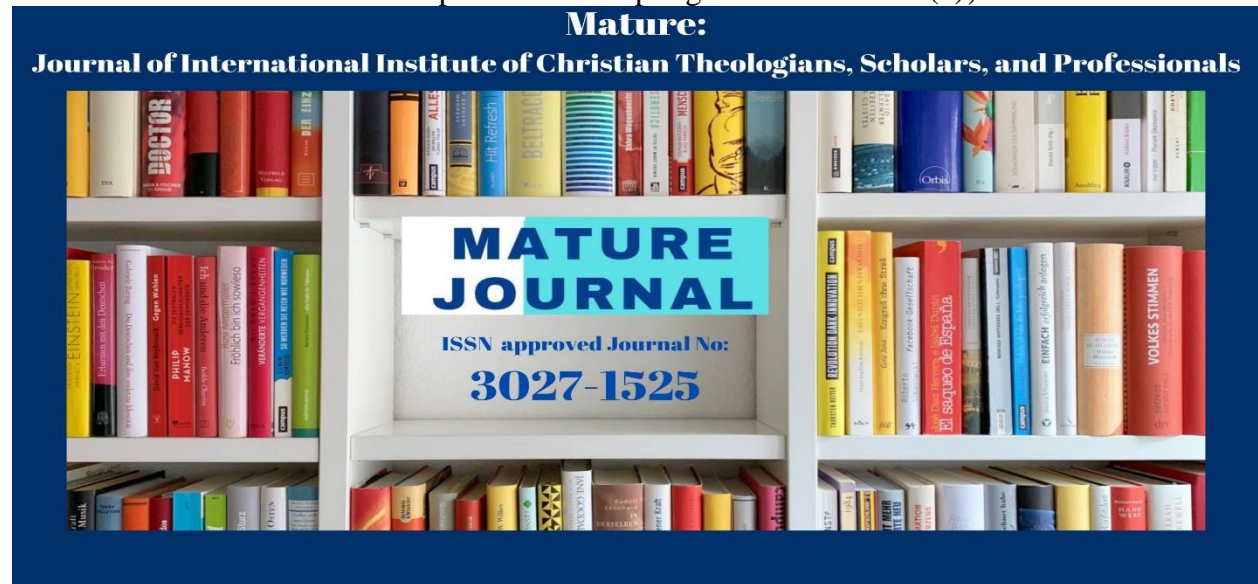


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**The Historical Context of Christianity in the Republic of Benin:
Implications for Present-Day Politics**

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the historical trajectory of Christianity in the Republic of Benin and its multifaceted implications for the nation's present-day political landscape. The paper intends to answer the following key research question: How has the historical development of Christianity in the Republic of Benin shaped and influenced its present-day political landscape, social dynamics, and governance? Beginning with the pre-colonial and early colonial era epitomized in the overview of panoramic historicity of the Republic of Benin, followed by its historical synopsis of Christianity, and scriptural review to identify and dig into the relevant biblical themes and principles that can be applied to reflect on the historical context of Christianity in the country. The research presents an array of biblical concepts which provide a theological framework for the analysis of the subject. The paper claims that the initial introduction, the growth, and the changes of Christianity in Benin have deeply penetrated contemporary political discourse, civil society formation, and the influence and power game, thus stirring up both social cohesion and occasional tensions. The study utilizes triangulation research methodology, employing historical analysis, explanatory model, and scriptural review method. The study uses both primary and secondary data. While it derives primary data from scriptural review, the secondary data comes from books and online databases. The results show that the course of Christianity in the Benin Republic positively influences the civil society formation and the power game in the country. The paper concluded with some recommendations for further consideration.

Keywords: *History of Benin Republic, Present-day Politics, History of Christianity, Colonial Period, Scriptural Review.*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A Panoramic Overview of Benin History

Benin, a nation nestled in the heart of West Africa, is a vibrant tapestry of cultures, languages, and religions. It is bordered on the north-west by Burkina Faso, to the north-east of the Republic of Niger, to the east of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and on the west by the Republic of Togo. The majority of its population lives on the southern coastline of the Bight of Benin.¹ With a 124 kilometers long coastline, it stretches north to south some 672 kilometers while its breadth extends 324 kilometers at the widest point. The entire area called Benin covers an area of 112,622 km² (43,484 sq mi), and its population as at 2021 was estimated to be approximately 13 million.² The capital is Porto-Novo, and the seat of government is situated in Cotonou.³ While often recognised globally for its deep-rooted Vodun traditions and a growing presence of Islam, the significant and historically impactful role of Christianity often goes less explored. Yet, from the earliest European encounters to the nation's contemporary democratic framework, Christian beliefs and institutions have woven themselves inextricably into the social and political fabric of this West African state.

According to the two key authors who have explored the history of Republic of Benin: Jean Pliya and Olympe Bhêly-Quenum who examined urban realities and gender perspectives explained and spoke about the early history of the Republic of Benin which began from the pre-Colonial Kingdom. It was made clear that before European colonisation period, the region encompassed powerful and independent kingdoms like Dahomey, Porto-Novo, and various Bariba kingdoms in the north which are ultimately known as the powerful Regions at that time

However, the French ruled the land for some decades until 1960. At that time, Benin was known as a French Colony until it got its independence in that particular year. After the independence, the name, “French Dahomey” changed and the country was renamed “The Republic of Benin” in the year 1975. During this period, the Republic of Benin under the government of the socialist

¹ <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Matthew Kérékou, the Country transitioned to a more democratic and liberal system in 1980s and 1990s respectively.

The Republic of Benin can be broadly divided into pre-Colonial Era kingdom, the Colonial rule and the Post-Colonial Era. The pre-colonial era in Benin Republic has marked a significant landmark in West Africa Region. Before French colonisation, Dahomey and Porto Novo were known as a powerful Region in the country. Dahomey in particular, was known for its warrior culture and control of the slave trade. Dahomey is one of the popular, strongest, and powerful towns in Benin. This kingdom called Dahomey was ruled by the Fon people (popularly known as the Ègùn People – a tribe in the Republic of Benin). The kingdom became powerful military force after they fought and conquered the Oyo Empire in the early 1600s which was now located in the present day Nigeria. This Dahomey after conquering Oyo Empire later rose again to fight the Town known as Benin and also conquered and captured some Coastal Towns in Benin and later became the leading and a key players in the Atlantic Slave trade. During this particular period, the conquests built a very popular kingdom economy. It was the people they captured during the war that became their slaves and captives. They were the ones they used to build the economy through hard labour and victimisation and torture.

Moreover, it was gathered that there were some British that came to Africa particularly to Benin for slave trade business. They landed in Port Novo, the Capital City of Benin Republic. The number of the slaves captured in Africa was approximated to 16 million. At that time, the slave trade was booming in a progressive manner which brought about a rapid development to Port Novo. There were also Portuguese slave traders and the French slave traders who migrated to Benin for business because of the news they heard about the British who gained ground. Thereafter, it was gathered that the last slave trade which occurred in the Republic of Benin took place in the year 1885 with a very large number of slaves that left Benin for Portugal and Brazil that same year.

The arrival of Christianity in the former Kingdom of Dahomey, was initially with European traders and later through dedicated missionary efforts, introduced a new dimension to an already rich spiritual landscape. This wasn't merely a passive reception; it was a dynamic interaction that saw indigenous beliefs confronting, adapting to, and sometimes even integrating with the tenets of the

new faith. Though this was not easy initially, continuous evangelistic activities and interaction finally gave way for the establishment of churches and new lease of life in the land.

This paper examines how the introduction and expansion of Christianity, shaped by colonial influences and indigenous responses, has contributed to the political evolution of the Republic of Benin. It seeks to answer the central question: How has the historical development of Christianity in Benin shaped its present-day political landscape and governance? The paper argues that the historical introduction, expansion, and adaptation of Christianity in Benin have significantly shaped contemporary political discourse, civil society, and power dynamics, contributing to both social cohesion and occasional tensions. Through a comprehensive historical analysis of primary and secondary sources, the study traces Christianity's presence from the pre-colonial era through colonial rule, post-independence instability, and the transition to democracy. By examining key moments where religious and political shifts intersected, the paper highlights Christianity's enduring influence on Benin's pluralistic and relatively stable democratic identity, with attention to its ongoing implications for present-day governance and social dynamics. The authors embellish their work with scriptural review in relation to Benin's political, social, and religious adaptation and understanding.

1.2 Historical Synopsis of Christianity in Benin Republic

Christianity, particularly Catholicism, is the most practice religion in the Republic of Benin and this of course can be traced back in history to the late 16th Century. Catholic gained ground in the country in the 19th Century and the country's religious landscape include various Christian denominations with the Roman Catholic representing more than half of the Christian population according to World Atlas. Christianity came to Republic of Benin through the French missionaries that came to spread Christianity. Many people who decided to join them automatically became Catholic members. There and then, Christianity began to escalate little by little and gained footing in the 19th century, thereafter, some denominations such as Protestant, Baptist and English Methodist arrived for evangelical and mission assignments to fulfil divine command.

There were some Brazilian Returnees among the Colonial Masters who were Catholics that came and build some magnificent edifices crafted with different colours for the government and also built some worship and prayer centers for the Christians. Patrick Claffey (2007), in a book titled,

Christian Churches in Dahomey –Benin, emphasised and explained the state of the Republic of Benin and the socio-political role played by the Christian churches, he further talked about the role of the mainline Churches and the recent development of the Christianity in Beni and that Christian Churches are above all a commentary upon the society which they found themselves. He said that in term of stress, Christians should see themselves as positive contributors who play significant roles in nation building.

Patrick Claffey, the author of *Christian Churches in Dahomey*, critically examined the state in Benin Republic most especially the socio-political roles which Christian churches played in bringing a positive change including both the historical and contemporary perspectives. This motivated missionaries from various denominations including Roman Catholics, Protestant, Baptist, Methodists groups to play a significant role in shaping the history of the Republic of Benin in all endeavors.

These researchers observed that it was the efforts made by the Roman Catholic that opened doors for the missionaries for the spread of the gospel in the country just as the disciples of Jesus Christ did after the fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts of the Apostles 2: 1- 4,⁴ spreading the gospel of Christ abroad for the salvation of the heathen. This was in line with the commandment of Jesus Christ in Mathew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16 that we should go out and preach the gospel to all the nations of the world.

1.3 Political System and Christian Participation

After many decades of political struggle and instability, Benin Republic began to witness an atmosphere of political turning point and turnaround in the history of transition to democratic government at all levels. Also, the establishment of multiparty system cannot be overemphasised. Furthermore, in 1990, there was an adaptation of the new constitution and policies which gave room for many political parties and also paved way for free and fair election and the protection of human rights. As a result of this, there was a peaceful conduct of elections and the first multi-party presidential election conducted in the year 1991 was a very peaceful one and was won by Nicephore Soglo.

⁴ All scriptural citations are from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.

Thereafter, there was a peaceful transfer of power from one government to the other. This gave Benin Republic a more political recognition in the international Community not only that, this also brought rapid development in the area in foreign aid and investments and international recognition. From that particular period on, there have been a peaceful and good governance in the country till date. The current President of Benin Republic is Patrice Talon who was one of the descendants of the slave traders from a Town called Ouidah. He became the democratically elected president of Benin in the year 2016. Before then, he was a dogged business man popularly called the "King of Cotton" because he deals with Cotton business. He is a renowned business man, very popular and hardworking individual.

As of now, the Christian participation in the political system of Benin Republic is still very discouraging. Christian participation in politics is sine qua non if we want our society to experience a better life. The advice of Abogunrin (1984) in his paper titled, *Towards a Unifying Political Ideology and Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria* will be a tremendous help to Beninese Christians. Abogunrin declares that Christianity and Politics are two inseparable institutions in the human Social psyche and structure. He equally asserts that earthly Governments are mere agents of God's theoretical governance of the physical and the spiritual world. He further says that the ideal of Christianity is a good guide to better the political conducts. The scholar however said that the practice of such a political ideal can also be influenced by the Socio-cultural institutions in the society, politics inclusive.

It is unfortunate to hear Christians argue amongst themselves that it is not an ideal thing for Christians to participate in politics. Some even misinterpreted the statement made by our Lord Jesus Christ in the book of Matthew 22:17-22 where He said. "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. So many Christians today even the Clergy have used the phrase to exclude themselves from taking active parts or being involved in the politics of their father's land. In the words of Matthew Hassan Kukkah it is an aberration for Christians not to participate in politics.

2.0 Scriptural Review

This scriptural review section identifies relevant biblical themes and principles that can be used to reflect on the historical context of Christianity in the Republic of Benin and its implications for present-day politics. It gives a broad biblical concepts that offer a framework for theological analysis. It is should be noted that while no specific biblical verses directly mention the Republic of Benin, its history, or its political landscape, the Scriptures provide overarching principles and narratives that can illuminate and offer a framework for understanding the complexities of Christianity's presence and impact in any nation. These principles can be applied to analyze past events and inform present-day engagement in any nation. The purpose of this review is to establish the biblical model for this study.

The main thrust of this review is to evince the role of Mission and Evangelism (The Great Commission and Early Church Expansion) in the historical context of Christianity in the Republic of Benin which is relevant to other colonized and evangelized nations. The core principle of Christianity is the biblical mandate for Christian believers to spread the Gospel, make disciples of all nations, and teach them Christ's commands. This involves a call to share the good news through word and deed, which the early missionaries, such as Roman Catholic, that came to the Republic of Benin did. Indeed, the early Christian missionaries in in Benin Republic obeyed the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ as typified in Matthew 28:18-20 called the “Great Commission”:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Jesus reiterates this commandment in Mark 16: 15-18 to validate the urgency and importance of spreading the gospel – the Great Commission:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new

tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus reinforces the necessity of moving from one location to another, from one country to another country for the salvation of the perishing souls: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” This divine declaration lends more credence to the missionary activities in the Republic of Benin.

Furthermore, the historical context of Christianity in Benin Republic exemplifies or characterizes the biblical narratives of early missionary journeys, the proclamation of the Gospel, the formation of diverse communities, and challenges faced during this period (Acts 2, 4, 10, 13-19).

What is more, the early missionaries in Benin Republic were not oppressors and colonial masters. Their main goal was to spread the gospel of Christ, maintain justice and righteousness. God's consistent demand for justice and righteousness in human societies, His concern for the poor, the oppressed, the vulnerable, and His condemnation of injustice, exploitation, and corruption were all demonstrated in the missionary activities of the early church in Benin Republic. The following Bible passages clearly demonstrate how Christian institutions and individuals in Benin's history (colonial and post-colonial) have either championed justice for the marginalized or, conversely, been complicit in or benefited from systems of oppression (e.g., colonialism, political corruption, social inequalities):

Micah 6:8: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Amos 5:24: "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Isaiah 1:17: "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Psalm 82:3-4: "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked." Luke 4:18-19 [Jesus' mission statement]: " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance

to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

One may ask, however, that how have Christian leaders and communities in Benin Republic engaged with political power – from the colonial administration to post-independence governments? Have they been a prophetic voice challenging injustice, or have they sought political influence for self-interest? How have they balanced submission to authority with obedience to God? The answers to these questions are contained in the revelation of God to humanity. The Bible has a perfect match for every situation. The Prophetic Books, such as Jeremiah, Daniel, and Isaiah also have numerous examples of prophets challenging kings and political systems for their unrighteousness and idolatry. This implies that the contemporary Christian leaders are not supposed to remain indifference to political system of their milieu. It also includes the call for Christians to pray for leaders and to be good citizens while maintaining their primary allegiance to God.⁵ However, in Acts 5:29: "But Peter and the apostles replied, 'We must obey God rather than human authority.'" (NLT). Indeed, this offers a crucial caveat to submission to authority when it conflicts with God's commands.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The word "politics" in this research work refers to the public welfare or the common good of a nation as opposed to that of the private or individual domain. "Christianity" is taken to indicate all believers in Christ of all denominations who profess Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Christianity is a monotheistic faith that belongs to teleological religion – a religion of one God but three personalities: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit. These three are one inseparable entity – having the essence and substance (1John 5:7). The God of Christianity is one – one living God. It is important to note that the cultural identity of Benin people is woven around their religious practices. "Culture" is the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that characterize a people's way of life. This includes language, traditions, and social norms to art, music, and cuisine. On the other hand, religion is human way of finding God or gods, a system of beliefs, practices, and rituals, which centred on the worship of a higher power or powers. The concept of "the Great Commission" center on a biblical mandate given by Jesus Christ

⁵ Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17

to His disciples, instructing them to spread the gospel and make disciples of all nations by going from one place to another spreading the good news. All the disciples of Christ were commissioned to obey this command. This commission is primarily recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. The Great Commission is a cornerstone of Christian biblical theology and practice, which affirms the universal scope of the gospel and calls believers to participate in God's redemptive work without delay.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in four major theories:⁶ *Biblical-Cultural Engagement Theory*, *The Great Commission Theory*, *Supranationalistic Salvation Theory*, and *Jesus' Model of Leadership Theory*. These three theories are relevant given the political and cultural complexity in which Christianity has to strive without jeopardizing the truth in God's Word. For instance, the Biblical-Cultural Engagement Theory will help to douse the tension between engaging with and respecting local cultures while also challenging practices or beliefs that are contrary to biblical truth. The Bible warns against idolatry and syncretism (the blending of religious beliefs/practices in a way that compromises core truth). **The Biblical-Cultural Engagement Theory** posits that the effective proclamation of Christ must begin with a sound scriptural understanding of divine truth and a contextual awareness of the cultural environment being engaged. This theory emphasises that for the gospel to be meaningfully communicated and faithfully lived out, both the biblical message and the cultural context of the milieu must be thoroughly understood. In this way, Christian mission and practice are shaped by the unchanging truths of Scripture while being expressed in culturally intelligible and relevant forms within a given social setting. This was the case in Acts 17:22-31 (Paul's sermon on Mars Hill): Paul engages with Athenian culture, acknowledges their religiosity, even quotes their poets, but ultimately points them to the unknown God and the resurrection. This shows an approach of cultural understanding coupled with clear proclamation of Christ. Paul also addresses how Christians should interact with cultural practices tied to idolatry, particularly on eating meat offered to idols, emphasising conscience and avoiding stumbling blocks (1 Corinthians 8, 10). Similarly, Deuteronomy 12:2-4, 29-31 warns against adopting practices of surrounding nations. The scriptural understanding will help believers to decipher the

⁶ These theories were developed by Dele Ilesanmi

true God from the false gods. Thus, Christian believers are warned not to worship the true God in the way those nations worship their gods. This biblical-cultural engagement theory will help in this respect. The lack of biblical and cultural understanding can set in syncretism and transfer the glory due to God for idols (Romans 1:21-23). This implies that Beninese Christians should understand the interaction between Christianity and indigenous spiritual traditions like Vodun, and how the early missionaries and converts navigated this cultural interface. Were there attempts to eradicate local culture entirely, or to contextualize the Gospel within it? What challenges of syncretism persist, and what are their political and social implications? These theological insights will help the contemporary Christians to engage meaningfully and successfully in the political and cultural complexity of Benin in the practice of Christianity in the land.

The Great Commission Theory posits that the universal and unrestricted proclamation of the gospel is a divine mandate entrusted to all disciples of Christ by Christ Himself. This mandate is grounded in the supreme authority He declared following His resurrection, as recorded in Matthew 28:18–20. This divine mandate given to all disciples of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all nations without restriction, making disciples through evangelism, baptism, and teaching, under the authority of Christ and with the assurance of His abiding presence. This theory maintains that believers are commissioned to make disciples of all the nations of the world through intentional going, baptising in the Trinitarian name (the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit) and teaching obedience to all of Christ’s commands—carried out under the assurance of His continual presence until the end of the age. **The Supranationalistic Salvation Theory** is a related theory that support the Great Commission. According to Ilesanmi (2023), “the theory posits that the salvific mission of Jesus Christ is primordially and divinely global, primarily exclusive to the lost sheep of the House of Israel but graciously by God’s love extended to the entire world (the Gentiles).” In other words, Jesus’ Global Mission was deeply prioritized to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy by having the House of Israel as the ground zero or the fountain of salvation as a people specially loved, set apart, and chosen by God above all other nations on earth and then spread the gospel to the entire world.⁷ No doubt, the early missionaries obeyed Jesus’ command of spreading the good

⁷ Ilesanmi, Dele A. “The Salvific Global Mission of Jesus: A Biblical and Apologetical Interpretation of Matthew 15:24” in *African Journal of Kingdom Education, Benue, Vol. 1 (2), 2023*.

news. Hence, they set their feet of Beninese soil for the purpose of spreading the good news as commanded by Jesus. Therefore, these two theories are relevant to this study.

Jesus' Model of Leadership Theory, which is centered on servant – leadership system as established by Jesus Christ. Jesus' Leadership theory is also relevant to this study. The theory posits that true leadership is expressed through humility, service, and the prioritization of others' well-being over personal gain. This model stands in direct contrast to authoritarian and self-serving forms of governance as articulated by Jesus Christ in Mark 10:42–43: “You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you...” This theory holds that political leadership should not mirror worldly patterns of domination and exploitation (Rom 12:2). Instead, it should embody the servant-leadership of Christ's method or style of leadership – where power is used to uplift the vulnerable, promote justice, and serve the common good. In other words, Leadership is fundamentally servant-oriented, rooted in humility, self-sacrifice, and the empowerment of others.⁸ This theory fosters love, service, obedience to God's will, trust, unity, and sustainable national development rooted in moral integrity and social equity. This is the exact import of this theory, which is relevant to our study.

3.0 Implications for Contemporary Political Praxis

The historical trajectory of Christianity in the Republic of Benin has multifaceted implications for the nation's present-day political landscape given the biblical understanding of civil authority as ordained by God for order and justice, yet the prophetic critique of rulers who abuse their power act unjustly, or demand ultimate allegiance. The historical journey of Christianity in Benin – from its early missionary roots through colonial entrenchment to its pivotal role in the democratic transition – has left a lasting imprint on the nation's political and social fabric. This legacy is not only religious but deeply political, influencing how power is negotiated, how leadership is legitimised, and how civil society functions in the present day. Indeed, Christian participation in

⁸ Read these passages for a better understanding: Matt 20:26-27; 23: 8-12; Mark 9:35; Luke 9:48; 14:11; 18:14; John 13: 13-18; 18:36; 1Cor 9:19-23; Gal 5: 13; 1Pet 5:5-6

governance has numerous implications for the present-day politics. A few implications are discussed below:

Religious Institutions as Political Stakeholders: The Christian churches in Benin, particularly the Catholic Church, are moral arbiters in national discourse and have extensive influence. Their commitment to education, healthcare, and community organisation over a long period has resulted in them being rooted in the grassroots level and also having institutional credibility. Due to this, political actors frequently find it necessary to obtain the endorsement or guidance of religious leaders during the periods of elections, constitutional debates, or even national uncertainty. In fact, the religious institutions are not only the spectators but also the ones that are actively involved in influencing public opinion and solving social problems.

Elite Formation and Social Stratification: The educational foundations of Christian missions produced an educated elite in the early days, which was mostly concentrated in the South. This elite is still prominent in the government, academic institutions, and private sector. The mission schooling's legacy is still influencing access to various opportunities, thus, the regional imbalances continue to prevail and contribute to the shaping of contemporary identity politics and electoral behaviour. It is true that modern political dynamics are more complicated, however, the traces of this historical stratification still have a great influence.

Interfaith Harmony and National Identity: Benin's accomplishment of harmonious and peaceful coexistence among three religious traditions—Christianity, Islam, and Vodun—along with the accomplishment of a stable political system is partially based on the fact that religious leaders contributed to the success of the National Conference in 1990 through their cooperation. That event laid down the conditions of religious tolerance as the national identity. At present, this inter-religious harmony goes hand in hand with being the peace-keeping force that consolidates democratic values and facilitates inclusive governance in the region where religious strife is the primary factor that destabilizes the neighboring countries.

Moral Voice in Democratic Governance: The Christian leaders of the post-authoritarian period in the world have come to be regarded by the people as a moral compass. They have been explaining many times the matters concerning corruption, social justice, and electoral integrity, thus they have become ethical vacuum fillers that the political institutions unable to provide. The power of moral,

which is the result of the period of repression, and the resilience of years, is still the factor public trust in religious voices over political ones.

Continuing Challenges and Opportunities: However, the privileges, which are historical, that Christian institutions enjoyed are a thing of the past and now they are facing some challenges. The recent high presence of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, in addition to the reawakened interest in the Vodun religion and the continuous status of Islam, have forced the religious landscape to be reformed. The political leaders must be more aware that they will have to deal with a more pluralistic religious field with competitors now, so they must be ready for wider engagement and be more sensitive to the situation if they are not to be accused of favouring one tradition. The main problem the leaders face at the moment is to make sure that the religious institutions still have the same positive role in political development they had and also that all the faiths can have their space and voice in public life.

In a nutshell, one can say that the historical connection of Christianity with politics in Benin has led to the creation of a very unusual or distinctive type of religious engagement in the democratic governance of that country. The long tradition of moral leadership, elite formation, and interfaith cooperation is what still guides the process of Benin re-interpreting power, authority, and social cohesion in the 21st century.

4.0 Conclusion

The authors have been able to proffer solution to the main concern of this study: How has the historical development of Christianity in the Republic of Benin shaped and influenced its present-day political landscape, social dynamics, and governance? The study sheds more light on the historicity of Benin and Christianity in relation to traditional religious complexity and colonialism and its varied implications on the contemporary political praxis. The authors' adoption of scriptural review method has added credence to the originality of the study. The research discovered that the earliest European encounters with the nation's contemporary democratic structure, Christian beliefs and institutions have woven themselves inextricably into the social and political fabric of this West African state. Indeed, the coming of the missionaries to Benin Republic brought a

milestone changes through the spread of evangelism, which is the obedience to divine mandate of making disciples of all nations.

This paper has contributed tremendously to the historicity of Benin Republic and its Christian missionary endeavour. It is believed that the work will expand the frontiers of knowledge in historical theology and evangelism. Additionally, it will be of a tremendous benefit to historians, researchers, students of history, Christian churches and scholars, and the entire world who are interested not only in the historical context of Christianity in the Republic of Benin but also in the obedience to the divine mandate of “Go ye.”

5.0 Recommendations

- i. The researchers therefore recommend the active participation of the Christians in politics irrespective of any circumstances, and collaborate with the government so as to be able to implement and formulate the policies that will better the lots of the citizens. The moment Christians are the dominants at the parliament, bills that will enhance and promote the progress and development of their nation, in terms of religious tolerance, thriving economy, educational stability, youth employment and entrepreneurship, will be sponsored.
- ii. Christians are to work together to fulfil the mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ in their various countries (Amos 3:3).
- iii. Christians should fear God in any place they find themselves, be it in governance, business, etc. People who fear God are still the most sought after today because the world knows that divine revelation and wisdom supersede education and people who fear the Lord get access to divine mysteries. And people look for those who get access to divine mysteries. Biblical example sheds more light on this:

Pharaoh declared to Joseph, “Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly [without any argument] no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. [Therefore] you will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will

have a rank higher than yours. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt” (Gen 41:39-40 NLT).

Revelation supersedes education because revelation is the mother of education as wisdom is the mother of knowledge. In a world saturated with information but starving for wisdom, the people who fear God are indispensable—they carry light in a time of darkness and counsel in a day of confusion. Therefore, Christians should learn to fear God in their private and public spheres.

iv. The scriptural ideology of maintaining peaceful coexistence should be imbibed in every citizen in Benin Republic (Heb 12:14). Christians should seek peace and pursue it (Ps 34:14) because the peace of the land depends on them (Rom 12:18). Therefore, biblical Christians are to exhibit good behaviours by departing from evil to embrace enduring peaceful coexistence in the country.

v. Further research should be conducted to explore the historicity of Christianity or missionary endeavour in the Republic of Benin.

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