cooperating with any other means. Additionally, he talks of creating a debt-free zone between the debtor nation and the creditors. However, these suggestions or proposals cannot fix Africa's persistent problems. The buying-out approach would produce a distractive culture of corruption. The debt-free zone might interfere with the sovereignty of a nation in various ways. Ayittey is in this work trying to offer as many alternatives to resolving Africa's abiding problems. But the beauty of these proposals is that they also endeavour to show both the positive and negative sides of each. Ayittey puts all these options forward to allow the individual African nations to select whatever would work for them probably.

Turaki, on his part, does not disagree with Ayittey's suggested solutions but sees something deeper than just discussing the possible solutions. The need to anchor the solutions on a firm and credible foundation is inevitable. For Turaki, any viable solution to Africa's crisis has to be anchored in a Christian vision for Africa. This presupposes the availability of God's design and pattern for the well-being of humanity and society. It further presupposes the biblical authority and mandate for human existence and society. Such a pre-requisite to social transformation and development cannot be overlooked. He says, "Today, people rely more upon human reason and philosophy, the scientific worldview and the autonomous human will.

Post-modernity rejects any moral authority, whether of tradition, religion, philosophy, or science. It advocates 'no standards' or 'no absolute truth'" (Turaki, 2011, 10). Anchoring our solutions on such shaky grounds will never lead to a transformational endeavour.

In this case, Turaki (2011, 9) proposes the need for a new transformational educational model as a solution to Africa's problems. This model should be built upon a new vision for Africa. But then Turaki raises an important concern on this same point when he seeks to find out whether the Christian vision for Africa has been formulated and utilised in the first place. Turaki observes, "The powerful social factors of worldviews and visions of society have been neglected" (Turaki, 2011, 10). Hence, the social transformers of Africa operated under certain assumptions that overlooked critical aspects of being among the African societies. This has been continued in the modern world, as highlighted by Turaki when he says, "modern views are forcing a paradigm shift and a lack of respect and acceptance of the traditional and biblical authority in human life and society." However, Turaki's paper is geared towards formulating a viable biblically rooted vision for Africa as a base upon which social transformation and development should be practised.

Turaki points out that the Christian Scripture is central to the life and practice of Christians and any efforts toward social transformation and development because scripture is the revelation of God. And as Turaki says, "God created the world based upon his own culture, vision and worldview" (Turaki, 1999, 16). In this case, God is the ultimate standard and criterion for creational existence. Turaki says "the traditional Christian view has been that the scripture (both Old and New testaments) has the highest authority for the beliefs and life of Christians" (Turaki, 2011, 11). Scriptures bear information regarding how human beings and society are to be viewed and treated and should inform our attempts toward social transformation and development. To leave out the voice of scripture in attempting to fix Africa's social and political problems is to exempt an essential pillar of change and transformation.

Another solution that Turaki offers to Africa's crisis is transformational leadership. He observes that "much of Africa's failure is due to a lack of a transformational political leadership" (Turaki, 2011, 24). In most cases, leadership has been an avenue of self-enrichment and assimilation of power, as earlier stated by Ayittey. Turaki has an interesting view of leadership. He does not see leadership in terms of qualification or credentials but their ability to identify the need for developing human beings to gain spiritual, labour and technological skills. In this view, Turaki offers a viable response and solution to Ayittey's concern over illiterate elites. That leadership is not just about head knowledge but the ability to integrate and discern, as shown by Turaki. Turaki is arguing that Africa suffers from a lack of training in three areas, namely, spirituality, labour and technology. But he clarifies that such endeavour cannot happen without transformational leadership with a Christian vision for the continent. For instance, Africa, as argued earlier by Ayittey, is endowed with enormous resources. But then, Aneke (2014) was right when he observed the following about Technology, "It gives them the power to harness the raw material and utilise them." Leadership plays a critical role in identifying and developing its people. In summarising this leadership issue, Turaki (1999, 25) observes "The vision of developing a good humanity, environment, community, society, or nation is grossly lacking in the current political leadership." Turaki sees leadership as the centre bolt of every form of social and political transformation within the African setting. There is a need to have a clear vision of what kind of people, society, nation and so forth people would like to have in Africa. But this must be anchored on the Christian vision, for there we locate the pre-requisites that spell out what the standard and reference point should be.

A final but important solution that Turaki highlights are developing a way to overcome what he describes as the three top-most obstacles to Africa's development endeavor. These include Ethnocentrism and Primordialism, a lack of Transformational Political Leadership and a Lack of a National Ethic. The bottom line issue of this paper is that the obstacles are disrupting any possibilities of social transformation and development in Africa. They require transformational leadership with a correct biblical and Christian vision for humanity and society in Africa. Turaki (1999, 27) observes that "Africa needs effective transformational political leaders with social, spiritual and structural engineering skills of transforming the societies and peoples." However, these leaders must be committed to dealing conclusively with the said obstacles to pave way for meaningful social transformation and development. Turaki (1999, 26) cautions, "Unless these three top-most obstacles are cleared decisively, educational, and all other inputs into developing Africa would yield nothing but chaos, crisis, instability, conflict and violence," needs to be taken seriously. This is because key hindrances must be addressed in transformation and development to pave the way for effective processes.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions: Ayittey (1999, 348) concludes his work on '*Africa in Chaos*' by discussing what he describes as the '*Remaining Font of Hope*' for Africa. He says, "Africa's best hope lies with its intellectuals." This is what should be ideal. Ayittey sees Africa's intellectuals as the sole source of supplying intellectual justification to legitimise despotism and corruption. Here Ayittey has in mind the idea that the intellectuals like the Judges should not be a party to swear in those bad leaders. Ayittey also considered the civil servants who belong to the category of intellectuals. He says they should refuse to carry out the orders of these bad leaders. This way, they should use their intellectual influence to guide the political leaders in the right direction. As he takes cognisance of the potential of the African intellectual's shortcomings in exploiting their intellectual ability, Ayittey also shows some ways the intellectuals are derailed from this possibility. However, Ayittey holds firmly that Africa's intellectuals are the hope of Africa. For Ayittey, the civic groups composed of intellectuals can bring hope and solution to Africa's crisis by bringing these corrupt leaders to book. African intellectuals abroad with information and the media can use these from their exile to expose corruption and any form of mismanagement in Africa. Ayittey seems to be saying that even if Africa's intellectual model of resolving Africa's problems has challenges, it still stands a better chance towards this end. This conclusion by Ayittey raises many concerns, especially when one thinks of the hope of Africa being anchored in human beings. First, it is worth noting that intellectuals have a pivotal role in shaping Africa's destiny.

Recommendations: This study recommends that these concerns demand more concrete responses, which Ayittey does not provide. Turaki becomes very helpful to these concerns when he addresses the issue of a new vision for humanity and society anchored in God. A Christian vision addresses the deeper-seated issues that confront humanity, such as the problem of evil, sin and so forth. Africa needs solutions anchored on a new vision for humanity and society.

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