

Navigating the Intersection of Christian Teachings, Social Issues and Modern Challenges in Tiv Land

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Abstract

In contemporary times, Christianity has faced challenges in Tiv community amidst secularisation and internal divisions within Christianity. This study investigated the intricate interplay between Christian teachings, societal dynamics, and contemporary challenges within Tiv land. The study adopted qualitative research methods of data analysis which includes the descriptive, analytic and evaluative methods. The study explored the unique social organisation of the Tiv people, their linguistic affinity, and the historical establishment of Christianity in the region. The investigation also focused on key Christian ethical values such as accountability, responsibility, and integrity, providing biblical perspectives on these virtues. The methodology involved a qualitative approach, drawing on existing literature, historical analysis, and biblical references. Findings revealed the positive influence of Christian religious education in Tiv society, particularly in promoting moral reformation, respect for human rights, the common good, and protection of the poor and vulnerable. However, challenges such as changing values, moral crises, economic factors, secularism, and the impact of new media and technology on Christian teachings were identified. In conclusion, the study highlighted the complex dynamics influencing the intersection of Christian teachings and societal issues in Tiv land. The research recommends a holistic approach to Christian education that addresses contemporary challenges, emphasizes moral values, and navigates the evolving socio-cultural landscape.

Keywords: Christianity, Tiv Community, Christian Teachings, Ethical Values, Contemporary Challenges.

Introduction

Christian teachings wield significant influence over societal well-being, serving as a guiding force for moral and spiritual development among community members. These teachings, deeply embedded in the fabric of societies, have been instrumental in shaping core values that contribute to the establishment and sustenance of peace and order. In the specific context of Tiv land, currently grappling with a profound moral crisis exemplified by the alarming incidence of kidnapping, Christian ethical teachings emerge as a potent tool for addressing and resolving these pressing societal challenges. Values such as love, peace, respect for the dignity of human life, hard work, accountability, and responsibility, inherent to Christian ethics, have the potential to counteract the prevalence of kidnapping and other social vices that undermine the region's peace and stability.

The recognition of the transformative potential of religious teachings is echoed in the scholarship of Okobia (2017), who emphasizes the role of religion in promoting human

development. According to Okobia, religion achieves this by instilling essential values that are universally considered crucial for the enhancement of societal order, peace, progress, happiness, and the protection of vulnerable members of the community (Okobia, 353). Likewise, Otonti (1983) acknowledges the significant impact of religion, asserting that it acts as a deterrent to kidnapping by shaping individual behavior in alignment with societal norms and values. This, in turn, fosters societal stability and overall human development (Ubrurhe, 6). Religion's capacity to bind people together through various sanctions, including scolding, criticism, ostracism, excommunication, and the final judgment of God with its attendant consequences, further underscores its potential as a solution to the challenge of kidnapping.

However, even as Christian ethical values emerge as crucial in the fight against kidnapping in Tiv land, there exist notable challenges facing Christian teachings in contemporary society. Secularization and divisions within Christianity present hurdles that may impede the seamless transmission and application of these values. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive examination of these challenges, this study seeks to navigate the intersection of Christian teachings, social issues, and modern challenges in Tiv society. By delving into the unique dynamics of Tiv land, this research aims to provide valuable insights into how Christian ethical values can effectively address contemporary challenges and contribute to the preservation of peace and stability in the region. Through this exploration, the study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the interplay between religious values and the evolving societal landscape, ultimately contributing to the development of informed strategies for fostering well-being in Tiv land.

Statement of Research Problem

The intricate interplay between Christian teachings, societal dynamics, and modern challenges in Tiv land necessitates a comprehensive examination to understand the implications, conflicts, and potential resolutions arising at this intersection. The evolving socio-cultural landscape, coupled with factors such as secularization, internal divisions within Christianity, changing values, and the pervasive influence of new media and technology, raises pressing questions about the adaptability, relevance, and effectiveness of Christian teachings in addressing contemporary issues. This research delved into the complexities of this intersection, exploring the impact of Christian teachings on societal values, moral reformation, human rights, common good, and the protection of the poor and vulnerable. Additionally, it seeks to identify challenges posed by changing values, moral crises, poverty, secularism, and technological advancements, aiming to provide valuable insights for a nuanced understanding and effective navigation of the intricate dynamics within Tiv community.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the significance of Christian religious education in Tiv community.

- ii. To analyse the challenges of Christian teachings in the contemporary Tiv community.
- iii. To propose strategies for navigating contemporary challenges within the intersection of Christian teachings and social issues.

Clarification of Concepts

Christianity: Christianity is the religion based on the person and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, or its beliefs and practices. It originated among the Jewish followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who believed that he was the promised Messiah (or 'Christ'). In 313 Constantine ended official persecution in the Roman Empire and in 380 Theodosius 1 recognized it as the state religion. Most Christians believe in one God in three Persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) and that Jesus is the Son of God who rose from the dead after being crucified; a Christian hopes to attain eternal life after death through faith in Jesus Christ ..." (Houghton, 1980: 7).

Geering (2002:21) writes: "The word Christianity is derived from the Medieval Latin *Christianitas*. It was originally a synonym for Christendom, meaning the geographical domain where Christ ruled ...". The reference to Christianity as the geographical domain where Christ ruled gave Christendom a more transcendental status. It is therefore not surprising that Christianity was once the primary context for a number of communities (Geering, 2002: 19). This is how Christianity became a lifestyle, and this is especially true in sub-Saharan Africa. Christianity is one of the oldest religions in the world among Buddhism and Islam, Christianity has its root from Judaism which was on ground about six century before the birth of Jesus Christ (Adega: 2013: 1). Christianity derives its name from a Greek word "Christos" meaning "Anointed" and the Hebrew meaning of "Anointed" is "Mashiah" and its English word is "Messiah" (Ajiki, 2016: 224).

Christianity religion, based on Jesus Christ, the only saviour and Mediator between God the father and sinful humankind. Christianity religion is unique among all the religions of the world. Why so? Most of these religions emphasize the life of the founder, but Christianity is based on the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. As such Christianity also has many branches and forms with varieties of beliefs and practices. These branches include: Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism with numerous sub-categories within each of these branches. The division of Christianity into these branches came in about 1054, but then it was between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church (Okwueze, 2003:23). Christians have a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, been the son of God and made of man has come to earth to redeem humanity. They follow His teachings as set out in the Bible and place their trust in God's promise of eternal life with him (Akiga, 2016).

The Concept of Ethics: Ethics comes from the Greek *ethos* meaning character. Morality comes from Latin *moralis*, meaning custom or manners. Ethics then seems to pertain to the individual character of a person or persons. Whereas, morality seems to point to the relationship among human beings. Ethic is that discipline which studies the rational and comprehensive nature of man as an acting being. He is one who behaves with reason and

therefore acts right or wrongs (Ogugua & Okafor-Udah, 1983). Ethics acts as a moderator of man's actions. It guides the human person in ordering his or her life well and meaningfully. It is a discipline that is all embracing. Trull and Carter as cited Okwueze (2003) rightly puts: politicians, scientists, physicians, business leader, vending citizens and our clergy increasingly find themselves in situations where they really do not know what to do. As a result, ethics has become a boom industry, and moral failure a regular front page phenomenon. Conventional wisdom seems glaringly inadequate in the face of our environmental, technological, political, economic and social situations (13). The human mind is always striving to see and do that which is right and that which could be judged by others to be morally upright. How then can one look at a situation of everyday life happening and judge it to be ethical.

Christian Ethical Teachings: Christian ethical teaching is an important aspect of Christian religious education. Ogugua and Samuel Okafor-Udah (1983) observed that moral education can be seen as an essential instrument for equipping an individual to be able to judge what is right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate, just or unjust and good or bad in social relations. Moral education inculcates in an individual, the appreciation of the values of honesty, integrity, altruism, accountability, hard work, justice, equity, patience and discipline (7). This points out the nature and essence of Christian ethical education as well as identified important elements in moral education. Otonti (1983) opines that Christian ethical education involves not only teaching, learning and other processes whereby values, rules, principles, ideals, habits and attitudes are inculcated, but also the taking of adequate educational steps supplemented with appropriate institutional arrangements to promote moral growth along the developmental continuum (19). Christian moral education is the process of guiding the behavioural development of an individual in Christian moral principles so that the individual can reason appropriately and perform what is right and acceptable in the society.

Christian moral values are essential and indispensable in human existence. Adeyemi (2019) opines that, the forms of moral value which are featured in Christianity are those that are unselfish in determination, seek to improve human welfare and in the process of achieving all of these in the interest of God. Thus, actions that expunge God's interest in content loose its moral signification. All human behaviours standards and principles that are cynical to God's interest have no moral values. God's interests begin from the point in which people act as dangerous impediments to the wellbeing of others (51). Christianity inculcates moral values through its associations, for example, boys brigade, Girl's Brigade, fellowship of Christian students, Christian union, scripture union, Nigerian Federation of Catholic students, young men's Christian Association of Nigeria, etc.

Through the families, Christian moral ideals are introduced to children. Christian leaders also exert influence in shaping the moral judgments and practices of fellowship. The Christians have the Bible as guard for inculcating Christian ethical principles, failure of which could lead to the expulsion of the member or members from the church. However, various other punishments could also be taken upon the person. Ogugua and Samuel Okafor-Udah

(1983) opine that, there is no doubt that Christian moral education embraces the appropriate attitudes and values that are essential for good governance in Nigeria. The attitudes and values discussed in this study include: formation of good character, respect for human rights and dignity, promotion of the common good; and protection of the poor and vulnerable.

Review of Related Literature

The intersection of Christian teachings, social issues, and modern challenges is a compelling and complex area of study, particularly in the context of Nigeria. Nigeria is a diverse country with a significant Christian population, and understanding how Christian teachings interact with social issues and modern challenges is crucial for comprehending the dynamics of the society. The literature reveals that Nigeria has experienced rapid social, economic, and political changes, and these changes intersect with Christian teachings in profound ways (Ojo, 2018). As such, there is a growing need for scholarly investigation into this intersection, especially in specific regions like Tivland, where cultural and religious dynamics may differ from the national average.

Numerous studies have explored the role of Christianity in shaping social attitudes and behaviors in Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2019). The literature suggests that Christian teachings play a significant role in influencing the values and norms of Nigerian society, impacting issues such as gender roles, family structures, and community dynamics (Afolabi, 2020). However, the literature also points to the challenges posed by the modernization of Nigerian society, including issues related to globalization, urbanization, and technology (Ogunbodede, 2017). These challenges may intersect with Christian teachings in ways that require careful examination, particularly at the local level.

The specific focus on Tivland is warranted due to the unique cultural and religious landscape of this region. Tivland, with its predominantly Tiv ethnic group, presents a distinctive case study within the broader Nigerian context. Previous research indicates that Tiv culture and traditions have a significant impact on the interpretation and practice of Christianity in the region (Akiga, 2016). Therefore, an in-depth exploration of the intersection of Christian teachings, social issues, and modern challenges in Tivland is essential for capturing the nuances that may differ from the national narrative.

Furthermore, the literature underscores the importance of studying this intersection in Tivland to address the gaps in existing research. While there is a wealth of literature on Christianity in Nigeria, there is a dearth of studies specifically focusing on the intersection in local contexts like Tivland. Understanding how Christian teachings influence social dynamics in Tivland is crucial for the development of targeted interventions and policies that align with the unique needs of the community (Oche, 2021). The literature emphasizes the need for a nuanced approach that considers both the universal aspects of Christian teachings and the specific cultural and social factors at play in Tivland.

Moreover, the literature suggests that the intersection of Christian teachings, social issues, and modern challenges in Tivland is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon. As societal

changes continue to unfold, the ways in which Christianity intersects with social issues may undergo shifts, necessitating ongoing scholarly inquiry (Adah, 2018). This highlights the timeliness and relevance of a focused study on the current state of affairs in Tivland, providing insights that can inform not only academic discourse but also practical applications in areas such as community development, education, and public policy.

Another noteworthy contribution to the discourse on the intersection of Christian teachings, social issues, and modern challenges is found in the work of Ogugua P. Anwuluorah and Samuel C. Okafor-Udah (1983). Their exploration of "The Perspective of Christian Moral Education for Good Governance in Nigeria" in *New Perspectives in Moral Education* delves into the role of Christian moral education in addressing governance issues. This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of Nigeria, where questions of ethical leadership and governance have been persistent challenges.

Okwueze's (2003) work on *Ethics, Religion, and Society: Biblical, Traditional, and Contemporary Perspectives* provides a comprehensive examination of ethical considerations from biblical and traditional perspectives, offering insights that can inform the understanding of ethical challenges in contemporary Nigerian society. Okwueze's work contributes to the broader discussion on the applicability of traditional and biblical ethics in navigating modern challenges. Otonti (1983) adds a valuable dimension to the literature by discussing the historical, sociological, ethical, and religious issues involved in moral education. This exploration is critical in understanding the foundations of moral values in Nigerian society and how they intersect with Christian teachings. Otonti's work serves as a bridge between historical perspectives and contemporary challenges, emphasizing the continuity and evolution of ethical considerations.

In addition to these focused studies, broader discussions on secularism and postsecularism add depth to the understanding of the intersection under consideration. Casanova's (2011) exploration of 'The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms' in *Rethinking Secularism* provides a theoretical framework that allows for a nuanced examination of how secular forces may interact with Christian teachings in shaping societal norms. King's (2009) work on *Postsecularism: The Hidden Challenge of Extremism* is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where religious extremism has been a pressing issue. King's examination of postsecularism sheds light on the challenges and opportunities that arise when religious beliefs intersect with contemporary issues, offering insights that can inform discussions on religious extremism and its implications for social harmony. Furthermore, the inclusion of a foundational text like *The New Jerusalem Bible* (1985) serves as a reference point for understanding the Christian teachings that form the basis of the intersection under scrutiny. As a translation of the Bible, this work provides insight into the religious texts that influence Christian beliefs and practices in Nigeria.

The literature review underscores the significance of investigating the intersection of Christian teachings, social issues, and modern challenges in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Tivland. The unique cultural and religious dynamics of Tivland warrant dedicated scholarly attention to unravel the complexities of this intersection. The literature highlights the

influence of Christian teachings on social issues in Nigeria, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding that considers both universal and context-specific factors. The scarcity of research in Tivland further accentuates the urgency of this study, as it contributes valuable insights that can inform not only academic discussions but also practical interventions in the region.

The Tiv of Central Nigeria and Establishment of Christianity

The Tiv are of the semi-Bantu linguistic affinity, they speak one common language and have a unique political ideology and practices. The numerical strength of the Tiv is statistically over four million based on the 2006 National population census, ranking them as the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria (Kough, 2001:1). They occupy mainly the Benue State administrative areas of Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer, Gwer-west, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Makurdi, Logo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya Local Government Areas (Utov, Utov, 2000: 13). The Tiv are also indigenous to Taraba, Plateau and Nasarawa states. The origin and migration of Tiv has been a problem to historians and other scholars. According to Rubingh (1969), the Tiv agree that their original home was the south. Abeghe (2005) explains that, the Tiv genealogy dissects the Tiv family into two main groups of Ipusu and Ichongo from whom other family units in Tiv have now emerged (6). Going by this dissection therefore, the descendants of Ichôngo and Ipusu constitute not only the genealogical tree but also the basis of the social and political organisation of the Tiv society (Makar, 1994:5).

The social organisation of the Tiv is founded on kinship constructed by tracing descent “exclusively” through the male. The Tiv are thus a descent group, which in etic terms can be referred to as patrilineal. Though the four universal features of kinship — a lengthy infant maturation time, a marital bond creating an exclusive sexual and economic relationship between individual members of the group, a gender based on division of labour and an incest regulation are here, Tiv kinship is unique with three distinct forms (Wegh, 1998: 34).

Christian Ethical Values

There are certain values that are central to Christian teaching some of them are highlighted below:

Accountability: Accountability is the responsibility to account for stewardship to an authority or the people. Accountability constitutes the side of good governance process, it is the degree to which legislative arm, and public officers, gives account of their stewardship, or have to explain or justify what they have done or failed to do. Accountability is essential for the efficient functioning of the bureaucracy especially as it is the primary and major implementation arm of government. Accountability acts as a quality control device for the local government and public service. The public and the citizens in the public realm can expect to receive the best service (Adedoyin, 2016). Accountability underscores the superiority of the public will over private interests of those expected to serve and ensure that the public servants behave according to the ethics of their profession.

Biblical Perspective on Accountability: Aina, and Imoudu, (2014) emphasized that a vivid study of the Bible reveals that God expects accountability on a regular basis. They pointed out that God confronted Adam and Eve with the fact that they had hidden themselves. He did not absolve them immediately but waited as they gave an explanation of their actions and followed it up with discipline (Genesis 3:1-24). Other instances of accountability abound in the Bible: Cain, who murdered his brother, Abel, was required to face the Lord (Genesis 4:1-16); Moses, who in a fit of rage did not follow God's instructions carefully, was by God forbidden to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 20:11-12); David who committed immorality with Uriah's wife, was confronted by the Prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 11:1-12:23). Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit and to Peter, were not only asked a reason for their actions, but were judged for them (Acts 5:1-12); and the man in the Corinthian Church who committed immorality with his stepmother was banished from the church (1st Corinthians 5:1-5). It is therefore clear from scripture that accountability is part of the divine plan. It is a key to keeping on course or correcting one's course and an important means of channeling our energy and resources as leaders. It is absolutely essential if we are to avoid behaving in destructive ways.

Many of the parabolic teachings of Christ are lessons in stewardship, which is the biblical word for accountability. Grant explains that in the Greco-Roman world, a steward was a person called to a right use of that which had been entrusted to him by another. These parables therefore enjoin the principle of accountability on everyone. They point to the fact that God will hold everyone accountable for his action and lifestyle. They explained that Christians will have to give an account of their service to God, receiving reward or punishment (Ajagbe, 2016). The bible indicates that in the exercise of biblical stewardship, Christians are to be faithful in little things (Luke 16:10).

Responsibility: Responsibility refers to an obligation to do something. It is the duty of the subordinate to perform organisational tasks, functions or activities assigned to him. Authority and responsibility go side by side. When authority is delegated then some responsibility for getting the assigned task is also fixed. One can delegate authority but not responsibility.

For Ajagbe (2016: 17), "responsibility is the obligation of a subordinate to carry out the duties assigned to him". By responsibility we mean the work or duties assigned to a person by virtue of his position in the organisation. It refers to the mental and physical activities which must be performed to carry out a task or duty. That means every person who performs any kind of mental or physical effort as an assigned task has responsibility. Responsibility is the obligation to carry out assigned activities to the best of his abilities. Responsibility is thus the result of superior-subordinate relationship. In other words, a subordinate's obligations in any business unit will arise basically from his relationship with his superior who is given the authority to get something done. Being responsible infers taking care of your duties, answering to your actions, being accountable and above all being trustworthy. Accountability is also important if one is to be responsible therefore we need

to define accountability. Accountability is answering to somebody else for your actions or whereabouts.

The essence of responsibility is then obligation. Responsibility has no meaning except as applied to a person; a building, a machine or an animal cannot be held responsible.” Responsibility is a concomitant of authority (Bailey, 1987). A person who has authority has a corresponding responsibility for the proper exercise of authority given to him. Authority flows from a superior to subordinate while responsibility flows from a subordinate to a superior. Almost all modern philosophers approach responsibility as compatibilists – that is, they assume that moral responsibility must be compatible with causal or naturalistic explanation of human thought and action, and therefore reject the metaphysical idea of free will.

Responsibility and accountability demand that, leaders, head of families, parents and children, workers and individuals are accept their obligations and duties and are doing this without compromise. A father who cannot care for the children in terms of moral upbringing, educational and health needs as well as showing love has failed in his responsibility. Also, anyone who cannot be a good steward lack of trust, deceitful and corrupt lacks accountability. Christian perspective of these principles demands that, individuals accept the consequences of their actions and leaders, public servants, children, wives and husbands are committed to their obligations. While doing all these, this is need to do it as unto God and an act of stewardship in a honest manner.

Individual responsibility entails that, we have duties and obligations as individuals: children to their parents, parents to their children, religious leaders to their congregations, leaders to their subjects, workers to their employers, servants to their masters. Also, responsibility entails that, as free moral agents, we are responsible for our actions. For a example, if someone steals from another person or causes a kind of damage, such a person should be willing and ready to accept the consequences of such actions.

Integrity is central to all leadership, religious or secular. Business analysts, like Boring (2004) unveiled the importance of character in political leadership. Boring notes however, a disturbing shift in attitudes about character in leadership in politics over the last 200 years. He classifies this shift as Character Ethic versus Personality Ethic. In the first 150 years of political history, philosophy of leadership emphasized the importance of integrity, humility and fidelity. Since World War II, the emphasis has been on personality rather than ethics. Boring notes that success became more a function of personality, of public image, of attitudes and behaviors, skills and techniques... Other parts of the personality approach were clearly manipulative, even deceptive, encouraging people to use techniques to get other people to like them.

Christians need to be aware of such cultural trends and carefully distinguish them from the traits Jesus requires in those he chooses for leadership. In his book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins (2001) presents his analysis of companies that grew from good to great and stayed there. He found a quality in common among the leaders of these companies that had nothing to do with temperament. We were surprised, shocked really, to discover the type

of leadership required for turning a good society into a great one.... Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy- these leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. A key quality in common among political leaders who had moved from good to great is humility. Collins (2001:21) adds that these leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It is not that [these] leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious- but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves. Leadership of lasting value cannot exist without such humility. Manipulation and control may appear to work, but leadership that reaps the loyalty of others and leads to lasting success, will require integrity. This is an example Jesus that Jesus Christ and His followers demonstrated. The kind of leadership style exhibited by Christ is an example for Christian leaders and political leaders who must be responsible and accountable.

The Significance of Christian Religious Education in Tiv Society

Impact of Christian ethical teaching could be seen in the positive role it plays in Tiv society. This could be seen under the following sub-headings:

Christian Ethical Teaching as a Platform for Moral Reformation

Speaking on the teaching of Christian moral education, Adah (2018) opines that, formation of good character is fundamental in Christian moral education. It does not only recognise, but also require a discipline in a formation of character and points to self-discipline as an ideal norm. For example, Christians are urged to live good and righteous life for the well-being of the society, "Seek good and not evil that you may live; Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate" (Amos 5:14, 15): "Follow justice and justice alone". ... (Leviticus 19:35); while (Proverb 14:34) writes: "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach". From the above Biblical injunctions, bad behaviour which is portrayed in acts such as: nepotism, bribery, corruption, embezzlement of public funds, ethnicity, electoral malpractices and other social injustices etc. are all negative character attributes and contradict Christian moral education. A true Christian ensures that he or she distaste those negative attributes and is guided by these scriptural principles which are essential attributes of good governance, that is, justice, love, honesty, accountability, fairness, equality and responsibility among others.

Respect for Human Rights and Dignity

According to Adegbo (2013), "human right has its origin from creation. Man has never acquired them nor has any government or other authority conferred it. Man has had them from the beginning. He received them with his life from the hand of his maker. They are inherent in his creation. They have been bestowed on him by his creator" (19). The dignity of human beings is asserted in three successive sentences in (Genesis 1:27, 28). First, 'God created man in his own image.' Secondly, 'Male and Female he created them....' Therefore, every person, regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation,

employment or economic status, health, intelligence, or achievement is worthy of respect. Thus, human rights are at base the right to be human, and so to enjoy the dignity of having been created in God's image and of possessing in consequence unique relationship to God himself, to fellow human beings and to the material world. There can be no rights of man except on the basis of faith in God. But if God is real and all men are his son that is the true worth of every one of them. My worth is what I am worth to God; and that is a marvelous great deal, for Christ died for me. Thus, incidentally, what gives each of us his highest worth gives the same worth to everyone; in all that matters most we are all equal. Hence, equality of all comes from the essential dignity as children of God.

Treating equals equally is one of the ways of defining justice, and justice in turn, means that we render to each person his or her due, which is the attribute of good governance. While each person is different, while each culture and customs varies, talents vary, discrimination because of these differences goes against the basic principle of human dignity. This brings to fore, the issues of marginalisation in the distribution of natural resources in Nigeria. This has no doubt, engendered a lot of conflicts in the Nigerian polity. Just social structure is inevitable in the allocation of resources in the country and should not be biased either by religious, ethnic or political inclinations.

Promotion of Common Good

In the teaching of the Church, the common good is to be understood as the "sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily (Adah, 2018). A proper concern for the common good is the antidote to unbridled individualism, narrow mindedness and self-centeredness. Working for, and serving the common good involves three basic elements: respect for the human person; and the social well-being and development of the group. Jesus Christ begins his preaching by proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is at hand. His Kingdom, open to all and for all is a Kingdom of truth and justice, peace and love. In Nigeria, public officers squander and loot the money meant for the common good of the masses. In fact, the cancer called corruption which can be found in all spheres of Nigeria life is largely responsible for the stunted economic growth of the country and for the mass poverty that reign in the land.

Protection of the Poor and Vulnerable

Massaro (2000) observes that a society is measured and evaluated by its treatment of the weak and the powerless. The common good, the good society as a whole requires preferential protection to those affected by the absence of power (22). The heart and hand of Jesus went out in compassion to the sick, the hungry, the leper and the outcast. Jesus told the disciples of John the Baptist that the sign that he is the true Messiah is that "the poor have the good news preached to them (Mt 11:5). Pope John Paul II emphasises that the poor are not burdens, but our brothers and sisters. The Catholic Catechism in Massaro (2000), also indicates that, "those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the church, which since her origin and in spite of the family

of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere” (22). Indeed, if the Christian politicians and leaders sincerely imbibe these Christian moral values in the performance of their duties, good governance will inevitably be enthroned.

Challenges of Christian Teachings in the Contemporary Society

Christian teachings have faced a lot of challenges in this present age due to so many factors which include but not limited to the spread of false teaching, doctrinal differences, moral crises, poverty among others.

Changing Values

Some claim that it is not possible to have morality apart from religious authority. Such people perpetuate the simplistic myth of morality by externally-imposed fiat — that unless there is an all-powerful authority figure standing over us, threatening to punish us for doing wrong, we will have no reason to be moral. The only true morality is that which springs from internalizing self-actualized compassion, the self-driven compulsion to be kind and loving because it makes the world we are a part of a more harmonious place for everyone. It is morality we adhere to even when no one, including imaginary sky gods, is watching. Upholding Christian teachings and values in an age that people no longer regard religious teaching or pay a little attention to it makes it difficult to make people see the need of accepting Christian teaching today. Schools are paying less attention to Christian teaching unlike before and few that are still in the business of Christian teaching allow students to learn it voluntarily (Newbiggin 76).

Moral Crises

There is ongoing moral crisis in the society as seen in vices kidnapping, stealing, abortion, homosexuality, contraception, premarital sex are some of the moral crises that have made Christian teaching challenging in the contemporary society. Those who claim to oppose abortion based on the Bible are wrong. Although abortion was known and practiced in Bible times, the Bible never says one single word against abortion. Similarly, the Bible is cited as a basis for opposing homosexuality in general, and same-sex marriage in particular. It is true that the Law of Moses forbids homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13), but the same Law also prohibits eating pork and shellfish (Leviticus chapter 11), and requires ritual purification of women completing menstruation, yet these commandments are not so widely cited.

In like vein, conservative “Christians” often describe the sins that supposedly caused God to turn the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into pillars of salt (Genesis chapter 19) as being references to homosexual relationships. This is purely speculative conjecture on their parts, as the passage in Genesis does not actually say that. And if they really believe the Bible to be without internal contradictions, then their conclusion is explicitly rejected by a much later passage, Ezekiel 16:49-50, which describes the sin of Sodom as being that those who were prideful and of luxurious comforts, but who refused to help those in need, when it says:

"Behold, this was this guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.

Poverty and Unemployment

The pursuit of material prosperity appears to be the greatest factor that contributes to the promotion of false teaching today especially in Nigeria. Many who troop to Pentecostal churches are people looking for prosperity teaching and many have seen these as an opportunity to make a living. Many leave the mainline churches with the single motive to form their own churches where they will not only be chief executives but also financial controllers and most of such people choose the Pentecostal mode of church life for easy attraction of the masses. The messages of prosperity and the get-rich-quick syndrome in Nigeria today are products of bad economy Pentecostal pastors capitalise on this situation to exploit the masses and to hold them spell-bound in their fold. When South Africa was under apartheid, churches there preached only messages of freedom because that was what the people wanted to hear. Today, in Nigeria, Pentecostal pastors adopt similar strategies that are simply meant to retain old members and attract new ones. What matters is no longer what pleases God but what pleases the members and is capable of attracting many others to the fold.

Poverty and unemployment has made many to see the Church as a way of making money. Today, many want to found and pastor Churches. Money is so necessary that preachers are quick to remind you in case you quickly say "money is the root of all evil. It is the love of money that is the root of all evil. What is the difference between both sentences? The pastor will say it is a matter of semantics. To the grammarian, the difference is very clear. Money is good; money can make a lot of things happen. Money can buy you the things that will make you great in the eyes of men. The church has become a very lucrative business in Nigeria. In 1888, the Baptist church divided due to an unending disagreement between Rev. Moses Stone and Rev. David. The former wanted to mix trade with evangelism but the latter refused and stood by his words, this was the reason for the establishment of "Ebenezer" which means stone (Anjov, 2008: 108).

Closely related to this is the revitalized giving of tithe in our churches in most recent times. There is no church that does not preach about the payment of tithes. It was forgotten in the catholic church, nay it was not taken serious in some places where the church was not in need but today, whether the leaders of the church are in need or not, every church is placing serious emphasis on the payment of tithes. Why is this trend fast growing? Are they collecting the money for the sake of building God's kingdom on earth or is it for the building of the mansions and purchase of fantastic cars and clothes. The simple answer is neither for the kingdom of God nor for their benefit. Some of them spend it on the propagation of faith while majority invest the money on themselves and relatives (Anjov, 2008: 109).

The collection of tithes, its usage should not be anyone's primary concern. When you pay your tithe believed that it will be used for the growth of God's kingdom. That way of thinking is good but religion is not simply about beliefs. It is about the influence it makes on

her adherents. It is this influence that has caused the growth of churches in Nigeria. The pastors who are in charge of collecting tithes do not go out to collect the money themselves. It is the duty of church members who are mostly elders to collect and remit same to the council. While they count huge amount of money consider the level of commitment and dedication of the pastor in the church, they are motivated to separate themselves and form a new church so that they too can collect money in the name of tithing. This is one of ways the urge for personal aggrandizement can be achieved and its resultant effect on the church (Anjov, 2008: 109).

Secularism and Modernity

The term secularism can refer according to Casanova (2011) to two issues: (1) Modern worldviews views and ideologies concerning religion. Secularism becomes an ideology the moment when it entails a theory of what religion is or does. (2) The separation or rearrangement of relationships between state and religion; science and theology; law and morality. The purpose of such separation is to create a neutral, equal and democratic society. Secularism in this instance refers to a state policy relegating religion and politics to separate domains (Casanova, 2011: 69).

The social analysis of religion by Durkheim and Weber has contributed to secularisation. The effect of materialism and production brought about changes in social structures leading to secularisation. For Bruce (2016), secularisation exhibits three characteristics: (1) the importance of religious institutions (i.e. the church) in society is on the decline, (2) the social standing of religion is on the decline, and (3) people are less religious (3). The result Bruce foresees is the gradual decline of religious affiliation leading to a situation where religious people in society are a small minority. However, King (2009) does not foresee the reversal of secularisation. It is however not clear what the context is which Bruce speaks from. King suggests Bruce's assumptions only apply to the British context.

In the process of secularisation Casanova (2011:55) indicates that over time two distinct theories developed, namely that religion will decline (with exponents such as Berger, Durkheim and Weber) and that religion will be privatised (exponents such as Luckmann, Berger and Durkheim). This brings Casanova (2011:55) to define secularisation as 'a process of differentiation and liberation of the secular from the religious.' The result is that the secular is seen as superior and prior to the religious (Casanova, 2011: 56). Secular philosophies, teachings and influences are competing with Christian teaching thus the challenge of Christian teaching.

Social Media and New Technology

The challenge of new media and information technology on Christian teaching is disturbing. Many youths are now addicted to the social media and are learning social vices through the new media. The Church like the home is losing grip over its people. And instilling into the younger ones the true teachings of Christianity become a challenge. There are negative vices like pornography, indecent dressing, drug addiction among other are promoted

through this making it difficult for people to hold firm the genuine and authentic Christian teaching.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the Christian ethical teachings in Tiv society. The article showed how Christianity shaped people's lives for a peaceful and safe society. This is because, Christian ethical teaching is useful in moral formation and inculcation of values like respect for the dignity of human life, kindness, justice, the spirit of brotherhood among other values. However, there are challenges undermining the impact of Christian teaching in the contemporary society like multiplicity and diversity of Christian teachings and doctrines, contemporary moral issues, false teachings among others. There is need for Christians to develop a common teaching, doctrines and moral codes to make have a unity of purpose.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- i. There is need for Christian ethical teaching to be strengthened by Church leaders, parents and teachers.
- ii. Factors that promote vices and crimes in the society like unemployment, poverty, hunger, drug abuse should be checked.
- iii. Moral issues and Christian ethics be made to address contemporary issues like kidnapping, stealing and armed robbery.

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