



RELEVANCE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

Alala, Iheanacho Mendel

Department of Christian Religious Studies, Clifford University, Owerri Abia State, Nigeria
Email: alalai@clifforduni.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Nigeria is one of the largest and most populated countries in Africa. Indeed, Nigeria had her independence in 1960 from British colonialism; the country is still in need of functional political structures to maintain economic advancement and unifying diverse ethnic groups. The coming of Christian missionaries who introduced different Christian missions into West Africa brought tremendous changes to modern tropical Africa and Nigeria in particular, the acclaimed “Giant of Africa”. This work examines the roles played by different Christian missionary movements in the development of Nigeria. It aims at enriching the historiography of the early church history of Nigeria by delving into the activities of the Christian missionaries employing the historical research method, this work discovered that the contributions of Christian missions to the development of Nigeria are outstanding in religious, social, economic, political, educational and health sectors, among others. It then recommends that the quality of leadership role laid by the Christian missionaries be sustained, and advocates that the present church and political leaders of Nigeria in particular and West Africa at large improve on this legacy for proper national and regional development.

Key Words: Relevance; Christianity; Missions; Development and Nigeria.

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The continent of Africa has been generally described over the years by European scholars as a “dark continent”. In this regard, Onibonoje (1975) informs that for a long time the dark continent had been known as another popular name for Africa. The reason behind this assertion is that most countries in Africa, especially West Africa were without western civilization. Africa (West Africa) in particular was not favourable to the early Christian missionaries because of the harsh climate, thick forests and lack of good water and waterways (Groves, 1964).

1.1 Background History of the Activities of Christian Missionaries

The involvement of Christian missionaries in the historical dynamics of tropical Africa is fascinating. The missionaries’ activities were of outstanding importance in the sense that they c

carefully introduced new concepts as they became instruments for success in social, economic, political, religious and educational change. In this regard, the missionaries had to exercise individual and collective influence to develop Nigeria in particular and Africa at large. Rotberg (1965) opines that the missionaries prepared Africans to appreciate the benefits of Western Life and encouraged them to take the advantage of the temporal and spiritual concepts that were part of its foundation.

1.2 The Planting of Christianity in Nigeria

The Portuguese missionaries’ first attempt to plant Christianity in West Africa in the 14th and 15th centuries failed (Babalola, 1988). However, this attempt to establish Christianity especially in Nigeria was a failure because of the miscarriage of enterprise (Beetham, 1967). This means that the first Christianity planted suddenly vanished without any trace of its

continuity in the nearest future. Steward (1983) opines that the present Christianity in Nigeria is historically dated in the 19th century as the European missionary enterprise of the evangelical movements of Protestant denominations as well as Roman Catholic church to West Africa. The 19th century missionaries played vital roles in laying solid foundation for the modernization of Nigeria. For Babalola (1988), the history of Christian missions is embedded in the story of the Buxton's doctrine about the civilization of Africa by British "Apostles of civilization" and it included a number of Nigerians such as William Johnson, Granby, Thomas King, Simon Jonas, Yariba George, Finley and Harvey, they preached regularly to Nigerians that the exception was principally for the good and benefits of Africa at large.

Commenting on the Christian missionary history, Ilega and Onu (2008) disclose that the earliest attempt of extending Christianity to Nigeria was through the activities of Portuguese missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church. The missionaries entered Africa in the 15th century. Their aim was to have free access and control for the entire West Africa and to enjoy exchange trade and at the same time, make converts to Christianity which had become their state religion. The Church missionaries went with the navigators and traders and appointed a priest to minister the local population.

For Kalu (1983) the history of Christianity in Africa was not only what missionaries did, or what they did not do, but what Africans thought about what was going on and how they responded (14). Africans indicated interest in the guns and power of the Portuguese than to the Christian missions. This manifested in the activities of the early Portuguese missionary evangelistic outreach to old Kingdoms of Benin and Warri which did not produce lasting results.

As earlier stated, the successful missionary activities of Christian missions in Nigeria took place in the 19th century, and the first half of the century ushered in European interests, attitudes as well as politics to capture West Africa. However, the principal interest for the European

missionaries for many centuries was trade in slaves which was carried on mainly by Christian missionaries in Western Europe and Asia. Anene (1999) aptly states that:

The establishment in the New World of European plantations for the large -scale production of sugar, cotton and tobacco necessitated the search for cheap and abundant labour. The local Indies were being wiped out through subjection to arduous plantation labour and it was out of solicitude for these Indians that Bishop Las Cases petitioned the Holy Roman Emperor to allow the importation of Negro slaves (100).

From the foregoing, the British who had already acquired large islands in the Caribbean discovered that the islands were fertile for the production of sugar. Therefore, their demand for increased labour to work in the sugar cane plantations and harvesting for processing into sugar and other forms could be met by importing "Negros". African slaves suffered and worked in various plantations in Europe and Americas for nearly three centuries they were humiliated and used as slaves. This situation touched the conscience of religious and humanitarian groups in Western Europe and America who were aroused against the iniquitous traffic. This struggle witnessed its first victory in 1807, this was when Britain proscribed the slave trade business by her citizens.

The slavery and slave trade business did not stop immediately because a good number of African chiefs who had made huge successes in the slave trade were not ready to stop the trade without any promise of an alternative lucrative venture moreover other European nations like Spain, France and Portugal had continued with a trade that had been proscribed by the British Parliament. The British government agreed to sign agreement with the United States of America (USA) and other European countries to enable them enforce the Parliamentary Act of May 1, 1807. It was based on this agreements that Britain authorized her navy to capture foreign slave dealers on the high seas. The captured slaves were sent to Freetown in Sierra

Leone. Therefore, Freetown became a conglomeration of people from several Nigerian and other parts of the West African regions. The Sierra Leone settlers were exposed to the doctrines of Christianity and that made Freetown a nursery bed for the spread of Christianity and western civilization in the entire West Africa. The Christian missionary activities of various bodies who carried out their operations in Sierra Leone at the time were well informed with the resolution of the British government that only by following the method of industrial enterprise and preaching the gospel of Christ could there be a possible way to redeem and regenerate the Africans. It was during this time that Thomas Fowell Buxton, a British humanitarian, propounded the theory of the “Bible and the Plough” as an effective approach to redeem the liberated slave. It was in the light of this that Okeke (2006) posited that:

Thomas Fowell Buxton believed that the most effective approach to the anti-slavery campaign was to involve the British government, humanitarians, interested businessmen and the British missionaries in the cooperative endeavour. The success of the venture they anticipated would mean a death-blow to the traffic in person(4-5).

The missionaries were convinced that the “Bible and the Plough” hypothesis would help in the course of civilization and Christianity (Onunwa, 30-35). By this approach, they preached the gospel in a captivating way and it was accepted. It contributed to the civilization of the Africans.

According to history, it was Christianity that laid the solid foundation for European civilization, the point of stress here remains that if any meaningful civilization took place in Africa, it has to be on the basis of the foundation laid by Christianity. Following the analysis of the “Bible and the Plough” hypothesis, the Christian missionaries collectively worked together in the civilizing mission of Nigeria. Based on the consideration above, it is evident that the abolition of the slave trade was an asset to the establishment of Christian Missions especially in West Africa. For Daudu and Gbule (2013) it led to the formation of missionary bodies which

made the Europeans to plant Christianity in West Africa. However, the freed slaves were found in Sierra Leone through the aid of Christian movements, the Christian Missions played a major role in the development of the colony of Sierra Leone both in spreading the gospel and providing formal education. In the field of education, Fourah Bay College established in 1827 became the first University in West Africa.

The missionaries provided channel that contributed to the repatriation of the freed slaves who probably formed an already made Christian community before the arrival of foreign missionaries. The recaptives played a vital role for the expansion of Christianity to other parts of West Africa. A good example was, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who was identified as a Yoruba ex-slave who later became the first black bishop. The other ex-slave was J. C. Taylor, an Igbo repatriate who contributed freely to the extension of Christianity to Igboland (Daudu and Gbule, 2013, 22). The Christians who went to Sierra Leone promoted formal education, and trade, such as masonry and carpentry should be noted that Fourah Bay College, was the first University in West Africa which was established by the Church Missionary Society in 1821.

It subsequently became an affiliate of University of Durham, England in 1876. It was from these mission schools, where eminent scholars such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther who contributed greatly to the development of Nigeria, graduate.

1.3 The Contributions of Christian Missionaries to the Development of Nigeria

In an attempt to discuss the contributions of the Christian missionaries to the welfare and development of Nigeria, it is paramount that we apply the Mannheim’s Sociology of Knowledge which argues that people’s social group, their temporal orientation and collective aspiration rather than their inherent nature significantly determines the way they think and act. Mannheim posits that the task of sociology of knowledge is “to comprehend thought in the

concrete setting of historical and social situations out of which thoughts gradually emerged” (Mannheim, 1954, 3).

However, apart from coming to introduce Christianity, the development of Nigeria was paramount in the hearts of these Church missionaries. This contributed to the task of planting of churches, formation of the doctrines as well as commerce and civilization, which became the guiding principles to the church missionary society and all their activities. Christianity witnessed significant expansion as the missionaries made progress in planting churches in many places in Nigeria.

Thomas J. Bowen, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, arrived in Abeokuta in 1850, and the political condition of the land did not allow him to proceed with his missionary activities to the other parts of the nation. He began his ministry in Abeokuta. He got assistance and opened churches in several centers, but the work was not progressive during the first decades. In 1875, W. J. David came with one of his colleagues to help in reviving the ministry (Ajayi, 1969). Before the close of the century, the mission report was that six churches and six outstations were planted. By 1880, several members of the congregation withdrew from the association to form an independent Baptist Association.

The mission proclaimed the Yoruba Baptist Association in 1914. It was not long the name was changed to Nigerian Baptist Convention. In 1914, there were about 31 Baptist churches, of which 14 were independent, with a membership of 2,880 grown out of the mother church in Abeokuta (Latourette, 1943). Planting of churches contributed in the development of the nation in the sense that the missionaries built churches in rural villages and outstations which made such areas to be known.

Apart from the above, the missionaries assisted greatly in building the economy of Nigeria. Falola and Babalola (1991) assert that the European Christian missionaries, as precursors of British Colonial administration in Nigeria, made significant contributions to the evolution

and development of a monetized economy in the country. However, the Niger expedition was inaugurated in 1841 and had alliance between the British government, Christian missionaries, European traders and adventurers to survey the possibilities of the Niger and Benue for trading potentials and Christian evangelization. This means that the economic development of Nigeria was one of the tasks impressed upon the minds of the missionaries apart from evangelization which was their major focus.

Looking for ways of accomplishing this aim, the missionaries organized the supply of raw materials from West Africa to the growing industries in Britain and at the same time acted as catalysts in the setting of trading companies in Nigeria. For example, West African Company, Cotton Growing and Processing Company was set up in Abeokuta by Manchester Chamber of Commerce, among others.

In line with this, Ayandele (1966) argues that by the introduction of such legitimate trade, the missionaries attempted to discourage, at all costs, the inhuman Atlantic Slave Trade and introduce a legitimate economic link with the outside world which also helped to build the country.

Another area that witnessed the contribution of the Church Christian missionaries was in social welfare. Nigeria was given a new look through a number of projects which the Christian evangelists embarked upon. The plight of Nigerian children captured the sympathy and the interest of Father J. M. Conquard, the Catholic missionary from France who carried out his missionary activities among the Egba of Abeokuta and established a child welfare center to cater for the impoverished children. Perhaps, this is first of its kind in Nigeria as a nation for children who do not receive help from anywhere to have been remembered for such a welfare scheme. Along the line, Reverend Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) opened the Ake Orphanage (Onibonjo, 1975) to house the care of Nigerian orphans who seem hopeless. In this regard, one can say that, the missionaries first championed the campaign for promoting the course of the

African child which perhaps today, has developed as a world essential project.

In addition, the missionaries also built colonies for the rehabilitation of lepers. This is very good because, in Nigeria in particular, and in West Africa at large for some decades anybody infected with leprosy was, in most cases, sent to isolated and lonely places where they live in seclusion for the rest of their lives. This is to say that, rehabilitation of lepers, which has come to stay as a government policy is altogether a heritage from the Christian missions. It was Father Damian, a missionary from Belgium to Africa, who first realized that this group of unfortunate people needed help and loving care. He cared for them so much to the extent that he became leprous. He was not discouraged; he took the challenge as one of the crucibles one has to pass through in serving humanity. According to him, "I am now one and the same with those I am serving" (Onibonoje, 1975, p. 85).

It was Father Damian's Foundation for leprosy that other missionaries in West Africa followed upon. For example in Nigeria, Father Jean Conquered built a leper colony in Abeokuta. Another body that built lepers' settlement was the Roman Catholic Mission in 1933 at Osiomo. This was built to control leprosy within some communities in Benin and Warri Provinces. They went the extra mile by providing homes for unaffected babies and children of leprous patients (Agubosi, 2002).

Again, Christianity brought civilization and a revolution in social ethics which removed superstitions and barbaric traditions such as the killing of twins. In light of this, Mary Slessor, a lady missionary of the Presbyterian Church arrived Calabar from Scotland in 1876, and tried greatly in condemning barbaric and ungodly practices of the people of Calabar area. She championed the campaign against the mundane/horrific custom which promoted the unjust killing of twins or their mothers. Before her crusade against the unethical killing of the twins and other barbaric customs, the birth of twins was considered as abnormal occurrence which portends a bad omen in such a

community. As a repressive measure, the society has it as her custom to kill the twins at birth and later kill their mothers or have them banished from the community. As a result of this barbaric and unethical practice such as killing of the twins, killing of the women who gave birth to twins, regarding such a phenomenon as a bad omen, restricting women from going to school and banishing such people from the community, some of the victims who could have been pillars to the society were killed ignorantly.

It was as regards to these practices that Mary Slessor did everything within her disposal to enlighten the community against this barbaric custom and to save the lives of some victims of this custom by taking them up, in most cases, into her custody and bringing the infants up. The missionary foundation laid by Mary Slessor today has made the act of killing twins which were usually regarded as devilish children a prohibited practice not only in Calabar but throughout Nigeria as a nation. Other barbaric and unpleasant practices opposed by her and other Christian missionaries in Nigeria included human sacrifice, cannibalism and trial by ordeal which have been drastically abolished.

In the aspect of education, the Nigerian society has positively benefited from the Christian mission. The first to lay the foundation for Western education were the Christian missionaries who used education as a tool to reach the West Africans and convert them into Christianity. Based on this, Agubosi (2002) opined that the Christian missionaries opened schools side by side with their churches. In the region of the Niger Delta for example, the opening of churches gave rise to the opening of schools in the various towns, villages and communities. This is true because church founders started first to teach children how to read and write, and further taught them how to read and explain the Bible very well.

Corroborating on the contributions of the missionaries, Babalola (1988) asserts that the history of the education system of the colonial period is most importantly the history of the inter-play of three forces. The first of these, was that Christian missions established a good

number of pioneering schools in the nineteenth century in Nigeria. The point to stress here remains that, it was the missions that made the most important contributions to education in the colonial period. Babs Fafunwa (1974) reported that 1842 till 1882 experienced intensive missionary activities, yet, the colonial government in Nigeria refused to give adequate attention to the educational needs of the people. This means that the field was entirely left to the missions to take care of education.

However, the first notable school in Nigeria was established by Mr. and Mrs. De Graft of the Methodist Mission in Badagry. This school was named "Nursery of the Infant Church". The majority of the pupils were children of Nigerian emigrants from Sierra Leone, while the rest were children of the local converts (Babalola, 1988). Subsequently, in 1846, the C.M.S. built schools at Igbein and Ake, both in Abeokuta. The first school that was opened in Eastern Nigeria was located at Creek Town in 1854 by Rev. Hope Waddell of the Scotland mission. The first school in Onitsha was opened by Samuel Ajayi Crowther in December, 1858 and it was school for girls between six and ten years old. It is a statement of fact that Christian missions established many schools founded to aid in the propagation of the gospel in Africa.

The oldest teacher training institutions in Nigeria were opened by the missions, for instance, St' Andrews College of Education, Oyo (Anglican); Baptist College, Iwo, among others. It was reported by Fafunwa (1974), that these missions did not only establish schools, but went further set up management boards which helped and regulated the curriculum, teachers' salaries and conduct, and other essential requirements for the schools. The graduates of their mission- established schools emerged as the first generation of Nigerian indigenous educators and teachers. It is a statement of fact that mission- established schools were founded to aid in the propagation of the gospel in Africa; the fact that needs to be stressed here remains that it was the same mission schools that laid the solid foundation for the educational development of West Africa at large, and Nigeria in particular.

The missionaries felt it necessary to emphasize on Western education so that their converts could have adequate knowledge of the Bible. Hence, Western education became the agent of change which indeed brought social revolution in Nigeria. In a general sense in West Africa, beneficiaries of Western education who emerged as the new elites gradually replaced the traditional elites. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries in West Africa, some members of the elite group were the local priests, traditional rulers, chiefs and other individuals who were asked to perform certain vital services in the society. In this period the status of an individual was determined to a large extent partly by his age and partly by the services he was asked to perform. During the second half of the 19th century, the situation changed. The imposition of European social and economic systems during this period undermined the influence of the traditional elites. Their positions were gradually taken over by men who could operate effectively in the new system (Fatokun, 2006, 145).

Based on the above, it stands to reason that the new, educated elites from mission schools posed serious threats to the colonial system of government in Nigeria in particular and West Africa in general. It was discovered that the nationalists that championed the course of independence in the nations of West Africa were mostly graduates of these mission schools. It is not an over statement to admit that, qualitative education is a vital tool in the development of nations. One may argue that if not for the introduction of Western education by the Christian missions who laboured in West Africa, especially in Nigeria, our country would not have experienced the present stage of development in the world.

Admittedly, mission schools contributed in the moral reconstruction of Nigerian children of different ages. Parents who had difficulties in training their children looked up to the missions as the best place for character building, values and moral life and as such, they were willing to send their children to their mission schools. Some missionaries took some of these children and raised them for their parents. Christian missionaries in the course of preaching the

gospel and teaching the children also took the initiative of redeeming and converting some slaves, pawns and criminals and enrolled them into mission schools where they were provided with moral Christian education. With the value of Christian missionary education inculcated into Nigerian children many social outcasts ended up becoming relevant in the development of Nigeria. So far, we have established that Christian missions brought and impacted moral values and social regeneration in Nigerian children and youths through their churches and schools.

Also, the missionaries made education their major means for the spread of Christianity in West Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Schools were established in the colonies where the converts were taught how to read and write. They built primary and secondary schools, and in 1827, Fourah Bay Teacher Training College was built in Sierra Leone and was later upgraded to the status of a University in 1876 and provided university education to students from various West African countries. This made missionary activities to be carried out in building of schools, churches, roads, hospitals and other government institutions. These institutions produced several educationists, evangelists and nationalists who contributed to the development of their nations.

Moreover, the missionaries provided industrial education by opening various vocational training centers in different places for both men and women alike. For example, women were particularly privileged to receive training in several vocations, crafts and domestic duties such as sewing, basket making, weaving, ironing of clothes and book binding. Men were taught vocations such as carpentry, brick-making, brick-laying, tailoring, boat repair and cabinet-making. The missionaries from CMS, the Church of Scotland encouraged Nigerians in Abeokuta, Onitsha, Lokoja and Calabar to learn vocations like agriculture, carpentry, brick-laying, among others. The industrial institutions at Brass where boys within the average age of sixteen were trained in one year apprenticeship in carpentry was established by the C.M.S Mission. Ayandele (1966) pointed out that the

C.M.S. not only provided the trainees the boarding with allowance, also, provided donations for the tools worth four pounds to each apprentice at the end of their training, which enabled them to set up their own business. By this provision, some Nigerian youths were able to be employers of labour by training others as they were trained by the church missionaries. The Linguistic development of African indigenous languages was another major contribution by the Christian church missionaries the European missionaries did very well in the development of Nigerian indigenous languages. Commenting on this, Ayandele (1966) avers:

The main languages of Nigeria preserved by the efforts of the missionaries as a lasting legacy the Igbo, Yoruba, Efik, Nupe and Hausa. In fact, the reduction of these languages into writing resulted in a linguistic homogeneity that never existed in these tribes (283).

The point being made here is that various Christian missionaries studied some Nigerian languages such as Igbo, Yoruba, Efik, Hausa and Nupe to enable Nigerian citizens become educated. Severe attempts to translate the Bible into different indigenous languages were employed and these culminated into the scholarly study and development of the languages' grammar and syntax and the documentation of the oral tradition. In Nigeria, missionaries like Rev. Henry Townsend and Golloner not only studied the Yoruba language, but also contributed to its development. Rev. Bowen, the American missionary of the American Baptist Convention acquired a high degree of proficiency in Yoruba to such extent that he produced a literary work, "Grammar and Dictionary of Yoruba Language".

He drew the attention of the poetic structure of the invocative prayers in traditional Yoruba worship especially those of Ifa (Ajayi, 1965, p.127). Also, the Christian church missionaries devoted time and studied the Nigerian languages well and used the knowledge acquired and taught the converts how to read the Bible in vernacular. As such, Crowther translated the

Bible into Yoruba; J. F. Schon and G. P. Bargery translated the Bible into Hausa. Hugh Goldie of the Presbyterian Mission published the Bible in Efik. Proficiency in speaking and writing African languages enhanced the linguistic homogeneity of their ethnic groups in Nigeria. In a way to promote the study of Nigerian languages, missionaries had to establish printing press and published newspapers. Maudu and Gbulu (2013) noted that Rev. Townsend established the printing press in Nigeria in 1852 and published some publications in Yoruba in 1859, “iwe iroyin fun egba ati Yoruba”, the first newspaper in Nigeria.

Christian missionaries contributed immensely to the improvement of medical work in the country. The foundation of modern medical services in Nigeria today and West Africa at large was laid by the Christian missionaries. This is true because, before their arrival, medical health care was sub-standard and most drugs administered were nohygienically prepared. To solve this problem and to save the lives of Nigerians, the missionaries introduced modern medical services to Nigerians during the early colonial days. Father Jean Conquard of the Catholic mission was impressed not only to take care of the spiritual need of Africans, but o, to also attend to the physical needs. The first time Fr. Conquard visited West Africa, as a French soldier who was under military service, he saw evidences of much suffering, diseases, dirt and pain (Onibonoje, 1975).

He was greatly distressed and decided to alleviate the suffering and hardship of Africans. So, on his return from battle and as a medical doctor, he applied to the Society of African Mission at Lyon to be a missionary. As soon as his request was granted, he arrived Abeokuta in Nigeria, and settled down to practice medicine. He built a small hospital which attracted people from Abeokuta, Lagos, Dahomey, and Northern Nigeria among other places to arrive Abeokuta for modern treatment. He gave equal treatment for the impoverished health conditions of Africans and medically took care of Muslims, Christians and pagans indiscriminately. He also developed a scheme for training nurses, since he also studied tropical diseases. The CMS

established Iyi Enu Hospital in Onitsha and the Methodist church opened the West Guild Hospital, Ilesha. The Sacred Heart Hospital, Abeokuta was established by the Roman Catholics. Other missions also contributed immensely to health care development in Nigeria. For example, the first modern medical station in Odo-Ofin local government area of the present Ogun State was established at Inisa in 1947 by the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) mission which took care of many sick people (Jolayemi, 1995,p.35). Many medical doctors visited from the SDA Hospital at Ile- Ife. This means that until 1947, this part of Yoruba land in Nigeria did not have a taste of modern medical care.

Health lectures to compliment medical services were also given by the missionaries. These were DONE towards modern measures of preventing disease. Apart from organizing health and sanitation workshops in the churches, hygiene and health education were taught as well as enforced in mission established primary and secondary schools. In this regard Agubosi (2002) writes:

In these schools, the pupils were inspected during morning assemblies and the dirty ones were punished. Hygiene and health education being subjects in the school curriculum, featured on the school timetables. During such periods, pupils receive formal lessons on sanitation, first aid treatment for various ailments and accidents in accordance with modern methods (p. 118).

It is interesting to state that Christian missions contributed greatly in providing quality medical care in Nigeria. They built hospitals, dispensaries as well as health centers. They introduced drugs and embarked on war against diseases at a time when the Nigeria government did not give urgent attention to health cases. The success of the medical work helped to check the mortality and morbidity rates in Nigeria in particular, and West Africa in general. These hospitals and health centers, built by the missionaries, set the pace for modern medical facilities due to high standards.

The church missionaries also contributed in the technology of the country. The nineteenth century missionaries laid a solid foundation for the establishment of modern communication network especially in the area of printing technology and publishing of books and other related materials. The first printing press in Nigeria was opened by Rev. Hope Waddell of the Scotland mission in the Eastern part of the country, Calabar in particular in the year 1846. In the same vein, Rev. Henry Townsend opened the first indigenous Newspaper in 1852 with the first newspaper published in 1859 (Jolayemi, 1995, 35).

Furthermore, apart from modern communication network, the missionaries helped in ending incessant wars which had characterized Nigerian villages before the advent of Christianity. This brought peace and stable government.

Conclusion

Nigeria has greatly benefited from the nineteenth century series of events of the Christian missionaries that led to the development of Nigeria's present situation. It is no gain-saying that the Christian missions, in different areas, gave the increasing number of Nigerian adherents powerful weapons through the provision of Western education. The church missionaries within the mission stations used education as the main instrument used for establishing and maintaining the Christian moral and ethical values of life. In fact, Christianity is indeed a religion of civilization and a potent agent of positive change in the development of Africa.

The church missionaries gave outstanding contributions as they introduced Christianity, developed doctrines, stabilized the social welfare, built rehabilitation centers for lepers, campaigned against barbaric customs and eradicated the killing of twins, introduced Western education, assisted in the development of African indigenous languages, improved on health care delivery and the establishment of modern communication networks in Nigeria in particular, and West Africa at large.

Recommendation

The author recommends that the meaningful contributions of the church missions should be sustained and serve as a foundation for nation building

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