

21. of Theology, (London: SCM, 1967) pp. 108 - 109.
21. A. Flew "Theology and Falsification", *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (London: SCM, 1955), pp. 96ff. Also R.W. Hepburn, *Christianity and Paradox: critical studies in Twentieth Century Theology*, (London: Watts, 1958), pp. 9 - 22.
22. J. Wisdom *Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p. 50.
23. A. Ayer *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 9
24. E. Cell *Language, Existence and God*, (New York: Abingdon, 1971). p. 94.
25. *Philosophical Analysis*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), p. 179.

Mr. J.A. Omolafe is a lecturer in the Dept. of Religious Studies, Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria.

THE CHURCH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE THOUGHTS OF OBAFEMI AWOLOWO⁽¹⁾

F. I. Ogunmodede

Introduction

The issue of human development is a perennial one and can never be over-discussed. In this critical and transitional period of the history of our nation, when we hope to bid good-bye to military rule permanently, and hope, also, to return to a democratic civilian rule with a renewed spirit, it is only right to examine the writings of Obafemi Awolowo (1909 - 1987), one of Nigeria's nationalists, and a foremost sage, to see what values and lessons we may learn from him. This is even imperative if we bear in mind that the development of man in the state was the primary concern of his thoughts, writings and career as a christian, journalist, business-man, economist, lawyer and politician.

This paper adopts the expository method, therefore, it examines Awolowo's concept of development, in its relation with its subject matter, man. Finally, and more importantly, it considers the role the Church can and should play in his development and that of the society. It ends with an evaluation.

The Nature of Development

Which ever way one looks at it, there is something complex about the nature of development. This explains perhaps why views, theories and perspectives are many and diverse. Generally, however, one can identify the humanist view-point as well as those of the naturalists. For the humanist, development is meaningful if it projects and uplifts the person and dignity of man as a unique being in the cosmos. On the other hand, the naturalists talk of realization and actualization of the material or physical energy and power that is inherent in the universe in a more or less generic sense. The distinction is necessary especially for the group among the humanists that lays emphasis on the spiritual dimension within an integrative development of man.

Awolowo, like Teilhard de Chardin, belongs to this spiritual segment of the humanist group. For him, development is not a state that is already attained, but a goal and ideal to be achieved. The present state of man is

that of under-development: But, under-development is better perceived collectively than individually, especially in a third-world nation. And, so, in *The People's Republic*, he defines an under-developed country as:

"... one whose natural and human resources are partly utilized, partly under-utilized, and partly mis-utilized, and in which there is a gross deficiency in the quality of three productive agents of labour, land, capital and organization."

Awolowo, also, gives the following as the characteristics features of an under-developed country: poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and poor health, superstition, dependence on subsistence agriculture, excessive and widespread under-employment, unwholesome foreign dominated economy epitomized in unfavourable terms of trade and unstable export markets; as a persistent adverse balance of payments caused by dwindling foreign reserves, deficiency in technological, capital, technical and manpower know-how; and widening social gap and stratification between the rich and the poor in the society.²

If that is under-development, what is development? Awolowo has an instrumentalist and integrative notion of development. It is both an ideal goal and a means to an end, that is, a process of realizing to the utmost level, all the resources, talents and potentialities latent and innate in man; i.e. physical, intellectual, economic, political, moral or religious. Development also procures man's welfare and well-being, prosperity and happiness. For this end to be attained, development has to be all round and complete. That is to say that development has to involve and relate to all aspects of man for it to be meaningful and authentic.

Now, Awolowo contends that since no one person or group has attained development fully, the term 'development' is a misnomer if it refers to the peoples and countries of the third world only. In fact, no one is static and everybody or nation is developing, but at different levels. It is necessary, in the opinion of Awolowo, to categorize different nations as either developed or underdeveloped only for the purpose of discourse. This is how Nigeria comes within the category of underdeveloped nations in spite of her abundant resources and even economic growth.³ It is also the strong view and opinion of Awolowo that she would have become an industrialized and developed nation like Korea and Malaysia by 1990 if her economy had been planned scientifically, and her oil revenues had been wisely utilized. Hope is not lost. We can still continue our struggle.

Hence, we must examine critically the factors that constitute and promote development in our society.

Man and development

Development is about man, that is, his welfare and well-being. But, in order to develop him well, we should first understand his nature as an individual particularly. So, Awolowo himself asked in *The People's Republic*, "What is man?"⁴

For Awolowo, man is no doubt, a reality, an *ens vivens*, that is, a living being in the cosmos. He is a unique living being, and person that is composed of material and spiritual elements which are intrinsically related. Now "spiritual" can be misunderstood to be just "mental" or "rational", as is the case in some modern psychological theories. Awolowo is explicit, therefore, in his analysis of man by stating that a man without the soul is nobody at all, but just some bundle of chemical particles which disintegrate quickly at death. Awolowo as a convinced and committed christian subscribes, in fact, to the "Christian Ontology"⁵ which admits the Bible as its source.

So, the christian anthropology of Awolowo is tripartite and explicit in character; it consists of the body, the mind and the soul. In *The Path to Nigerian Greatness*, he writes:

"man is a manifestation of three phenomena. The first is the soul which is the dwelling of God. The second is the subjective mind which is the seat of man's reasoning faculty (mind). The third is the objective mind which can see, hear, smell, touch, and taste.... with the aid of the subjective mind"⁶

These three elements are not just related. The concept of a person in Awolowo means that they are intrinsically related and constitute a whole being or entity which Frederick Copleston likens to "a complete substance of rational nature".⁸ It follows from the foregoing analysis that any reference of development to man must reckon with these three different levels and modes of being and existence, singularly and collectively.

Nevertheless we must specify how Awolowo thinks that man should be developed. Let us, therefore, raise some posers in order to bring into relief what is involved. Are the soul, mind and body of man static or dynamic? Are they subject to change and development?

Awolowo's response is akin to the views of the essentialists like Plato

who believe that only man's essence or soul is pure, fixed and immutable. But, the body is subject to change and development. In *Voice of Reason*, he writes:

"The soul (or Spirit) ageless and pure, does not need any development. But the body must be trained, developed and disciplined to acknowledge both the existence and the supremacy of the indwelling soul"

The body in reference here must be further explained. It is the mind in distinction from the soul and the physique of man that are intended as the focal point of Awolowo's theory of development. Awolowo actually writes particularly on the function of the mind as a matter of emphasis.

*"Man exhibits the image of God (Gen. 1: 26) when his mind is cultured and is functioning at an optimal level. The more cultured his mind is, the more he exhibits that image"*¹⁰

But in any case, that which does not need change and development namely, the soul, has to supervise and control that which needs perfection, change and development, namely, the body (and the mind).

Education

But, if development is conceived from an instrumental perspective, it is in relation to education that this perspective comes into play prominently. The cardinal belief and teaching of Awolowo is that development is impossible to attain without education. Writing in 1947 under the theme, *Education as a means of National Freedom*, Awolowo defined education in terms of the cultural process, and dynamics involving the whole man.

*"... Education is that process of physical and mental culture whereby a man's personality is developed to the fullest"*¹¹

Awolowo sees education also as a process of systematic instruction and experience which induces and helps a man bring out the best that is in him "in order to evolve an integrated personality"¹²

The latter definition re-echoes the classical doctrine which considers education as the formation and training of man in all ramifications, name-

ly physical, intellectual, political, moral, and religious. This idea is recapitulated in the dictum, *mens sana in corpore sano*. The former definition also agrees with Okafor's definition which considers education as a process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the development of his potentialities, and their maximum activation when necessary, according to right reason and to achieve thereby his self-fulfilment.¹³ So, for Awolowo, education is not just "the most potent weapon"¹⁴ with which man has to obtain knowledge and skill;¹⁵ it is through it also that man transforms his environment for better, and liberates himself and society from underdevelopment.

Since the foundation of education is literacy, that is, the ability to read and write and reflect logically and systematically, it follows that all must have a minimal level of education. This is necessary if we are to have an enlightened citizenry for rapid development. Primary education is good and should be made compulsory. But ideally, Awolowo opines that all citizens should have a minimum of secondary education and formal learning which terminates with what is now known as the Senior Secondary School. Better still, however, is tertiary education for those who are capable, intelligent and willing to be trained as highly qualified officials of the state. Awolowo insists, in fact, that education is a *conditio sine qua non* for leadership, be it at the private or public level of society. An illiterate priest will do more harm than good as the religious leader of his flock. An educated and trained worker is always preferred to a less skilled and illiterate one by employers of labour for he knows what to do and as a creative personnel, he is a great asset to the national economy. In a bid to ensure that all get the minimal primary education irrespective of their economic means and conditions, Awolowo proposed, the Free Primary Education policy in 1954 and began to implement it as the Leader of government in the West in 1955. Since then, he campaigned consistently and rigorously until it was adopted by the whole nation in 1976, and Free Education at all levels as a desired goal was included in our Constitution in 1979.¹⁶

The Role of the Church in Human Development

Religious development is an integral part of the development that Awolowo advocates for man. This is to be expected. Since he concedes the superiority of the spiritual domain to the material domain, one can say, in fact, that no programme of human development is adequate and complete without having a religious dimension. In fact, spiritual union

with God expressed in love for fellow men is the peak of human development. It is relevant to note that Awolowo does not consider the religious development of man the same in essence and form as his moral development. The religious consciousness and development of man is quite different from moral consciousness and development since moral principles and values are sufficiently discernible by reason alone as Kant has proved.¹⁷ But knowledge of religious truths requires much more than reason, hence, God, the subject matter of religion is, for Awolowo, knowable both by the act of faith and by "a process of rigorous and systematic reasoning".¹⁸ Awolowo also contends that socio-economic programmes for human development have floundered and failed because governments have failed to formulate them on the basis of theological truths and principles:

*"By all means, let our society change and grow in all socio-economic ramifications. But if our growth or change must endure, it must so to say be Christward. We must make Jesus Christ our corner-stone and we must also keep the goal and objective ideals which He enjoins upon us constantly before our eyes"*¹⁹

It is at this point that the 'Church' comes in within the parameter of development in the thoughts of Obafemi Awolowo. The Church exists for him both as a sociological fact and as a religious body. It is an association of men who believe and follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Because of the supremacy he has conceded to spiritual values over material ones, Awolowo regards the Church, known also as the People of God²⁰ as one of the most powerful organs of human development in the society. The other organ is the Government of the State. The function of the State is politics while religion is that of the Church. The purpose of the former is the socio-economic or material development whereas, the Church caters for the moral formation of men's conscience, and their spiritual needs. Writing in the chapter 'Politics and Religion in Voice of Reason, he has this to say:

*"The purpose of politics is first and last the material well-being of man. The purpose of Religion on the other hand is to do this, or to ensure by persuasion that this is done and to cater in addition, to the spiritual welfare of men"*²¹

In the process of bringing out the best in human personality and ensuring for him a healthy and happy life, the Church and the State have to join ranks, collaborate and work together. One area where both agencies can easily do so is in the area of education. Another area is that of health services. For him the eradication of ignorance, disease and want is a matter of utmost concern to both the Church and the State. However, Awolowo wants us to recognise that it was the religious bodies and their off-shoots and allies — the charitable organisations which were more or less in charge of providing and catering for people's educational and medical needs at the beginning.²² In those olden times, the primary functions of Government were the preservation of peace among the people at home, and the resistance of external foes. It is in modern times that Government has expanded its functions beyond the limits of bare security for individual citizens, to include their education, health, and general welfare and happiness.

Has this government's participation and control an adverse effect on development in the Nigerian society and policy today? Let us consider, for instance, the issue of education which Awolowo considers to be vital to development itself.

No doubt, opinions are divided on the matter. For some humanists, teachers and muslim jihadists under the labels of "neo-nationalist" and "patriots", government take-over of schools is the greatest thing that ever happened to Nigeria. Through it more progress has been made in the provision of knowledge to the masses. The mass literacy programme would not have been conceived and executed if education had remained in the hands of foreign missionaries and profit-making private proprietors and voluntary groups etc. On the other hand, other people like Church authorities think that the take over of schools by the state is the greatest tragedy that ever struck in the history of education in Nigeria. Their particular complaint is not so much that there is mass literacy, but that the quality and standard of moral and religious instruction and learning has fallen considerably.

The position of Awolowo as a politician, democrat and committed Christian is conciliatory. First, he argues that since the State is responsible and pays for education at all levels, "The State has full responsibility and control over all levels of education...."²³ But, on a second thought, he becomes aware of the fact that the state, although a very powerful juridico-political institution, is just one of the several institutions in the polity. Other bodies like the family, community, Church, voluntary or-

ganizations co-exist with it, and their members have fundamental and inalienable rights of thought and expression, of belief and association, and imparting of ideas and information²⁴. So he adds

*Notwithstanding the above, a government of the Unity Party of Nigeria will encourage the active collaboration of communities in the construction, development and management of primary, secondary and adult education institutions.*²⁵

In Awolowo's estimation, therefore, "full control" of education by the government is merely theoretical and not practical. It does not help the development of the people. Commenting during an interview granted to this writer, on the legal tussle on private schools between Archbishop Okogie and Jakande, the ex-governor of Lagos State, he says:

No doubt government who pays the piper should dictate the tune. But, that is not the way to do it. In private, I told my governors, time and again that we are losing a lot of advantages by making all schools public owned. In the realm of inspection, for example, no government could ever really, for the time being, or, in the foreseeable future time, run an inspectorate division that will effectively inspect all our schools. Therefore, I think, if a private agency that conforms to the law wants to own and run a school, it should be allowed to do so.

Apart from religious bodies owning their schools, all religious ministers, being teachers per se, should have the licence to call at any time to inspect their schools in order to keep up the standard of both teachers and students. In that case, every one would be on his toes.

*Now, because we separate everything from the Church, we deny ourselves of valuable services and assistance from them, and standard and quality have fallen. The quarrel which arose was not necessary.*²⁶

The point he is making in this apology for private schools is that in the development of man in the state, it is not only the government that should provide everything for its citizens; private agencies like the Church and wealthy individuals could and should be allowed to contribute their

quota as well. And rather than take over the management of these private schools, government should set the standard and send supervisors to inspect occasionally, and if possible subsidize to encourage them.

Much as Awolowo subscribes to the Church's teaching of the principle of subsidiarity and collaboration, he wants, however, the Church to recognise and maintain the principle of the division of labour and roles between the Church and the State in bringing about human welfare and development. The realm of the State is politics while that of the Church is religion. He thinks that the supremacy of religious values does not grant the right to any religious body to be involved in politics which belongs strictly speaking to the temporal realm of society.

It is even wrong for religious organizations to be irresponsibly partial in their pronouncements, or for their leaders, like the bishops and priests, to make themselves the mouth-pieces of the government of the day. This is unwise and dangerous. The moment a religious body becomes openly partisan like asking its members to vote for one party, it loses credibility and divides instead of uniting its members. From experience, such religious bodies "would sink or swim with the Government concerned"²⁷

Nevertheless, it is the duty and responsibility of the Church or any religious body to speak out the truth, fight for social justice and make known the will of God. It must also speak out, criticize and condemn evil always wherever it may be found in the society. But Awolowo thinks that good example by religious leaders speak louder than precepts and sermons.²⁸ For the Church to function freely and without inhibition, it must be independent of government and its patronage and must never be subordinated to its dictates or whims.²⁹ This does not, however, mean religious leaders must be intolerant of politicians or of their desire to manouvre for power, something which is peculiar and legitimate. In fact, constituted political authorities ought to be respected and obeyed. But like Aquinas,³⁰ Awolowo says that legislations and directives of government must never be incompatible with or contradictory to the laws of God. Neither must they disrespect the religious rights and values of the people. Why?

*"... since the earthly authority is ordained by God it is easy to infer that where Caesar's behests are manifestly repugnant to the injunctions of God, the latter must be made to prevail whatever the consequences"*³¹

In fact, it is Awolowo's conviction that a true Christian who practices politics would bring to bear the Christian beliefs and "seek by Christian methods to make the will of God sovereign and supreme in the society where he lives."³² However, as religious issues are often very sensitive and explosive, and as gross interferences and wranglings often occur between the Church and State, Awolowo proposes a secular state in which there is no official state religion.³³ Such a state separates the activities of the Church from those of government.

Evaluation

In this paper Awolowo paints clearly and vividly the picture of under-development, and goes on to postulate a wholistic and instrumentalist theory of development. An authentic human development is a balanced and harmonized development and it touches all the facets and circuits of human life physical, intellectual, political, moral, spiritual. Awolowo shows that no one can claim to be fully developed since we, and all nations are still in the process of actualizing our in-born talents.

The place of education in development is emphasized and cannot be disputed, and it is the catalyst and motor of his theory. Without the education of man, development cannot be accomplished. Besides, the Church, like other groups in the society, can play and should play its divinely chosen role and make its invaluable contribution to human development. This is in collaboration and partnership with the government which also has human welfare and well-being as its goal and scope. The government should realize on its part that it is unnecessary and counter-productive to take over and control such enterprises initiated by private agencies and bodies like the Church in the areas of education, health, labour, culture, etc. The joint efforts of both the Church and the State should be appreciated if undertaken under the canopy and condition of Constitutional separation or secularity of the polity.

All these aspects of Awolowo's theory of human development are reasonable and tally with the view-point of the Church on development. But certainly reservations exist about some of what he says: The first reservation refers to Awolowo's anthropology and the use of the term 'mind' in particular. The impression one gets is that the mind is the seat of man, and hence the bias for the education and formation of the mind. But for Awolowo to think that the human mind is the nerve-centre of man's activity as he had elaborated above, is to down grade inadvertently the significance of the soul and to end up in rationalistic psychologism.

Let it be said that, generally, in Awolowo's corpus, references to the nature of man lack the touch of precision. It is a pity he did not finish, before he died, the work he promised to write about man and his education.

Another area of reservation is with regards to change in human conditions. Awolowo strongly believes in socio-economic mobility, and by extension, spiritual development. In deed one can and should change one's present condition for the better. Thus, those who fail today can hope to pass their examinations tomorrow if they work hard. But, one wonders if this is true in all cases. If the conditions of poverty can be changed in all cases, why is it that not all men are wealthy? Or, who likes really to be poor and remain in the state of need to the extent that he has to beg for his sustenance? It may be that the issue of poverty is beyond socio-logical theories.

Conclusion

These are just some comments on Awolowo's thoughts and writings. From all indications then, Awolowo has not said everything about development just as no one has heard the last about man and his problems.

Notes and References

1. This article is an adaptation of a paper which was originally presented under the same title at the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) Conference which took place at the Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Owerri, 2nd - 5th of April, 1991.
2. O. Awolowo, *The People's Republic*, (Ibadan: Oxford University Press 1968), p. 299.
3. *Path to Nigerian Greatness*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension publishing Ltd., 1981), p. 57ff.
4. Awolowo makes a distinction between economic growth and economic development. "Economic Growth" is "outward evidence of the process of economic development while "economic development" is the "underlying determinant of economic". It is the qualitative index used to describe not the quantitative measures of growing economy but the economic, social and other qualitative changes that produce the growth. *Convocation Address*, (University

- of Ile Ife, Unpublished, 1973), p. 4.
5. O. Awolowo, *The People's Republic*, Op. cit. p. 211.
 6., *Path to Nigerian Greatness*, Op. cit. p. 128.
 7. Idem p. 129
 8. F. Copleston, *Aquinas*, (Middlesex Penguin Books Ltd, 1955), p. 155.
 9. O. Awolowo, *Voice of Reason*, Akure: Fagbamigbe publishers, 1981), p. 180.
 10., *Path to Nigerian Greatness* Op. cit, p. 129
 11., *Voice of Reason* Op. cit, p. 163.
 12. Idem, p. 12.
 13. F. Okafor, *Philosophy of Education and Third World Perspective*, (Virginia Brunswick publishing Company, 1981), p. 16.
 14. O. Awolowo, *Voice of Reason*, Op.cit.p. 163.
 15. T. Brameld, "My contention is that if education is to become meaningful, it must become powerful. It is, in fact the one power left in the world that is greater than the forces of nature that man has now enslaved. Only the power of education is capable of controlling the other powers that man has gained and will use either for his annihilation or transformation." *Education as power*, (New York: Fawcett Publications Inc. 1965). p. 12.
 16. Before Nigeria started Free Primary Education in 1976, and included free education at all levels as a goal in her constitution in 1979, 71 nations had by 1974 done so. cfr. Gani Fawehinmi, *People's Right to Education at All Levels*. (Ibadan: Sketch publishing Co. Ltd. 1974).
 17. I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, (1788).
 18. O. Awolowo, *The People's Republic*, Op.cit., p. 230.
 19. O. Awolowo, *Address to the First Synod of Anglican Diocese of Ijebu Remo*, (Shagamu, unpublished, 1984).
 20. *Vatican II Document on Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, (1964) Art. 9.
 21. O. Awolowo, *Voice of Reason*, Op.cit., p. 180.
 22. Idem.
 23. U.P.N. Directorate, *U.P.N. Policy Papers*, (No date), p. 6.
 24. F. Ogunmodede, *Awolowo's Socio-political philosophy*, (Rome: 1986), p. 222.
 25. U.P.N. Directorate, Op.cit., p. 6.
 26. O. Awolowo, *Interview with Rev. Fr. Francis Ogunmodede*, (Lagos: Unpublished, 1984).
 27. O. Awolowo *Voice of Reason*, Op.cit., p. 183.
 28., What does the Nation expect of the Church today? in *Voice of Wisdom*, (Ibadan: Fagbamigbe publishers, 1981), p. 68.

29. O. Awolowo, *Voice of Reason*, Op.cit., p. 183.
30. A. D'Intreves, "Introduction" *Aquinas Selected Writings*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell publishers Ltd. 1959) p. xxx.
31. O. Awolowo, *Voice of Reason*, Op.cit., p. 183.
32. Ibidem.
33. O. Awolowo, *Thoughts on Nigerian Constitution*, (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1966). p. 150.

Rev. Dr. F.I. Ogunmodede is the Head, Department of Philosophy, Seminary of SS Peter & Paul, Ibadan, Nigeria.