
INCULTURATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN YORUBA LAND: A STRATEGY FOR CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND RESISTANCE

Yetunde Ruth Balogun, PhD

Department of Christian Religious Studies,
Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo
oromoshe06@yahoo.com / 08035778345

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Abstract

The Western missionaries of the nineteenth Century tried to preserve Christianity by restricting the introduction of the culture and traditions of Africans to prevent syncretism. The Europeanised Christianity presented to the Yoruba obliterated Yoruba culture and social norms. Alienation of African culture and political subjugation of Africans in the church and the larger society by the missionaries and the colonialists propelled a sense of activism and resistance by African Christians. This paper makes a historical appraisal of the raison d'être of Aladura Churches in Yoruba land to showcase how their emergence helped to integrate the Christian faith with Yoruba cultural values and traditions. Historical analysis and review of relevant literature were the tools for gathering data for this study. Resting on cultural preservation theory, this paper argues that for Christianity to remain ubiquitous with sound theology that resonates with the yearnings of Yoruba people of the present age, inculturation is inevitable. African rituals, symbols and customs, adoption of Yoruba language, music and traditional musical instruments are practices borrowed from African indigenous religion. They served as tools for the preservation of Yoruba cultural heritage and social identity. The zeal to preserve African heritage strengthened the resilience of African cultures and socio-political emancipation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the religious landscape, it led to the establishment of African Pentecostalism with a distinct Christian theology that expresses African spirituality. The paper canvases for a continued purging of neo-imperialism to ensure Yoruba cultural heritage thrives in the face of globalization.

Keywords: Inculturation. African Christianity. Yoruba culture. Cultural preservation.

INTRODUCTION

Religion and culture are the nucleus of identity and social solidarity among cultural groups across the globe. This ideology succinctly describes the Yoruba people of West Africa. Yoruba people are mainly found in the southwestern region of Nigeria. The Yoruba ethnic group are also present in the eastern region of the Republic of Benin and Togo. The focus of this study is on the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria. Before the discovery of the West African coasts by European explorers and the incursion of the Christian missionaries, the Yoruba people had diverse religions but expressed a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being called *Olorun*, the Creator of the universe.^{xxxv} The Supreme Being oversees a pantheon of lesser divinities. The implication of this is that the European missionaries did not introduce God to the Yoruba people. The Yoruba indigenous religious beliefs set the standard for their social, economic and political praxis. According to Johnson, Yoruba people are social, hospitable and polite. He reported that ancient Yoruba people were simple in their manners, tastes and habits.^{xxxv} Yoruba uphold social virtues, pilfering or theft, untruthfulness and other vices were rigorously punished. Offenders were excommunicated, condemned to slavery or banished from the community.^{xxxv} The Yoruba country was ruled by chiefs and obas who regulated social behaviour with laws and taboos.^{xxxv} Adekola^{xxxv} held a similar view to Johnson on the richness of Yoruba cultural heritage. However, Adekola^{xxxv} lamented that intercourse with other nations has caused various forms of vices to creep into the social space of Yoruba people.

The colonization of Nigeria by the British opened a new chapter in the socio-cultural, political, economic and religious landscape of the Yoruba people. Ayegboyin noted that the colonization of Nigeria by the British imperialists had both positive and negative implications on the religion and culture of the people^{xxxv}. At the incursion of the Europeans and the eventual planting of Christianity in Yoruba land, attempts to incorporate some elements of Yoruba beliefs and practices into Christianity by African Christians were vigorously opposed by the missionaries. The European missionaries canvassed for a complete detachment from the indigenous religious beliefs and practices upon conversion to Christianity

in their bid to protect their Europeanised Christianity from being syncretised with African indigenous religious beliefs. Nwadiakor lamented that the Western pioneers in Nigeria glossed over the fact that the indigenous people they were interacting with had their unique culture and values, which ought to be respected.^{xxxv}

European supremacy as an ideology was not only expressed in the church by the Western missionaries, but it also featured in the administration of the colonialists. The similarity in the *modus operandi* of these two institutions led many African history writers or scholars to label the Western missionaries as the precursors of colonialists. Bosch affirmed that the modern missions originated in the context of Western imperialism.^{xxxv} The imperial agencies were commissioned not only to subdue the indigenous population, but they were also charged to evangelise them. Another fact to note is that the religion, culture and worldview of the imperial agents and missionaries in general are homogeneous; they both shared the idea to impose European culture on Africans^{xxxv}. They show solidarity with each other in their operations. While the colonialists provided security for the Western missionaries, the missionaries were committed to evangelism and social action. The social actions endeared the missionaries to Africans more than the evangelism.

Early Yoruba Christians and indigenous missionaries stood their ground against the oppressive attitudes of the colonialists and the European missionaries. Though their opposition was labelled schismatic and syncretic, history will never forget their activism and resilience to inculturate Christianity. Their actions have engendered the preservation of Yoruba cultural heritage. This paper, therefore, showcases how the inculturation of Christianity in Yoruba land served as an agent of preservation of religious beliefs and socio-cultural identity for posterity.

Theoretical Framework

This discourse is predicated on the theory of cultural preservation, a subset of post-colonial theory. It has a wide perspective and approaches, scholars in disciplines such as social sciences, archaeology, health, architecture, artistic designs, ecology, science, politics and religion have adopted it to illustrate their

thesis. Cultural preservation theory focuses on the maintenance and protection of a community's cultural heritage, including traditions, customs, language and values. This study adopted the cultural preservation of Edward Said (1935-2003). In his much-celebrated treatise, *Culture and Imperialism*, Said analysed how the West positioned itself as a self-evidently superior, independently developed culture that should mandatorily share its civilization with the inferior cultures through colonization.^{xxxv} In his argument, Said reasoned that neo-imperialism is imminent when former colonies do not understand that no culture can claim superiority over others or direct the destinies of inferior cultures.^{xxxv} The implication of this is that the indigenous culture must be intentional in the attempt to preserve their cultural heritage that is not inimical to Christian faith.

Suppression of indigenous culture did not end with colonialism; realities in the post-colonial regime in Nigeria and other former European colonies portray monumental damage to the indigenous culture as a result of the infiltration of European culture. Cultural preservation of the post-colonial theory applies to this study because it emphasizes the importance of sustaining cultural identity in the face of external influences and changes. Therefore, this article rests on this framework that preserving cultural elements is crucial for the continuity of the revered Yoruba identity. It also provides an undeniable connection between the past to the contemporary social norms, beliefs and traditions.

Conceptual Framework

Culture

Culture has been given different definitions by scholars from archaeology, sociology, anthropology, psychology, religion and history. Archaeologists would describe culture as a learned and shared values, attitudes or beliefs system. Archaeologists gather information and facts about the people of the past through material remains. Ezinwa defined culture as a shared communication, a means of deploying a society's forms of communication.^{xxxv} He noted that language, body movements, attitudes, emotions, along with other symbols, are vehicles for the interpretation of culture. Cummings and Sanders submitted that psychologists view

culture as the values, beliefs, language, rituals, traditions and other behaviours that are passed from one generation to another within any social group.^{xxxv} Beliefs, values, practices, rituals, symbols, and traditions are elements of religion that shape culture. Saroglou and Cohen^{xxxv} maintained that religion is a constituent of culture. Culture and religion exist in a dynamic relationship. Culture influences religion while religion potentially shapes culture. It is worth noting that religion transcends culture owing to the adherents' connection with transcendent reality. Religion, unlike culture, is beyond the limits of experience; it is above all known categories. Culture, on the other hand, is confined to the limits of the material world.

The preliterate generation preserved cherished elements of their culture through oral traditions. Cherished experiences and worldviews were preserved in the memories of the people and were later transmitted from one generation to the other.^{xxxv} Similarly, Onyima described cultural heritage as the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group of people that are inherited from past generations, maintained by the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.^{xxxv} This description of culture suggests that the culture of a people could be visible, while some other aspects could be invisible. Culture is said to be divided into two categories, material culture (visible culture) and non-material culture (invisible culture).

Material cultures are tangible artefacts or materials produced and used by people of historical antiquity and still have historical and social relevance in modern society. Examples of such include musical instruments, tools, utensils, buildings, food, weapons and clothes. Non-material cultures relate to thoughts, ideas, beliefs, laws, customs, ethics, folklore and religion.^{xxxv} Material and nonmaterial cultures are meant to be transmitted from one generation to another, a heritage passed down to younger generations. Cultural heritage creates a sense of awareness of historical origin and identity in individuals within a social context.^{xxxv} Cultural identity helps an individual to raise objective questions about their identity, values, and preferences. It helps to build social solidarity among people of similar culture and shows mutual respect for the culture of others. In sum, culture is the total way of life of a cultural group that is valued and transmitted from one

generation to another. It manifests in language, literature, arts and crafts, fashion, cuisine, attitudes, philosophy, architecture, music, dance, politics, economy and religion. It is worth noting that culture is not homogeneous. Lawore submitted that culture is heterogeneous;^{xxxv} it varies from one people group to another. The marked difference between a culture group and the other becomes more visible as their settlements are distant from one another.

Inculturation

Inculturation is the process of integrating a foreign culture with local culture. In our context, it is the process of integrating Christian faith with local cultures. It is a missiological term that originated from the Roman Catholic tradition but gained currency in Christian cross-cultural mission. Inculturation projects a certain level of respect for the indigenous culture. It helps Christianity to resonate with local cultural traditions. Okure, cited in Bate, posited that inculturation functions as the process through which Christ becomes ‘native’ to a particular culture.^{xxxv} In other words, Christ is incarnated in a particular African culture. Invariably, if a missionary fails to inculturate the Gospel, Christ remains a foreigner to that culture. Bate explained further that Christ must be made a citizen of the new cultural environment before he can effect the redemption of the natives.^{xxxv}

According to Kurgat, inculturation is the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture or cultures. It is a continual process that allows for a dynamic relationship between Christian faith and cultures.^{xxxv} This connotes that inculturation is the tool for the exportation and planting of Christianity to other nations of the world. Expressing the position of the Roman Catholic Church on the question of inculturation, Kurgat stated that the Vatican teaches that all cultures have the right to an independent existence within Christianity. He added that the Vatican has mandated that the introduction of Christian teachings in a new culture must be intentional about preserving the essential integrity of culture, its values, institutions and customs^{xxxv}.

Inculturation in the first place made it possible for Christianity to be robed in the European cultural garment. The dynamism of Christianity allows it to be

inculturated into the cultures of every new community the religion interacts with. The foundation of the practice of inculturation is traceable to the circumstances that led to the convocation of the Council of Jerusalem in 49 AD and the decision of the council (Acts of the Apostles 15:1-35). The Jews canvassed for the imposition of Jewish dietary rules, circumcision, and other cultural practices as conditions for the acceptance of Gentiles into the commonwealth of believers. The Council rejected such imposition and proclaimed unconditional acceptance of Gentiles into Christianity. Gentiles only need to confess their faith in Jesus Christ, be baptised, abstain from sexual immorality and food offered to idols without necessarily subjecting themselves to circumcision. Apostle Paul's thought on equality between Gentiles and Jews is also a pointer to the fact that equality among cultures is universal. No culture is superior to another.

Historical appraisal of Western missionary enterprise in Yoruba land

Christianity as a religious movement did not emerge out of a historical vacuum. It has its origin in Judaism, the religion of the Jews. This explains why Jewish culture was expressly showcased at its beginning. As Christianity spread to other nations, it blended with the culture of the host community. There was an early attempt by the apostles of Jesus Christ to make Christianity a purely Jewish institution. However, God permitted the apostles to be persecuted by the Jewish religious leaders. This informed their scattering abroad as reported in Acts of the Apostles 8:4-19. The universality of Christianity commenced at this period, at every region and nation they escaped to; they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ and planted Christian churches. The persecution of the church at Jerusalem and subsequent events heralded the fulfilment of the commission of the apostles to witness the salvific grace of Christ to the uttermost parts of the world.

The early attempt to plant Christianity in West Africa was pioneered by the Portuguese explorers and traders during the fifteenth century. The effort to plant an enduring Christian legacy in West Africa was a monumental failure due to what many scholars have described as faulty strategies.^{xxxv} The relegation of Africans' culture and worldview in general and attempts to substitute it with European culture

resulted in the suspicion of West African chiefs and kings. They perceived that the new faith would usurp their political authority as the Arabs did in neighbouring states where Islam had been accepted. According to Adamolekun, the missionaries of the fifteenth century only thrived in commerce but failed in Christian missions.^{xxxv} Not only that, the fifteenth-century voyages marked the beginning of European imperialism in West Africa. It should also be noted that Christianity was only introduced to the kings, chiefs and selected nobles in the coastal regions of Benin and Warri in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. Everything about African culture and religious practices was relegated and termed fetish and demonic. No attempt was made to contextualise Christianity.

The evangelical revival in Europe and the subsequent formation of missionary societies were the harbinger of an enduring Christian presence in West Africa and Nigeria in particular.^{xxxv} In the nineteenth century, there was another move to reintroduce Christianity to West Africa. It is worthy of note that the nineteenth-century missionaries were more focused on mission and better equipped for the task of cross-cultural Christian mission than their fifteenth-century forbears. The incorporation of social actions to evangelism was a paradigm shift from the focus of mission on individuals (chiefs or obas) to the entire society. It appears that the missionaries learnt a great lesson from the unfruitful efforts of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century.

Ayegboyin and Ishola submitted that the success of the nineteenth-century missionary enterprise was in part due to the missionary policy of the Church Missionary Society (CMS).^{xxxv} Ayegboyin and Ishola extolled the missionary principle taught by the renowned missionary strategist, Henry Venn (1796-1873). The missionaries were taught before their dispatch overseas that attention should be paid to the training of native agencies and the development of native languages, which is part of the native culture. Henry Venn recommended the 3^s of mission, which he called euthanasia of mission, for a successful cross-cultural mission. The 3^s are – Self-governing, Self-sustaining and Self-propagating.^{xxxv} The nineteenth-century missionaries adopted this policy, which eventually made native or indigenous leadership in the church possible. The ordination of Samuel Ajayi

Crowther and his subsequent consecration as the first African Bishop of the Anglican Church on 29 June 1864 bear testament to this.^{xxxv}

Scholars in the field of Church history^{xxxv} have appraised the engagement of native agents and other social concerns of the nineteenth-century missionaries. Ajayi^{xxxv}, Oshitelu^{xxxv}, and Balogun^{xxxv} reported that training and ordination of native agencies, development of Yoruba orthography, introduction of the western form of education, and provision of healthcare services, among other developmental initiatives, were strategies that helped Christianity to spread into the hinterlands. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was communicated in the local dialects, which made the message of the gospel meaningful to the natives.

It is worthy of note that deliberate attempts were made at the inculturation of Christianity with Yoruba culture during the period under review. Certain beliefs and practices, such as belief in the Supremacy of God, eschatology, the existence of spirits and practices like circumcision, chastity in marriage, align with Christian doctrine. These were not condemned but accommodated into Christianity. Egwuonwu noted that the practice of circumcision was in existence among Africans before the arrival of the European missionaries.^{xxxv} The implication is that circumcision was not introduced to the Yoruba people. The acceptance must have been for the reason of its similarity with the Jewish culture, where Christianity originated.^{xxxv} To the Jews, circumcision binds the male child to the covenant relationship with Yahweh inaugurated in the era of Abraham. In Yoruba culture, circumcision is a rite performed for social and religious reasons. Socially, it integrates the person into the community and with the ancestors spiritually. While ancestor worship was condemned as idolatry, circumcision was accepted.

Chitando reported that as soon as the missionaries gained the trust of the natives, particularly the chiefs and the kings, they began to exhibit signs of competitiveness and hostilities to the host culture and natives.^{xxxv} The various missionary denominations began to compete with one another. They scrambled for social and religious relevance. Africans were drafted into the unhealthy rivalry among the missionaries; they became hostile and divided across denominational affiliations. This development in the missionary approach to evangelism was

condemned by careful observers among the Yoruba elite who had the opportunity to acquire higher education in Europe. They pointed out much hypocrisy of the missionaries and their colonial friends. Exposure to Western culture allowed them to realise that the Christianity presented to Yoruba people was packaged with European culture. Many of the prohibitions they placed on African culture were informed by the cultural biases of the Europeans.

Imposition of Western culture and Yoruba resistance

Religion and culture share a symbiotic relationship. Religion is a part of ethnic or cultural identity. A good number of cultural practices have links with religion. Christianity was planted in Europe in the first century AD under the intense persecution by the Roman Empire. By the fourth century, Christianity was contextualised to the extent that liturgy and festivals had taken on the pattern of European culture. As earlier mentioned, the missionaries who brought Christianity to Yoruba land shared common ethnocentric assumptions with the colonialists. According to Chitando,^{xxxv} the conversion to Christianity required Africans to change their names to either biblical or European names to mark a transition from a primitive worldview to a new one. In Yoruba land, names that have links with divinities like Ogundare, Oyabunmi or Omitola were denounced; converts were compelled to pick new names with Jewish or European leanings. In some instances, the prefix that shows a relationship with the divinity must change to the Christian Lord. Ogundare changed to Oluwadare, Oyabunmi to Oluwabunmi. Yoruba native attires were forbidden for the priests, they must always appear in clerical shirts. Similarly, appearance in European attire was a symbol of holiness and a new life in Jesus Christ. The missionary forced Yoruba Christians to break away from their socio-cultural and religious past.

Indigenous spirituality was condemned. God of the African Traditional Religion was termed inferior to the Christian God. A reflection of the ideology of white supremacy in the church relegated the Yoruba worldview on cosmology. Indigenous musical instruments were forbidden in the church. They also denied prophetic revelation and vision. Akin to this was the restriction of polygamy in the

church. Johnson argued that Yoruba people naturally practice monogamy but do not prohibit polygamy.^{xxxv} They embrace polygamy on social and economic grounds, not just for sexual pleasures. A large-scale farmer marries more than one wife to raise children to meet his labour demand. Mission churches mandated that polygamists divorce other wives and stick to only the first wife. The men were also denied church sacraments until they made restitution. The question to ask here is whether conversion to a new religion connotes a disconnection from one's cultural identity. It is also important to note that when the Bible and an aspect of the native culture clash, the Bible takes priority. Nwosu opined that religion takes diverse forms according to different cultural settings. He added that when conversion into another religion takes place, it does not outrightly erase the knowledge of the traditional religion.^{xxxv} Fuller observed that converts to a new religion show differing attitudes to their previous religious traditions after conversion.^{xxxv} Fuller noted that some show partial solidarity with the previous religion, while many others try to reject their past completely. These attitudes are not healthy for the survival of the indigenous culture. Fuller canvassed for continued solidarity with the past, just as Jewish Christians saw Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the prophecies of their ancestors.^{xxxv}

Although the CMS authority in London was a significant player in the Episcopal consecration of Samuel Ajayi Crowther at a time when he was never ambitious of such a status, white clergies frustrated his Episcopal duties. Decorvert and Oladipo narrated the racial discrimination against Bishop Ajayi Crowther. There was determined opposition against a 'native' leadership of the church by the western missionaries who felt that leadership of the church at that level should be exclusively reserved for a white man.^{xxxv} Other black clergies also faced racial discrimination. They were made subordinates to the white clergy with lesser post-ordination experience and charisma. They claimed that black men cannot understand theology or comprehend divine inspiration.

Dedication from all of these is that the inculturation claim of the Western missionaries in the nineteenth century was superficial. Their engagement with the Yoruba promoted cultural suppression and political subjugation. Shyllon lamented

that the interaction of African Indigenous religion with Christianity and Islam resulted in the crisis of culture among Africans.^{xxxv}

Cultural Preservation and African Indigenous Churches

Racial discrimination was foremost among the reasons for African initiatives in the church in Yoruba land. Anderson reasoned that the perceived failure of the Niger Mission led by Bishop Ajayi Crowther further encouraged young white missionaries in Yoruba land to conclude that Africans were unfit for leadership positions.^{xxxv} Ajayi Crowther was humiliated by much younger white priests. He was made to step down from the finance committee, which he chaired. Ajayi Crowther was later replaced by a white man against the earlier arrangement to consecrate James Johnson as the successor of Ajayi Crowther.^{xxxv} With these unpleasant occurrences, coupled with the nationalist movement gathering momentum outside the church, a large number of Christians split from the mission churches. At the Southern American Baptist, Lagos, the maltreatment of the African pastor, Ladejo Stone, led to the establishment of the Native Baptist Church in 1888.^{xxxv} In 1901, a group of wealthy and influential Yoruba Christians under the leadership of Jacob Kehinde Coker led a revolt that resulted in the founding of The African Church - Bethel from the Anglican Church.^{xxxv} In the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the polygamists were excommunicated from the church in 1917. They took up the challenge and founded the United African Church (Eleja) in the same year.^{xxxv}

When these secessions took place spontaneously in Lagos, Nigeria, the churches of the African initiative were tagged the schismatic or Ethiopian churches. The churches seemed to only change leadership; they still patterned their liturgy after the mission churches. However, the group that started churches with African expression emerged after the First World War (WWI) in 1918. They were characterised by long hours of prayer and claims to supernatural gifts. The prophetic and charismatic activities of Yoruba Christians in mission churches were not tolerated. To exhibit such was to be excommunicated from the mission churches by the European missionaries. Such excommunication also laid the foundation for

the emergence of the *Aladura* churches. It is worth noting that the *Aladura* churches were not reactionary but prophetic movements. However, it was in their era that Yoruba cultural heritage found expression in Christianity. They adopted the use of Yoruba language in their worship, song composition and rendition, indigenous musical instruments, lively worship, interpretation of dreams and visions. Polygamy was allowed among a few of them. Anderson maintained that these churches were part of the struggle for the termination of colonialism and ecclesiological forerunners of the nationalist independence movements.^{xxxv}

Naming, wedding, burial ceremonies and harvest festivals are celebrated with spiritual significance in Yoruba culture. These were revived by the *Aladura* and other African Indigenous Churches. Today, the celebration of the harvest festival has been borrowed from African churches and incorporated into the mission churches. Also, age group social association was integrated into Christianity. All African Initiated Churches encouraged the social groups and affiliations. They celebrate festivals annually in the church and rotate chairmanship among members. It serves as a source of fundraising for the church.

The movement also produced African Pentecostalism, which is different from the European typology. There is a practice of spirit possession, speaking in tongues and prophetic or divine healing. This pulled crowds to these churches as miracles of the apostolic era became evident in the church.

Modern resistance and challenges

African Indigenous Churches left footprints in the sand of time as movements that fought for the liberation of Africans from white imperialism. Current realities in Neo-Pentecostal churches and a few *Aladura* churches call for a reformation. Neo-Pentecostal churches are leaning towards neo-colonialism. Worship and sermons are patterned after American televangelist preachers. Services are held in the English language even when the pastors have very poor command of the foreign language. Public prayers are often said in a foreign language, leaving the erroneous impression that God hears only prayers rendered in English. The indigenous musical instruments are gradually giving way to drum

set, saxophone, piano and other European string instruments. Song compositions and renditions in churches tend to favour Western musical styles. Where the failure to resist domination of Yoruba culture by foreign elements would lead us could better be imagined.

The neo-colonial mentality pervades every aspect of modern Yoruba life. The mode of dressing is patterned after the Western style, with ladies walking the street almost naked. There are claims of monogamy, but more visible are the realities of infidelity in marriage among many Christians. These are a corruption of Yoruba's cherished cultural heritage. The contemporary church is faced with a moral dilemma. Sexual promiscuity is commonplace among church leaders. There are reports of incest among Christians; Yoruba culture forbids this. The *Omoluabi* ethos that promoted transparency in business transactions and patriotism has been dumped for the individualistic tendencies of Western culture. Neo-imperialism is evident at both micro (home) and macro (community) levels of the Yoruba state and by extension, Nigeria. Just as Said postulated, when a former colony allows residues of the colonial cultural influences to dominate its culture, there would be a loss of cultural identity. Failure to integrate the cherished cultural heritage of the people into Christianity has produced a form of outward spirituality without a corresponding moral rectitude.

Concluding remarks

Christians of Yoruba descent contributed greatly to the spread and growth of Christianity in Nigeria. Their mission initiatives and ability to inculturate Christianity have kept them thriving where the Western missionaries failed. They have fostered a form of Christianity that bears relevance to the social and spiritual yearnings of Nigerians. In light of this, the church needs to keep pace with the dynamism in society occasioned by globalisation and technological advancement to retain relevance. There is a need to keep doing theology that is relevant to the changes of the time and in tandem with Yoruba identity. A theology that addresses the challenges of poverty, corruption in governance, insecurity, craving for wealth without recourse to morality, and other forms of social ills that have jettisoned the moral ethos of African society. Essentially, the cherished cultural heritage

preserved by the early Yoruba Christians through various social and political activities must be consciously preserved for the next generation. The church must expunge all forms of coloniality for the gospel message to truly be contextualised and relevant to the present age.