

National Anglican Identity Formation: An African Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Africa played a prominent role in the formation of earliest Christianity not least in the persons of Cyprian of Carthage and Augustine of Hippo. The Anglican heritage is considered through the experience of the Yoruba people in south-west Nigeria through whom christian faith came to the rest of Nigeria. The Anglicanism which came to the Yoruba was evangelical through the Church Missionary Society, though a key role was played by liberated slaves from Sierra Leone. Contexts in which the gospel is proclaimed and the way it is expressed may change, yet the contents of the gospel do not. A contextualized curriculum thus includes key courses such as biblical studies and systematic theology. It also includes contextual subjects such as African traditional religions and Islam and Christianity. The Church of Nigeria has thus undertaken a thorough review of the curriculum to adequately represent this kind of contextualized theology.

KEYWORDS: Nigeria, Anglican identity, theological education, Yoruba, contextualization

Introduction

Every journey has a destination in view. It is not only enough to know where one is going; it is equally important to take cognizance of where one is coming from so that adequate strategies might be put in place to arrive at the desired destination in view of the past history and the relevance of the present situation. This kind of exploration is a necessity in view of the topic of this article, 'National Anglican Identity Formation: The African Perspective'. The choice of this perspective is simply to reflect my background as an African Christian in relation to my understanding of the Christian faith within the confines of the Anglican tradition.

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From the African perspective, it is not an overstatement to say that Africans played a prominent role in the formation of earliest Christianity. Kwame Bediako thoroughly examined this claim with reference to the significant roles played by a few great Churches Fathers such as Cyprian of Carthage and Augustine of Hippo, who were a few examples of early African witnesses to Christianity.[1]

Talking about the formation of Anglican identity, although our point of reference is Africa, we shall be focusing in particular on the Yoruba-speaking region of south-west Nigeria, which invariably became the entry point in Nigeria for the advent of Anglicanism in the middle of the nineteenth century.[2] The Anglican Church, with a common ancestry to the Church of England and to the Archbishop of Canterbury,[3] has long been noted to have contained within itself a diversity of expressions of belief and worship, but held together by the instruments of Unity.[4]

The original home of Anglicanism was in England, although it later spread both in places which were formerly parts of the British Empire, and outside places of British Colonial powers, such as Latin America and Congo. It has been observed that there is no one single form of Anglicanism, but forms of Anglicanism. The observation was made recently by Bishop Terry Brown at a meeting, 'Consultation on the Anglican Way' held in Singapore.[5] The form of Anglicanism that was introduced to the Yorubaland was born out of the British evangelicalism of the late eighteenth century, a reaction to the doldrums and corruption of the eighteenth-century Church of England[6] which resulted in the founding of the Church Missionary Society in 1799.

Little wonder that today, considering the evangelical tradition of the Anglicanism that was introduced to the shores of Nigeria; there is that uncompromising attitude to renege on the age-long tradition of sound

1. Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press/Orbis, 1995), pp. 7-16.

2. M.O. Fape, *Where Are the Anglican Youths? Towards the Restoration of the Anglican Evangelical Heritage* (Ibadan: Golden Wallet Press, 1999). A detailed account of the advent of the Anglican Church is contained in Chapter 1 on pp. 1-20.

3. The history of the Anglican Church is shrouded in great complexities. See Stephen Neil, *Anglicanism* (London: Mowbrays, 1977), p. 397.

4. The Instruments of Unity are: the Anglican Consultative Council, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting and the Archbishop of Canterbury is now designated as a Focus of Unity.

5. Bishop Terry Brown, 'The Anglican Way and History', paper presented at a meeting, 'Consultation on the Anglican Way' held in Singapore, 9–16 May 2007. Here Bishop Terry identified seven forms of Anglicanism, all with a common ancestral background to England.

6. Brown, 'The Anglican Way and History'.

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principles of biblical study and preaching, simple devout worship according to traditional Anglican formularies, evangelism and promotion of education which the apostles of evangelical revival stood for.

The Birth of Anglicanism in Nigeria: Our History

The birth of Anglicanism in Yorubaland was specially connected to the Niger Expedition of 1841 which had its focus on evangelism, commerce and abolition of the slave trade.[7] The expedition consisted of individuals from different walks of life in order to ensure its success. The new Agricultural Association was saddled with the responsibility of providing the plough while the CMS was to see to the provision of the Bible. It was for these reasons that J.F. Schon, a German linguist working for the CMS in Freetown, and Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a liberated recaptive also working as a lay teacher for the CMS, and others, were asked to accompany the expedition. Though the expedition encountered some problems, it proved to be a success story at the end of the day.

The arrival of Schon and Crowther from this journey greatly warmed the hearts of their compatriots in Sierra Leone who were delighted to learn of the friendly disposition of the people they had met. This news heightened the desire of the recaptives in Sierra Leone that missionaries should be sent to their different countries.[8] More importantly the joint report of Schon and Crowther gave a high hope to the CMS that they have 'had a call from God to minister to the tribes of the countries lying around the Niger, and they resolved to go forward when it should please God to open the door'.[9]

While the CMS was reluctant to respond to the requests of some peoples in Sierra Leone to send missionaries to their homeland, the request from the Yoruba-speaking people of the south-west of Nigeria was immediately acted upon. Such an enthusiastic desire of the CMS might be accounted for in the existence of a conducive atmosphere (the presence of the freed slaves who were in their hundreds in Yorubaland). As Walker appropriately observed:

> The church (in Sierra Leone) had ready to hand men and women who were native of these Niger (and in particular the Yoruba countries) who were familiar with the languages as being their own mother tongues. In

7. Stephen Neil, *Anglicanism*, p. 397.

8. Sarah Tucker, *Abbeokuta: Or Sunrise within the Tropics; An Outline of the Origin and Progress of the Yoruba Mission* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 5th edn, 1956), p. 84. While Sarah Tucker spelt Abbeokuta, Yoruba modern orthography has it as Abeokuta.

9. Tucker, *Abbeokuta.*

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> view of this Sierra Leone was, for the purpose of training 'incomparable beyond any other spot'.[10]

The purpose of the CMS in supporting the earnest request of the Freetown Yoruba Christians for a mission in Yorubaland was to raise committed, useful, mature and well-informed Christians who would be proud both of their Christian heritage and native land. The coming of the Anglican Church into Yorubaland therefore was fully in accordance with the recognition of the CMS 'evangelical allegiance'.[11]

The CMS Yoruba Mission took off in earnest with the arrival of Henry Townsend (later Revd) at Badagry[12] on 17 December 1842, accompanied by Andrew Wilhelm.[13] Townsend's initial visit was a preparatory one which was meant to be 'a mission of research' to find out the possibility of missionary work.[14] The report of this exploratory visit was highly impressive so much that the CMS decided to establish a permanent mission in Abeokuta in the hope that:

> The hand of God was beckoning to Abeokuta, and for the moment there was no opportunity of carrying out the earlier project of a mission on the Niger. Every possible circumstance pointing to the Egba capital as the strategic base for the new venture. A number of the teachers and catechists in Freetown, being Egbas were keen to work among their fellow country men.[15]

Townsend's invitation to England for ordination in preparation for this mission was predicated on such encouraging news. After Townsend's ordination, the CMS Yoruba Mission launched out to Yorubaland in full force; and as earlier noted, making Badagry an entry point, although with serious resistance from the natives. Mission work later moved on to Abeokuta with a resounding success. The main CMS missionary team on the journey consisted of the Revd and Mrs C.A. Gollmer, the Revd and

10. F. Deavile Walker, *The Romance of the Black River: The Story of the C.M.S. Nigeria Mission* (London: CMS, 1931), p. 30.

11. A.F. Walls, 'Black Europeans, White Africans: Some Missionary Motives in West Africa', in D. Baker (ed.), *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian* (Oxford: Blackwood, 1978), pp. 339-48 (348).

12. The CMS Mission work in Yorubaland began in Badagry as the point of entry; and later missionary activities spread to Ibadan and Lagos.

13. Modupe Oduyoye, 'The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland 1842–1888' in Ogbu Kalu (ed.), *Christianity in West Africa: The Nigerian Story* (Ibadan: Day Star Press, 1978), pp. 239-304 (257).

14. J.F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841–1891: The Making of a New Elite* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 32. See also Walker, *The Romance of the Black River*, p. 43.

15. Walker, *The Romance of the Black River*, p. 44.

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Mrs Henry Townsend and the Revd and Mrs Samuel Ajayi Crowther with their two children.[16]

The year 1847 was very remarkable in the history of Christianity in Yorubaland. On 21 March 1847, a church was opened for worship at *Ake* district in Abeokuta, and from there the gospel message which eventually became the source of salvation for many was regularly preached to a congregation of about 150–200 people every week. Also, by December of the same year, four additional places of worship had been established in the districts of Igbein, Owu, Itoku and Ikija with an average attendance of about 150 on Sundays and about 40 to 50 people attending on the week days. As the impact of the CMS missionaries became evident in Abeokuta, their spiritual accomplishment also became known in the power of the gospel as devotion and dedication to idolatry lost their holds upon the lives of the converts. By the end of 1847, not less than 40 candidates were being prepared for baptism.

The untiring efforts of these missionaries in the first 18 months of their stay in Abeokuta resulted in the first baptism in February 1848, when three women and two men were baptized, including Crowther's own mother.

The missionaries were undaunted in their dedication to the evangelical heritage of the CMS Mission among the Yoruba. They continued to present the gospel message in such a way that people were convinced of the folly and vanity of idolatry. For sure, such messages were a reflection of the fact that the Scripture contains everything that is needful for the salvation of mankind;[17] and the after effect of the salvation experience by converts shows the truth of the Scripture. On account of the preaching of the Missionaries the Churches of *Ake* and *Igbein* as well as the others continually increased in numbers. People attended in their hundreds. The street preaching of the missionaries drew the attention of a big crowd of eager listeners. There were many candidates for baptism and people were leaving their idolatry in search of the divine truth. People were not just baptized, but a conversion experience was considered a necessity.

Baptism was not just a mere outward ceremony, but evidence of a changed life which fits in with the truth of the gospel: 'If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come' (2 Cor. 5.17). By 1849, the evangelistic activities of these missionaries had produced an impressive result of over 500 regular

16. Oduyoye, 'Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland', p. 257.

17. This is the first of the 1888 Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral Statement; and Article 6 of the 39 Articles of Religion in the Book of Common Prayer.

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worshippers at Church services with 80 communicant and 200 candidates for baptism in Abeokuta. As noted by Burton, by 1861 there were about 1,500 registered converts with about 800 communicants.[18]

There was wide publicity in various missionary magazines in terms of the huge success of the missionaries and the religious experiences of the converted Christians. Thus Abeokuta became a significant mission base in the eyes of the missionaries at home in England not only in terms of the number of those already converted, but also in terms of the hope of the anticipated conversion, and the hope it held out for the civilization of Africa. This is the sense in which Abeokuta soon became a household word among the readers of missionary magazine, long before Lagos was known. From Abeokuta, the Christian faith via the vehicle of Anglicanism grew to other major towns in Nigeria such as Ibadan and Lagos.[19]

Theological Education in the South West of Nigeria in Retrospect

It is our main task in this section to address the important issue of what has shaped the identity of Anglicans in their national setting; and as it were within the Nigerian setting with special reference to Yorubaland. In a sense, what this section seeks to unravel is the understanding of the pedigree of Anglican identity and its living dynamism in Nigeria. The question we are seeking to address here is, 'What things in the curriculum in our institutions are thought to be important in shaping the students' understanding of Anglicanism so much so that they are encouraged to convey the same to those whom they will minister outside the four walls of theological colleges?'

For us at the advent of the Christian faith in Nigeria, the gospel is the power of God for salvation. Though the *contexts* of where the gospel is proclaimed and *methodologies* of this proclamation may change, yet the *contents* of the gospel do not change. The gospel is timeless and changeless in substance and contents. The main task of theological education is to bring the unchangeable contents of this gospel (God's redeeming love) to bear upon the sinfulness of mankind thereby convicting sinners of their sins and God's offer of pardon to live a new life made possible through the atoning death of Christ. Down the ages, theological education continues to strive towards the goal of fashioning those who have set themselves apart for training to be bearers of the Gospel message to a

18. Richard F. Burton, *Abeokuta and the Cameroon's Mountains, Vol. 1* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1863), p. 246.

19. This is the sense in which Sarah Tucker entitled her book, *Abbeokuta: Or Sunrise Within the Tropics* to show the significant role played by Abeokuta in the spread of Christianity among the Yoruba. See n. 8 above.

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world needing God's divine intervention. One of our great hymns, *Hymnal Companion* (HC) 601 composed by Edward Henry Bickersteth offers a searchlight on the basis for theological education which stretches from God to whoever imparts that knowledge and whoever acquires the same and passes it on. HC 601 Stanza 1 reads thus:

> For my sake and the Gospel's go,
> And tell redemption story:
> His heralds answer, Be it so,
> And Thine Lord, all the glory,
> They preach His birth, His life, His cross,
> The Love of His atonement
> For whom they count the world but loss
> His Father, His enthronement.[20]

The text from 2 Tim. 2.15, 'Study to show yourself approved unto God' seems to encapsulate the understanding of the relevance of sound theological education to the survival of Anglicanism in Yorubaland. Thus the idea of identifying and training the best men[21] for the ministry was of paramount importance right from the early period of the CMS Yoruba mission. Right from the beginning, it was the intention of the early missionaries to produce manpower that would be relevant to the sociocultural settings of the Yoruba people. According to Henry Venn, this is the only way that the Anglican Church could be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.[22]

There are three major Anglican Theological Colleges in the south-west, which is predominantly the Yoruba-speaking part of the Church of Nigeria. Of the three,[23] Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan is an ecumenical college jointly owned by the Anglican and Methodist Churches. The other two are Archbishop Vining College of Theology, Akure and Ezekiel College of Theology, Ekpoma. It will be essential to take a peep into these colleges just for background information for the purpose of this article and not necessarily delving into the details about the day-to-day administration of the Colleges.

20. Hymn 'For my Sake' by Edward Henry Bickersteth 1825–1906 in *Hymnal Companion*, 601.

21. This article acknowledges the fact of inclusive language in theological debates. However, the Church of Nigeria does not ordain women in the present circumstance, hence the use of 'men'.

22. R. Wilbert Shenk, *Henry Venn: Missionary Statesman* (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), pp. 108-16.

23. Apart from these three Colleges, others serving the Anglican Church in Nigeria include: St Francis of Assisi, Wusasa, Zaria; St Paul's University College, Awka; Trinity College, Umuahia and Bishop Crowther College of Theology, Okene.

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Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan

Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan is a fusion of the Ordination Programmes of the Church of Nigeria originally run at Melville Hall in Kudeti, Ibadan, and the Ministerial Training Programme of the Methodist Church Nigeria located at Wesley College, Elekuro, Ibadan. The amalgamation took place on 14 February 1958.

In 1971, the College acquired affiliation status with the University of Ibadan to award the Diploma in Religious Studies; and in 1986 was accredited to award the BA Degree (Christian Option) of the same University.

Prior to this amalgamation, Melville Hall, which was established in 1947, was solely saddled with the responsibility for training all Anglican priests needed to shepherd the teeming population of the Anglican members in the south-west of Nigeria.

Archbishop Vining College of Theology, Akure

This college started in 1933 primarily as a Women's Training Centre. It was meant to train the wives and fiancées of pastors, catechists and head teachers of the church mission schools. In 1960 due to the demand for more hands to man the growing congregations that could not support full-time pastors, it was upgraded to a Catechist School, Vining Leadership Training Centre. To maximize resources and enhance efficiency, Mackay (Catechist School) Hall, Osogbo, another school training catechists, was merged with the school in 1964.

Another milestone was reached in the history of the school in 1983. When Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan could not meet the demands for ordained ministers, Vining Leadership Training Centre was upgraded to a full-fledged theological college and renamed the Archbishop Vining College of Theology. The college was affiliated to the University of Ibadan for the Diploma in Religious Studies in 1992, and became a degree awarding college in affiliation with the same university in 2001.

Ezekiel College of Theology, Ekpoma

Ezekiel College of Theology, Ekpoma is a gift to the Church of Nigeria, and was built by Sir Ezekiel A. Ainabe of Ujoelen, Ekpoma and donated to the then Province One (now Supra Board West) in 1998. Like the earlier two colleges, it trains candidates for the ordained ministry and in addition to the ordination course also offers the Diploma in Religious Studies of the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.

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Theological Education and Contextualized Curriculum

The purpose of theological education at the beginning was to produce manpower for the infant church insofar as the milieu required. However, in the light of the present reality on ground, theological education that is capable of producing effective ministers who are suited for rendering a relevant and satisfying ministry to the educated church of the twenty-first century must be based on a radically revised curriculum.

For a long time, the contents of theological education in Nigeria show that they leave much to be desired. It has been discovered that many are mere replica of curricula inherited from the foreign Christian Missionaries who established the theological institutions. The direct implication of this is that theological education is being done with course contents that are extraneous to the realities on ground.

Based on the need to do a contextual theology, while not denying the necessity of some core theological education courses so as to develop a holistic curriculum, it is imperative that a radical approach be adopted to make the church and theological education more relevant in the twenty-first century. Regardless of whatever revision we attempt the Anglican Church in the south-west of Nigeria has not lost sight of the fact that there are certain basic core courses in theological education anywhere in the world. Such courses include: Biblical Studies, Biblical Languages, Systematic Theology, Homiletics, Church History and Missions studies. Even though these core courses have been adjudged inevitable, yet they become irrelevant if isolated from the contextual realities of the recipients. In other words, there is need for inculturation[24] if biblical facts are to be meaningful to the recipients in their immediate environment. In other words, a teacher should be able to take both himself and his hearers, as it were, behind the biblical record by recreating equivalent events in cotemporary situation. This is the main task of biblical hermeneutics.[25]

24. Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology Inculturation and Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 63-94. This term was used by Emmanuel Martey to describe the contextualization of theology from the African perspective.

25. Hermeneutics is a biblio-theological tool for decoding original biblical texts as perceived by the author for his audience and making the same intelligible for the audience of the present milieu bearing in mind their contextual realities. While the fact remains that Africans have gained a reasonable degree of political independence, it is now that they have started applying the Bible in a concrete way to the realities of their daily living; be it in the realm of liberation theology or otherwise.

Awareness of the above is what informed the decision of the Theological and Doctrinal Commission of the Church of Nigeria to embark on a thorough review of the curriculum of our Theological Colleges in Nigeria some years back with a view to making theological education relevant to our context. Courses included in the review are: African Traditional Religion and Christianity, Islam and Christianity, Ecumenism, Spiritual Formation of the Minister, Independent African Christian Church Movements, Christianity and Contemporary Issues, Sociology of Religion, Cultural Anthropology, African Christian Theology and Liberation Theology.

The courses above were taken on board for obvious reasons. Here we shall examine five courses: African Traditional Religion and Christian Theology, Islam, Ecumenism, Liberation Theology, and Christianity and Contemporary Issues. Although Christianity has been present with us in Nigeria for many years, yet it is still very much conditioned by African Traditional Religious practices in their reaction to boundary situation crises. It is no secret that in times of serious crises, the average African Christian finds recourse to traditional religious practices for a means of escape.

If a Nigerian priest is to minister to people who have to contend with the forces of African Traditional Religion and are still to hold on to the integrity of their Christian faith it is then important that he must be well grounded in the nitty-gritty of the practices of African Traditional Religions. If theological education does not include a course that enables a student to handle such a problem in his later ministry, it cannot be said to be adequate.

Knowing the pre-conversion background of an average African Christian and how much dearly he held on to traditional practices before his conversion enables the priest to offer him the much-needed support in the face of seeming problems as he reverts to traditional religious practices in times of trouble for solution. It is for the same reason also that a course in African Christian Theology must be an essential part of a functional theological curriculum.

Just as African Traditional religions must be included in the Theological Education Curriculum, the same is applicable for the inclusion of courses in Islam. Islam and African Traditional Religion are the two sources for gaining new converts for the Christian faith. It is therefore necessary for the Christian minister to have a clear understanding of the teachings of Islam. If a Christian minister does not know what a Muslim believes, it may be difficult interacting with such a Muslim much less of preaching to him with a view to converting him. A good knowledge of Islam is also necessary for peaceful co-existence and to avoid religious crisis, considering the pluralistic nature of the Nigerian nation.

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While Anglicanism was the foremost Christian faith in Yorubaland, it was only a matter of time before other denominations[26] also found their ways into the shores of Nigeria, including Yorubaland inclusive. A course in ecumenism is required to help students understand the basic teachings of other Christian denominations for healthy collaboration and avoidance of denominational rivalry. If the Christian faith will impact significantly on our society, there is need for collaboration among Christian denominations. A house divided against itself cannot stand. However, what we are suggesting here is not a call for organic union of churches but a clarion call for mutual understanding among various denominations while still adhering to their cherished denominational doctrinal traditions. To achieve this laudable objective, it is important that we include ecumenism in the curriculum of theological education in our colleges.

Liberation theology is another course that has received some boost from the perspective of social concern for the poor, the oppressed and the outcast. Apart from the fact that the gospel gave rise to the freedom of the first generation of African Christians in the sense that it set them free from the shackles of slavery; it also subsequently resulted in their spiritual liberation turning them away from being devotees of African traditional religions to the service of Christ. However, in recent times, there is a more holistic view of liberation theology as a course in the curriculum of our theological colleges.

There is no doubt that difficult economic situations in Nigeria in the last two decades have occasioned spiritual ambivalence in the church. Nigeria is endowed by God with huge natural resources which ought to have made the country a proud nation in terms of infrastructures and social services. Unfortunately the reverse is the case. There has been unreasonable mismanagement of our economy by the past successive regimes be it civilian or military. This mismanagement has left the greater percentage of the masses in abject poverty. Economic and financial hardship has brought frustration and depression to many people. As a result, people are looking for economic survival by any means. It is not surprising therefore that many ordinary church goers are caught up in the web of fraudulent practices while looking for means of economic survival.

Those who take bribes of different kinds have found justification for their unacceptable lifestyle by shifting the blame onto the chronic economic hardship in the country. It is sad to note today that the desire to

26. These other denominations include African Independent Churches such as the African Church, Christ Apostolic Church, Eternal Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Church, just to mention a few.

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amass wealth through fraudulent means has taken its toll on Christians. Today bribery and corruption are normalized as a standard practice in our country. The Scripture clearly denounces this wicked act (Ps. 15.5).

This is where the question of Stephen Fagbemi becomes relevant as he writes, 'How has a church that was built solidly on evangelical foundation and outreach, with emphasis on social morality and holiness, produced members who have no positive moral input in contemporary society?'[27] In trying to answer the above question, Fagbemi opined that the reason may not be far removed from economic problems in the country just as we have noted above.

The fact that many members of the Anglican Churches are seeking solutions to their economic problems by adopting a non-biblical approach shows that something is lacking in the quality of the teaching of the church. In order to stem down this unchristian attitude a radical interpretation of liberation theology is needed to enable Christians to understand that salvation must be holistic in all ramifications. There must be correlation between creed and conduct.

Christianity and Contemporary Issues is a course that relates the Christian faith to the daily struggles of Christians in the face of vicissitudes of life. An area that calls for urgent and practical solution in contemporary Nigerian society is the ravenous scourge of the pandemic of HIV and AIDS. The curriculum is receiving attention in this area so that the gospel can be socially re-interpreted to meet and minister to the needs of people living with HIV; and also to re-orientate the perception of people about this disease. For quite some time, there are members of the Christian community who are of the opinion that sufferers of HIV and AIDS are deserving of the pathetic condition. For such people, HIV and AIDS are a result of sinful activity. Such a claim as this can neither be scripturally sustained nor is it a faithful expression of the heart of God. There are many instances where people have been infected with this disease for reasons other than sin. While the Bible is specific in some instances that sickness could be a direct consequence of an act of sin (Jn 5.12-14), yet the Bible does not assume that every instance of sickness is occasioned by sin (Jn 9.3). While not denying that there could be cases in which wrong behaviour could result in the disease, even in such cases the Bible would still want us to respond in a manner that mirrors the heart of God, who is 'not willing that any should perish' (2 Pet. 3.9).

27. Stephen Ayodeji A. Fagbemi, *Who Are the Elect in 1 Peter? A Study in Biblical Exegesis and its Application to the Anglican Church of Nigeria* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 223.

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It is no longer a matter of debate that sub-Saharan Africa has the highest HIV and AIDS related cases in the world. To reduce the growth of HIV and AIDS, the church must put up a courageous fight through adequate enlightenment campaigns in order to disabuse from the minds of people the erroneous claim that HIV and AIDS are a consequence of a sinful life. Knowing fully that those in theological colleges are going to minister in the society that is already biased about the status of people living with HIV and AIDS, courses on HIV and AIDS and other life threatening diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis are taught to widen the horizons of the postulants and get them adequately prepared for the challenges out there. That is why our theological colleges attach great important to hospital chaplaincy courses. Inclusion of the hospital chaplaincy course as part of the requirement for ministerial training is meant to expose our students to the realities on the ground after graduation. In this way through their hospital placement, they are able to strike a balance between theory within the four walls of a theological college and practical situations in the society where the church is located.

The strong emphasis placed on theological enlightenment vis-à-vis HIV and AIDS awareness informed the Church of Nigeria comprehensive programme launched in June 2004 tagged, 'The Church of Nigeria National HIV/AIDS Policy'. This programme is meant to sensitize every Anglican member about the reality of this pandemic and the right way to handle it. It cuts across the entire Church from Provincial to Parish levels. Since ministers of the gospel have been exposed to a measure of education while in the College, not much of a problem would be encountered after graduation when they are faced with the reality of the parish work with the visible evidence of the prevalence of HIV and AIDS cases.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we have tried to examine the advent of Anglicanism in Yorubaland, bearing in mind the significant role played by the Church of England through the missionary activities of the CMS. Having embraced the gospel message, there was evidence of genuine Christian conversion which resulted in a changed lifestyle of the converts. In order that this new-found faith might grow and have permanent positive influence on the converts, this article has looked at theological institutions which emerged at different times to prepare candidates for ministries in the church. Worthy of note in this direction was a paradigm shift in the contents of theological education to reflect more of a contextualized curriculum in the present milieu to reflect our struggle and our purpose to do theology from our contextual realities.

We have noted that believers are pilgrims here on earth, and it does not matter whether in the north or south of the globe, we are called to a life of obedience to the Scripture, which is the cornerstone of Anglicanism. This is not an agenda only for the Church in Africa; we are all called to this life irrespective of race, colour, language or culture. With this understanding, we must all strive to rediscover this truth, which is why theological education becomes relevant in the Communion. When adequately positioned, from the perspective of African Christians, and especially the Yoruba people of the south-west of Nigeria, theological education will help to focus on God and his divine intervention in human history in relation to our socio-cultural contexts without jettisoning the authority of the Scripture.

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