

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL VALUES IN AFRICA

Rosaline Achu Tchuisseu

Journalism and Communication, Madda Walabu University, Bale-Robe, Oromiya Region, Ethiopia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17453263>

Abstract

Social media has become an indispensable communication tool, enabling the exchange of information and transactions locally and internationally through internet and ICT-based platforms. While social media offers significant benefits, including promoting values and facilitating effective communication, its misuse can lead to harmful consequences. This study highlights both the positive and negative impacts of social media on religion, politics, social, economic, and cultural life, particularly in Africa. Misuse of social media can mislead youths, expose them to criminal activities, drug abuse, and extremist ideologies, including recruitment into terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP in North Eastern Nigeria. The study emphasizes the urgent need for political, religious, and traditional institutions to guide youths, mitigate risks, and educate them on the responsible use of social media. Proper use of these platforms can foster informed, productive, and value-driven societies, while misuse can have destructive social consequences.

Keywords: Social Media, Youth, Religion, Culture, Values

1. INTRODUCTION

Religion is a strong institution in Africa. The dominant religions in Africa are, Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion. The social media has both positive and negative impacts on all these religions in Africa.

1.1. Statement of Problems

Social media has its merits and demerits. The problem with it is that, there are information that people received that are distractive and destructive in nature. The negative aspect of social media, has more negative impact on the youths than the adults. Because of the youthful exorbitance, they are more vulnerable to such ill information in society through social media platforms, on what they hear. Watch or see on those social media platforms.

Christians: Mic Clintok (2006 accessed 14/02/16), defines Christians as “Those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.” The researcher defines it as “those who believe Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior.

Media: Longman (1995:886), defines it as “All the organization such as television, radio and the newspapers that provide information for the public. “I define it as, all technological means of providing information for public.

Religion: Morris and Lois (1990:575), define Religion as “A system of belief in worship of one or more gods”. Religion could also be defined as, “Believing and worship of a supreme being above humanity.

2. CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN AFRICA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Christianity is at the moment is one of the world’s largest religions. It is derived its origin from Judaism because Jesus was a Jew. Christianity centers on the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus and Christians believe in one God despite the doctrine of Trinity. Christianity is monotheistic. Christians believe in the Bible as God’s word, being inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christians believe in Jesus as the savior of the world which is a fulfillment of prophecies to be the Messiah and save the world from sin. By His death and resurrection, He has defeated Satan and redeemed man. Man gets salvation by believing and accepting Him. Jesus will return to judge the world, living and dead and establish God’s Kingdom. This is a fulfillment of prophecies too. Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born by Virgin Mary. Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension are very important and cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. This shows His ultimate power over death and shows him as fully God. The Bible is the ultimate Book to be read as a manual and guide to Christian living, it is usually interpreted.

Christianity is monotheistic. Christians believe in the Holy Trinity which is God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit at the same time, but still fully one God who is worshipped and are separate entities. This is a very key doctrine and belief of the Christian faith of which many people find difficult to understand. This is included in the Nicene Creed.

The history and origin of Christianity can be traced to the early Church as founded by the 12 Apostles. There was great persecution on the followers of Jesus because of what and who they believed. It became legal in the 4th Century when Constantine formed the first council of Nicaea, which wrote the creed. The creed is a doctrine of the Church in Rome. After the death of Roman Empire, the Church mission work expanded throughout the world. Even though Islam began to grow and take over some Christian states and the collapse of Romans led to rise of monasteries, learning centers, University and included the study of law, medicine and philosophy.

There were crusades because of rising Islamic population in the Holy Land which failed. The Church later divided into 2 sections. Western- Catholic and Eastern- Orthodox because of some disparities. There was later reformation of the Catholic Church in the 16th Century led by Martin Luther. Christianity began to spread all over the world.

Christianity covers a third of the world population and is still growing. Church attendance is growing in different parts of the world and their milieus. This implies that, the gospel although Christocentric and divine, yet it transcends enigmatic strident, because it also addresses the physical needs of the people. It is in view of this, that this paper attempt to discuss the basis of Missional Hermeneutics on love, care, charity, and concern to non-Christians, addressing a particular religious group called the “Kanuri” in Borno State.

Christianity is a unique way of life that has to do with conscience, personal guidance, faith and practice that is strictly on spiritual and moral values as instituted by Jesus Christ. Christian religion is meant to promote the personal conviction of a believer in relationship and fellowship with God and humanity. It is also a call for serve to God and humanity. Brown (1990:575) says: that Christians are “called out of people from the world who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and are baptized and are living for Christ.”

Christian relationship and responsibility to God and the society is for God to be glorified, Christian religion is the religion that should change or shape the world through evangelism and missions. It is not enough to preach the gospel verbally; the gospel must also address human physical and spiritual needs. The Church as salt and light of the world needs to be involved in wholistic evangelism of the community she found herself, in such a way that the community will feel her impact. The gospel which the church should involve should be able to address two dimensions: Physical and spiritual needs of its people in order to restore and alleviates them from all ramifications of life. Any gospel short of that, is not actually viewing human beings as total beings, and will not penetrate all the nooks and crannies of its society. This is so, because, Jesus during his earthly ministry, did not only focused his attention on salvation of the soul; rather, ministered wholistically by salvaging soul, thereafter the physical needs of vast number of people.

The gospel as preached in the early church in the Acts of the Apostles (4:32-36) encompassed the physical ministrations to the physical needs of the people of the church community. This tells us that the church’s proclamation of the gospel must be done in such a way that the gospel message finds meaningful expression in people’s lives.

In addition, “it is very expedient to assist people move from where they are to where God wants them to be, in the light of the gospel. This is a transformative process. And as the Bible says in Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”. This will help in changing and transforming their worldviews which is responsible for how and why they act the way they do. Transformation is personal, and also seen in the social and cultural life of the people. The aim of transformation is basically the people and not only about organizing programs. Transformation is a lifelong process till death, so believers should not give up on that journey, but sharpen and encourage one another. It is important to have the Evangelistic, Pastoral, Teaching and Prophetic ministry. Effective discipleship is also a way to help stop Syncretism among people in the Yoruba land. Christians should always remember that Jesus is “... the way, the Truth and The Life, no one comes to the Father except through Him” (John 14:6)

Christianity is at the moment the world largest religion with billions of followers with so many denominations. It is derived from Judaism because Jesus was a Jew and the 12 disciples. It centers on the birth, life, death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus and Christians believe in one God despite the doctrine of Trinity. Christianity is monotheistic. Christians believe in the Bible as God’s word, being inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christians believe in Jesus as the savior of the world which is a fulfillment of prophecies to be the Messiah and save the world from sin. By His death and resurrection, He has defeated

Satan and redeemed man. Man gets salvation by believing and accepting Him. Jesus will return to judge the world, living and dead and establish God's Kingdom. This is a fulfillment of prophecies too.

Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born by Virgin Mary. Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension are very important and cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. This shows His ultimate power over death and shows him as fully God. The Bible is the ultimate Book to be read as a manual and guide to Christian living, it is usually interpreted.

Christianity is monotheistic. Christians believe in the Holy Trinity which is God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit at the same time, but still fully one God who is worshipped and are separate entities. This is a very key doctrine and belief of the Christian faith of which many people find difficult to understand. This is included in the Nicene Creed.

The history and origin of Christianity can be traced to the early Church as founded by the 12 Apostles. There was great persecution on the followers of Jesus because of what and who they believed. It became legal in the 4th Century when Constantine formed the first council of Nicaea, which wrote the creed. The creed is a doctrine of the Church in Rome. After the death of Roman Empire, the Church mission work expanded throughout the world. Even though Islam began to grow and take over some Christian states and the collapse of Romans led to rise of monasteries, learning centers, University and included the study of law, medicine and philosophy.

There were crusades because of rising Islamic population in the Holy Land which failed. The Church later divided into 2 sections. Western- Catholic and Eastern- Orthodox because of some disparities. There was later reformation of the Catholic Church in the 16th Century led by Martin Luther. Christianity began to spread all over the world.

Christianity covers a third of the world population and is still growing. Church attendance is growing in different parts of the world.

Biblical love is often a concept that has been confused with cultural views of "love".(John 2000:584). "In Scripture, love is a description of God, a sacrificial act toward the undeserving, a fulfilment of law, and the trademark of a true disciple of the law, and the trademark of a true disciple of Christ.

Love should be characteristic of Christian mission".

Care: John (2000:584). States this, "A trouble state of mind; worry or concern".

Charity: in Christian thought, the highest form of love, signifying the reciprocal love between God and man that is made manifest in unselfish love of one's fellow men. Apostle Paul classical description of charity is found in the New Testament. (1 Cor. 13).

Concern: To be of interest or importance to; affect; involve: or to relate to; to be connected with.

Non-believers: A person who does not believe in a particular thing, especially one who has no religious faith.

It is an undeniable fact today that some 'pious' Christians frowns at love, charity and care approach to ministry in this dispensation, due to gross ignorance of biblical knowledge and shallow understanding

about God and His created things. God out of His fore and intuitive knowledge created the universe and placed man in it to enjoy fellowship together. He commanded man to take care of the environment (Gen 2:15). This mandate given to man by the creator is a clear indication that God initiated man in to care giving to believers and non-believers. However, this plan was thwarted when man succumb to serpent's lure by eating the forbidden fruit. As such, man and of course the entire creation is in an indictment and in dare need of reconciliation to God. Man's sin of disobedience separates him from the creator and creates an enmity between the created humanity and the creator (God). Not only does a break exist between humanity and God, there is also a breakdown in communication and relationship between men and man; he becomes a killer to be hunted as fugitive and a vagabond. Furthermore, there is a rift between humanity and the environment. John (2000:584) concurs that "man is cast from the garden and becomes a tiller of soil which has been cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles. Man, we discover, must not only be reconciled with God, but also be reconciled with other people, and even be reconciled with the environment."

What John seems to import here is that man has two different relationships: intrinsic and extrinsic. He has a vertical relationship (intrinsic) with God which is spiritual; this requires restoration and reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. He also has a horizontal relationship (extrinsic), man's relationship with other fellow human beings and of course created things. The above importation has given a basis for Christian and Church involvement in wholistic approach to ministry in ensuring that he or she redeems the fallen humanity and creation to God. Thus, this relationship has to be healthy and, in an equilibrium, state otherwise sharing the gospel will be one sided. And that is why it is an imperative upon Christians to have a broad view of ministry in order to salvage God's creation. (Lev 19:9-10; 25:35; Job 31:5-6; Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37-40). Sider Ronald (1993:37) asserts that "in the Old Testament, salvation is clearly social and corporate and includes every aspect of life. God's salvation pertains to material prosperity, justice for the poor and needy in the judicial system, and the continued historical existence of the people of Israel" Love, care, concern and charity to people is deeply rooted in both Old and New Testament, example of Isaiah 58:7-8 and James 1:27 present a biblical warrant for Christian's involvement in wholistic ministry".

Jesus during His earthly ministry focused on the two-dimensional approach by providing the immediate physical need of people before salvation. The feeding of multitudes John 6:1ff; healings of different diseases John 5:2-5; embracing the ostracized after which He offered Himself as ransom for the whole world Mark 10:45. Furthermore, John argues that "few, if any, would really argue as to whether the church has a biblical mandate to be concerned with the physical dimension of human need. For many, however, it becomes a matter of the priority of pure evangelism over that of physical concerns whatever position or particular theological understanding a Christian may have, to be scriptural, they must be consistent with the underlying biblical responsibility to integrate both the ministry (development) and the message of reconciliation. For it is within the reconciling work of our Lord that ministry and message come together. Ultimately, the sole aim or motivation behind any valid scriptural ministry must be that of bringing individuals in to full and abundant relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour, to be fully reconciled

with Him John 10:10. This proposition has given Christians a clear warrant to be fully involved in giving love, care and charity for the emancipation of total man.

3. ISLAM RELIGION AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN AFRICA

Muslim is an Arabic word, which means people from all over the world with different backgrounds, educational levels, different origins and races who follow the religion of Abraham as decreed by God for them in the Quran. Whereas Islam means peace. Jawa (2018:3) submits that Muslim who “one who submits to Allah”. *Pros of Muslim*

Muslims are been taught to believe in one and only God called Allah and his prophet Mohammed. Including Jesus, Moses, and Adam. They teach that Muslims should be people of peace and morality. They are against any of immoral acts such as terrorizing others. Do not kill Quran 5:32. “If you save one it is as if you saved mankind. Creed (Shahadah): Every religion has its own way of initiation and orientation to its members, so is Islam. Shahadah is simple confession one made to become a Muslim.

It literally means “there is no god but Allah and Muhammad are His prophet” According to Smith (2001:49) “The first part of the confession designating a unique being and him alone. The second affirmation that Muhammad is God’s Prophet- registers the Muslim’s faith in the authenticity of Muhammad and in the validity of the book he translated” A Muslim must at least once in a life time be able to recite the Shahadah correctly, slowly, thoughtfully with full understanding and heart-felt conviction. Canonical prayer: Muslims are adjured to be constant in their prayer. Smith noted that “Muslims are admonished to be constant in prayer to keep their lives in perspective... the Koran considers this as the most difficult lesson people must learn” Because of that obligation and the blessings that contain therein, Muslims pray five times a day.

Alms giving: Those that have much are expected to share with those that do not have. That is why Muslim brothers from somewhere is more preferable than a biological brother who is not a Muslim. With this we can understand why Muslims who are in power always empower their Muslim brothers in jobs, business, and politics all for the growth of Islam.

Observance of Ramadan: Ramadan is a month in Islamic calendar known as Islam’s holy month. The month in which prophet Muhammad received his initial revelation (Quran) at mount Hira. In order to commemorate this day, every able-bodied Muslim is expected to observe the month: that is, to pray and fast for 30 days, after which sharing of meal and fashion parade.

Pilgrimage: Once during a life-time every Muslim is supposed to visit Mecca, a place where God’s revelation was first revealed to the prophet. The reason is to heighten the pilgrims’ devotion to God and his revealed will. (Q42:13). He decreed for you the same religion decreed for Noah, and what we inspired to you, and what we decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. (Kenneth 1994:22). “You shallup hold this one religion, and do not divide it.” The idol worshipers will greatly resent what you invite them to do. God redeems to himself whomever he wills; He guides to himself only who totally submit.”All followers of

Mohammad or the Muslims are to believe and hold unto one God and it doesn't matter what people will say or called as a religion. But submitters of Allah should hold firmly these three things.

- 1 Believe in monotheism that is people should rely in one God.
- 2 Muslims should believe in the last day
- 3 Muslim will receive a reward on the last day (Lada in Hausa language), they should not be afraid of dying and are encouraged not to be afraid. And Submitters are to hold onto the teachings of submission without breaking any of the rules and regulations or the teachings of Prophet Mohammad. They are also advice to spread the message of the truth that they heard about the Quran. Muslims are encouraged to bring believers and those that think they are worshiping God alone close together, in spite of what they regard as faith. The Muslims are against procession (Q2:217), and are for the freedom of religion and peace(Q2:256).

Tradition of the Quran and other sources make the Muslims to have no sense and become miserable.

4. AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This paper talks about some contemporary issues on culture in relation to Christianity and how Yoruba culture influences Christianity in the western part of Nigeria. It shows how that some of these cultural practices which are not in line with scriptures should be rejected and gives Biblical perspectives and Christian way of doing things, showing God's word being and having the final say over every form of culture. As many as 20 percent of the Yoruba still practice the traditional religions of their ancestors. The practice of traditional religion varies from community to community. For example, a deity (god) may be male in one village and female in another. Yoruba traditional religion holds that there is one Supreme Being and hundreds of *orisha*, or minor deities. The worshipers of a deity are referred to as his "children."

There are three gods who are available to all. Olorun (Sky God) is the high god, the Creator. One may call on him with prayers or by pouring water on kola nuts on the ground. Eshu (also called Legba by some) is the divine messenger who delivers sacrifices to Olorun after they are placed at his shrine. Everyone prays frequently to this deity. Ifa is the God of Divination, who interprets the wishes of

Olorun to mankind. Believers in the Yoruba religion turn to Ifa in times of trouble. Another god, Ogun (god of war, the hunt, and metalworking), is considered one of the most important. In Yoruba courts, people who follow traditional beliefs swear to give truthful testimony by kissing a machete sacred to Ogun.

Shango (also spelled Sango and Sagoe) is the deity that creates thunder. The Yoruba believe that when thunder and lightning strike, Shango has thrown a thunderstone to earth. After a thunderstorm, Yoruba religious leaders search the ground for the thunderstone, which is believed to have special powers. The stones are housed in shrines dedicated to Shango. Shango has four wives, each representing a river in Nigeria.

The Yoruba who practice other religions are divided about evenly between Muslims (followers of Islam) and Christians. Nearly all Yoruba still observe annual festivals and other traditional religious practices.

The "addimú" are fruits, vegetables, plants, flowers and animals that are offered to the orishas as a sign of love and gratitude. Certain ranks within communities are allowed to make animal sacrifices, starting from the belief that this makes the animal an energy that transmutes evil.

The letter of the year is a ceremony that consists of a kind of premonition about the beginning year, with suggestions and warnings about positive and negative events. This ceremony is headed by the senior priests of the Yoruba religion, and there Orunmila is invoked, who warns them about the destiny of humanity. Another of the traditional characteristics of the Yoruba religion is the art of divination. This is how the santero communicates with his orishas: interpreting messages coded in elements such as snails, coconut or the Ifá board.

Domestic violence is quite a prevalent thing in our cultures, societies and even the world at large. Kunhiyop (2008:243) says "Domestic Violence involves the abuse of power in intimate relationships within a household. On the simplest level, a man is guilty of violence when he beats his wife with his hand, a stick or belt". It is also Helen (1998:6). Asserts that "linked to control and manipulation of the victim by perpetrator and there are a whole range of ways he can accomplish without resorting to a physical assault". Kunhiyop (2008:244) says "psychological abuse is also a form of violence in which the husband shows no appreciation for his wife. Adults (parents and relatives) may beat, neglect or sexually abuse children. I would also say that domestic violence happens even at work places between colleagues, superior and subordinate staff by sexual harassment, refusal to pay workers as at when due because even the Bible says in 1 Timothy 5:18s.

Some causes of violence in Africa as stated by Kunhiyop (2008:244-245) are:

- Showing of power and control. African traditional beliefs often hold that a woman is a man's property. In order to prove this and promote his image as "lion" in the family he resorts to physical and verbal violence to assert his control over them.
- Denial of sex. Because women are assumed to be properties, men feel it is their right to have sex even if she does not, so he abuses her. But this is totally wrong even the mindset because the Bible says that we are created in god image and all one, and regarding sex it must be based on mutual agreement. 1 Corinthians 1:3-4, 7:7.
- Polygamous marriages. There could be jealousy, misunderstanding between the wives which may lead to one party setting the other up to gain the husband's favor. This leads to confrontation and abuse of the other by the husband.
- Alcohol abuse. Some men in a drunken state misinterpret their wives and children's actions as disrespectful and respond with violence.
- Lack of sanctions on those who perpetuate domestic violence. It is like a tradition in communities that a man has flaws of hot temper or lack of self-control, so measures are not taken against those who abuse their families.

Domestic violence has great negative impacts on families and victims. They live in fear and intimidation, feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, Children in such environments live in fear and grow to be violent too, seeing it as normal. It also affects the child psychologically, thereby affecting their relationships with people.

What does the Bible say about domestic Violence and the headship of man is different from what the tradition and culture does. It is true that the man is the head of the wife as it is in Ephesians 5:23, but it is a wrong tradition or culture that a man should exert power, force and abuse the woman or family because he is the head. The Bible also says that the man should “love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her” Ephesians 5:25-26. That is love and headship that Christianity talks about.

Some may talk about Proverbs 13:24 “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him” as a yardstick to abuse. But the focus of proverbs 13:24 is not “the rod” Kunhiyop (2008:247) says “but on the principle of loving correction. It is making the point that a parent demonstrates love for a child by directing him in the right path, not unrestrained beating meted out by a drunken father who merely wants to prove that he is the “lion in the house”.

It is also true that “the Lord disciplines a son” Hebrews 25:6, so also “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” Ephesians 6:4. Bringing up involves love and godly training and not just beating without a reason.

Jesus showed love and concern for children (Matthew 21:16, Mark 10:16, Luke 18:115-16.). He even showed that to show love to children is to show love to him, (Matthew 18:5-6). Abusing a child would thus be equivalent to abusing Jesus.

The Christian way to this issue is to recognize and make it known that violence against women and children and even whoever any human being is wrong, unjust and must be frowned at because we are all created in the image of God, so no one is inferior to the other but must respect others and be respected. Because of the wrong culture, children do not understand their identity. Males must be taught that they are in no way superior to women, but must be treated with dignity. Females should also be taught that they are also in no way inferior to males, but they should also be respectful towards the male. This is not an issue of women emancipation or right, it is a matter of the fact that we are all humans created in the image of God and deserve to all be treated right. Females should also be reports any attempts or acts of abuse geared towards them and their children. Such reports should be to the appropriate authorities like the police, Human rights commission, there are also organizations that stand in to defend women and children who are abused by people. In villages it can be reported to the heads, chiefs, and elders as the case may be depending on the locality. It is also important to report to Church Pastors, leadership for proper monitoring and needed actions to be taken to avoid further occurrences.

It is also very important to teach men to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ when it comes to leading the family. They must be taught to love their wives like Christ and the Children as Jesus loved the children. Wives should also be taught to respect and love their husbands and be submissive to them.

Relatives alike should be taught to do right and even siblings to love and correct in love. Work staff should also be educated on right Behaviour towards one another from superior to subordinates and know that there are consequences for bad actions. With these in place, educating the community also at large, there will not be domestic cases and this will establish a godly society.

5. CULTURE OF SYNCRETISM IN RELIGIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Syncretism occurs not only in young Churches. Hiebert (194). "Many traditional divines and healers use 'in Jesus' name' at the beginning and end of their rites, and keep Bibles handy and recite words of Jesus to their clients. They do not see themselves as witnesses to Christ, however, but as mediators between the unseen world of spiritual beings and forces, and Jesus. Because they claim guidance in Jesus' name, many Christians are attracted to their services." So many people still use the name of Jesus in disguise but are not truly Christians. This brings the Scripture that says, "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven...did we not drive out demons in your name and perform many miracles, and He will say, depart from me you workers of iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). This shows that doing things using the name of Jesus does not guarantee being a Christian or from God.

In responding to this as way of solution, it is important to know and use Critical contextualization. Contextualization Tennet (2010:266) "means relating the never-changing truths of Scripture to the ever-changing human contexts so that those truths are clear and compelling, it is the process of engaging the culture in all its varied dimensions with Biblical truths." It is passing the Scriptures through the people's cultures so that they understand Scriptures and apply it in the own context and letting the Scripture shape their minds. It is important to study the people's culture, their beliefs and why they act the way they do, understand them before judging them. Their languages should be learnt, ask questions, study their practices. It requires careful observation and study. Christians should be able to study what shapes the way they think. Ultimately for Christians, the Scripture is the fundamental test of truth. Scriptures will help to shape their thinking and have a biblical worldview. Christians should be taught to know that the Bible is ultimate and final (2 Timothy 3:16,) and that Christ is the centre of Christianity (John 1:1-5). Christians should also be taught that the Holy Spirit give believers power to live godly lives (Romans 8:1-17, Gal. 5:2), and there is protection and source of help in God, so we do not need to look for other sources of power or protection because Scriptures totally goes against diviners, magic, fortune tellers and others.

Another thing to do is that after they have studied Scriptures and rightly interpreted, they would get lighter and understanding into Biblical truths. "To involve people in evaluating their own culture in the light of new truths draws upon their strength" (folk 27) they should be involved in evaluating their old practices in line with scriptures and make decisions on what to do about those cultures and apply Scriptural teachings to their lives. It will also make Christianity more indigenous for them and not see it as a foreign religion. They will be able to stop some bad practices and modify others to be in line with Scriptures. This is a transformative process. And as the Bible says in Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and

perfect will of God". This will help in changing and transforming their worldviews which is responsible for how and why they act the way they do. Transformation is personal, and also seen in the social and cultural life of the people. The aim of transformation is basically the people and not only about organizing programs. Transformation is a lifelong process till death, so believers should not give up on that journey, but sharpen and encourage one another. It is important to have the Evangelistic, Pastoral, Teaching and Prophetic ministry. Effective discipleship is also a way to help stop Syncretism among people in the Yoruba land. Christians should always remember that Jesus is "... the way, the Truth and The Life, no one comes to the Father except through Him" John 14:6. Syncretism is "the mixing of different beliefs and practices in ways that distort the truth and power of the gospel.... It is common in Churches in the West. It has sapped the vitality of Churches and limited Christianity to a segment of people's lives, Combining elements of Christianity with folk beliefs and practices in such a way that the gospel loses its integrity and message" People mix Christian beliefs and practices with their traditional beliefs and practices, especially practices that are not in line with Scriptures. This makes their lives one sided and also water down the power of the gospel, maybe because they do not have a full understanding of the gospel as powerful above all things. "Most Christians live on two unreconciled levels. They are members of a Church and ascribe to a statement of faith. But below the system of conscious beliefs are deeply embedded traditions and customs implying quite a different interpretation of the universe and the world of from Christian interpretations. Many Christians in the Yoruba land practice this double-sided life. They practice both the Christian beliefs and also still hold onto their traditional beliefs even more than the Christian beliefs and practices. This actually has an influence on Christianity in the Yorubaland. One of the reasons why syncretism came into being was because the missionaries did not deeply deal with the superstition of the people with Scripture. They also thought that Hiebert (194) says "there is nothing in the non-Christian Culture on which the Christian missionary can build and, therefore, every aspect of the traditional non-Christian culture must be destroyed before Christianity could be built up. Consequently, there was little need to study the religion of the ordinary people. Tennen (19) opines that "Young converts did not tell the missionaries about their old ways. Some of the syncretic practices are that Christians hold marriage ceremonies in Church but still later on go to their homes and do it the traditional ways in private. Some people hid amulets in their shirts for protection, and did not tell the Christian doctors they were going to the Shamans. They practice these old ways in secret to avoid being condemned. In essence they had double beliefs. "...this uneasy coexistence of Public Christianity and private paganism led to syncretism...creating havoc in young Churches in the West". There are people that whenever they want to travel, they visit the babalawos or fortune tellers (orishas gods) to see what will happen, if they should travel or not, or sometimes get amulets for protection when travelling. They believe they are first of all Yorubas, before they became Christians, so they hold onto their beliefs and traditions first above the Christian cultures. This is to say that old practices should be checked critically before being incorporated. At the same time, rejecting or condemning these old ways completely may not be the best way and solution to this because it makes Christianity look foreign, old

beliefs must be replaced, and customs cannot be fully suppressed. "Syncretism occurs not only in young Churches. Many traditional divines and healers use 'in Jesus' name' at the beginning and end of their rites, and keep Bibles handy and recite words of Jesus to their clients. They do not see themselves as witnesses to Christ, however, but as mediators between the unseen world of spiritual beings and forces, and Jesus. So many people still use the name of Jesus in disguise but are not truly Christians. This brings the Scripture that says, "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the Kingdom of heaven...did we not drive out demons in your name and perform many miracles, and He will say, depart from me your workers of iniquity" Matthew 7:21-23. This shows that doing things using the name of Jesus does not guarantee being a Christian or from God.

In responding to this as way of solution, it is important to know and use Critical contextualization. Contextualization. Tennet (2010:266) says "means relating the never-changing truths of Scripture to the ever-changing human contexts so that those truths are clear and compelling, it is the process of engaging the culture in all its varied dimensions with Biblical truths." It is passing the Scriptures through the people's cultures so that they understand Scriptures and apply it in the own context and letting the Scripture shape their minds. It is important to study the people's culture, their beliefs and why they act the way they do, understand them before judging them. Their languages should be learnt, ask questions, study their practices. It requires careful observation and study. Christians should be able to study how shapes the way they think. Ultimately for Christians, the Scripture is the fundamental test of truth. Pastors, Missionaries lead the Church in a study of Scriptures related to the question at hand. Scriptures will help to shape their thinking and have a biblical worldview.

Christians should be taught to know that the Bible is ultimate and final (2Timothy 3:16,) and that Christ is the centre of Christianity (John 1:1-5). Christians should also be taught that the Holy Spirit give believers power to live godly lives (Romans 8:1-17, Gal. 5:2),(folk 27) says "there is protection and source of help in God, so we do not need to look for other sources of power or protection because Scriptures totally goes against diviners, magic, fortune tellers and others. Another thing to do is that after they have studied Scriptures and rightly interpreted, they would get lighter and understanding into Biblical truths. To involve people in evaluating their own culture in the light of new truths draws upon their strength". They should be involved in evaluating their old practices in line with scriptures and make decisions on what to do about those cultures and apply Scriptural teachings to their lives. It will also make Christianity more indigenous for them and not see it as a foreign religion. They will be able to stop some bad practices and modify others to be in line with Scriptures.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA SYSTEM

Social media system is simply a means of passing information for or to the public concerning daily happenings in the society both locally and internationally through radio, television newspapers and other technological means like internet, telephones and so on. Social issues are communicated and discussed

through the media. There are positive and negative effects of giving and receiving of messages through the media.

Advantages of Media

1. Information is received within the shortest possible time
2. Source of information gathering
3. Create enlightenment and awareness
4. Create opportunities access some values in the society as related to religion
5. Religious programmes can go on the air. In fact, there are religious TV and Radio stations mainly for religious activities
6. Sharing basic knowledge, technology, investments, resources and ethical values that affects religion are been carried out through the media.
7. Provide security and protection for people.

Effects of Media

1. Wrong information can be communicated through social media which can be dangerous e.g., taking of salt as protection for Ebola was communicated through the media in 2015.
2. Many people, most especially youth do watch immoral naked pictures, films through television, face book and hear negative communications through radio and so on.
3. Some people are addicted to social media to the extent that their spiritual life is negatively affected.
4. Information can be manipulated through social media for selfish reasons or motives
5. Social media can be used to create religious and political crises.

Remedy of Social Media Effects on Religion in Africa

1. Moral and spiritual training for the youth (Proverbs 22:6)
2. Discipleship that can make believers deeply rooted in Christ (Col. 2:7)
3. Enlightenment to people concerning the danger of social media against religion
4. Discourage addiction to social media programmes and their influence on Christians
5. Prayer for victory over Satanic programmes through the media (Eph. 6:17-18).

7. CONCLUSION

All people generally, should differentiate between what they learn from social media and what their faith is all about, many people today are compromising their faith with what the world can offer them through social media, secularism or globalization in the name of civilization. People must stand by the power of God and fight again sin, the world and the Devil. They must estimate their cultural values and virtue that align with peace unity and development under God. Culture in itself is good, however there are some cultural practices that are bad and must be rejected by Christians because they contradict the Bible. However, culture in itself is incomplete or limited especially in solving human problems because it is based on human values which may be good but not wholistic in nature. African cultures are restricted to sense of values, based on world view. But the Christian faith brings the complete sense of it to purify and enrich

the culture true values for salvation and development. That is why Christianity is needed to beautify the culture, shape it and make it more meaningful. The Scripture should also be the yardstick for measuring if a cultural practice is bad and needs to be rejected, or if it good and upholds good values in line with Christianity and can be kept.

We must also be able to study and understand various cultures, traditions and practices especially as ministers of the gospel, preachers, teachers and missionaries and evangelists in order to be able to effectively evangelize people within the love of Christ. People can be helped to reject bad practices, and use the gospel to penetrate their cultures so that the gospel can be brought to their understanding and reality of the truth in it.

Culture should also be preserved, even though cultures are rapidly changing, but certain cultures with good values in line with scriptures should be preserved and upheld. The culture of the kingdom of God is the ultimate culture as the Bible says, they will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Christianity is not a White man's religion; it only came through them. So, for example wearing African traditional attires instead of foreign ones, does not make one less of a Christian. On the other hand, wearing foreign western attires does not mean one has neglected or abandoned his culture. What is important is keeping the true word of Christ in total obedience to his will and love your neighbour as yourself. We are living in the world of globalization, modernism, enlightenment and civilization, where people are looking for freedom and fundamental rights outside the will and purpose of God for them in creation is alarming. What is right before God, is just before man who was created in the image and likeness of God himself.

REFERENCES

Aderson, R. (1997). *The early Christian taster*. One Day Publication.

Alister, M. E. (2000). *Christian spirituality*. Blackwell Publishers.

Ayondokun, E. O. (2013). *Biblical nurture through effective Christian education*. Gloryline Christian Publications.

Bailey, B. (2016). *How to love your unbelieving family members*. Wisdom Hunters Press.

Brown, H. O. J. (1990). *Christianity today*. Zondervan.

Clintok, M. (2006). *Strong encyclopedia* [Electronic database]. Bible Software Inc.

Conway, H. L. (1998). *Domestic violence and the church*. Paternoster.

Craig Ott, S. J., Strauss, S. J., & Tennet, T. C. (2010). *Encountering theology of missions: Biblical foundations, historical developments, and contemporary issues*. Baker Publishing Group.

- Gaudeul, J.-M. (1999). *Called from Islam to Christ: Why Muslims become Christians*. Monarch Books.
- Gadsby, A., & Rundel, M. (Eds.). (1995). *Longman contemporary English dictionary*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Grunlan, S. A., & Mayers, M. K. (1979). *Cultural anthropology: A Christian perspective*. Zondervan.
- Hutchison, J. P. (1981). *A reference grammar of the Kanuri language*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- John McIntosh. (2000). In S. A. Moreau (Ed.), *Evangelical dictionary of world missions*. Baker Books.
- Kato, B. (1974). *Christianity and culture* [Typescript].
- Kato, B. (1975). *Evangelization and culture*.
- Kato, B. (2010). African cultural revolution and the Christian faith. *A.E.A.M Challenge Publication*.
- Kunhiyop, S. W. (2008). *African Christian ethics*. Zondervan.
- Kunhiyop, S. W. (2008). *Africa ethics*. World Alive Publishers.
- Luther, M. (1879). *Justification by faith*. Every House Crusade Publication.
- Miles, H. (2008). Coptic Christians attacked in churches. *The Telegraph Press*.
- Morphe, R. I. (2011). *Africa's social and religious quest: A comprehensive survey and analysis of the African situation*. Holma House, Logos Quest Publishing.
- Muazu, M. A. (1992). *Northern Nigerian garments and caps* (p. 19). Borno Press.
- Murry, J. (1924). *Early history of Christian church from its foundation to the end of the fifth century*. Oxford University Press.
- Niebuhr, R. H. (2001). *Christ and culture*. HarperOne.
- O'Donovan, W. (1995). *Biblical Christianity in African perspective*. Paternoster Press.
- Omolola, O. C. (2014). Influence of Yoruba culture in Christian religious worship. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Education*, 4(3), 588–599.
- Random House. (1999). *Random House Webster's college dictionary*. Random House.

Robert, S. W. (Ed.). (1972). *Christ and the modern mind*. InterVarsity Press.

Sider, R. J. (1993). *Evangelism and social action in a lost and broken world*. Clays Ltd.

Wagner, C. P. (1978). *Unreached peoples '79*. David C. Cook Publishing.

Watkins, M. G., & Watkins, I. L. (1990). *All Nations English dictionary*. All Nation Literature.