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The Influence of Christianity in Africa: From Ancient Roots to Modern Controversies

1. Introduction

Africa, a fertile ground for Christianity, saw its spread and influence in every part of the continent, leaving an indelible mark. The impact of Christianity on African culture is manifold. Spiritual beliefs such as monotheism, the afterlife, and creation are deeply rooted in African folklore, showcasing the resilience of African cultures in the face of change. The church's image as a tree, more than a metaphor, is based on the African concept of spirit and matter, serving as a bridge between the living and the dead. This resilience is evident when significant indigenous feasts are Christianized. In return, the rich and diverse African cultures inscribed their imprint on Christianity, further demonstrating their adaptability. If the spread of Christianity were a powerful agent of social change in Africa, it would be a mistake to understand it as a unilinear, fundamental change. The regions and times when the change process was most powerful were when European forms least influenced Christianity. (Jacobsen, 2021) (Jedwab et al., 2022) (Atiya, 2023) (Busia, 2023) (Christopher, 2023) (Dickson & Ellingworth, 2024) (Fafunwa, 2022) (Decker & McMahon, 2020) (Troup, 2022) (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2020)

As Christianity took root in the African socio-economic landscape, it adapted to traditional values and social relations, showcasing its potential to serve as an agent for social change and resistance in Africa. African Christianity, akin to complex, associated African cosmologies of hybridity, is a rich amalgam of diverse beliefs and practices, predominating one reality. Just as the dual nature of the African spirit world exemplifies notions of duality and duplicity, Christianity has also accommodated itself to complex and nuanced African views of reality. This adaptability is a testament to the richness and diversity of African cultures. These progressive adaptations increased during the colonial period, when Christianity became one of the few forms of institutional stability on the African continent. Furthermore, these ideas of institutional legitimacy through colonial resistance

were subsequently adapted to the specific local documentaries that earned their iconography, symbolism, and widespread patronage by recounting the stories of African heroes who contributed to the fight against colonial forces that embedded their deliberations and social media reform at the moment, and for the near future.

2. Ancient Roots of Christianity in Africa

It is anyone's guess how long Christianity has been in Africa. Tradition holds that Matthew and Bartholomew formed Christian communities in Ethiopia and Egypt, and this is mentioned in The Book of John, one book that did not make it into the canon of the New Testament. However, this is not likely because ancient Ethiopia or Axum was not Christianized until the 4th century. However, the Christian tradition in Ethiopia persisted very early, at least as early as the 3rd century, and most likely, there were Christian communities at least after the Council of Nicaea in 325. There is much evidence to work off, but it is hard to determine precisely when or how these phenomena arose, and one must take a humble, cautious stance.

What is clear is that Christianity in Africa arose very early, most likely from two directions. The first almost certainly went from Palestine into Egypt and the surrounding area. Theopolis Tradition says that Bartholomew or Matthew first spread Christianity in Ethiopia in the 1st century, and both are often said to have been working there and in India. This was a period of great turmoil and upheaval in Palestine when it was under Roman occupation and an area of grand commerce and intellectual exchange.

3. Spread of Christianity in Africa

Precious Litho Modise Kharikoe, a Motswana-born writer and thinker, is interested in theological studies, which she believes will help better understand the world, academic philosophy, African philosophy, and the development of Africa, which she is passionate about. Ms. Kharikoe is an undergraduate student. Her interest in theological studies goes beyond just reading the biblical texts; she uses them to challenge theological studies' skin. Christianity, for her, is not just a praxis or a belief but the catalyst of much knowledge. In her work, she deliberates on theological issues like the identity and the existence of God in the world, religious plurality in Botswana, the development of women in Africa, and so on. Her views on theological matters carry her otherwise demanding lifestyle from exam room to exam room.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, it was argued that ancient encounters with European Christians in Africa failed to impact them significantly. This Euro-centred position was influenced by contemporary notions of crusades and colonialism and the inherited Enlightenment emphasis on Christianity as an agent of reason or 'civilisation'.

The religious practices and texts of the earliest African converts and their descendants were typically dismissed as hardly Christian. Ideologically driven 19th and 20th-century scholars and societies created an ideological divide. The New Testament appointed Apostle from Tarsus to the nations—Saint Paul had addressed critical segments of the Semitic (bond) and members of family-based Gentile (free) audiences. The bonds were only valued to the extent that their deeds facilitated the existence and lifestyle of the master. Naturally, these defended the family-based social structure. Their belonging determines people's place and lifestyle in a particular family group (social division/household). It is unsurprising that ancient Christianity quickly converted to these structures or that these structures helped generate considerable information on different Christian communities. The Apostle from Tarsus had been explicitly clear on the reward of loyalty to the City governors; rebellion was treated as treason to God. With such clear support from one of the stars of Christianity, why would people not move to a community which ensured its members could quickly move to a life of relative ease?

4. Christianity and Colonialism in Africa

It is not surprising that Christianity grew in influence as the seeds of European colonialism began to be sown in Africa. At the opening of the colonial period at the end of the 19th century, perhaps one-half of the continent was already Christian and about a fifth had been drawn increasingly into leaves an abiding intellectual and religious mystery - the most rapidly Christianized large population on earth in the long sweep of Christian history. These regions were colonised in the 19th and 20th centuries by Europeans. The European powers of the colonial era were poor Christian evangelicals themselves, expending little treasure on religious outreach overseas. However, they did not allow religion to be driven from the hearts of the domestic populations of the colonies, and they had little compunction about using the skills and institutions of the Christian organisations they found when they arrived to achieve their political, social, and financial objectives in the new lands.

The colonial era in Africa lasted little more than half a century (c. AD 1850-1960). However, so many fundamental transformations occurred in African societies during that period that the problems of East Africa "became different" from those in the continent's pre-colonial era. The most formidable of those changes were demographic, economic, social, and political, rather than religious in and of themselves. However, Christianity was often the "fighter and prophet" of those social changes. It pointed to the desecration of the African way of life by colonialism, and it was a living, strengthening example that Africans could change; they did have the right to make demands of their own, and they could and should live more modern, European-like lives.

5. Christianity and African Nationalism

One of the most potent aspects of Christianity in Africa is its widespread popularity as the foundational philosophy of resistance to colonialism. Christianity was the critical ideological foundation of African resistance to colonial rule during the independence movements of the late colonial era. Christianity was also the primary legitimising force used by European colonisers to convince themselves that they were participating in an appropriate progressive movement to uplift the savage heathen and remove the pagan relics of African culture through colonisation and conversion. This is not an easy development because, for the previous several centuries, Christianity had been used as a tool of oppressive hegemonic political control over an Africa engaged in an intense cultural struggle to resist external and internal assaults and build a cohesive African ethnic family consisting of its various national components and the Diaspora.

Several African writers and theologians have examined the role of Christianity in African nationalism. Many among the generation charged with leading the struggles for independence were products of mission schools and orphanages or sent away for further training by the missions. Their most important early exposure to the world began through the doors of the mission schools taught by missions that had come to Africa with promises of outraged assistance and had become a major financial and political force in the colonies' affairs. They left these schools with an understanding of Christianity that was often very different from anything contemplated by the founders of the modern African churches. Unlike the walls in the European-built schools, classrooms, chapels, and dormitories, walls built to separate the Africans from the outside world were not strong enough to contain and hold the ideas developing in the minds of Christian students. The received ambition was changed and nurtured through the teachings of

Christianity. In pursuing a European education provided and financed by the mission influenced by the Faustian efforts of Christianity, these students often gained a new sense of their potential and an awareness of the disparity of European behaviour in its dealings with Africa. Yoked to a failure to live up to the Christian teachings they had received, European behaviour produced a gnawing discontent that found immediate reflection in the physical oppressions and political subordination found in their homelands. As dissatisfaction with being exposed to an alien educational system grew, the problems of damaged self-respect, longing to fit into the new world, economic discrimination of a place in that world, and, most important, the retarding idea of a place in Africa, created a climate that offered young, enthusiastic converts a larger mission that included the desire to make daily lives at home reflect the urgencies and promises of God.

6. Contemporary Christian Movements in Africa

Except in Ethiopia, only a handful of people were Christian in Sub-Saharan Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, by the century's end, there were, in fact, more Christian 'adherents' than Muslims. We cannot understand this striking religious revolution in Africa without looking at the work of widely diverse individuals and movements, many of which have existed briefly before they disappeared. Here, we discuss some of contemporary Christianity's fundamental movements. After considering the revival of Christianity in Egypt, we will dwell briefly on Christianity's relationship with apartheid in South Africa. Then, we examine Christianity's revival on the continent by discussing its place in independent Africa and its competition with Islam.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, some important new Christian movements have emerged in Africa. The most interesting is the network of mega-churches, a Nigerian Pastor, and several Catholic and so-called 'spirit prophet' movements supported, the biggest of which. Established and new churches are actively promoting Christianity's expansion, especially amongst the less educated and poor majority. In contrast to these mass or middle-level movements, the spirit prophet churches, led by illuminated and, at times, very wealthy founder-prophets, seem to attract more African elites.

7. Christianity and African Traditional Religions

We mention the challenge that the high growth of Christianity in Africa poses to African Traditional Religions (ATR). Thus, Christianity has become a part of the social changes destroying ATR. However, the interaction between Christianity and ATR is richer and more ambiguous than that vision of assimilation or

destruction. Christianity integrates elements of ATR, and Christianity ends up surrounding itself with popular orthopraxy. Christianity maintains cultural patterns that are not so much Christian as they are of the pre-Christian religious world of the converts, resulting in African Christianity having original characteristics. We relate the existence of many concrete and personal deities in Classical ATR with the more personal and concretist vision of God in African Christianity. We study the role of martyrs, confessors, demons, witches, rituals, and exorcisms.

African Traditional Religions are under pressure in much of contemporary Africa, with hundreds of millions of Africans in the process of converting from ATR. A few hundred million Africans, mostly in rural areas and slums and some among the urban poor, believe in and practice traditional religions involving many deities, rituals and festivals, and notions of good and bad magic. When people convert from ATR, they abandon their gods, spirits, ancestors, healing practices, and moral norms. Their culture is weakened. We are concerned about the relationship between Christianity and ATR. Still, the narrative we endorse is not that of the destruction of a type of religion or ATR's adaptation into Christianity because we believe that adaptation works both ways. Since medieval times, when St. Francis of Assisi of Umbria, Italy, preached to the sultan of Egypt and St. Thomas Aquinas wrote about the permissibility of belief in barbarian deities, Christianity has interacted with other religions, such as the Scandinavian, Baltic, and Mongol religions in the north, and the Vodou, Maya, Bantú or Zulu religions. Throughout history, many conversions have involved adaptations and changes; these conversions have been evolutionary. Through its interaction with ATR, we argue that Christianity undergoes an Africanization process, showing that many Christianities exist in Africa. However, the influence of Christianity on ATR has been exceptionally high in colonial times, and these influences have included texts, Christian clergy and missionaries, schooling, protection rituals that do not require attendance at church, three pillars of Western civilisation, summarised in the phrase Buzbee and Readers. Because not all the deities present in ATR are equal, the more excellent contact of Christianity with friends, enemies, and neutral characters, the more the divine and the demon become personified as saints, monsters, and evil spirits, Nexus. When so much of ATR has always reacted to the new historical and social surroundings and the new denominations of Christianity expel, under duress, the deities of ATR, it is the charismatic branch of Christianity that, through personal contact, begins a process of amalgamation and appropriation of gods.

African Christianity shows pre-Christian elements. The attraction of converts from their old religion; these needs are especially anxiety caused by danger and excitations of significant events; separation from the world, its goods, and its desires; decay of the customs of the people around while they grow around; explanation of the environment, which does not correspond to people's expectations; and the need for and examples of moral behaviour with a culture that the aspirant tries to acquire.

8. Christianity and Politics in Africa

In modern Africa, one of the most common roles of Christian churches is to provide criticism and alternative leadership in the face of an oppressive state rather than support that state. In many instances, churches have had access to the international media and networks in ways other types of autonomous organisations have not, transmitting and acting as transmitters of human rights norms. It will be a great irony if an authoritarian regime bolsters civil society in Africa in efforts to sustain control over what might be the only institutional actors with some ability to retaliate against a repressive regime - and by doing so, reverse even some of the otherwise inevitable negative trends in human rights practices.

However, while Christianity tends to have normative liberties beyond particular social orders and ethnic or cultural organisations, church-state relations are by no means confined to the former; why should they be in Africa, where the motive of imperialism, in one of its various forms and effects, has ever been present? With particular ethical perspectives, Christian churches have attracted material and moral support in many settings and played pivotal political roles. Furthermore, as much as all social and political actors reproduce ideological and normative cultures which define the conjectured (as against the institutionalised) rules of the game, the position and mutual relations of Christian churches are only a subset of such behavioural anomalies; again, in an African or indeed in any other example, this only tends to be exacerbated the more reform and revitalisation take place and the less the initial conditions fall short of the ideal.

9. Christianity and Social Issues in Africa

Whether Christianity has been a progressive or regressive force in Africa is an open question and, indeed, a question of controversy. To some extent, this controversy involves the issue of how much historical memory the African Church has preserved of the role played by its missionary predecessor institutions. For many 20th-century social critics and political leaders, it was the witness of the missionaries to justice and freedom, together with their practical work for those

values, which explains the conversion of Africa to the Christian faith despite what was sometimes said and done by colonial governments, their agents, and vested interests. Many Africans believe that they have been offered Christianity as a religion, all too divorced from the social message of the New Testament.

Let us reflect on some of the most significant problems facing the Church in Africa today as it rediscovers and proclaims its social message. Chief among them is the continuing problem of poverty. On the one hand, Africa is currently the fastest-growing area in terms of world population. Still, on the other, it contains the enormous already-existing pockets of danger from malnutrition. As large numbers of Africans move to Christianity, to education, and towns, they inevitably raise their standard of living and adopt lifestyles increasingly dependent on industrially produced goods, which are imported. However, there is a growing and justified feeling that the new leaders of Africa sometimes use the old Western pattern of life to which they have gained access more to their advantage than in the service of their people.

10. Christianity and Gender in Africa

There is a broad consensus that African societies that hosted ancient African indigenous religions developed gender concepts that attached equal worth to women and men, although acknowledging the distinct roles that the Creator had allotted to them. The gender principles of complementarity and gender equality were respected in theory and practice. The introduction of Christianity in Africa in both its Orthodox and its ancient Oriental forms had a significant effect since Christianity was instrumental in developing gender concepts on a foundation that downgraded the female sex. The mission traditions developed norms, belittled and disparaged the female sex that savoured hate speech. In contrast to the commandments of the Creator, the mission of Christianity taught that the female sex was guilty. The white mission Christians were superior, the male mission Christians were next in line, and the female mission Christians were at the bottom. These teachings, which Catholics and Protestants had in common, did not reflect the message of Christ.

A critical view underpins the present essay, revealing that the inequality between the sexes is traceable back to the concepts of early Christianity and touching on the fact that a few thinkers have already criticised these concepts. Nevertheless, this critical debate is still under-represented in theological faculties and journals. Feminism, in contrast to this, has laid a foundation where it documents and criticises a patriarchal power structure in society, in faith communities, and in

theology to develop collective theories that have permanently contributed to the public debate and are, therefore, beyond the niche gender discussion. Christ questioned all existing power structures, not excepting those of His time. Christ empowered women, and no women who sought His assistance were turned away. Within the group of disciples, Christ also gravitated to the first three months after the resurrection since it was to the women that the prior experience belonged. Christ did not establish any sacraments, tacking on guidelines that deal with sexual orientation, contraception, or duties to corrupt disciples. Christ unleashed the potential of woman and man equally, the possibility to prepare for the Kingdom of God by doing what is lined out in the Philosophy of the Lord's Prayer.

11. Christianity and Health Care in Africa

Christianity and Islam have shown themselves in Africa strongly associated with distinctive health care and social service forms. While Islam's connections with health care are long-standing and central factors in its early and rapid spread, the association between Christianity and health care became much more significant in the 19th century, both in missionary Christianity's European home and in Africa. Some Christian healthcare projects in Europe, many of those established by missionaries beyond Europe, continue in the 21st century to be among the most advanced in global healthcare NGOs. Notable Christian influences in public health have sometimes been noted, such as their role in eliminating traditional practices that incubate disease-bearing mosquitoes.

Medical knowledge has been an issue in debates about the nature of African knowledge and intelligence since before the colonial creation of artificial borders was complete. There are differences among the traditional medical practices in African societies, of course, but a genuine history of Africa's articulate clinical experiences of disorders and their therapeutic responses emerges only with the rise of classical textual sources and oral archives. Some descriptions are ancient, such as medical papyri, writings, and inscribed objects dating back to 1600 BCE, when they were excavated in Africa.

12. Christianity and education in Africa

The arrival of Christianity in Africa has shown perhaps its most significant influence in the age-old appeal for learning and education in almost all traditional African societies. From the earliest form of Christian mission, which involved limited assistance in reading the Bible, Christian education has initiated and maintained the more recent educational framework in most parts of the continent. Across African highlands, in southern Africa, in the central Nyanza Plateau of

Tanzania, in Senegambia, and the river and coast towns of the Niger Delta, Christian missions have, since the very early centuries of the Christian era, left indelible marks of their extensive educational activities.

The responses from various traditional African communities to the new Christian theology taught by these early missions are not well documented. However, goals such as teaching the latest script for reading the Gospels as a type of literary work or the Ten Commandments as a norm of behaviour constitute goals that cut across the boundaries of the traditional African people, establishing a continuous link between past and present educational activities on the African continent.

13. Christianity and Economic Development in Africa

This paper examines the hypothesis that the spread of Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa is significantly and negatively associated with economic development within the region. The analysis proceeds using country and region-level filtering methods, and the religious composition of African ethnic groups is examined. In both cases, the hypothesis is strongly supported. The observed association remains highly significant, even after conditioning on the possible effects of many other variables.

The nature of the relationship reflects the proposition that Christianity might have played a negative role in Africa. As the empirical results are based on current survey data, the case is based on modern Africa rather than a long-term historical study. However, where the hegemony of Christianity is substantial, there is a good deal of evidence that its historical roots can be traced back well before the colonial period. Since the era of European colonial occupation came with massive exploitation and plundering, Christian influence on Africa goes back many centuries. During these pre-colonial centuries, the role of Christianity in Africa was often that of an elite-serving partner, complicit in the slavery and plundering of Africa's populations. More recently, a great many critics maintain that present-day Christianity in Africa has become a primary ideology advocating the benevolent attitude of the international community, one that drives most of the Western-led aid operations providing negative support for political systems based on corruption and the use of force.

14. Christianity and Environmental Issues in Africa

In recent years, questions about the relationship between Christianity and the environment have become central elements of the broader discussion about a distinctively Christian development and contribution to improving the shattered

worlds in which so many human beings reside. Christianity and environmental issues in Africa are fundamental because the global environmental movement and the northern nation states that represent it often attempt to impose global environmental conventions drawn from a Western Enlightenment understanding of the environment on African states and people that different historical and religious experiences have shaped. For this reason, contemporary religious thinkers have sometimes argued that the conception of the created world familiar to the African traditional religions and the Abrahamic faiths can serve as a critical alternative to the individualistic and instrumentalist articulations of the world found in some post-Enlightenment Western environmental discourses.

In Africa, like the rest of the world, opposition between a mainstream 'why worry about the Earth, when God has promised us redemption in heaven' Christian theology has been met by a more positive, for want of a better word, 'ecological' Christian theology that sees human responsibility for care of the earth as a requirement of Christianity. In Nigeria, the construction of the Itapai hydroelectric project was criticised because some of the most important Oron divinities might die should the river that the dam would create be flooded. This new responsibility is often linked to theology that emphasises the nature of plant and animal life as part of God's creation and to understanding contemporary environmental dangers that threaten human existence and other life forms. The exploitation of the earth is to be minimized, for maximum exploitation will exhaust and destroy the earth that God brought about. The continental-wide World Council of Churches' document on Christianity and the Environment has also influenced African Christians. The WCC's comments have often led to other Christian statements about the environment, such as the SACC's comments on strip mining in South Africa. This document emphasised the Christian duty to live in harmony with nature. "Faithful Alertness," the document continues, the Christian care of the planet both in the name of future generations and for the sake of the overall natural order, and as a requirement of Christian faith.

It is tempting to place this focus on the relationship between Christianity and Africa as a broken land into some post-colonial African Christian awakening that will place African Christianity in opposition to European or North American Christianity. After all, from congregational vocals to drumming and dancing, from lay leadership to a world that is filled with spiritual power, much that is considered 'authentic' about Christianity and Africa is also positioned as religion 'against the world', in this case, against the modern West. However, that last

assertion, 'religion against the world', is in question. For one thing, the 'world' against which African Christianity is arrayed is hardly a cultural sphere that has nowhere outside of the Christian mission. Instead, it is a 'world' created by the crosscurrents of black identity and white power, the 'pernicious racial habit' that involved 'the coloniser and the colonised at once, such that neither could escape his racialised dichotomy'.

15. Christianity and Peacebuilding in Africa

Being a building project and a high call, the practice and tradition of peacebuilding—technical matters of peace—along with quality valuations remains frontiers for multidisciplinary studies and scholarship, ranging from principles and underpinnings to applications. It embraces causative factors of war and peace in conflict management, resolution, and transformation, embodied with human rights and actions for justice and a just society. Both pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Africa are not new to conflict, war, and peacebuilding. Work and processes are as old as humanity. Christianity has subsequently been present in the continent and, therefore, is central to the continent's peacebuilding history, present, and future; thus, this work rolls Communio Sanctorum et Ecclesia.

Christianity's presence and influence in Africa have been visibly profound and unique—heralding vast numbers and geographical representation, quantum activities and programs, institutions and human and material resources, and excellent diversity of many kinds, including conflicts, with the social witness of pastoral action. To the extent that specific colonial legacy skewed towards the three divergent spheres of religion, social ethics, and ethnic division of African socio-political systems, Christianity in Africa—Africa's peacemaking and peacebuilding activities—remain central issues in many peace and conflict investigations and earnest campaigns for sustainable development and the common good of a peaceful world. For these and other out-of-sight important triggers, so much emphasis and multidisciplinary tourism on why the continent's main religions—such as traditional African religions, Islam, and Christianity, which as a particular topic of the work is receiving due momentum—are targets of varied attention in peace studies and peacemaking.

16. Christianity and Human Rights in Africa

Although funding from churches in the West helped local community leaders form human rights organisations during and after the independence period, in the post-Cold War era, churches (and partly as a response to the controversy over their possible roles) have taken and sought to revitalise their roles on human rights

issues. The issues have multiplied, for with the growth of communications media, particularly television, news of distant human rights disasters comes into the living rooms of church members. Immediately after the Cold War, several new African churches on Nigeria's model reassumed their early functions and resumed active roles in human rights issues; overwhelmingly, those new African churches on Nigeria's model have been disruptive to their societies, not affirming human rights. Concern for human rights is broader, more widespread, and deeper among Catholic bishops than among the leaders of the Protestant mainline.

Sexton showed that the fewer the systems of social stratification in a country, the more likely Catholic bishops of that country are to announce concern for human rights. The fewer the systems of social stratification operate within the different communities of a single church, the more likely the church leaders are to announce concern for human rights. Palestine showed that newer and larger Catholic churches in Africa had recognised and announced concern for human rights more frequently than had the old established Catholic churches. These authors have given a radical explanation for their findings. They argue that the stronger the obligation of church teaching, the less likely the church leaders are to prioritise human rights concerns.

17. Christianity and Interfaith Dialogue in Africa

Over two millennia, Christianity in Africa has become a profoundly African religion. Its spiritual, social, cultural, intellectual, and political influence has been intense. How much and in what ways Christianity can contribute to Africa's ever more peaceful and sustainable development have been concerns in which Africans of several generations have significantly been engaged. How Christian virtues and theology fit with traditional African religions, and Islam has been a central issue. That issue is being debated today in the global scene, as the question of the relation of Islam to life in a predominantly Christian European Union becomes central to European discussions and an African one. Four posts open various ways to link African issues to global general concerns, 'African' and 'Christian' concerns, and how Christianity matters in Africa.

A danger in a book that links 'influence' to a specific subject is that the former is assumed to flow uni-directionally from the subject of reference and to be uncomplicated. A serious consideration of the subject matter held in this volume shows that not all influence flows from the Christian elements in the exchanges. Not all influences are peaceful. Umes and social integrity in some measure with the aid of church affiliation, and because the general Christian concern is about life

enhancement of the total membership of any given society, such an increase can be most meaningful through those who have long carefully enjoyed that membership but who had had less than a total share in social institutions.

18. Christianity and Technology in Africa

This paper has discussed various ways Christianity has impacted Africa for centuries. We end by considering one of the most contemporary issues facing Africans—technological development—and suggest how the Christian religion might help address some of the difficulties accompanying such developments.

Technological developments have brought about rapid changes in the lifestyles of many Africans in the last decade or so. At an increasingly fast rate, Africans are leaving the streets as places of leisure and social intercourse and becoming eating and drinking establishments. What has also come about is a sea change in the role of the African woman – socio-religiously and from the economic point of view, who once was Africa's stability. However, introducing technology and metro-urban complexes into Africa has complicated the simplicity and tranquillity of African family and community social life.

In light of recent developments facing the African cultures' social dynamics, Fred Adagbasa interprets the "complications" in African family and community life in these terms: The effect of this newfound prosperity is the paradox that now exists. Increased sophistication and affluence have led to an increased desire for urbanisation as Africans forsake traditional occupations and lifestyles. However, as they become more urban and modern, they also move to a more isolated, perhaps impersonal lifestyle.

This does not suggest that technology and urbanisation are not welcome in Africa but that the impact of these changes needs to factor into the national and social policies that development strategy implies. These developments have also affected the political economy, social policies, local aid organisation strategies, and Asian social welfare. In turn, this is causing uproar among some nations, wishing to remove their people from emerging class struggles in the states of the world.

19. Christianity and Migration in Africa

Introduction This chapter examines the extensive two-way relationship between Christianity and migration in sub-Saharan Africa. This intertwining is based upon data from diverse geographies and communities throughout the continent and the history of the Christian religion in Africa. This evidence is understood in numerous resonances between aspects of the Christian faith, experience, and

various dimensions of human migration. This collective experience has been and continues to be encased in significant dialogues and controversies within the Christian churches in Africa, in the work of church communities at particular historical moments, and at both national and international levels in Christian witness. Such dialogues and controversies have implications that extend well beyond ecclesiastical boundaries. There are mutual influences on various scales between migration and the Christian presence, encounters and participation located in Africa and held by Africans in non-African and African environments.

African Aspects of the Christian Religion Before examining the range of relationships between Christianity and migration, it is helpful to acknowledge particular African aspects and dimensions of the Christian religion. Firstly, it is essential to note the presence of indigenous African shamans, holy men and similar doctors, wizards, sorcerers, and soothsayers accessible through local religions, paleo-Christian syncretistic communities, and Ethiopian and Coptic ethnic identities. This peculiar aspect of African sanctity is, at the time, being investigated by African Christian traditions and practices. Secondly, ordinary faith thoroughly permeates the daily life of African societies; prayers are a social event, and so are miracles. The prospect of ethical salvation, the rite of baptism and men's initiation are of the utmost importance for Equatorial Africa initiates and are accessible to both communities. These particular African features are only a few examples; plenty of others influence the Christian religion from the inside and throughout the Western World.

20. Christianity and Diaspora Communities in Africa

Throughout this chapter, we have attempted to focus on the internal Africanization of Christianity. However, there is a significant African Christian community in the diaspora, particularly in North America and Europe, and it is worthwhile to offer a brief analysis of an institution, now itself marked by Africa's influence and vitality, as an intermediary between the American or European and African experiences. Diaspora Christians, especially in the United States, give a significant share of their revenues to business enterprises and supply their fellow Africans with vital purchases. Reports on the clerical qualities of suitors from Africa who hope to make lasting commitments to diaspora African-American Christian women, canting exceptional social status, attract the attention, speculations, and violent reactions of African-American leaders. African Americans are proving that the star of black Christianity shines in the expanses of worldwide blackness.

The close relationship between religion and the solidarities forged by a common perception that in historical times (in the age of the "Egyptian dynasty" and "African empire"), African societies devised a religious belief system that was so rich, all-embracing, and relevant that it carried Africans not only through their low points but also to the apogee of world history. It was a prelude to and a practice for their spiritual revitalisation. At the same time, it demonstrated to foreigners the theatricality, the style, the persistence, and the organisational strengths of all the inhabitants of "the Black Jerusalem," the underground church of the "Negro Atlantis." The alliance has vanquished racial discrimination. It has been so successful in dissolving both the insidious mythologies associated with lynchings, deportations, and burnings and urban-renewal-grubbing social integration. Its oars no longer ply in the worldwide, turbulent, and generous river of black African underdevelopment's cooperation and repeated demands for reparations.

21. Christianity and Popular Culture in Africa

An essential characteristic of popular culture is its "democratic" nature. In a primarily oral and non-literate society, it is popular culture that became the central crucible for national history, stories, their retelling, and their celebration. Popular culture was an excellent repository of local myths, fables, festivals, and the daily rituals of life. This dimension of popular culture is often disregarded in academic literature. However, it resurfaces whenever we reflect on the nation-building process in countries with an emerging sense of identity. Celebrating weddings, funerals, and feast days, during which the whole community participates, has immense anthropological and cultural value. These ceremonies help shape a person's self-awareness, expectations, resentments, and hopes.

Popular Christianity has been the "legitimator" and reassurer of the community. Anyone travelling through Africa will have noticed that religious space often liberally encroaches on secular space. Homes and shops often bear the four uppercase letters "G," "O," "D," and "T." There are also the notorious names of minibus taxis - "Praise the Lord," "There is God," "According to God" - and beer parlours bearing similar names. People have learned to live comfortably with both the sacred and the profane. Some have turned this into a lucrative business. At the turn of the century, Western missionaries would have noticed, with some discomfort, the familiar scenes of elderly, wise villagers who are supposed to be the repository of tradition, of magical powers and remedies, as well as the practice of stigmatisation of people considered guilty of impious acts. They are invariably a problem for the Christian clergy. The villagers respected them as people who

could raise their age-old voices to invoke and exorcise ancestral spirits and alleviate misfortune.

22. Christianity and Literature in Africa

Williams' essay is perhaps the most esoteric topic in this volume. Some foundational remarks, preliminary to the specific matter with which we are concerned, may help establish the parameters of examining Christianity and literature in Africa. Literature, of the kind of concern here, is part of an art, precisely, a craft, fundamentally of knowing. Not, it must be said, primarily of such knowing as is involved in what is called today the "sciences" even though the sciences essentially impose an "aesthetic" category onto thinking about the world. Proper knowledge of the world as it is lived, that everyday reality which philosophers since Aristotle (the saint) have been at pains to state and demonstrate the immensity of, is couched in art forms, within which poetry occupies the dominant position. Dualism, although a favourite mode, more specifically and frequently of religious than philosophical or scientific debate, is an aesthetic issue. Useful and often entertaining, a critique of its origin rather than its sporadic venting points must handle it. Such a critique's location is sought, and the power of analysis carves the logic for controlling its emergence through the mode of creative intelligence called "metaphor," one of art's remarkable offspring.

23. Christianity and Art in Africa

In many parts of the world, including Africa, the history of art is characterised and determined by a great variety of cultural and religious traditions. Africa indeed experienced a kind of creativity spurt in art and architecture with the arrival of Islam. Even in that period, however, Islamic art on the African tube was not irreversibly differentiated from its Christian heritage. This point is evident in the work of Abbo, an almost legendary Basilean monk of St. Catherine's on Mount Sinai. Though most of his work was done in Egypt, some were executed in Africa, notably in a capital found at the monastery of Bawit in the Egyptian part of the Delta, which is green with palm groves.

Abbo's capitals are certainly more stylised. However, their central motifs are none other than those of Scopas and Praxiteles. The extraordinary aspiration of the human soul toward light had made Christianity create religious art. The almost trans parody transparency of some capitals shows this dual attitude of Christians, who wished neither to refuse good things nor to take them at the avaricious mythological price. The decoration in stone reflects the external light and, at the same time, the trans-optics of the faith that has again restored to humanity its

creative dignity. At the time of the birth of African art, Christianity made to "be" the point form to "have them". In this transition of complicated resonances, solved using a remarkable simplicity, even Absoluteness has become evident, no longer destroyed by interests that better result and its gifts.

24. Christianity and Music in Africa

Christianity is closely associated with the development of music in Africa. The New Creatures and its successors, including the Zion Apostolic Church and Celestial Church of Christ, played an important role in popularising talking drums. The origins of African Christian music can be traced back to the New Instruments period in African history when there was an urgent need for new or adapted musical instruments to communicate with the spirits within their religious beliefs.

African music has a unique, rich rhythm that was first used in Indigenous religions and then in Africanizing music practised by early converts to Christianity. Special musical instruments to accompany worship were developed. Seychelles, for example, developed its own stringed instrument that accompanied the singing of hymns in church, becoming the soul of national music and originating indigenous secular music per se.

These early missionary contacts led to a rapid expansion and development of African music that owed its origin to Christianity. The contact resulted in the technology that allowed the broadcasting of Christianity in Africa and the invention of Christian African music-making machines. Since, in its mono-dimensionality of being, sound can only be the medium of Narayah, it is said that Christianity greeted what it touched and melted much in the way of African music, creating a blend that drew to Christianity a greater understanding, acceptance, and communion through the art of music. This gradual synthesis of African culture and European culture facilitated by it was unprecedented and remains a testimony to the ability of the gospel to work in diverse and adaptive ways.

The establishment of schools as part of the missionary scheme changed the attitude of the Africans toward European culture, education, civilisation, and Christianity. However, innovative government media services have realised the popularity of religious speeches, questions, and answers in communication work amongst illiterate people in Africa. With this realisation, instead of music being utilised as spearheading mediums of accompanying hymns or question-answer approach

transmitted over national broadcasts, government citizens' communication services have changed to sponsor gospel music broadcasts. Today, secular and gospel music competitions join each other throughout the year.

25. Christianity and Film in Africa

The connection between religion and film is as old as that between film and literature, and film and even biblical stories date back to the silent era of the 1890s. From the 1950s to the present, Christian ecclesiastical orders and Catholic missionary associations have used the motion picture in so-called audio-visual missions in missionary territories worldwide. Catholic missionaries have also initiated, through Catholic Action, the production of mobile cinema, which translates many religious and moral themes for the illiterate.

African filmmakers and directors, mainly linked to secular production, did not reject or turn away from the religious theme. Hollywood's interpretation of biblical narratives has not proved the palm of success in African contexts; it also ignores and disconnects from the concerns and sufferings of today's society; the violence and suffering of today's world are present in the social and political events of much of Africa. From this dynamic, Catholic and Protestant churches and confessions in various African countries realised that in the scenario of African cinema, they were already absent and marginalised and ready to be a partner but in an extension of ecclesial cinema to mass agape.

26. Christianity and Sports in Africa

Sports are among the most global human enterprises, with participants and fans spanning the planet. Just as globalisation brought Christianity to Africa and indigenous beliefs and customs shaped expressions of the Christian faith, sports also became part of a globalising African culture. However, just as there are expressions of Christianity that Africans label negatively as "American," including "prosperity teaching," the "health and wealth gospel," and choice of denominational affiliation, so too are there aspects of sport that Africans do not want to have as their own. The growing African reluctance to have "identity-threatening" elements of sport in its modern, corporate, and mass market development form raises a critical point about assimilation, integration, and culture change under modern, globalised conditions.

Sports have long been part of the human experience. In early Christian Scriptures, the effort-achievement-image-sports link is vividly portrayed. First introduced to non-colonized peoples on the African continent by missionary bodies, sports in

modern Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, began in mission schools to instil a sense of discipline in the individual's life. However, little is known about the contributions of these mission bodies to both the formulation and the perpetuation of indigenous values regarding sports. The army, the police, and other professional and para-professional bodies eventually joined in developing the activities in the 1940s, and soon, several institutions specialising in sports training were introduced. Today, it is no secret that sports are big business, and Africa constitutes a significant market. Indeed, it is one area where the term "global village" finds true meaning.

27. Christianity and Tourism in Africa

Religion still plays a vital role in tourism growth in almost every area of the world. The role of Christian heritage and pilgrimage centres has been vital. Despite the shared religious roots, Christian tour companies operating in Denmark, for example, only visit Israel and Jordan. While they stress the belief that they want to celebrate a Christian identity and promote solidarity in the Middle East, their ecumenical pilgrimage program appears to perpetuate an exclusive approach to concepts of pilgrimage. It can be seen as consolidating their cultural entities. The economic success of these travel companies in Denmark is of an order of great magnitude, and they are not interested in further destinations in Africa, as they explain: any further expansion would mean increased use of travel infrastructure, where African nations would fight for traffic with destinations in the Middle East.

We must remember the vital contribution of the Nile to the birth of Christianity. Not only was it the medium of transport and communication between the Christian communities living on the Nile and a central area of religious assonance during late antiquity, but it was also the site of the 5th-century Christian monasteries, which were sought for their spiritual teaching. Today, the Egyptian government encourages Christian tourism. This is despite many things, notably little "often conflicting" knowledge among the locals on the part of the Tourist authority, several lodging places that very often do without the "4-star level" and, above all, the Indian and luxe companies which promote the nurture of the private structure and do not allow for financing large professional plans.

28. Christianity and Linguistic Diversity in Africa

The historical background on the spread of Christianity outlined in previous chapters has made a point of underlining the fact that Christians in Africa today, particularly but not only those who belong to what has been called world religions, are highly world-transcending. But through diversity. And possibly nowhere

more so than about language. In Africa's most affluent linguistic environment, unwieldy approximations trying to cover a continent's Christian communities invariably do an inadequate job. Exploring these highly paradoxical points of the intersection of Christianity in Africa is facilitated by the unfamiliar conceptual register in which the problems of translating the Bible have been staked out. In seeking to place Christianity in Africa, where it belongs, as a socially grounded phenomenon, one must introduce the person who sought to preserve the memory of Africa's ancient ecclesiastic and missionary past.

The critical importance of this single figure will come to light only if it is remembered that Europe suffered a state or social collapse with severe consequences. Its unifying investigation under today's humanistic, cultural, and religious labels, which still dominate much of the ongoing work, allows us to take it for granted in our discussion of African ecclesiastical affairs as established university courses have done in the heartlands of world Christianity. Indeed, Christianity is surprisingly appropriate for pursuing Africa's rich past in this most recent public institution, the museum. The museum, as a significant institution, has further shaped our ideas about these early African Christians by transforming the physical traces of Christian religious practice into distinct aesthetic entities, 'objects,' whether they are symbols of authority, markers of the sacred, images of the apostles, representations of Christ, depictions of the Virgin Mary. Its influence is evident in the fact that modern sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception we have noted of Ethiopia, finds it impossible to break away from ancient images and ways of thinking about itself.

29. Christianity and Indigenous Languages in Africa

In his famous article, Johannes Lukas prefaced a discussion of whether "the present practice of not using the local native languages more extensively for liturgical purposes in native churches in Africa is justifiable" by forecasting "a church in Africa which will smother its roots and neglect the native culture." Some today, of course, consider Christianity in Africa to have smothered those roots and to have led to the neglect of African culture with its solid linguistic flavour. On the contrary, Christianity in Africa, by its discovery of the primary and secondary uses of formal learning and by its contribution of a Christian perspective, may, more so than any secular movement, put the indigenous languages of Africa on a solid linguistic foundation. However, it is incontestable that a strong grey shadow has recently been cast over the future of the many thousands and varied forms of African languages.

30. Christianity and Media in Africa

The advent and rise of electronic media on the African continent have profoundly impacted the promotion and popularisation of Christianity, as both institution and faith have aligned themselves with this powerful transmitter of knowledge, symbolism, and a connecting force of identity and value-ordering. The African Christian church has been slow to participate actively in managing and owning mass media and related moral and ethical challenges accompanying that process. Today, a critical debate continues between the authority and teachings of charismatic church leaders in the electronic media and those of the majority faith communities, as well as the implications of their faith-based messages on the socio-economic realities of the poor and marginalised in Africa.

The spread and consolidation of Christianity in Africa have become indistinguishably linked with that of the media. Their history is relatively short, but today, the available range of media is quite varied, and the impact on the population is enormous. Moreover, as easy as it is for media consumers to benefit or lose from media offerings, it is for media operators and the general institutional church. The relationship, and often a difficult balance to maintain, between mass media and the institutional church started hesitantly with the Catholic Church, soon followed by the historic missionary churches, which reached out to remote rural communities with print and little spoken communication. Decades of national independence from colonial rule and early single-party or military rule stimulated the earliest thoughts and practical steps towards national and private mass media developments.

31. Christianity and Social Media in Africa

In 2016, Zambian Catholic Father Lastone Nkumbwa said during a media conference in Nairobi, "The Church cannot close its ears and eyes to social media." He had seen how this technology had helped his church in Zambia when it successfully promoted Pope Francis's call for peace on one of his troubled visits to Africa. The powerful message from the Pope, calling for peace and dialogue for Zambians to learn from the suffering of people who had lost a family member or a house in the violence, may have helped to avert a Rwanda-type bloodbath. This demonstrates the incredible power of social media and the potential it has to change behaviour. Only a few days into 2017, Father Nkumbwa's words were underlined when his fellow Zambian, Father Frank Bwalya, and the government joined social media to agree that it should be regulated in order to prevent the spread of misinformation and hostility disguised as free speech.

Former journalist Reverend Bwalya cautioned Zambians that social media was a noble enhancement of the right to freedom of expression. However, it had grown into a monster capable of disrupting national peace. Some suggested that the government should use the mystique and technical support of the Chinese government, which had recently pumped large amounts of money into Zambia's coffers and thus had powerful leverage to press for compliance (blunt as this approach may be). Others pointed out that Bwalya was acting as a priest against his government, which put him at odds with Rome. Both men were on the right track, but try as they might. However, they cannot push back against the irresistible tide driving social media. This essay on Christianity and social media in Africa uses Zambian examples to set the scene. However, it compares them with other instances on the continent to show how powerful communication technologies have become. It will turn to the opening statements of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's reference to a continent of vibrant, pioneering initiatives using the web and cyberspace, thus confirming the synthesis in progress. Finally, it will look at the negative aspects these technologies have brought to their wake, addressing where the Church has contributed to these problems through doctrine or lack thereof. The Journal of Religion in Africa must be commended for commissioning this essay because a point that is not to be missed is that the numbers that present such an inviting target for commercial and evangelical Christians are not all their creations. With the help of small talk, the fondest social and family ties are really and truly created. This could explain the conservatism and antagonism to social progress, a hallmark of sect members, as seen in the ancient debate about new mass media.

32. Christianity and Oral Tradition in Africa

Not only did Christianity find the cultural expression of land and foundation myths in Africa surprisingly receptive, but needs and expectations surrounding these myths soon came into play. The oral tradition was to be considered highly significant. Over the centuries, predatory crops of ironies and paradoxes have arisen. Medieval North African Christianity, strong in African roots but not yet an exclusively African faith, is reported to have guarded against penitents taking refuge in the shame of their psychological or sexual problems, apparently mainly of European antiquity. Later, the situation of the relatively small, multi-racial medieval Nubian Church was to be exploited and abused under the severely feudal conditions of a Byzantine colony in the third region of Africa. Its Christianity, as in the case of Yemen, had been nestling on the margins of the Roman Empire.

Using the context and the overall feeling of the written manuscript of the artefact, the contemporary expansion of Islam in the region, it is probable that the Nubian Church and the Ethiopian counterparts were prepared to tolerate unorthodox behaviour for political support. They required the presence of a powerful African landowner class of Arabian stock, but at that time, invested with Greek 'minority rights' since subject African Church units waited for many centuries, eventually assuming a degree of religious autonomy under the guidance of a more sophisticated, politically damaged 'Eraric' caste system. The ruling elite that has repeatedly sought to re-establish its old, pre-Islam privileges as a new candidate was, entirely ethnically and largely politically, callow. With the weakening of political cohesion and Roman contact influences in Ethiopia, the Eastern Christian churches, including the Coptic one in Egypt, were lifted from the religious function in place of Assyria after the cryptographically unavoidable transition of this third legacy of Roman imperialism into a publicly ordained 'Christian Empire' of European, East African, and trans-Illyrian proportions.

33. Christianity and Historical Memory in Africa

It could, therefore, be said that, in part, modernity in Africa has religious roots. The asceticism and love of learning that are common to many world religious traditions are praised in Africa by many today as the values by which her traditional societies coped with reality, attracted foreign visitors, gave rise to trade with the outside world, and hence became essential nodes in the network of countries; that is, long-distance travellers now no longer from Persia or China but now from many other places such as the British Isles, Turkey, and Portugal. It was the intensification of these networks by the growing practice of faiths such as Christianity or Islam that did for the ideas of teachers like Diop what the ideas of Ibn Khaldun of North Africa and Al-Farabi of Central Asia had done for them during the time of the Silk Road cum Dar al-Islam (the Islamic Empire of Faith).

For the historical memories of Africans to be reconciled with the historical memories of others—such as the non-Africans present in numbers large enough in modern societies to play a significant part in determining the possibilities and limits of modern forms of reading and teaching which these require—Africa must decide for herself using her traditional yards, Professor Leakey suggested in a panel discussion that opened the year. Because slavery is an institution that was a Teutonic speciality, the European vocabulary should adjust so that a person should be able to tell the children of the West that their forebears did do something very shocking only without reinforcing stereotypes prevalent in a continent where

religious and family ties are still such that your father is my father and your family is my family. In other words, religious feelings should be respected, the ideas of reconciliation and forgiveness interwoven with sound scholarship, and black men, by necessity, their historians again, one panellist replied.

34. Christianity and Museums in Africa

The transition from religious artefacts to mere curiosity in glass cases is an exciting and not-so-unimportant detail in the study of religions and society. There is no evidence to suggest that African Christian remains in museums ever attract the likeness or scrupulous dimensions as do the 'pre-Christian' ritual remains from various regions. Most are made in the colonial era and are found on a frontier of great intellectual interest in the phenomenon of European tourist-visitor, caught in the stage-managed culture encounter to which the museum represented the African cultures. Within such encounter settings, masked societies and religious cults were liability passed and authenticated with memorable or a gift to collectors conditioned by exotic connoisseurship. These museum collections and their uses are the mainstays of contemporary debates about foxed communities, touristic encounters, cultural sources, or nominal 'ownership' raised by the equivalent ancient art museums.

Research and debate seem remiss. Does not understand Christianity's role in society and interaction with individual terms and symbols call for research and exhibition to deserve greater specialised interest, as does the range of attitudes to those monuments with deep and varied roots in many sections of the African cultural landscape? Do not the direct terms - the Nilotic Christ, the Tacitus icon, the Chameleon altar front- we are already haunting the museum doors- cry out for their stories to be peeled back from present anonymity? True, every drum and jar cannot delay outward processions, and aerial reduction with a subject that follows the grand religion of tradition is required. However, given the right connections and studied perspective, many an ancient cake-patterned censor or Jewish tombstone or Church doorway might surface fresh association as meaningful as history, as those found with the foundation of mosques of cemeteries of shrines. Moreover, at the same time, as the acknowledgement betrays, one should avoid any over-zealous application of goodwill. Indeed, we might, in the long run, learn a little more, both of research and re-interference, from the present conflicting European attitudes to newly installed holocaust museums and strange cult contemporary in the former Stalinist state.

35. Christianity and Cultural Heritage in Africa

The cultural heritage of human beings is not only visually and materially present in the preserved ruins, works of art, and buildings, but it is also stored in the countless stories, traditions, and customs that are passed on verbally from generation to generation. Today, we observe the growing interest in cultural heritage and the many problems associated with its protection and preservation, such as the repatriation of cultural objects or the protection against the adverse effects of tourism. In this context, the Church and its missionaries in Africa must be seen as one of the most important protectors of the cultural heritage on the continent. However, this protective activity of the Church towards the cultures and traditions of the African communities has been overshadowed by their confrontation with the colonial regimes, by the often-dogmatic positions towards the local animist religions, and by the coerced adhesion of the local populations to the doctrine of the Christian faith.

When Westerners portray the encounter of the first missionaries in Black Africa, it is often done from an almost heroic perspective. Medieval religions had the will to suffer privations and the ability to convert the powerful, to civilise the population, and to create new kingdoms and Christian nations. It is as if the African soul was so full of fear and darkness that the angel in the form of the white man brought the divine salvation and the light of civilisation – and technology as a bonus, a saving kit. This simplistic vision is deeply entrenched in the Christian tradition today, and many Catholics are thankful to the Holy Mother Church for suffering so that they could be saved and for having discovered that the family has tremendous therapeutic properties for the troubled spirit of the black man. This manner of presenting the history of the Christian missions in Africa is often why, nowadays, many opponents invoke their animosity towards the Church or religion. The truth, however, is more complex.

36. Christianity and Ethical Issues in Africa

The arrival of Christian missions in pre-colonial Africa was accompanied by solid positions against indigenous practices that were opposed as pagan and evil. The situation is different today, with indigenous Christians who have practical knowledge of and experiences of some traditional practices in their societies openly re-examining them in the light of the Gospel. There is an increasing dialogue between Christianity and traditional/indigenous religions on several issues based on mutual respect, not fear and condemnation.

At the same time, the arrival of so-called imported religions of Christianity and Islam resulted in a religious indifferentism that is opposed to indigenous African traditional religions, which are variously depicted as demonised, superstitions, or, at most, artificial. Underlying these condemnations are tendencies to dismiss ideas about spiritual beings. These cosmologies define the relationship between God, nature, and human beings, as well as myths, oral literature, rituals, and other religious practices, reflecting and refracting traditional African lifestyles. While these essential components of the continent's cultural heritage were systematically or violently displaced and destroyed, the pressure and conviction that the religious elements are essential factors for identity, meaning, memory, values, and attitudes in all human groups has led many indigenous Africans to examine and re-evaluate their traditional religions as African religions, or as African ways that may lead them closer to God in their local context with their own cultures and in their history as people.

37. Christianity and Ethical Leadership in Africa

The concept of ethical leadership in Africa has a long history in pre-colonial African societies before the colonial period. Ethical leadership was fundamental in ensuring leaders acted responsibly and in the best interest of those being led. The introduction of Christianity added a new dimension to the concept of ethical leadership by identifying God or Supreme Being as the overseer of leadership actions. From a biblical perspective, through acceptance of the cross and recognition of God, political leaders can bring positive change by making a difference in the lives of the oppressed masses. Ethical leadership is also premised upon the biblical concept that God institutes all authorities for the good of the people. In this perspective, adherence to godly virtues or principles at the core of power becomes necessary as Christian leaders are called to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Contemporary African churches have continued to promote ethical leadership to ensure good governance and social justice, especially against a background of experiences of corruption, ethnic violence, political unrest, and lack of democracy and human rights in many African countries. Hence, contesting views about Christianity's influence remains a thorny African subject. Given this setting, this paper analyses how biblical teaching on ethical leadership has influenced politicians in Africa's power structures to govern and provide democratic, transparent, and accountable representation for the people they lead. Furthermore, the paper discusses whether fabulously wealthy African religious

entrepreneurs who have made Christianity competitive are at odds with noble and self-fulfilling ethical leadership principles.

38. Christianity and Corruption in Africa

Although many Christian church leaders and missionaries in colonial Africa addressed moral standards and personal character, their ultimate allegiance to colonial rule prevented effective public condemnation of corruption. Moreover, today, at the very least, differing reactions by church leaders date back to the transition from colonial to independent Africa. For instance, many Anglican church leaders in Nigeria behaved somewhat better concerning politics and public administration than many of their Roman Catholic counterparts. The Roman Catholic church in Igboland supplied more than its share of corrupt and even (locally) notorious political elites, using religion as just another vehicle in the process of social mobility.

As elsewhere around the world, missions and missionaries — including the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and other Protestant denominations active in Africa during the colonial era — were surprisingly venal. Various segments of the Roman Curia and the British, French, Belgian, Portuguese, and other European colonial governments and their Christian state churches often colluded in many of the most objectionable actions and policies enacted by colonisers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For missionaries seeking to spread the mercy and justice of the Christian faith, colonisation offered all too many impediments. In a dozen essential ways, the active Christian promotion of education was the loudest and best opportunity for ideological inculcation and successful social transformation of traditional, colonial, and postcolonial Africa.

39. Christianity and Justice in Africa

Christian churches have a unique role in protecting human dignity and enhancing social capacity in Africa. While paganism and Islam tend to reinforce structurally conservative tendencies, the indigenous African Christian churches contribute to institutional, social, economic, and political transformation. Partly by interpreting existing political and social structures in ways that encourage individual and collective confidence, responsibility, and better moral practices and partly by teaching, preaching, and practising principles of equality, justice, and the intrinsic worth of human individuals, these indigenous African Christian churches have been involved powerfully in changing the continent. Furthermore, the Christian faith has shown itself to be the best defence against degrading human forces such as drug addiction, cultism, corrupt gain, greed, and selfish behaviour.

Bishop Socrates Fortes gave the following final charge to villagers of Caió, Guinea-Bissau, after a Catholic religious service: "(Be) always watchful, not only of your souls but also of your human life and the service due to our community, preserving its material and cultural goods...." (This charge was made public more than twenty years after the event without any subsequent discernible ill-effects.) In a real sense, Christianity, as opposed to other religions, promotes justice in Africa through its message. Between the mechanisms of state, schools, markets, and churches - if these are healthy - justice, probity, and service are promoted, kept in balance, restored, and encouraged. The churches do so primarily by encouraging specific religious values and beliefs. About Christian churches, much empirical evidence demonstrates that not only do values matter but that religious values matter, strongly influencing certain kinds of behaviour.

40. Conclusion

The spread of Christianity in Africa in the last 100 years has reinforced the beliefs, patterns, and institutions exported from the West a century ago. It has undoubtedly modified and restructured them in a way that makes for a vital and dynamic faith. Its African adherents see it as a purified return of that faith to its legitimate roots; their local antagonists and foreign opponents say it is a virulent challenge that endangers them. The line drawn between the two sides is social justice, political order, and development. Christianity, like other forces, is one factor in the social discussion. However, to those inside the church, this dynamic movement is part of a spiritual one. They are the ones who contribute money, goods, labour, energy, and life to the church, and their presence alone guarantees the church's future growth and role as a major centre of the spirit for the continent and its people.

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