

Christian Missionary Enterprise in Igboland and the use of Old Testament: A Critique

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Abstract

Various scholars have written volumes of work on activities relating to Christian missionary enterprise in Igboland. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Christian missionaries did not make adequate use of the Old Testament during their apostolic work. They propose that one of the major reasons for the establishment of African Initiated Churches (AICs) was the failure of the Christian missionaries to use the Old Testament in addressing certain issues of great concern to Africans. However, this research is of the opinion that the Christian missionaries absolutely did not neglect to use the Old Testament in addressing some issues of great concern to the indigenous people. The research proposes that the Christian missionaries applied and utilized the Old Testament passages in areas they considered it necessary. Examples are on certain issues regarding slave trade, human sacrifice, killing of twins, among others. The problem of this research is that volumes of literature have been written on Christian missionary enterprise and rise of African Initiated Churches (AICs) with specific reference to poor use of the Old Testament by the Christian missionaries. The need for this research becomes imperative to correct certain impressions, opinions, views and postulations of some scholars who wrongly accuse the Christian missionaries of not making adequate references to the Old Testament during their evangelism activity in Africa particularly Igbo territory. The study relies on secondary sources of data collection which includes; mainline books, book of readings, journals, unpublished project works among others. The study finds out that Christian missionaries utilized the Old Testament during their evangelism activity in Igboland for the common good of the indigenous people.

Keywords: Christian, Missionary, Igboland, Old Testament, Critique

Introduction

Christianity began in Jewish soil. After the resurrection of Christ and its subsequent Pentecost experience of Acts 2, many people who came to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost from various destinations outside the Jewish territory accepted the religion. As about 3000 souls were added to the Church. The early Church faced persecution from the Jewish

authority, those who ran out of Jewish territory for safety, continued to spread the gospel. However, with the conversion of Saul later named Paul, and with his massive missionary activities, the gospel spread sporadically to the entire Roman territory. During the Medieval period, Constantine made efforts to sponsor evangelism activities. At a point evangelism and missionary activities seemed to decline, as a result of elements of decay in the Medieval Church such as; sale of indulgence, concubinage, simony, inquisition and index etcetera. However, the incidence of the Great Awakening that swept across Europe and America led to revival among the Christian fold. Kidd (2007) explain that the Great Awakening was a powerful, unprecedented series of revivals from 1740-1743 that touched many of the colonies and contemporaries remembered for decades as a special visitation of the Holy Spirit. Nwadiolor (2010) recorded that Christianity witnessed a wave of spiritual upheaval-the bubbling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men, generating a kind of evangelicalism that demanded a renewed zeal, revivalism and commitment. Hall (2009) states that Jonathan Edwards besides being a key preacher during the Great Awakening, was instrumental in facilitating prayer for global mission, while casting a general vision for such mission. The enthusiastic and committed Christian groups constituted themselves into various evangelism and missionary societies such as Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), Church of Scotland Mission (CSM), Primitive Methodist Mission (PMM), Qua Iboe Mission, Baptist Mission among others through which Igboland was evangelized.

The era of Christian missionary enterprise in Igboland has come and gone. Since then, various scholars have written volumes of work on activities relating to Christian missionary enterprise in Igboland. Some have written on educational, medical, agricultural, infrastructural and human capital development strides credited to the 19th century Christian missionaries. Others have documented on the individual achievements of some Christian missionaries such as J.C Taylor, Simon Jonas, Bishop Shanahan, Mary Slessor among others. While other scholars have recorded how the missionaries suppressed African culture and indigenous religion leading to rise of African Initiated Churches (AICs). On this note, some scholars are of the opinion that the Christian missionaries did not make adequate use of the Old Testament (OT) during their apostolic work. Instances are: Mojola (2014) states that when the European missionaries first came to Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, they naturally gave preference to the New Testament (NT). Some scholars proposed that one of the major reasons for the establishment of African Initiated Churches (AICs), was the failure of the Christian missionaries to use the Old Testament in addressing certain issues of great concern to Africans. Thus, the Africa instituted Churches arose as an affirmation of the emerging indigenous readings and interpretations of the Scripture (OT) and of the Christian faith and the appropriation and inculturation of these (Mojola, 2014). Umeanolue (2020) further said that the common and basic feature of African Independent

Churches (AICs) is the special preference for the Old Testament, while in the orthodox churches the New Testament (NT) is given priority over the Old Testament. However, this research refuses to accept Umeanolue's viewpoint because in most of the orthodox/mainline or mission Churches, during sermon a combination of OT and NT is utilized. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church in Igboland ensures that both the two parts of the Scripture is adequately read before the homily. Mainline Churches also carry out harvest feast, circumcision, ordination of priest, use of anointing oil, tithing, praying and fasting, among others which have their root from OT.

Furthermore, this research is of the opinion that the Christian missionaries followed the footsteps of Christ because Jesus quoted and applied the OT in his itinerant work before his death. Hence, the Christian missionaries did not absolutely neglect to use the Old Testament in addressing some issues of great concern to the indigenous people. The research proposes that the Christian missionaries applied and utilized the Old Testament passages where they deemed it necessary. Examples are on certain issues regarding slave trade, human sacrifice, killing of twins among others. The Christian missionaries by their teaching and activities tried to emancipate Igbo society from such cultural practices based scriptural backings from OT.

This research aims to justify the fact that Christian missionaries gave much credence to OT in their apostolic work in Igboland just as they did to the NT.

The Scripture

The Scripture is the inspired and revealed word of God, documented and recorded by man under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. For reproof, correction, discipline so that believers may be furnished for every good work and be able to keep to God's law in their daily living. The Scripture has been held sacrosanct by believers' right from time immemorial. Umeanolue (2020) affirms that Christians from the beginning have unequivocally accepted the Holy Scripture as the only authentic and indisputable mother of all books which is the undoubted progressive revelation of God to mankind through ages. In fact, the Holy Scripture is the indisputable living and inspired word of the living God. Kizhakkeyil quoted by Umeanolue (2020) states although the Bible is the word of God, it is also the literature of the people of God. Their life and faith have strongly influenced the contents of the Scripture. This observation is very important for a proper understanding of the Scripture. The Scripture contains the record of one progressive revelation of God to man, but at the same time it came into being in many parts and in many modes, by a gradual growth extending over many centuries. The books of the Bible contain evidence of the varied conditions of time, place and thought under which they were composed. The Christian faith anchors on this divine, absolute and infallible library. Undoubtedly, the

Scripture has in no small measure sharpened Christian ideas; affected every culture it cuts across and influenced Christian life. The Scripture is thus the book translated into the highest number of languages and dialects in the world.

The Scripture contains the Old and the New Testaments. Umeanolue (2020) explains that the Old Testament contains *Tanak* which is the first 39 books of the Scripture meaning the *Ta-Torah* (Law Pentateuch), *Na-Neviim* (Prophets) and *K-Kethuvim* (Writings). While the New Testament contains the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Epistles and some authoritative, inspirational and apocalyptic writings which are the last 27 books of the Scripture. The Old Testament originally was written in Hebrew but as a result of the incessant attacks on the Jews and their subsequent exiles, the Hebrew language declined that even among the younger generation of the Jews to speak it fluently and write it was a big challenge. This gave rise to Septuagint (Greek translation of the *Tanak*, LXX), for the younger generation of the Jews to be able to read and understand the *Tanak* even though not rendered in its original language. Furthermore, after many years, there came the Vulgate (Latin translation of the *Tanak*) credited to the efforts of Jerome. It was during the Greco-Roman period, that the New Testament was written, at this time, Greek language dominated hence, learning Greek language was synonymous to studying the New Testament.

There are also Deutero-canonical books used by Roman Catholic Church. The New Testament is the fulfillment and explanation of the Old Testament. It explains the historical antecedents of Jesus Christ. It is worthy to note that both the Old Testament and the New Testament complemented each other. They are indivisibly bound together by the inspiration of God's kingdom and kingship into this world. Ugwueye (2004) avers that, in practice it is impossible to articulate an adequate Christian faith without reference to the Old Testament. Owing to the importance of the OT, the Christian missionaries never neglected it.

Issues on the use of Old Testament and New Testament in Church History

In the history of the Church, the use of the OT and NT has never been neglected. However, at point in time, some Christian theologians, scholars and other famous members of the church made efforts to give certain reasons some parts of the Scripture should be discarded or be preferred than the other. In the words of Umeanolue (2020), the history of Christianity, emphasis has been laid either on the Old Testament or New Testament over and against each other. In some quarters, the difference between the Old and New Testament standards are felt as a problem. There had been periods in the yore when dissatisfactions were obviously expressed towards the Old Testament. In the very earliest days of the Church the meaning of Old Testament and its relevance to the Christian faith were subjects of heated debate and controversy. The above statement shows that some Christians in church history tried to make their choice or preference between the OT and NT. This relationship between

the Old and New Testaments was put in an outspoken way by a second century Christian Marcion so much that he rejected the Old Testament (Drane, 1990). Thus, the Marcionists expresse obvious rejection of the Old Testament and advanced their theologies. Be that as it may, their views were severely attacked by the early Church fathers such as St. Augustine, Irenaeus and Eusebius among others.

It is worthy of note that, some passages of NT were also attacked by some Christians. Some group of Christians attempted not only to discredit OT but tried to misinterpret some themes of the NT. Some Christian theologians misinterpreted certain ideas in the NT which gave rise Arianism, Nestorianism, Apollinarianism Gnosticism and so forth. Even Martin Luther rejected certain themes in NT. For example, is the concept of faith and work as emphasized in the book of James which the Church believed and taught. Baptism is akin to New Testament however, there are controversies surrounding it. Some accept infant baptism while others emphasize on adult baptism. The above accounts is a pointer that the quest to make preference between OT and NT have been in existence prior to the advent of Christianity in Igboland.

Brief Survey of Christian Missionary Enterprise in Igboland

Church Missionary Society (CMS) was the first Christian missionary body to plant the seed of Christianity in Igboland in 1841. According to Dike (1965), at the first sight, the 1841 expedition appears to have been a complete failure for, within two months of its departure from England, two of the three ships were lost at sea and 54 of its 162 white crew had died of malaria. The missionaries who survived were able to preach to people of Aboh for a short while and left. Ekechi (1971) points that in 1857, CMS carried out another expedition similar to the one of 1841 was being sent to the Niger, a number of them volunteered to join the missionary team on the voyage. The evangelists in the crew were led by Crowther and the titular leader of the volunteers from Sierra Leone was Rev. John Christopher Taylor whose parents were Ibo ex-slaves. The expedition arrived at Onitsha on Sunday 26th July 1857 and was warmly received by the King, Obi Akazua and his chiefs. CMS opened a permanent mission station there and began to spread to other Igbo towns.

After many years, Igwe (1977) recorded that the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) arrived at Onitsha on December 5, 1885 under the leadership of Father Joseph Lutz. Hence, evangelism became intensive and competitive. The Primitive Methodists (1893) based first at Oron but latter advanced her evangelism activities to Uzuakoli and Umuahia in 1920 (Okpalike and Nwadiakor, 2015). Through these missionary bodies, Christianity gained firm ground in Igboland.

Arguments against the inadequate use of the Old Testament by the Christian Missionaries

The use of the Old Testament by the Christian missionaries during their apostolic work in West Africa has been debated by various scholars. Some are of the view that Christian missionaries preferred NT to OT hence, made little or no use of OT. For instance, Mojola (2014) views that when European missionaries first came to Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, they naturally gave preference to the New Testament (NT). Umeanolue (2022) supports that in the orthodox Churches the New Testament is given priority over the Old Testament. Bonk (2006) narrates that David Picton Jones a Welsh missionary of the London Missionary Society to East and Central Africa in the mid-19th century wrote a letter to his home secretary...confessed that he could no longer believe in the divine inspiration of the Old Testament. The conjunction of his study of the Old Testament and his African experiences had unavoidably led him, he said, to the conclusion that the Hebraic moral and intellectual status was scarcely higher than that of the Africans. Mojola (2014) argued that many of the missionaries who brought the good news of Jesus Christ to Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries tended to underrate the place of the Old Testament in their work of mission in Africa. Some of them were afraid of highlighting the stories of the Old Testament for fear that they would undermine or subvert their own missionary or westernizing agenda because the Old Testament seemed much closer to the African world.

Some scholars suggest that one of the major reasons for the establishment of African Initiated Churches (AICs), was the failure of the Christian missionaries to use the Old Testament in addressing certain issues of great concern to Africans. Thus, the Africa instituted Churches arose as an affirmation of the emerging indigenous readings and interpretations of the Scripture (OT) and of the Christian faith and the appropriation and enculturation of these (Mojola, 2014). Nkwoka (2007) elucidates that with the emergence of the African instituted churches, there was authentic African Christianity which constituted a serious theological challenge and dilemma for the Mission Churches and greater preponderance was placed on the Old Testament.

Christian Missionaries and the use of Old Testament

The research is aimed at giving voice to the salient point that, the Christian missionaries applied and utilized the Old Testament passages for the common good of the indigenous people. Examples are on certain issues regarding slave trade, human sacrifice, killing of twins among others. Christian missionaries ensured that both the OT and NT were adequately used in church programmes. They introduced harvest feast, ordination of priest, use of anointing oil, tithing, child dedication among others which have their root from OT and these religious events and activities are still ongoing in churches in Igboland; recalled

that the Christian missionaries supported circumcision (*Ibiugwu*) rite practiced in Igbo culture prior to the advent of Christianity. From the OT perspective, circumcision started with Yahweh's command to Abraham to circumcise all the male people under his household and new born males born to Abraham's family must undergo circumcision after eight days (Gen. 17: 10-14). The Igbo also carry out circumcision mainly eight days after birth.

The Christian missionaries supported some virtues, morals and norms found in the indigenous value system that are in tandem with values stipulated in OT. Africa values according to Nwadiakor (2015) are those habitual basic frames of mind of Africa people which influence their general attitude towards life and motivate their actions in their selection of what is worthwhile and what is not; what is good and what is bad. Some of these Africa values include; sacredness of human life, sacredness of human sexuality, fidelity in marriage, chastity before marriage, love and care, communalism, respect for dignity of human person and so forth. These indigenous values concur to Christian values stipulated in OT.

The OT contains the Decalogue which comprises of Ten Commandments. This section will briefly discuss few among them as they relate to the study. For instance, According to Echeta (2007), the fifth commandment charges children and the young people with the moral principle of respect and honour within the family relationship (Exo. 20:12). This moral obligation charges children and youths with the respect of parents to maintain strong and good moral disposition. The sixth law prohibits murder: "Thou shall not kill" (Exo. 20:13; Deut. 5:1). The seventh commandment prohibits adultery Exo.20:14 "You shall not commit adultery". This law can be regarded as the basics for chastity before marriage and fidelity in marriage. The eighth law which is a moral law prohibiting stealing (Exo.20:15).

Also, OT prohibits commercial sex work. Deuteronomy 23:17 "There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel; neither shall there be a cult prostitute of the sons of Israel". Igbo culture prohibits *Akunakuna*, (prostitution) as it negates the value of chastity, fidelity before marriage and sacredness of human sexuality. Moreover, the missionaries understood the importance placed on music by the Africans hence, CMS ensured that the book of Psalms was among the earliest OT work to be translated into Igbo language. Mordi and Ajiboye (2016) observe that the first translation of Igbo Bible was made into Onitsha dialect, Rev. J. C. Taylor . . . was the first Igbo Bible translator. He translated the 167 Gospels, Acts, and some Epistles of Paul between 1860 and 1868...David Anyaegbunam, an Igbo man who had worked for CMS as a Catechist, translated the book of Psalms and all the Pauline epistles. Below are further instances where the Christian missionaries appropriated the OT while performing their evangelical work in Igboland.

Application of Old Testament in Tackling Slave Trade

Slave trade is selling of people (captives) to slave merchants for economic and other purposes. In Igboland by extension Nigeria, Pauline (2005) traces that it began with the practice of domestic slavery and voluntary services and there was the devotion of the captives and local criminal to the gods. However, the arrival of the Europeans on the bank of the Niger opened a new phase in slave trade as Igbo land became a notable trade centre. Pauline (2005) enunciates that Liverpool boasted of being the principal slaving port not only to England but also to the entire Europe. Trans-Atlantic slave trade became a booming and lucrative business which attracted many wealthy European and American merchants to Enugu State and other parts of Igbo land. There is also no doubt that Igbo speakers comprised the majority of the slaves transported from the hinterland to Europe and America. Dike (1956) observed that from the 1780s, it was reckoned that 80 percent of the slaves exported from Bonny were Igbo. The Aro people of Igboland played significant role in Trans-Atlantic slave trade. One of the major reasons for Trans-Atlantic slave trade was to provide the needed human resources and labour needed to work in various plantation sites in Europe and America. Africans were considered to be suitable for such, as it could be said that Africans have able bodied people who could do such work. Slave trade had devastating impacts on the indigenous people.

While the Christian missionaries were coming to Igboland, they made abolition of slave trade a missionary imperative. For instance, the agents of Church Missionary Society (CMS) according Okpalike and Nwadiakor (2015) chose Africa as one of the spheres of its apostolic work, and the Negro race in particular, out of commiseration for wrongs which the slave trade had wrought upon them. They fought against slavery through inspirations drawn from OT passages. Midgley (1992) observes that the modern abolitionist movement emerged among the English Quakers and other evangelical groups. The first modern anti-slavery activists were unquestionable Bible believing Christians. Jankiewicz (2016) points that the star of the British anti-slavery activist William Wilberforce was indubitably a born-again Christian. Phipps (2001) opines that his friend and mentor John Newton was a former slave ship captain who experienced conversion through the reading of Scripture, subsequently abandoning the slave trade and becoming a Christian minister. With the backing of these Christians and evangelical groups, the Christian missionaries in Igboland, (Hodge 1860) tended to focus on the grand themes of Scripture, such as the love of God, his moral law, creation in the image of God, freedom, equality, redemption and restoration. Seen through this lens slavery was utterly repulsive instrument of satanic oppression. The Christian missionaries advocated for love of God and man as created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*) which shows equality of all human being thus, no person should be sold or bought as a slave. Moreover, the Christian missionaries spoke against Trans-Atlantic slave

trade based on Exodus 21:16 whoever steals a man, whether he sells him or is found in possession of him, shall be put to death. According to Antwi (2018), concern for the needy and the zeal of the British Christian denominations such as the Anglicans, Quakers and the Methodists to evangelise and to get rid of the evils in the society was to be instrumental in putting an end to the slave trade in Britain and its colonies in the nineteenth century. Through condemnation of slave trade based on the above OT passage and others alike, the Christian missionaries in Igboland partnered with other Christians in Britain and they were able to overcome the grip of slavery. Slave trade was later abolished in Nigeria in 1807.

Application of Old Testament in Addressing Human Sacrifice

Prior to the advent of Christianity, human sacrifice was performed in Igbo culture. In African traditional practices, a human being was considered the most acceptable offering to the gods or deities (Aghawenu, 2020). In most Nigerian traditional belief, the gods of war, took pleasure in human sacrifice as a source of power to protect or enable the people attain victory over their enemy. Thus, human rituals serve like armor, to protect and strengthen the people (Parrinder, 2004). Human beings were sacrificed to various deities in Igboland in disparate circumstances to avert impending danger. Aniche (2012) affirms that sacrifices abound in rituals; the act of sprinkling blood during sacrifice is very significant ritual. This could be human blood in order to avert calamity that would befall the entire community. For instance, in traditional Igbo society, kings, notable warriors and titled men were buried with their domestic slaves (*Ohu*) to continue to serve them in the spiritual world. This is based on the belief of life after death. In agreement to above line of thought, Peterson (2020) states that traditionally, some slaves (*Ohu*) serve the function of constituting to appropriate burial rite. Nwabueze (2013) affirms the use of domestic slaves for the burial of their masters- the number to be so used depended on the standing of the master and the number of domestics he owned. This is shown in names like *Akaeze*, *Anyaeze*, *Ukwueze*. So, when a slave owner dies slaves bearing such name will also be buried along with their masters; however, with the belief that the slaves will continue to serve their masters in spiritual world. From the above viewpoints, human sacrifice in traditional Igbo society were for various cultural purposes; for appropriate burial rites and to avert an impending danger that would have befallen on the whole community. Enwonwu (2007) recorded that, Onitsha as a town was nothing short of primitive; they worshiped their gods and performed human sacrifices. They also killed twin children and buried human beings alive. Anaukwu (2012) noted that:

Human sacrifice was all done in secret but when such sacrifice was made, it spread to the whole town. “Otu uvio” Umolum, “Iyi ojii” Nkwelle Ezunaka, are notable notorious places with the priest. People from far and near do consult their chief

priests. In Aguleri, “Aligom” deity needed human sacrifice of a virgin girl and a boy yearly. The foundation of “Oleme Nkilisi” was laid with a virgin girl and a man buried alive. Omabala, like other Igbo communities was strongly convinced of the importance and necessity of human sacrifice (p.95).

Human sacrifice was also practiced in Ancient Near East. For instance, Masoga and Temba (2018) cite that the book of Deuteronomy confirms the practices of the Canaanites in which parents burnt their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods (Deut. 12:31; 18:9-12), which justified the extirpation from the land. Also, in 2Kings 3:26-27, when Israel was fighting war with the Moabites, Mesha saw that he was losing the battle. He quickly killed and offered his son (human sacrifice) the heir to the throne to *Chemosh* the Moabite gods and thus, he won the battle. However, Yahweh commanded the Israelites not to perform human sacrifice like their neighbours. When Yahweh tested Abraham, by telling him to sacrifice his son Isaac. In obedience to Yahweh’s instruction, he took Isaac to mount Moriah for sacrifice, tied Isaac to the wood to slaughter as commanded, Yahweh instructed him not to do so and a lamb was provided for the sacrifice. This is evidential that Yahweh detests human sacrifice rather prescribed animals as a substitute. This could be seen in the following OT passages which prove Yahweh’s outright rejection of human sacrifice (Deut.12:32; 18:10; Lev.18:21; Jer.7:31 etcetera).

As the missionaries came and observed that human sacrifice was carried out by the indigenous people, they described it as a barbarous superstition and moved all out to put such cultural practice to an end. Anchoring on this OT passage, Exo 20:13 “You shall not kill” and on the fact that Christianity upholds the human dignity of human person and sacredness of human life, they partnered with the colonial government in bringing human sacrifice to a stop. In confirmation to the above line of thought, Crowder cited by Afigbo (1972) states that among these was the abolition of human sacrifices and of certain forms of punishment like maiming, which were considered barbarous.

Application of Old Testament in Stoppage of Killing of Twins

Another cultural practice that was tackled using the fabrics of the OT was killing of twins. According to Anaukwu (2012), before the advent of Christianity, the birth of twins was no cause to be celebrated. It was regarded as an abomination and the twin babies and their mother were regarded as people who have desecrated the land. In fact, the woman that gave birth to a set of twins needs a special sacrifice and cleansing and the twins would be killed. The indigenous people dreaded this phenomenon because of its believed potency to upset the orderly and peaceful living into the society. The elders believed that if cleansing rites were not performed, to ward off the evil, or if the people involved were not killed, misfortune would befall the whole community. It might be poor harvest, epidemics and so

on. Twins, triplets and quadruplets born in Igboland were killed for it was considered unnatural for human beings to be born more than one at a time. Anaukwu (2012) observed that there were varying methods of dealing with twins in Igboland. In Omabala: Aguleri, Umuleri, Nando, Anam and Awkuzu usually dash the babies to a special tree *Agba na-abo* in the evil forest while Nteje, Ogbunike, Nkwelle, Umunya and Omor people would drop the children at the evil forest for them to die there on their own.

Within the few periods the missionaries spent in Igboland they took notice of it. They fought effortlessly to bring such practice to an end. Moreover, Mary Slessor of the Church of Scotland Mission whose evangelism work reached Itu in Arochukwu of Igboland championed the course for the stoppage of killing of twins. This was based on these OT passages Exo.20:13 "You shall not kill" Genesis 17:2, "and I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly"; and Psalms 127:3-5 "Lo, sons are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Psalms, like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." Mary Slessor and other missionaries collaborated with the British colonial government to stop killing of twins in the entire Nigeria.

Conclusion

The research has pointed out core points to prove that the Christian missionaries who came Igboland by extension West Africa, indeed, utilized the OT in their apostolic work for the common good of the host communities. What could be inhuman that degrades the dignity of human person like slave trade, human sacrifice, killing of twins among others. These are the areas the Christian missionaries resorted to passages from OT to kick against and stop them. Hence, this research justifies the claim that, the Christian missionaries who Christianize Africa did make recourse to the OT just as they did to the NT for the common good of the indigenous people. In affirmation to this, Chukwuma (1999) recorded that:

Rev. J.C. Taylor, Mr. Simon Jonas, Rev. Jackson, Rev. Dobinson, Bishop Hills, Dr. G. T. Basden, Archdeacon Dennis, Rev. Lasbrey, Rev. G. N. Anyaegbunam, Ven. Arch Wilcock, Mr. and Mrs. W.E. Blackett; Rev. J. Spencer; Mrs. Machay. And other prominent and dedicated servants of God performed creditably and exposed fearlessly and openly the evils of human sacrifice and the atrocious treatment meted out to twin babies within and outside Onitsha kingdom (p.20).

The missionaries did the best they could to properly appropriate the OT, for the good of the host communities.

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