



LEADING AS A CHRISTIAN TRADITIONAL RULER

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PERSONAL &
GENERATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Dr. Ezra Aniebue



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A Practical Guide to Personal and Generational Transformation

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DEDICATION



This book is dedicated to JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, who
alone is the KING OF KINGS and the LORD of Lords.
We worship GOD THE FATHER in the MIGHTY NAME of
JESUS CHRIST! Amen!





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INTRODUCTION



A PICTURE OF A SAND

WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE PICTURE OF THIS SAND, WHO DO YOU SEE? THE QUESTION IS INTENTIONALLY NOT “WHAT,” BUT, “WHO?”

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION:

When you look at the picture of the sand, you see yourself 100 years from now. No matter what your title or position currently is, 100 years



from now, you will become a sand and may or may not be remembered by most people worldwide.

As shocking as the above statement is, the biggest shock is that every leader reading this book now, will in 100 years either live happily forever in the presence of GOD or live forever in hell, being tormented by the devil and his demons.

Accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior is a must, and leading as a Christian Traditional Ruler is not negotiable! This book aims to equip you with the knowledge, wisdom, and courage to secure both your eternal destiny and the futures of those God has placed under your care, leading them faithfully in the fear of the Lord.

Welcome your Majesty! Let's get started!



CHAPTER



THE CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN KINGSHIP



A Divine Call to Righteous Leadership

Christian kingship or traditional rulership is a call from God for righteous leadership for the Glory of God. It is being entrusted with the divine responsibility of governing with justice, mercy, and humility. It is rulership that must reflect God's character, embodying the virtues of wisdom, righteousness, and servant leadership. Proverbs 16:12 declares, *"It is an abomination for kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness."*

The foundation of a Christian king's reign is his relationship with God. The Hebrew word for righteousness, *צדקה*





(tzedek), captures the essence of a just and upright ruler. Psalm 72:1-2 prays, *“Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king's Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice.”* A king's devotion to God ensures that his rule is marked by divine wisdom and moral integrity.

“True leadership begins with a heart fully surrendered to God.”
— Unknown

Seeking Divine Wisdom in Decision-Making

A Christian king must constantly seek divine wisdom, or σοφία (sophia) in Greek, for guidance in ruling his kingdom. Proverbs 3:5-6 advises, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”* By prioritizing God's wisdom, the king ensures that his decisions align with God's will.

“Wisdom is the art of steering by the stars, not by the lights of every passing ship.” — Seneca

Upholding Justice and Righteousness

A Christian King has a Duty to Administer Justice. Justice, or δικαιοσύνη (dikaiosynē) in Greek, is the cornerstone of a Christian king's reign. Isaiah 9:7 emphasizes, *“Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with*



judgment and justice.” The king must ensure that justice is served without partiality, reflecting God's righteousness. “Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought.” — John Rawls

Practicing Righteousness in Governance

The Hebrew word *חָסִיד* (*chasid*), meaning “faithful” or “righteous,” is central to a king's conduct. Proverbs 29:4 declares, *“By justice a king gives a country stability, but those who are greedy for bribes tear it down.”* The king's commitment to righteousness ensures that his governance is just, fostering stability and trust among his people.

“The righteous king upholds justice, even when it is costly, for his throne is founded on truth.” — Unknown

The King as a Shepherd of His People Leading with Compassion

A Christian king is called to be a shepherd, or *ποιμήν* (*poimēn*) in Greek, to his people. Ezekiel 34:23 declares, *“I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.”* Compassionate leadership involves caring for the physical and spiritual needs of the people, ensuring their well-being.

“A shepherd leads with love, not force; with care, not



command.” — Unknown

Protecting the Vulnerable

The king must protect the vulnerable, acting with רַחֲמִים (*rachamim*), the Hebrew word for “compassion.” Psalm 82:3-4 exhorts, *“Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.”* The king's role is to be a defender of the defenseless, using his authority to uplift and protect those who cannot protect themselves.

“The measure of a king's greatness is in how well he cares for the least of his subjects.” — Mahatma Gandhi

Wisdom and Discernment in Leadership

Valuing Godly Wisdom Above All. The pursuit of wisdom, or חֵכְמָה (*chokmah*) in Hebrew, is essential for effective leadership. Proverbs 8:15-16 highlights this: *“By Me, kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, all who judge rightly.”* Wisdom enables the king to govern with insight, making decisions that honor God and benefit the people.

“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.” — Proverbs 4:7



Exercising Discernment in Governance. Discernment, or *διάκρισις (diakrisis)* in Greek, allows a king to judge rightly and avoid pitfalls. Solomon's request in 1 Kings 3:9 exemplifies this: *"Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong."* A discerning king carefully considers the consequences of his actions. This would enable him to lead with prudence and foresight. *"Discernment is the ability to see the truth beyond the surface and make decisions in alignment with God's will."* — Oswald Chambers

Promoting Peace and Unity

The Role of a Peacemaker. A Christian king is called to be a peacemaker, or *εἰρηνοποιός (eirēnopoios)* in Greek. Matthew 5:9 blesses peacemakers: *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."* The king must strive to maintain peace within his kingdom and with neighboring nations, ensuring lasting stability and prosperity. *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit not just the earth, but the hearts of the people."* — Unknown

Fostering Unity in Diversity. Unity, or *ἐνότης (henotēs)* in Greek, is essential for a strong and cohesive kingdom. Ephesians 4:3 encourages, *"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."* The king must strive to unify his people, respecting and valuing their diversity while



fostering a sense of shared purpose.

“Unity does not mean sameness; it means working together in our differences for the common good.” — Unknown

Integrity and Accountability

Upholding Integrity in Leadership. Integrity, or *דָּן* (*tōm*) in Hebrew, is a non-negotiable quality for a Christian king. Proverbs 11:3 teaches, *“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.”* Integrity builds trust and respect among the king's subjects, ensuring that his rule is founded on truth and righteousness.

“Leadership is not about being in charge; it's about taking care of those in your charge.” — Simon Sinek

Embracing Accountability

Accountability, or *ἀπολογία* (*apologia*) in Greek, is essential for a king's spiritual and moral health. Hebrews 13:17 reminds leaders that *“they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.”* A Christian king is accountable to God and his people. He remains humble and open to correction, fostering a culture of transparency and trust.



Leadership Quote: “Accountability breeds response-ability.” — Stephen Covey

Building and establishing a Lasting Godly Legacy

The Hebrew word נַחֲלָה (*nachalah*), meaning “inheritance,” underscores the importance of a king's legacy. Proverbs 13:22 states, *“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children.”* A Christian king's actions should reflect his commitment to God, ensuring that his legacy of righteousness and godliness endures through the generations.

“The true legacy of a leader is not what he achieves, but what he enables others to achieve.” — Unknown

Preparing for Succession

A wise king prepares for succession, mentoring his heir in the ways of God. 1 Chronicles 28:9 records David's charge to Solomon: *“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve Him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind.”* By ensuring that his successor is well-equipped to lead, the king ensures the continuity of godly leadership.

“A leader's final test of greatness is how well he prepares others to continue his work.” — John Maxwell



List of the kings of Israel and Judah, who succeeded and those who failed as recorded in the Bible

Successful Kings

1. David (Israel)

- **Reign:** c. 1010–970 BC
- **Successful:** David was known as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). He unified Israel, expanded its territory, established Jerusalem as the capital, and brought the Ark of the Covenant there. Despite his sins, such as his affair with Bathsheba, David's repentance and devotion to God marked his reign as successful (2 Samuel 7).

2. Solomon (Israel)

- **Reign:** c. 970–931 BC
- **Successful:** Solomon's wisdom, wealth, and building projects, including the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, marked a golden age for Israel. He succeeded due to his initial devotion to God, as seen in his request for wisdom (1 Kings 3). However, his later years were marred by idolatry



due to his foreign wives (1 Kings 11).

3. Asa (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 911–870 BC
- **Successful:** Asa reformed Judah by removing idols, renewing the covenant with God, and relying on God in battle (2 Chronicles 14-15). His success was rooted in his commitment to doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

4. Jehoshaphat (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 870–849 BC
- **Successful:** Jehoshaphat sought God, strengthened Judah's defenses, and promoted the teaching of God's Law (2 Chronicles 17). His alliance with Ahab was a mistake, but overall, he is noted for his devotion to God (2 Chronicles 20).

5. Hezekiah (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 715–686 BC
- **Successful:** Hezekiah was faithful to God, destroying idols, reopening the Temple, and trusting God during the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 18-20). His reforms and trust in God brought spiritual renewal to Judah.

6. Josiah (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 640–609 BC



- **Successful:** Josiah is remembered for his religious reforms, including the restoration of the Temple and the revival of the Passover (2 Kings 22-23). His discovery of the Book of the Law led to a national repentance.

Failed Kings

1. Saul (Israel)

- **Reign:** c. 1050–1010 BC
- **Failed:** Saul started well but disobeyed God's commands, leading to his rejection as king. His impatience, pride, and failure to fully obey God's instructions (e.g., sparing King Agag) led to his downfall (1 Samuel 15).

2. Rehoboam (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 931–913 BC
- **Failed:** Rehoboam's harsh policies and refusal to listen to wise counsel led to the division of Israel into two kingdoms, namely: Israel and Judah (1 Kings 12). His pride and poor judgment marked his reign with failure.

3. Ahab (Israel)

- **Reign:** c. 874–853 BC
- **Failed:** Ahab, influenced by his wife Jezebel, led Israel into Baal worship and gross idolatry. His



reign was characterized by spiritual apostasy and conflict with the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 16-22).

4. Ahaz (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 732–716 BC
- **Failed:** Ahaz was one of the most wicked kings of Judah, leading the nation into idolatry, sacrificing his own children, and seeking help from Assyria instead of God (2 Kings 16).

5. Manasseh (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 687–642 BC
- **Failed:** Manasseh's reign was marked by extreme idolatry, child sacrifice, and widespread bloodshed (2 Kings 21). Although he repented later in life (2 Chronicles 33), his earlier actions led to Judah's eventual downfall.

6. Jeroboam I (Israel)

- **Reign:** c. 931–910 BC
- **Failed:** Jeroboam led the northern kingdom into idolatry by setting up golden calves in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:25-33). His reign was synonymous with sin, as he was popularly referred to as the king who made Israel to sin (1 Kings 14:16).



7. Zedekiah (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 597–586 BC
- **Failed:** Zedekiah's refusal to heed prophet Jeremiah's instructions and his rebellion against Babylon led to the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile (2 Kings 24-25).

Kings that succeeded and failed

1. Jehu (Israel)

- **Reign:** c. 841–814 BC
- **Compromised:** Jehu was zealous in destroying the house of Ahab and Baal worship (2 Kings 9-10). However, he continued in the sins of Jeroboam, failing to fully turn Israel back to God.

2. Uzziah (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 792–740 BC
- **Compromised:** Uzziah was successful in many ways; he strengthened the military might and boosted the economy of Judah (2 Chronicles 26). However, his pride led him to unlawfully enter the Temple, resulting in leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

3. Joash (Judah)

- **Reign:** c. 835–796 BC
- **Compromised:** Joash restored the Temple and initially followed God under the guidance of the



priest, Jehoiada (2 Kings 12). However, after Jehoiada's death, he turned to idolatry and was eventually assassinated (2 Chronicles 24).

Important Notice:

- **Successful kings** generally sought God, obeyed His commands, and led spiritual reforms.
- **Failed kings** often rejected God's covenant, led the people into idolatry, and ignored prophetic warnings.
- **Compromised kings** showed initial promise but faltered due to pride, incomplete reforms, or turning away from God later in life.

Some leadership terminologies for traditional leadership

1. Vision

- **Greek:** ὄραμα (*horama*) - Vision or divine sight.
- **Hebrew:** חִזְיוֹן (*chazon*) - Prophetic vision or revelation.
- **Explanation:** Vision guides the direction of leadership, inspiring others toward a shared goal.

2. Wisdom

- **Greek:** σοφία (*sophia*) - Wisdom or insight.
- **Hebrew:** חֵכֶם (*chokmah*) - Wisdom, skill in living.
- **Explanation:** Wisdom allows leaders to make prudent decisions.



3. Authority

- **Greek:** ἐξουσία (*exousia*) - Authority or power.
- **Hebrew:** שָׁלִיט (*shalit*) - Ruler, one with authority.
- **Explanation:** Authority empowers leaders to guide and direct effectively.

4. Servanthood

- **Greek:** διακονία (*diakonia*) - Service or ministry.
- **Hebrew:** עֲבֹדָה (*avodah*) - Service or work.
- **Explanation:** Servanthood emphasizes leading by serving others.

5. Integrity

- **Greek:** ἀλήθεια (*aletheia*) - Truth, reliability.
- **Hebrew:** תָּמַר (*tom*) - Completeness, moral integrity.
- **Explanation:** Integrity fosters trust and credibility in leadership.

6. Courage

- **Greek:** θάρσος (*tharsos*) - Courage, confidence.
- **Hebrew:** גִּבּוּר (*omets*) - Strength, courage.
- **Explanation:** Courage enables leaders to face challenges boldly.

7. Humility

- **Greek:** ταπεινοφροσύνη (*tapeinophrosyne*) - Humility.
- **Hebrew:** אָנָּה (*anavah*) - Humility, meekness.
- **Explanation:** Humility keeps leaders grounded and empathetic.



8. Justice

- **Greek:** δικαιοσύνη (*dikaiosyne*) - Justice, righteousness.
- **Hebrew:** צֶדֶק (*tsedek*) - Justice, fairness.
- **Explanation:** Justice ensures fairness and equity in leadership.

9. Mentorship

- **Greek:** καθοδήγία (*kathodigia*) - Guidance, mentorship.
- **Hebrew:** מורה (*morah*) - Teacher, guide.
- **Explanation:** Mentorship involves guiding and developing others.

10. Leadership

- **Greek:** ἡγεμονία (*hegemonia*) - Leadership, authority.
- **Hebrew:** מנהיגות (*manhigut*) - Leadership, governance.
- **Explanation:** Leadership is the art of guiding a group towards a common goal.

11. Inspiration

- **Greek:** ἐνθουσιασμός (*enthousiasmos*) - Inspiration, enthusiasm.
- **Hebrew:** השראה (*hashra'ah*) - Inspiration.
- **Explanation:** Inspiration drives motivation and creativity in leadership.

12. Discipline

- **Greek:** παιδεία (*paideia*) - Discipline, education.
- **Hebrew:** מוסר (*musar*) - Discipline, instruction.
- **Explanation:** Discipline ensures adherence to values and



goals.

13. Empathy

- **Greek:** συμπάθεια (*sympatheia*) - Sympathy, empathy.
- **Hebrew:** רַחֲמִים (*rachamim*) - Compassion, empathy.
- **Explanation:** Empathy allows leaders to connect with and understand others.

14. Resilience

- **Greek:** ὑπομονή (*hypomone*) - Perseverance, endurance.
- **Hebrew:** עֲמִידוּת (*amidut*) - Resilience, endurance.
- **Explanation:** Resilience helps leaders withstand and overcome adversity.

15. Innovation

- **Greek:** καινοτομία (*kainotomia*) - Innovation.
- **Hebrew:** חִידוּשׁ (*chiddush*) - Innovation, renewal.
- **Explanation:** Innovation fosters creativity and progress in leadership.

16. Communication

- **Greek:** ἐπικοινωνία (*epikoinonia*) - Communication, fellowship.
- **Hebrew:** תִּקְשׁוּרֶת (*tikshoret*) - Communication.
- **Explanation:** Effective communication is key to conveying vision and values.



17. Accountability

- **Greek:** εὐθύνη (*euthyne*) - Responsibility, accountability.
- **Hebrew:** אַחֲרָיֹוט (acharayut) - Responsibility, accountability.
- **Explanation:** Accountability ensures that leaders uphold their duties and responsibilities

18. Teamwork

- **Greek:** συνεργασία (*synergasia*) - Cooperation, teamwork.
- **Hebrew:** צִוְתַּת עֲבוֹדָת (avodat tzvet) - Teamwork.
- **Explanation:** Teamwork is essential for collaborative success.

19. Charisma

- **Greek:** χάρισμα (*charisma*) - Gift, grace, charisma.
- **Hebrew:** חֵן (*chen*) - Grace, favor, charisma.
- **Explanation:** Charisma enables leaders to attract and inspire followers.

20. Strategic Thinking

- **Greek:** στρατηγική σκέψη (*strategike skepsi*) - Strategic thinking.
- **Hebrew:** חֲשִׁיבָה אֶסְטְרָטִיגִית (chashivah istratigit) - Strategic thinking.
- **Explanation:** Strategic thinking helps leaders plan effectively for long-term success.



21. Empowerment

- **Greek:** ἐξουσιοδότηση (*exousiodotese*) - Empowerment.
- **Hebrew:** הַאֲזָמָה (*ha'atzamah*) - Empowerment.
- **Explanation:** Empowerment involves enabling others to take action and lead.

22. Decision-Making

- **Greek:** λήψη αποφάσεων (*leipsi apofaseon*) - Decision-making.
- **Hebrew:** קַבְּלַת הַחֲלָטוֹת (*kabbalat hakhlatot*) - Decision-making.
- **Explanation:** Decision-making is central to leadership, affecting outcomes and direction.

23. Visionary

- **Greek:** ὁραματιστής (*hormatanistes*) - Visionary.
- **Hebrew:** בַּעַל חֲזוֹן (*ba'al chazon*) - Visionary.
- **Explanation:** Visionary leaders create and articulate a compelling future.

24. Influence

- **Greek:** ἐπιρροή (*epirroi*) - Influence.
- **Hebrew:** הַשְׁפָּאָה (*hashpa'ah*) - Influence.
- **Explanation:** Influence is the ability to affect the thoughts and actions of others.

25. Adaptability

- **Greek:** προσαρμοστικότητα (*prosarmostikoteta*) - Adaptability.



- **Hebrew:** גְּמִישׁוּת (*gmishut*) - Flexibility, adaptability.
- **Explanation:** Adaptability enables leaders to navigate change effectively.

26. Motivation

- **Greek:** κίνητοποίηση (*kinitopoiisi*) - Motivation.
- **Hebrew:** הַנְּעָה (*hana'ah*) - Motivation.
- **Explanation:** Motivation drives leaders and followers to achieve goals.

27. Visionary Leadership

- **Greek:** ὁραματική ἡγεσία (*horamatike hegesia*) - Visionary leadership.
- **Hebrew:** חֲזוֹנִית מְנַהִיגוּת (*manhigut chazonit*) - Visionary leadership.
- **Explanation:** Visionary leadership involves guiding others toward a shared future vision.

28. Ethical Leadership

- **Greek:** ἠθική ἡγεσία (*ethike hegesia*) - Ethical leadership.
- **Hebrew:** אֶתִּית מְנַהִיגוּת (*manhigut etit*) - Ethical leadership.
- **Explanation:** Uprightness in thoughts, actions, and relationships.



CHAPTER



PAST AND PRESENT ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES IN AFRICA



Most African countries operate a traditional government structure characterized by dual institutional frameworks: one representing formal state laws and the other representing traditional institutions, which are more commonly adhered to in rural areas. These parallel systems often complement one another in contemporary African governance. However, there are instances where they contradict each other, leading to issues of institutional incoherence.

Despite the significance of these traditional systems, the reasons for their endurance, their impact on the development of democratic governance, and ways to address the problems arising from institutional incoherence have not been thoroughly explored in African studies. Evidence suggests that



traditional institutions have continued to evolve under the postcolonial state, even as Africa's socioeconomic systems change rapidly. These institutions are termed "traditional" not because they exist in an unaltered form from Africa's precolonial past but because they originate from pre-colonial political systems and are primarily adhered to by populations within the traditional (subsistence) sectors of the economy.

Although the colonial experience altered these institutions, they can be considered informal because the state does not always sanction them. However, they are not merely customs or norms; they are systems of governance that were formal in precolonial times and now exist semi-formally in some countries and informally in others.

A key concept in understanding these systems is "**ethnos**" (Greek: ἔθνος), meaning "nation" or "people." African traditional systems are rooted in the ethnos of various communities, reflecting their values, beliefs, and social organization. The traditional leaders, such as chiefs, kings, and elders, are not merely figureheads but representatives of the ethnos they serve.

Another issue that requires clarification is the literature's neglect of traditional institutions within political systems lacking centralized authority structures. Decentralized political systems, often elder-based with group leadership, have



received little attention despite being widespread and possessing their own judicial systems, conflict resolution mechanisms, and resource allocation practices, similar to those of centralized systems. Careful analysis reveals that African traditional institutions exist along a continuum from highly decentralized to centralized systems, all of which have distinct practices in resource allocation, conflict resolution, judicial processes, and decision-making, separate from those of the state.

In Hebrew, the word "**mishpat**" (מִשְׁפָּט), meaning "justice" or "judgment," captures the essence of traditional governance, especially in the context of conflict resolution and resource allocation. These systems, deeply rooted in **mishpat**, continue to function alongside formal state structures, sometimes offering a more accessible and community-centered approach to justice than state courts.

Thus, traditional African government structures, deeply tied to the **ethnos** of various groups, and grounded in principles like **mishpat**, remain significant in the continent's political, social, and cultural landscapes.



Now, I will attempt to provide a concise overview of the history of traditional government structures in various traditional societies:

ASHANTI KINGDOM

In West Africa, for example, the Ashanti Kingdom in present-day Ghana had a highly organized and centralized system of governance. The Asantehene, or king, was the supreme leader, and a council of elders and chiefs from different regions advised and supported the kingdom's administration.

The basis of Asante's social organization is matrilineage, a localized segment of a clan whose members claim descent from a common female ancestor. Members of the lineage assist one another in activities such as building houses, farming, clearing paths and in funeral rites.

ZULU KINGDOM

Similarly, the Zulu Kingdom in Southern Africa, under the leadership of the Zulu king, was another example of a centralized, traditional government that wielded considerable power and influence. Under reserve administration, the various Zulu tribes are grouped into magisterial districts, each under



the supervision of a chief with limited judicial authority. The real political power today is vested in the European magistrate who is the superior political and judicial officer in KwaZulu-Natal.

GIKUYU OF KENYA

In contrast, other parts of Africa, such as East Africa, had more decentralized governance systems. The Gikuyu of Kenya, for instance, had a system where power was distributed among various councils of elders who made decisions through consensus. This decentralized approach allowed for greater participation in governance by community members and was characterized by a strong sense of collective responsibility. Kikuyu also are organized into age groups that have served as the principal political institutions.

Groups of boys are initiated each year and ultimately placed into generation groups that traditionally ruled for 20 to 30 years. Political authority traditionally belonged to a council of elders. The Kikuyu believe in an omnipotent creator, god, Ngai, and in the continued spiritual presence of ancestors.

IGBO LAND

Most Igbo societies are traditionally described as acephalous, meaning they operate without a centralized authority,



governed instead by a decentralized form of governance. Authority in these communities is distributed among age grades, lineage heads, councils of elders, and various pressure groups.

This system reflects a high degree of autonomy at the village level, allowing decisions to be made collectively. Although most Igbo societies follow this decentralized structure, there are notable centralized kingdoms such as Onitsha, Agbaja, Arochukwu, and Aboh, which feature a constitutional monarchy. However, even in these kingdoms, individual villages retain autonomy, with leadership exercised by a Council of Elders.

Village Assemblies (Ama Ala or Oha-na-eze):

The village, often composed of extended families or kindreds, forms the core unit of political organization in Igbo land. Governance is conducted through village assemblies, known as "Ama Ala" or "Oha-na-eze," consisting of all adult male members of the community. These assemblies serve as the primary forum for decision-making, conflict resolution, and policy discussions.

However, women hold significant influence through their own assemblies. The most powerful of these is the Umu Ada (First Daughters), an influential group of first-born daughters of the



community. The Umu Ada play crucial roles in social, religious, and even political matters.

They are responsible for ensuring social order, particularly in family disputes, inheritance issues, and matters concerning land. Their ability to intervene in both public and private affairs adds a vital balance to the governance system. Another women's assembly, the Inyemedi, consists of married women who also have roles in maintaining social harmony and supporting communal projects.

Council of Titled Elders (Ndi Ichie):

Within each village, a Council of Elders, known as the "Ndi Ichie," holds significant authority and influence. These elders, who are usually the heads of the various extended families (umunna), act as the custodians of community laws, customs, and traditions.

They are entrusted with making decisions on behalf of the community, advising the younger generations, and maintaining social harmony. Decisions made by the Ndi Ichie often reflect the collective wisdom of the elders and are considered binding by the community. The Council also plays a central role in religious matters, overseeing traditional rituals and ceremonies.



Age Grades (Otu Ogbo):

Igbo society is organized into age grades, or "Otu Ogbo," which serve as important administrative and social structures. Both men and women are grouped according to age, with each group having distinct roles and responsibilities that evolve as they grow older.

The Otu Ogbo play a key role in enforcing community laws, undertaking communal projects such as road building or market organization, and serving as a militia when necessary to protect the village. They are also instrumental in organizing festivals, ceremonies, and ensuring the smooth running of village affairs.

Each age grade has a sense of duty to the community, and as members progress in age, they assume greater leadership responsibilities.

Title Societies (Ozo Title):

In addition to the age-grade system, the Igbo have prestigious title societies, such as the Ozo title, which is conferred upon individuals who have distinguished themselves through wealth, bravery, wisdom, or exceptional service to the community.



The Ozo title is a symbol of high social status and is highly respected. Titleholders play significant roles in governance, dispute resolution, and the preservation of Igbo cultural and spiritual heritage. The Ozo title is often seen as a reward for leadership and integrity, and titleholders are expected to uphold the values of honesty, fairness, and justice in the community.

In some communities, there are other titles beyond the Ozo, such as the Nze title, which is often linked to religious and ceremonial duties. These titles contribute to the social hierarchy and help in maintaining the moral and spiritual order of the society.

Impact of Traditional Governance Structures:

The intricate balance of decentralized authority, represented by the Ama Ala, Ndi Ichie, Umu Ada, and Otu Ogbo, and centralized elements found in some Igbo kingdoms, creates a governance system that is both adaptable and resilient.

Traditional leadership in Igbo land is not rigid but fluid, allowing for community participation and ensuring that multiple voices contribute to decision-making. The inclusion of groups like the Umu Ada provides a gendered balance in leadership, giving women a platform to influence political, social, and religious matters.



Despite modern influences and the rise of formal state institutions, these traditional structures remain deeply embedded in Igbo society. They continue to shape the political, social, and cultural life of the people, influencing contemporary leadership styles and conflict resolution methods.

The enduring significance of traditional governance in Igbo land reflects the values of communalism, participatory leadership, and respect for authority that have long been central to the Igbo way of life.

YORUBA LAND

The Yoruba people, located in southwestern Nigeria, have a more centralised and hierarchical system of governance compared to the Igbo. The Yoruba traditional government is centered around kingdoms, each ruled by a monarch known as an "Oba."

In a traditional Yoruba town, the large and elaborate palace of the Oba lies at the centre, and grouped around it are the compounds of the patrilineages.

The palace and the compounds are now often modern structures. There is much diversity in social and political organization among the Yoruba, but they share many basic features. Inheritance and succession are based on patrilineal descent; members of the patrilineage live together under the authority of a headman, share certain names and taboos,



worship their own deity, and have rights in lineage lands.

The Yoruba also have several kinds of voluntary associations, including the *egbe*, a male recreational association; the *aro*, a mutual-aid association of farmers; and the *esusu*, whose members contribute a fixed amount of money and from which they can receive loans. Political authority is vested in the Oba and a council of chiefs; constituent towns each have their own ruler, who is subordinate to the Oba. The Oba is also a ritual leader and is considered sacred.

The Oba (King): is the paramount ruler in Yoruba society, often regarded as a semi-divine figure with political and spiritual authority. The Oba's position is hereditary, usually passing from father to son or through other royal lineages within the ruling family. The Oba's palace (Alaafin) serves as the center of political and religious activities. The Oba is responsible for maintaining law and order, administering justice, and overseeing the welfare of the people.

Council of Chiefs (Ijoye): The Council of Chiefs, known as the "Ijoye," assists the Oba in governance. This council is composed of high-ranking officials, including titleholders like the Balogun (war chief), Otun (senior chief), and others who head various aspects of administration. The Ijoye advises the Oba on matters of state, including war, diplomacy, and economic policies. They also serve as intermediaries between the Oba and the people.



The Ogboni Society: a powerful and secretive institution within Yoruba society, playing a crucial role in governance. It consists of respected elders who are custodians of the law and religious traditions.

Baale (Local Chieftains): smaller towns and villages within the Yoruba kingdom are governed by local chieftains known as Baale. The Baale operates with a degree of autonomy but remains subordinate to the Oba. The Baale oversees local governance, including conflict resolution, tax collection, and the implementation of the Oba's directives.

The traditional government structures in Igbo and Yoruba highlight the diversity of political organisations in pre-colonial Nigeria. While the Yoruba system emphasises central authority and hierarchical governance, the Igbo system reflects a more egalitarian and participatory approach. Both structures have played crucial roles in maintaining order, enforcing laws, and preserving cultural values within their respective societies. Understanding these systems provides valuable insights into the historical and cultural foundations of governance in these regions.



KEY FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

- 1. Leadership and Authority:** In traditional governance systems, leadership, often embodied in figures such as chiefs, kings, or elders, played a pivotal role. This leadership was typically hereditary, where authority was passed down through familial lines. In Greek, this concept of authority is captured by the word *ἐξουσία* (exousia), meaning power or authority, which emphasizes the right to rule.

However, in certain societies, leaders were chosen based on merit, wisdom, or their ability to lead effectively in times of crisis. This reflects the Hebrew word *מֶלֶךְ* (memshalah), which signifies rulership or dominion. Leadership was thus not only inherited but also earned through one's capability to guide the community, especially during critical times.

- 2. Councils and Assemblies:** Integral to these governance structures were councils or assemblies of elders. These bodies provided crucial advice to the leaders and played a key role in decision-making processes. These councils, often composed of the community's most respected members, were selected based on their wisdom,



experience, and ability to represent the interests of their people. The Greek word *σύνδοδος* (synodos), meaning an assembly or gathering for decision-making, captures the essence of these councils. Their input was vital in maintaining balanced governance, ensuring that the leader's decisions reflected the collective wisdom of the community.

3. **Customary Law:** The guiding force behind traditional governance was often *customary law*, a body of unwritten rules and norms that governed social behavior. These laws were deeply intertwined with the cultural and spiritual heritage of the community, reflecting their core values and traditions. Leaders and councils were responsible for enforcing these laws, ensuring order within the community. This traditional legal framework was upheld not only for justice but for preserving societal cohesion, as customary law was understood and respected by all.
4. **Dispute Resolution:** One of the essential functions of traditional governance was the resolution of disputes. Traditional leaders acted as both judges and mediators, utilizing customary law to resolve conflicts and maintain peace. Their role in resolving disputes prevented escalation and fostered social harmony within the community. The process of mediation often involved a



deep understanding of communal relationships, as well as wisdom in applying the law equitably. Dispute resolution was thus a means of promoting reconciliation, ensuring that community bonds remained intact.

- 5. Resource Management:** Traditional governments were tasked with the stewardship of communal resources such as land, water, and livestock. The leaders ensured that these resources were distributed fairly and utilized in a sustainable manner. Often, the management practices were based on generations of inherited knowledge and reflected a deep connection with the land. The Hebrew word *שָׁלוֹם* (shalom), meaning peace or completeness, could also be used to express the goal of such resource management – the maintenance of balance and well-being within the community. Leaders ensured that natural resources were preserved not just for the present generation but for future ones, thus promoting sustainability and fairness in communal life.

These traditional governance structures, rooted in ancient customs and wisdom, reflect timeless principles of leadership, community, and responsibility.



CHAPTER



WHY TRADITIONAL RULERS MUST TURN TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; AND THE LOWLY STATE OF TRADITIONAL RULERS



Traditional rulers in Africa, once wielding immense authority over their communities, have seen their influence diminish over time. In pre-colonial Africa, they served as both political and spiritual leaders, commanding the respect of their people. However, the rise of colonial and post-colonial governance systems shifted their roles, reducing their once-vibrant powers to largely ceremonial positions.

Many traditional rulers today are viewed as mere custodians of culture, customs, and traditions. They are also merely seen as playing key roles in conflict resolution and community mobilization. Their supreme authority as the paramount Lord of the land as has always been perceived since time immemorial has been significantly eroded.



One of the primary reasons for this decline is the loss of moral authority, financial dependence on the state, and political manipulation. As they face challenges that range from the erosion of autonomy to disrespect by state officials, traditional rulers are at a crossroads, requiring a return to the source of true authority—GOD through JESUS CHRIST.

Why Traditional Rulers Must Choose Christian Leadership

Restoring Influence Through Faith in JESUS CHRIST:

Traditional rulers must turn to GOD through JESUS CHRIST to reclaim their rightful place in society. Proverbs 14:34 declares, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Embracing Christian leadership, rooted in **phobos** (φόβος), the Greek word for "fear" or reverence for GOD, empowers rulers to restore their moral authority and dignity.

A leadership grounded in righteousness and the fear of GOD, ensures justice, wisdom, and respect for authority. As John Quincy Adams once said, "Duty is ours; results are GOD's."

Choosing Christian Leaders Ensures Respect for Authority:

Traditional rulers who support Christian politicians will experience greater respect and honor because Christian leaders, guided by the fear of GOD, understand the importance of honoring authority. Romans 13:1 affirms that "There is no



authority except from GOD, and those that exist have been instituted by GOD." Christian politicians will recognize the significance of traditional rulers and collaborate with them, knowing that GOD's ordained structure must be respected. As leadership expert John C. Maxwell said, "Leadership is not about titles, positions, or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another."

Empowering Traditional Rulers Through GOD's Wisdom:

Proverbs 11:14 declares, "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors, there is safety." Traditional rulers who seek **chokmah**(חִכְמָה), the Hebrew word for wisdom, from GOD will find themselves equipped to make sound decisions that benefit their people.

With divine wisdom, traditional rulers can regain the trust lost through political manipulation or corruption. This wisdom leads to decisions that reflect GOD's will, as rightly stated by leadership expert Peter Drucker: "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."

The Importance of Supporting Christian Politicians

Mutual Respect and Partnership: Traditional rulers who align with Christian politicians form a powerful alliance that restores relevance. Christian leaders, who honor GOD, will respect and uphold the authority of traditional rulers, recognizing their role



in the community. Proverbs 16:12 states, "It is an abomination for kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness." Together, righteous politicians and traditional rulers can promote peace and justice. As Sir Winston Churchill wisely noted, "The price of greatness is responsibility."

Upholding GOD's Laws and Justice: Christian politicians, who govern by the fear of GOD, are more inclined to enact policies and laws based on biblical principles. Traditional rulers who support these leaders will see a society that values justice, fairness, and morality. Micah 6:8 encourages leaders to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your GOD." With Christian politicians in office, traditional rulers can be assured that the laws of the land will reflect the righteousness of GOD.

A Return to the Fear of GOD: Supporting Christian politicians aids traditional rulers in returning to the fear of GOD, which is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). This collaboration ensures that leadership, both political and traditional, is centered on GOD's Word, which brings peace, prosperity, and righteousness to the people. As Billy Graham once said, "Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are stiffened."



How Traditional Rulers Have Contributed to Their Decline

While external forces like colonialism and modern governance have played a role in the diminished status of traditional rulers, their own actions have also contributed to their decline. Political manipulation, corruption, and failure to adapt have led to a loss of trust among their people. By collaborating with political powers, engaging in partisan politics, and neglecting community development, many traditional rulers have lost their significance.

However, a return to JESUS CHRIST provides a path to redemption. By turning to Christian leadership and supporting righteous politicians, traditional rulers can restore the trust of their communities. As 2 Chronicles 7:14 reminds us, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

The restoration of traditional rulers' relevance in Africa hinges on their return to GOD through JESUS CHRIST. By supporting Christian politicians who uphold godly values, traditional rulers will regain their respect and honor, revive their authority and influence in governance. Christian leadership, rooted in GOD's



wisdom, equips traditional rulers to guide their communities in justice, peace, and development.

In this new era, traditional rulers must align with biblical principles, embrace GOD's leadership, and work with Christian politicians who fear and respect the divine order. Only then will their role in society be fully restored to its rightful place.



CHAPTER



WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SOUND DOCTRINE?



Christianity, within the context of Sound Doctrine, refers to the belief system that adheres strictly to the teachings and principles found in the Bible, particularly those that align with the core tenets of the Christian faith.

Sound doctrine, known as "hygiainousa didaskalia" (ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία) in Greek, meaning "healthy teaching," refers to biblically faithful theology that aligns with the entirety of Scripture. This is foundational to understanding Christianity as a belief system that strictly adheres to the teachings found in the Bible.

According to 1 Timothy 1:10-11, sound doctrine conforms to the gospel and provides clarity on how to interpret Scripture as a whole. It does not distort or fragment the message of the



Bible, but instead traces the singular story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration that runs from Genesis to Revelation.

In Hebrew, the term for doctrine is "leqach" (לִקַּח), which can mean instruction or learning. Sound doctrine serves as both a guide and a guard, helping believers understand God's nature so they can love Him fully and interpret His Word correctly. Without sound doctrine, teaching becomes subjective and strays from the truth, leading believers astray.

The Role of Sound Doctrine in Christianity

Christianity, or "Christianos" (Χριστιανός) in Greek, refers to the followers of Christ who are bound by the truth of His teachings. Sound doctrine acts as a safeguard, ensuring that what is taught and lived out is rooted in biblical authority and the unchanging principles of Scripture. The essence of sound doctrine is in teaching believers what God is like, as revealed in His Word, so that they may love and worship Him in truth.

In Christianity, sound doctrine is essential in the following ways:

Biblical Foundation: Christianity is anchored in the Bible, seen as "theopneustos" (θεόπνευστος) or "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). Sound doctrine, therefore, emphasizes that the



Scriptures are the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative guide for both faith and practice. Believers who adhere to sound doctrine ensure their beliefs align with this divine revelation, fostering an authentic and uncorrupted relationship with God.

Orthodoxy: The Greek word for orthodoxy, "orthodoxia" (ὀρθοδοξία), means "right belief" or "correct opinion." Sound doctrine underpins orthodoxy, ensuring that core Christian tenets—such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and salvation by grace through faith—remain intact.

These teachings form the bedrock of historical Christianity and are protected from distortions by adhering to sound doctrine.

Teaching and Preaching: In Christian teaching and preaching, sound doctrine is vital to ensuring that messages reflect the truth of Scripture. Pastors and teachers are instructed to "preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2), focusing on biblically accurate teachings. This prevents false teachings or "didaskalia pseudous" (διδασκαλία ψευδοῦς) from taking root and misleading the flock.

Discernment and Protection: Sound doctrine equips believers with discernment, helping them distinguish truth from error. The New Testament, especially in letters like 2 Timothy and Titus, warns of false teachers who introduce unsound doctrine, leading believers astray. Sound doctrine acts as a defense, protecting the church from heresies and deviations from the truth.



Spiritual Maturity: Adherence to sound doctrine fosters spiritual growth. As believers immerse themselves in "orthotomeō" (ὀρθοτομέω), or rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), they become equipped to live godly lives, resist worldly temptations, and stand firm against false ideologies. Spiritual maturity is the fruit of being grounded in sound doctrine.

Unity in the Faith: Sound doctrine cultivates unity among believers. As Christians rally around the same core beliefs, doctrinal divisions diminish, and the church stands as a cohesive body, reflecting the truth of the gospel. This shared commitment to sound doctrine preserves the integrity of the Christian faith across generations and denominations.

The Importance of Sound Doctrine in Today's World

In a time when subjective interpretations of Scripture abound, sound doctrine remains a critical anchor for the Christian faith. Paul's warning in 2 Timothy 4:3-4—where he describes a time when people will reject sound teaching in favor of messages that cater to their desires—rings true today. In the face of this, Christianity, within the framework of sound doctrine, requires steadfastness in upholding biblical truth, even when it contradicts popular opinion.

The Hebrew term "emunah" (אֱמוּנָה), meaning faithfulness or



fidelity, encapsulates the believer's responsibility to remain faithful to sound doctrine. By doing so, Christians guard against the erosion of faith caused by false doctrines and cultural pressures. Sound doctrine ensures the purity of the Christian message, protecting the church from moral and theological decay.

Sound doctrine is not a mere theological concept but the heartbeat of a faithful Christian life. It ensures that believers are rooted in the unchanging truth of God's Word, guiding them toward deeper love for God, spiritual maturity, and unity in the body of Christ.



CHAPTER



ANTI-GOD TRADITIONAL RITUALS, CEREMONIES, THRONES, AND “OSU CASTE SYSTEM”



A ritual is a precise sequence of words, gestures, and actions that follow norms and a specific order. Examples include religious acts, birth, marriage, funerals, formal events, rites of passage, and purification acts. Evidently, rituals form a major facet of human existence.

The Greek word for “ritual” is *τελετή* (*teletē*), which refers to a ceremony or religious rite. In Hebrew, the word for “rite” is *ḥin* (*choq*), meaning an ordinance or statute. Rites and rituals are commonly thought to be the same and are often considered synonyms. However, to be precise, a *choq* is an established, well-structured ceremonial act, while rituals are the actions performed in a *teletē* with symbolic meaning



Rituals in traditional Africa are mostly connected to religious activities, but they can also be related to other traditions or cultures of a specific community, or they can be connected to ceremonies or different protocols. Different rituals are present everywhere in every society, each one holding diverse meanings and reasons behind every act. Religious rituals are essentially an act of worship, but it is also possible to encounter diverse moments connected to cults, rites of passage, or purification acts.

The activities related to more formal or political situations can also be considered rituals, such as coronations, inaugurations, funerals, and marriages. Every activity that combines acts, words, and norms that are displayed in a precise order with a specific intention and meaning can be considered a ritual.

ANTI-GOD RITUALS IN AFRICAN TRADITIONS

Below is a partial list of ritualistic practices and beliefs that most often are opposed to scriptural teachings and are known as anti-God practices:

1. Animism:

Many African cultures practice animism, the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence. The Hausa Animists, or Maguzawa as they are more popularly known, are a subgroup of Hausa People who are neither



Muslims nor Christians.

The Maguzawa opt to follow a traditional way of life, retaining an ancestral form of cosmology and worldview vis-à-vis the physical, the metaphysical, and the supernatural. Today, the Maguzawa are comprised of Hausa-speaking followers of traditional spirituality living in rural areas within Kano State, in Northern Nigeria.

Maguzawa religion revolves around an infinite number of spirits or *iskoki* (singular - *iska*) in Hausa. This translates into 'WINDS' There are about 3,000 *iskoki* in the religion. The Maguzawa belief system is often referred to as 'animist'. This is because of a traditional belief among the Maguzawa of spirits that are said to reside in nature, especially trees, rivers and stones. Hausa animists practice a possession-based spirituality, similar to Vodun in other parts of Nigeria.

The anthropologist, Robert Voeks described Yoruba religion as animistic, noting that it was "firmly attached to place". The Yorubas believe that everyone living on earth attempts to achieve perfection and find their destiny in *Orun-Rere* (the spiritual realm of those who do good and beneficial things). The traditional Igbo man is not different either. *Alusi* are spirits that are worshipped and served in the Igbo religion. There are many kinds of *Alusi*, each with its purpose and function.



2. Ancestor Worship:

In many African traditions, ancestors are revered and considered as intermediaries between the living and the dead. In Igboland, Nigeria, the Igbo cosmology is complex, consisting of several interconnected realms that reflect their deep spiritual beliefs. The primary realms include the **realm of the living**, the **realm of the dead or the ancestors**, and the **realm of the unborn**. Each of these realms is intricately connected, forming a cyclical understanding of life, death, and rebirth.

Individuals who lived **honorable lives** and received proper burial rites transitioned to the ancestral realm, where they took their place among the revered ancestors, known as *Ndichie*. These ancestors hold a distinct and sacred role in the spiritual hierarchy, separate from the **Alusi** (deities), who are worshipped as intermediaries between the Supreme God (*Chukwu*) and humans.

The *Ndichie* are honored as the guardians of the family and the community, embodying values of morality, wisdom, and protection. In the ancestral realm, these venerated forebears continue to play a crucial role in the lives of the living. They keep a **watchful eye** over their descendants and maintain a spiritual connection by offering blessings such as **fertility, good health, longevity, and prosperity**.



This relationship is reciprocal, as the living express their gratitude through **sacrifices** and rituals performed at the family hearth (*obi*). These sacrifices, which may include offerings of food, kola nuts, and palm wine, are made to appease and honor the ancestors, ensuring their continued goodwill and protection.

The *Ndichie* are also consulted for **guidance** and **counsel** in times of difficulty. Through divination, families seek their wisdom and intervention in personal or communal matters, believing that the ancestors possess a deeper understanding of the spiritual and material worlds.

This consultation is not merely transactional but rooted in respect for the ancestors' wisdom and their ongoing participation in the life of the community. The **realm of the unborn** is another significant aspect of Igbo belief. It represents those who are yet to be born, waiting to enter the world of the living.

The unborn are seen as part of the extended spiritual family, maintaining the cyclical nature of existence in Igbo thought. This cycle emphasizes continuity between generations, with life moving seamlessly between these realms.

In summary, the Igbo cosmology reflects a deep connection between the **living, the dead, and the unborn**, with each realm playing an essential role in the spiritual and social life of the



community. The ancestors (*Ndichie*) are central to this belief system, acting as custodians of family and community welfare, ensuring that the moral and cultural integrity of the Igbo people is preserved across generations.

3. Ceremonies and Rituals:

Many of these are rituals involving sacrifices. Some African rituals involve animal sacrifices to appease gods, spirits, or ancestors. These practices are often seen as primitive or against monotheistic religious teachings but are part of a traditional understanding of maintaining balance and harmony.

Ikpu alu in Igboland is known as a sacrifice of expiation. It serves as a ransom to reconcile and redeem the sinner and offer him the protection of the spiritual being. Confession is an essential process through which atonement is affected.

Omenana refers to the culture of a people, in this case, the Igbo of Nigeria. For many authors, 'omenana' is synonymous with 'odinana' (sometimes spelled 'odinala' or 'odinani'), which means 'as it is in the land', i.e., the 'tradition' or 'custom of a people'. The two concepts obviously merge in scope and content. The present author investigates the meanings and contents of both with a view to distilling the salient differences between them.

Both aim to protect and preserve the purity, sanctity and



sacredness of the land and the people therein. However, '*omenana*' is man-made; it is changeable and adaptable. '*Odinana*', on the contrary, is a code of life, handed down from Chukwu, from God the Creator, to Eri, the patriarch of the Igbo race, to prevent chaos and confusion.

The earth spirit, Ana, is '*odinana*', as is the sacred role of yam in the Igbo world, the right of inheritance, and the place of the elder. '*Odinana*', as the immutable customary rites and traditions of the Igbo world, is enduring and cuts across indigenous Igbo people, while '*omenana*' is somewhat relative from one section of the Igbo to the other.

In Yorubaland, *Orò* Festival is an event celebrated by various towns and settlements of Yoruba origin. It is an annual traditional festival that is patriarchal, as it is only celebrated by male descendants who are paternal natives of the specific locations where the particular event is taking place. It worships the god/*orisha*, *Orò*, the Yoruba deity of bullroarers and justice.

During the festival, females and non-natives stay indoors as oral history shows that women and non-participating people must not see *Orò*. The ceremonies surrounding the celebration of *Orò* differ from town to town, and one is often called after the death of a monarch. When the Oba or other important official dies, a particular atonement and mourning period are held.

Among the Olympus of Yoruba divinities, the most evocative



ancestral rites are those reserved for the *Egungun*, representing the spirits of departed ancestors, with their whirling movements and richly decorated costumes, those of the *Epas* linked to fertility, or the marvellous processions of *Eyo* dancers.

In the traditional Yoruba religion and culture, sacrifice is referred to as (*Ebo*). It connotes offering something to a particular deity or cult to be in communion with them or to seek favours.

Fetishism and Use of Juju: In many African cultures, fetish objects, believed to have spiritual powers is used for spiritual activities. These are often interpreted as anti-religious or anti-God by those from different religious backgrounds.

Juju is an object that has been deliberately infused with magical power or the magical power itself; it also can refer to the belief system involving the use of *juju*. Although most African people share their assumptions, *Juju* is practised in West African countries such as Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana.

In traditional Yorubaland, there are some like *Magun*, meaning do not climb. And it is traced to *change*, the god of thunder and lightning. This deadly charm is laid on a woman by a jealous lover without her knowledge. Having a sexual experience with a lover who is not her partner, they are joined together until they are caught and/or released by the doer of the charm.



It is a traditional charm that is used to punish adulterous partners. The Yoruba designed it to prevent or expose illicit sexual relationships between a man and a woman who are not properly married. Myth has it that such preventive measure discourages a married woman who may have an unbridled sexual appetite for infidelity.

In traditional Igboland, the *Aros*, centred around Arochukwu were able to manipulate their central oracle, *Ibri Ukpabi (Long-Juju)* in such a way, that it became the judicial machinery in every Igbo community. Trusting in the efficacy of the oracle, people in dispute went to settle their scores. The guilty victims became the property of the gods.

4. Thrones and Leadership:

Sacred Kingship: In some African societies, kings or chiefs are seen as divine or semi-divine figures with a spiritual role. Their authority is often linked to the favor of the gods or ancestors. This can be misunderstood as challenging the concept of a single, all-powerful God.

Divine Right of Kings: The belief that a leader's authority is derived from a divine source can be seen as opposing certain religious teachings, but within the culture, it is a deeply spiritual concept.



5. Interpretations by Outsiders:

Colonial and Missionary Perspectives. During the colonial era, many African spiritual practices were labeled as “pagan,” “heathen,” or “anti-God” by Christian missionaries and colonial authorities. This was primarily because these practices involved worshipping God through dead ancestors without acknowledging Jesus Christ as the sole mediator between God and humanity, as taught in Christian doctrine.

The Bible clearly states that Christ is the only way to God: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Ignoring this principle, many African spiritual traditions attempted to connect with God by venerating deceased relatives, seeking blessings, guidance, and protection through their ancestors.

These practices were viewed by missionaries as contradicting Christian teachings because they bypassed the essential role of Jesus Christ in salvation. As a result, such customs were often suppressed or demonized by the missionaries, who sought to replace indigenous practices with Christian doctrines.

In summary, while many African spiritual practices may appear to be anti-God from a Christian perspective, they are often misunderstood. These traditions reflect a different approach to



the divine—one that emphasizes ancestor veneration as a path to connect with the spiritual world. However, from a biblical standpoint, the worship of God through ancestors without going through Christ is seen as misguided.

Jesus himself said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Therefore, while the cultural practices may express deep spirituality, they are contrary to Christian teachings that emphasize Christ as the only mediator between God and mankind.

6.The Osu Caste System in Igbo Land

CHRISTIAN TRADITIONAL RULERS MUST DESTROY THE “OSU CASTE SYSTEM” AND EVERY SYSTEM OF DISCRIMINATION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

The "Osu Caste System" in Igboland is a traditional practice that classifies people into two social groups: the freeborns (*nwadiana*) and the *Osu*. While the *freeborns* are regarded as the real owners of the land entitled to all privileges, the *Osus* are believed to be dedicated to or sacrificed to deities. This results in discrimination and segregation.

This practice is deeply rooted in pre-colonial beliefs, where certain individuals or families were marked as "sacrifices" to a deity and thus they are regarded as outcasts, forbidden from



mingling, marrying, or even worshiping with the freeborn. This system is not only socially divisive but also unbiblical and contrary to the core tenets of Christianity.

Background of the Osu Caste System

The Osu Caste System originated in pre-Christian Igbo society, where certain individuals were dedicated to local gods (*alusi*), often as a result of vows made by family members or community leaders. The *Osu* was considered ritually impure and as a result, they were excluded from the community. Even after the advent of Christianity, the system persisted in many places, affecting marriage, social relationships, and communal participation.

Though Nigeria outlawed this caste-based discrimination in its constitution, the practice still influences societal behavior, including marriage decisions and social integration in some Igbo communities.

Why the Osu Caste System is Unbiblical

The Osu Caste System contradicts the biblical principles of equality, love, and the inherent dignity of all human beings. It creates division based on man-made categories, whereas the Bible teaches that all humans are equal before God.



All Humans Are Made in the Image of God:

- The Bible declares that all human beings are created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*), and this truth transcends any human categorizations.
- **Genesis 1:27** – “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”
- The *Hebrew word* for "image" here is *דְּלֶמַת* (tselem), which refers to a representation or likeness. Therefore, each person, regardless of their social status, bears God's likeness and is worthy of dignity and respect.

No Partiality in Christ:

- The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that God shows no partiality, whether between Jew or Gentile, rich or poor. The *Osu* system, which treats some as inferior and others as superior, goes against this fundamental biblical principle.
- **Galatians 3:28** – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- In this verse, the *Greek word* for "one" is *εἷς* (heis), meaning a single unit or unity, indicating that all believers are united in Christ, regardless of their background or status.



The Law of Love and Equality:

- Jesus commanded that we love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34-35). The *Osu* system violates this command, as it fosters discrimination and hatred, contrary to the love of Christ.
- **James 2:1** warns against favoritism, stating, “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” The caste system inherently shows partiality and is inconsistent with the Christian faith.

The Dignity of Every Believer:

- **Romans 2:11** says, “For there is no partiality with God.” The discrimination against the *Osu* class is therefore directly opposed to the Christian understanding that all believers are treated equally by God.
- The dignity of a person is not determined by their societal status but by their identity in Christ.

Suggestions on How Christian Traditional Rulers Can Abolish the *Osu* Caste System

Christian traditional leaders in Igboland and beyond must take bold steps to abolish this system, not only within their communities but also work with different church denominations in partnering in removing this evil from their communities.



Here are some practical suggestions:

Teaching and Preaching Against Discrimination:

- Christian leaders should preach on the inherent worth of every individual and God's impartiality, emphasizing Scriptures like Galatians 3:28 and James 2:1. These messages should promote unity and love within the congregation, denouncing any form of discrimination.
- Leaders should teach on the implications of *Imago Dei* and how treating others as less valuable contradicts this divine truth.

Integrating Osu and Non-Osu in the Community:

- The community should intentionally integrate people from both groups in leadership roles, social events, and church leadership. Public marriages between *Osu* and freeborn families should be celebrated, setting a powerful example for the rest of the society to follow.

Discipleship and Reeducation:

- Traditional rulers should encourage pastors and church leaders to hold discipleship programs that challenge cultural practices that contradict Scripture. These programs should educate members on the biblical understanding of love, unity, and the absence of social hierarchy in God's Kingdom.
- Offering classes on Christian social ethics would equip



believers to stand against the *Osu* system while encouraging societal reforms.

Influence Through Community Engagement:

- Traditional leaders should engage community leaders and local government to advocate for the abolishment of the system, organizing forums, seminars, and workshops that highlight the unbiblical nature of the caste system.
- Legal measures must be reinforced, ensuring that the rights of the *Osu* are protected under the constitution.

Establishing Unity-Based Programs:

- Create programs that intentionally bring together families and individuals from different sides of the caste divide. Such programs could include joint business ventures, community service projects, and cultural celebrations that promote the unity of all people under God.

The *Osu* Caste System is not compatible with biblical teachings. It promotes division and discriminates against those who are equally made in God's image and likeness. Christians are called to dismantle such systems by affirming the equal dignity of all people, based on Scriptures that teach unity, love, and impartiality.

Christian leaders in Igboland must lead the change in abolishing



this practice by teaching biblical truths, promoting social integration, and standing up for justice in their communities.

**CHRISTIAN RULERS SHOULD WORK HARD TO ABOLISH
OTHER DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES IN THEIR
COMMUNITIES AND NATIONS:**

Discriminatory practices manifest in diverse forms across various parts of the world, impacting individuals and communities based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, caste, and other distinguishing characteristics.

These practices result in social exclusion, inequality, and violation of fundamental human rights, culminating in significant societal divisions. The Bible's principle of equality, as expressed in *Galatians 3:28*—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"—stands in opposition to all forms of discrimination.

The *Greek word* for "one" in this passage is *ἓν* (*hen*), signifying unity and equality. Similarly, the *Hebrew word* *מִשְׁפָּט* (*mishpat*), meaning "justice" or "judgment," calls for fairness and righteousness in dealing with all people. Below is a summary of prominent discriminatory practices in different regions:



Racial Discrimination

- **United States:** Historically, rooted in slavery and segregation, racial discrimination against African Americans persists today in areas like policing, employment, and housing. Disparities in criminal justice and economic opportunities remain prominent.
- **South Africa:** Although apartheid officially ended in 1994, racial tensions still affect employment, education, and land ownership. The black majority continues to face economic disadvantages due to the legacy of apartheid.
- **Europe:** Anti-immigrant sentiments and discrimination against ethnic minorities have risen in many European countries. Racial profiling and xenophobia contribute to social exclusion and inequality.

Caste-Based Discrimination

- **India:** The *caste system* continues to marginalize *Dalits* (formerly known as "Untouchables"), despite legal reforms. Dalits often face discrimination in employment, education, housing, and access to public resources, particularly in rural areas.
- **Nepal:** Similar to India, the caste system influences societal hierarchies, with lower-caste communities facing exclusion, poverty, and limited access to education and healthcare.



Gender Discrimination

- **Middle East:** Women in countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran experience significant restrictions on their freedoms, including limited rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and public participation. Gender-based laws, such as those requiring women to have male guardians, enforce systemic inequality.
- **Afghanistan:** Following the Taliban takeover in 2021, women's rights have significantly regressed. Women face restrictions on education, employment, and public life, with the return of strict interpretations of Islamic law.
- **Western Countries:** Although gender equality has made strides, wage gaps, underrepresentation in leadership roles, and gender-based violence persist in countries such as the U.S., Canada, and many European nations.

Religious Discrimination

- **China:** The Uyghur Muslim minority faces severe repression, including internment camps, forced assimilation, and restrictions on religious practices in the Xinjiang region. Christians and Tibetan Buddhists also face persecution under government policies aimed at controlling religious expression.
- **Myanmar:** The Rohingya Muslim minority has been subjected to ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, and denial of citizenship, driven by both religious and ethnic



discrimination by the Buddhist-majority government.

- **India:** Rising Hindu nationalism has contributed to religious discrimination against Muslims, Christians, and other religious minorities, including mob violence, forced conversions, and discriminatory laws.

Ethnic Discrimination

- **Rwanda:** Ethnic tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups led to the 1994 genocide. Although the government has worked to promote national unity, ethnic discrimination and social divisions remain challenges.
- **Europe:** Ethnic minorities, including Roma people, face systemic exclusion in countries like Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. Roma communities frequently experience poor access to education, healthcare, and housing, coupled with widespread social stigmatization.

Indigenous Discrimination

- **Australia:** Indigenous Australians suffer from long-standing discrimination, resulting in higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and poor health outcomes. Dispossession of land and cultural marginalization remain major issues.
- **Canada:** The legacy of colonialism has led to ongoing discrimination against Indigenous peoples, particularly regarding land rights, education, and healthcare. The history of residential schools and forced assimilation has



left lasting scars on Indigenous communities.

- **Latin America:** Indigenous populations across countries like Brazil, Bolivia, and Guatemala face discrimination in access to land, political representation, and public services. They often struggle for recognition of their cultural rights and protection from environmental destruction.

Discriminatory practices remain a global issue, manifesting in various forms depending on cultural, religious, and historical contexts.

These practices are anti-God because they perpetuate inequality, social exclusion, and human rights violations, requiring continued advocacy, legal reforms, and societal change to promote equality and justice for all according to the Bible, the Word of God.



CHAPTER



THE STIGMA OF TRADITIONAL RULERS



Are Traditional Kings Synonymous with Idolatry?

Throughout history, many traditional kings and monarchs have been associated with idolatry, particularly in cultures where kingship and religious practices were intertwined. This connection stems from their role as both political leaders and spiritual figureheads. Their roles often involving idol worship or appeasement of local deities create a picture of them as idolaters.

However, this does not mean that kingship and idolatry are inherently linked. While some argue that traditional kingship is synonymous with idolatry, this assumption can be challenged when Christian kings lead by biblical principles, forsaking idolatrous practices and promoting worship of the one and only true God.



Arguments Linking Traditional Kings to Idolatry

Cultural and Religious Leadership: Traditional kings often served as both political and religious leaders in their societies. In many cultures, they were expected to perform rituals, offer sacrifices, or preside over religious ceremonies that included idol worship. Kings were often seen as mediators between the gods and the people, making their role integral to maintaining idolatrous practices.

Association with Polytheism: Many traditional kingdoms practiced polytheism, where multiple gods were worshipped, often represented by idols. The king's role would frequently include ensuring that the people adhered to the worship of these deities, reinforcing the bond between kingship and idolatry.

Ancestral Worship and Deification: In some cultures, kings were deified either in life or death. Rulers were sometimes regarded as gods or descendants of gods, leading to the establishment of idols in their honor. This practice blurred the line between political leadership and spiritual idolatry, solidifying the association of kingship with idol worship.

State-Sponsored Idolatry: Kings often institutionalized idol worship by mandating state-sponsored religious practices, constructing temples to false gods, and enforcing rituals that



involved idolatrous worship. In ancient Israel, several kings, like Ahab (1 Kings 16:31-33), led the nation into the worship of Baal, directly violating God's commands.

A Brief History of Traditional Kings who were involved in Idolatry

1. Ancient Near East and Egypt:

- In the ancient Near East, kings like the Pharaohs of Egypt were often regarded as divine beings, worshipped as gods. Pharaohs were linked to the sun god, Ra. They built massive temple complexes in communities for this idol.
- Babylonian kings like Nebuchadnezzar also promoted idol worship. Daniel 3 records how Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden image and commanded everyone to worship it.

2. Israel and Judah's Kings:

- In the history of Israel and Judah, several kings fell into the sin of idolatry, leading their people astray. King Solomon, despite his wisdom, built high places for the gods of his foreign wives (1 Kings 11:4-8), turning Israel to idol worship.
- Jeroboam set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan, leading the northern kingdom into idolatry (1 Kings 12:28-30). These actions were condemned by God and led to Israel's downfall.
- Kings like Ahab and Manasseh institutionalized idol



worship on a national scale, promoting Baal and Asherah worship (1 Kings 16:31-33; 2 Kings 21:1-9).

3. African and Asian Kingdoms:

- In many African kingdoms, traditional kings were deeply intertwined with religious rituals that included ancestral worship, idol sacrifices, and the worship of nature spirits. The role of traditional kings often included performing ceremonies to appease various gods or ancestors.
- In some Asian kingdoms, like those in India and Southeast Asia, kings presided over religious practices centered on idols, often in Hindu or Buddhist contexts, where kings were viewed as divine rulers.

4. Pre-Colonial European Kingdoms:

- In pre-Christian Europe, kings were often involved in pagan practices, worshipping nature gods and spirits. The ancient Romans and Greeks had kings who were closely associated with the worship of their pantheon of gods, and Roman emperors were deified after death, solidifying the connection between kingship and idolatry.

What Can Christian Kings Do to Change the Stigma?

For Christian kings or traditional rulers who have embraced Christianity, there is a challenge in breaking the association



between kingship and idolatry, especially in cultures where this connection is deeply rooted. However, by applying biblical principles, these leaders can effect significant change in both the spiritual and cultural lives of their people.

1. Renounce Idolatrous Practices:

- **Joshua 24:14** – "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served." Christian kings must take a public stand to renounce any idolatrous practices associated with their reign, refusing to participate in rituals or ceremonies that honor false gods or idols. This act of renunciation sets a powerful example for their subjects, showing that their allegiance is to Christ alone.

2. Promote Worship of the One True God:

- **1 Kings 18:39** – "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, 'The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.'" Christian kings can use their influence to promote the worship of the one true God by supporting Christian churches, encouraging prayer, and fostering a culture of devotion to Christ. By prioritizing the Gospel in their leadership, they shift the focus from idolatry to true worship.

3. Lead by Example in Holiness:

- **1 Timothy 4:12** – "Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." Christian



kings must lead by personal example, demonstrating a life of holiness, prayer, and dedication to Christ. By living out Christian values, they show that their leadership is under God's authority and that they reject any form of idol worship.

4. Reform Traditional Practices:

- **2 Kings 23:4-5** – "And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest... to bring out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels made for Baal." Christian kings, like King Josiah, can reform traditional practices by removing elements of idolatry and replacing them with ceremonies that honor God. This can include purging idols from public spaces, prohibiting occult or ancestral rituals, and replacing them with Christian worship and prayer.

5. Educate and Evangelize:

- **Matthew 28:19** – "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Christian kings have a unique platform to educate their people about the dangers of idolatry and the truth of the Gospel. By actively evangelizing and sharing the teachings of Christ, they can break down the misconceptions and strongholds of idol worship in their societies.

6. Encourage National Repentance and Revival:

- **2 Chronicles 7:14** – "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face



and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven." Kings can call for national repentance, encouraging their people to turn away from idolatry and seek God's mercy. Through prayer gatherings, national days of fasting, and public declarations of faith, Christian kings can lead their nations in revival and transformation.

The historical association of traditional kings with idolatry is undeniable, as religious and political power were often deeply intertwined in many ancient cultures. The kings were frequently seen as mediators between their people and the gods, which led to the adoption of idolatrous practices.

However, Christian kings can work to break this stigma by rejecting idolatry and promoting the worship of God alone, adhering to the biblical command found in Exodus 20:3, "You shall have no other gods before me."

By embodying the Greek concept of *ἁγιότης* (*hagiotēs*), meaning **holiness or sanctity**, Christian kings can set a powerful example for their people. They can reform traditional practices that are rooted in idol worship and instead lead their communities to embrace the one true God.

This involves not only personal dedication but also public reforms that honor God and reflect the love of Christ. Furthermore, Christian kings must strive to demonstrate the



Hebrew principle of *רָצוּן* (*tsedeq*), meaning **righteousness**. By governing justly and ensuring that their leadership is aligned with God's moral standards, they can transform their rule into one that glorifies God. Through their leadership, they can inspire their people to forsake idolatrous customs and follow the path of righteousness and faith in Jesus Christ.

In doing so, Christian kings not only reject the historical association with idolatry but also foster a spiritual transformation in their realms, leading their people in a way that reflects the teachings of Christ and glorifies God.



CHAPTER



HOW TO ESTABLISH AND COMMIT TRADITIONAL THRONES TO JESUS CHRIST



Acknowledging and dedicating traditional thrones to Jesus Christ is a significant spiritual act, affirming His supreme authority over all earthly powers. The Greek word for authority is *ἐξουσία* (*exousia*), representing not just power, but the rightful command and dominion that Christ holds.

In Hebrew, the word *מַלְכוּת* (*malkhut*) refers to kingship or reign, further symbolizing Christ's sovereignty over all kingdoms and nations. While Christianity has been present in Africa for over two centuries, many Africans continue to cherish their traditions, customs, and cultures, some of which occasionally conflict with the teachings of the Bible.

Though European missionaries introduced Christianity to



Africa, they had limited influence over how African converts interpreted and integrated these teachings into their lives. This has led to a challenging situation for some traditional leaders, who are torn between their Christian faith and their roles as guardians of cultural heritage. Many Christians, particularly those in African Independent Churches, navigate a complex spiritual journey, balancing their adherence to both African traditional beliefs and Christian practices. Here's a guide on how this balance can be achieved, both symbolically and practically:

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT

Theological Foundation: In Christianity, Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). This title asserts His sovereignty over all rulers and nations. Establishing a throne in His name declares that all authority belongs to Him. A throne symbolizes authority, power, and governance. When a traditional throne (like that of a monarch or tribal leader) is committed to Christ, it symbolizes the submission of that authority to His will.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Prayer and Reflection: Before committing a throne to Jesus, it is essential to pray, asking for guidance, wisdom, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.



Consecration: The individuals involved, such as leaders or monarchs, should consecrate themselves, seeking forgiveness, purification, and alignment with Christ's teachings.

FORMAL CEREMONY

Public Declaration: Organize a ceremony in which the throne or leadership is publicly dedicated to Christ. This can be done in a church, chapel, or other significant places.

Scripture Reading: Select scriptures that affirm Christ's kingship, such as Psalm 2, Revelation 11:15, or Colossians 1:15-20.

Anointing: Anointing the throne with oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit's presence and Christ's authority.

Commitment Prayer: Offer a prayer, dedicating the throne to Jesus, acknowledging His sovereignty, asking for His guidance, and committing to ruling according to His principles.

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

Christ-Centred Leadership: The leader or ruler should commit to governing with Christ's teachings at the forefront. This includes promoting justice, love, humility, and service.



Ethical Governance: Implement policies and decisions that reflect Christian values, such as compassion, integrity, and respect for all people.

Ongoing Dedication: Regularly reaffirm the commitment through prayer, reflection, and public declarations, ensuring the leadership remains aligned with Christ.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Educating the Community: Explain the significance of this commitment to the community and encourage them to support the leader in maintaining Christ-centered governance.

Engagement in Prayer: Encourage the community to pray for the leader, asking for wisdom, strength, and guidance in upholding Christ's authority.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Regular Review: Review the leadership's actions to ensure they are consistent with the commitment to Christ. Continual Growth: Encourage the leader and community to grow in their faith and understanding of Christ's teachings, fostering a more profound commitment over time.

By following these steps, establishing and committing a

traditional throne to Jesus Christ can be a powerful expression of faith and dedication, transforming leadership into a reflection of Christ's kingdom on earth.



CHAPTER



TRADITIONAL RULERS AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH



A Call to Refuse Participation in Fetish Practices

The position of an **Oba**, **Igwe**, or **Emir** is highly esteemed in Nigeria and across Africa. This role is unique compared to monarchies in other parts of the world, as an African traditional ruler is the **custodian** of the rites, traditions, and customs of his kingdom.

He is expected to uphold these practices and lead by example in preserving the cultural heritage of his people. Upon being chosen and accepting the position, there is often an expectation that the ruler will participate in various festivals and rituals, some of which may conflict with his personal faith, particularly for Christians.



This raises a crucial question: Can a Christian maintain his faith and remain uncompromised while fulfilling the traditional duties of a ruler? The challenge lies in balancing the responsibilities of the throne with the spiritual demands of following Christ.

In Greek, the term *συνείδησις* (*syneidēsis*), meaning **conscience**, is key to understanding how a Christian ruler can navigate this tension. A Christian leader must be guided by his conscience, rooted in faith, to discern when participation in certain rites violates his commitment to God. The Hebrew word *אֱמוּנָה* (*emunah*), meaning **faithfulness**, also speaks to the ruler's need to remain steadfast in his devotion to God, even when societal pressures arise.

Thus, while fulfilling the expectations, laws, and traditions of his kingdom, a Christian traditional ruler must find ways to honour his role without compromising his conscience or faithfulness to Christ. This may involve reforming certain practices, setting personal boundaries, or encouraging cultural practices that align with biblical principles, demonstrating that it is possible to lead without forsaking one's faith.

Christianity, with its firm stance against idolatry and the worship of other gods, clearly mandates those believers to



avoid practices that contradict Christ's teachings. Fetish practices, which often involve rituals, sacrifices, and the invocation of ancestral spirits, stand in direct opposition to Christian doctrines.

For a traditional ruler who has embraced Christianity, continuing to participate in such practices can be seen as a compromise of faith and a betrayal of the principles they now hold dear. Below are several reasons traditional rulers should refuse to engage in fetish practices after becoming Christians:

Faithfulness to Christian Doctrine: Christianity teaches that there is one true God and that worshipping or paying homage to any other deity is unacceptable. By participating in fetish practices, a Christian ruler would be endorsing beliefs and rituals that are incompatible with the Christian faith. This could lead to confusion among their followers and undermine their witness as a Christian leader.

Setting an Example for the Community: As leaders, traditional rulers are often considered role models. Their actions significantly impact the behaviour and beliefs of their subjects. By refusing to engage in fetish practices, a Christian ruler can set a powerful example of unwavering commitment to their faith. This can inspire others within the community to reject practices inconsistent with Christianity.



Promoting Spiritual Integrity: Christianity emphasises the importance of spiritual integrity and a clear conscience before God. A ruler who participates in fetish practices may struggle with a divided heart, torn between cultural obligations and their commitment to Christ. By refusing to engage in these practices, they can maintain a clear conscience and a solid spiritual foundation.

Encouraging Cultural Reformation: While it is important to preserve cultural heritage, it is equally essential to reform aspects of culture that are harmful or incompatible with Christian values. Traditional rulers, by their position, have the authority to influence and guide cultural practices. By rejecting fetish practices, they can lead the way in promoting a reformed culture that upholds the dignity of every individual and is in alignment with Christian principles.

Upholding the Dignity of the Office: The role of a traditional ruler is one of honour and responsibility. Engaging in practices that contradict their faith can diminish the respect and credibility of their office. By taking a stand against fetish practices, Christian rulers can uphold the dignity of their position and demonstrate that authentic leadership is rooted in moral conviction and spiritual integrity.

Therefore, traditional rulers who have embraced Christianity should firmly refuse to participate in fetish practices. This refusal is not just an act of personal conviction but a powerful statement of their commitment to the Christian faith. By doing so, they not only honour God but also set a transformative example for their communities, promoting a culture that is in harmony with the values of their newfound faith.



CHAPTER



HOW CHRISTIAN TRADITIONAL RULERS CAN HANDLE THE PRESSURES OF REFUSING TO PARTICIPATE IN FETISH PRACTICES



Christian traditional rulers often find themselves in challenging situations where their faith and cultural obligations collide. As custodians of tradition, they are expected to uphold the customs and practices of their people.

However, when these practices conflict with their Christian beliefs—especially in the case of fetish or animistic rituals—the challenge becomes one of navigating these pressures without compromising their commitment to God. In Greek, the word *ἀλήθεια* (*alētheia*), meaning truth, serves as a reminder that Christian rulers must stay rooted in the truth of the Gospel.

They must rely on the teachings of Christ to guide their actions, even when societal expectations demand their participation in



rituals that conflict with biblical teachings. The Hebrew word *ḥesed* (ḥesed), meaning steadfast love or faithful devotion, highlights the importance of remaining committed to God while exercising love and patience toward their people, even in the midst of difficult cultural conflicts. From interviews with journalists and writers across Africa, several strategies have emerged for how Christian traditional rulers can abstain from fetish practices.

These include setting clear personal boundaries from the outset, educating their communities about the potential for cultural practices to evolve in ways that respect both tradition and their Christian faith, and promoting alternative forms of leadership that reflect the values of justice, integrity, and service to others without compromising their beliefs.

By standing firm in the truth (*alētheia*) and demonstrating steadfast devotion (*chesed*) to God, Christian rulers can lead their people with wisdom and integrity, showing that it is possible to honor their cultural heritage while remaining faithful to their Christian convictions.

1. Understanding the Nature of the Conflict

According to Ojeme Johnson, the first step in addressing this challenge is for Christian traditional rulers to fully understand



the nature of the conflict between their faith and traditional practices. Fetish practices often involve rituals, sacrifices, and invocations that are inconsistent with Christian teachings, which emphasise worshipping only one God and rejecting idolatry. The ruler must recognise that participating in such practices could be seen as endorsing beliefs and actions that contradict their commitment to Christ.

2. Strengthening Personal Faith

Johnson added that traditional rulers must have a solid personal faith to resist pressures. This involves regular prayer, study of the Bible, and fellowship with other believers. A deep and personal relationship with God will give them the spiritual fortitude to stand firm in the face of opposition. This spiritual grounding is crucial, as it helps them draw strength from their convictions and remain steadfast in their decision to refuse participation in practices that contradict their faith.

3. Educating and Informing the Community

One of the most effective strategies for a Christian traditional ruler is to educate their community about their faith and the reasons behind their refusal to participate in fetish practices. This can be done through dialogue, public speeches, or community meetings. The ruler should emphasize the Christian principles of love, respect, and mutual understanding while



explaining that their refusal is not out of disrespect for tradition but rather a commitment to their faith.

In addition to verbal communication, Johnson said, the ruler can support community development projects, educational initiatives, and other activities, demonstrating their care for the people and the community. This approach helps to build trust and respect, making it easier for the community to accept the ruler's stance.

4. Engaging in Dialogue with Traditional Elders and Priests

For Fola Bola Tijani, the ruler must engage in respectful and open dialogue with traditional elders, priests, and other key figures who advocate for the continuation of fetish practices. These discussions should be approached with humility and a willingness to listen but with a firm resolve to uphold Christian principles.

The ruler can explain their beliefs and seek common ground, such as emphasizing shared values like community welfare and moral integrity.

Sometimes, suggesting alternative practices that align more closely with Christian beliefs may be possible. For instance, community celebrations or ceremonies could be restructured to focus on cultural heritage and community unity without



including fetish elements. This could preserve the positive aspects of tradition while avoiding religious conflicts.

5. Setting a Firm Precedent

As a leader, the ruler's actions set a precedent for others in the community. By consistently refusing to participate in fetish practices, the ruler demonstrates that it is possible to honour tradition while remaining true to one's faith. This can inspire others facing similar pressures to stand for their beliefs. However, setting this precedent may require the ruler to be prepared for initial resistance or backlash. The ruler must be patient and persistent, understanding that change often takes time and that consistency in their stance will eventually lead to greater acceptance.

6. Seeking Support from the Christian Community

The ruler should not face these challenges alone. Seeking support from the wider Christian community—locally and beyond—can provide encouragement and practical assistance. This could include advice from church leaders, prayer support, and solidarity from other Christian traditional rulers who have faced similar challenges.

Additionally, Christian organizations that focus on interfaith



dialogue and cultural engagement can offer resources and strategies for navigating the complexities of balancing faith and tradition. The ruler can gain strength and wisdom in their journey by connecting with a network of believers who share similar values.

7. Legal and Constitutional Safeguards

In many countries, traditional rulers are also subject to national laws and constitutions that guarantee freedom of religion. When refusing to participate in fetish practices, the ruler can invoke these legal protections. By framing their refusal within the context of religious liberty, the ruler defends their rights and sets a legal precedent for others who may face similar pressures.

The ruler should be well-versed with knowledge of the legal framework surrounding religious freedom in their country. This knowledge can reinforce their position and provide a strong defence against any attempts to coerce them into participating in practices that violate their beliefs.

8. Maintaining a Balance Between Tradition and Faith

While Christian traditional rulers need to stand firm in their faith, it is also essential to maintain a balance between tradition and faith. The ruler should strive to respect and honour the



cultural heritage of their people in ways that do not compromise their Christian beliefs. This can involve participating in cultural activities that do not conflict with their faith, thus, demonstrating that they can be both committed Christians and proud custodians of tradition. By finding and highlighting the aspects of tradition that are compatible with Christianity, the ruler can foster a sense of continuity and respect within the community while gently steering it away from practices that are incompatible with their faith.

9. Preparation for Possible Consequences

Refusing to participate in fetish practices may come with consequences, including criticism, ostracism, or even threats. The ruler must be prepared to face these challenges with courage and resilience. They should also be ready to protect their position by building alliances with like-minded leaders within and outside the community.

In cases where the pressure becomes intense, the ruler may need to seek legal protection or even consider stepping down if remaining in the role would require compromising their faith. However, such decisions should be made prayerfully and with the counsel of trusted advisors.



10. Relying on God's Guidance

Ultimately, the Christian traditional ruler must rely on God's guidance in every aspect of this journey. Through prayer and seeking the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the ruler can find the strength and direction needed to navigate the complex intersection of faith and tradition. Trusting in God's providence and remaining faithful to Christian principles will enable the rulers to stand firm in their convictions, regardless of the pressures they may face.

Christian traditional rulers who refuse to participate in fetish practices face a unique and difficult challenge. However, they can successfully navigate this complex situation by strengthening their faith, educating their community, engaging in dialogue, setting a firm precedent, seeking support, and relying on legal safeguards.

Balancing respect for tradition with a commitment to Christian beliefs is not easy. Still, with courage, wisdom, and faith, it is possible to honor both God and the cultural heritage they have been entrusted with.



CHAPTER



CHRISTIAN TRADITIONAL RULERS SHOULD MAKE NOTABLE CHRISTIANS THEIR LIEUTENANTS



Traditional rulers carry immense cultural and spiritual significance in many societies. These leaders are often seen as custodians of the people's heritage, values, and religious beliefs. For Christian traditional rulers, the choice of lieutenants—those who assist and represent them in various capacities—can be a profound statement of their commitment to their faith and the promotion of Christian values.

By appointing lieutenants who share their Christian faith, these rulers can uphold the Greek principle of *ἀγάπη* (*agapē*), meaning **selfless, sacrificial love**, which is central to the teachings of Christ. A Christian lieutenant who embodies *agapē* is more likely to promote justice, mercy, and love within the community, aligning their service with the Christian values of the ruler.



Additionally, the Hebrew concept of חֵכְמָה (*chokmah*), meaning **wisdom**, is crucial in the selection of lieutenants. A wise lieutenant, grounded in biblical principles, can help the ruler navigate the complexities of leadership while maintaining integrity and godly insight. This blend of love (*agapē*) and wisdom (*chokmah*) ensures that the ruler's leadership is both compassionate and discerning, reflecting the values of the Christian faith while honoring the cultural heritage of the people.

One compelling reason for Christian traditional rulers to appoint notable Christians as their lieutenants is the alignment of values and vision. When lieutenants share their ruler's faith and values, they are more likely to work harmoniously towards common goals. These goals often include promoting justice, peace, and moral integrity—principles deeply rooted in Christian teachings. A lieutenant who understands and embodies these principles can better support the ruler in making decisions that reflect the community's Christian values.

Moreover, notable Christians often deeply understand the Christian community's spiritual needs and aspirations. This knowledge is invaluable in a leadership context where the spiritual well-being of the people is a priority. A Christian lieutenant can provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance, helping the ruler navigate complex issues with faith-based perspective. This can lead to more thoughtful and compassionate leadership, which benefits the entire community.



Appointing Christians as lieutenants can also strengthen the ruler's ability to unify the Christian community. In regions where religious diversity exists, having a strong Christian presence in leadership can reassure the Christian populace that their interests and rights are protected and promoted. It also sends a powerful message to the wider community about the ruler's commitment to their faith and their desire to see Christian values reflected in governance.

Furthermore, notable Christians often have a track record of service and leadership within the church and the broader community. Their experience in these roles equips them with the skills needed to assist in effective governance. They bring with them qualities that are essential in leadership such as: a reputation for integrity, service, dedication, etc. By appointing such individuals as lieutenants, Christian traditional rulers ensure that their leadership team is composed of people who are not only competent but also trusted and respected by the community.

However, it is important to recognize that the appointment of lieutenants should not be based solely on religious affiliation. While it is beneficial for a Christian ruler to surround themselves with fellow believers, the ultimate criteria should be competence, integrity, and a genuine commitment to serving the community. In this regard, notable Christians who embody these qualities are ideal candidates for these roles.



Traditional Christian rulers should consider appointing notable Christians as their lieutenants because of the shared values, spiritual insight, and leadership qualities these individuals bring. Such appointments can strengthen the ruler's leadership, promote Christian values in governance, and ensure that the Christian community feels represented and supported. However, it is equally important to balance this with a commitment to appointing individuals who are truly capable and dedicated to serving all people, regardless of their religious background.



CHAPTER



WHAT IDOLATRY IS AND HOW TO RENOUNCE IT



What is Idolatry?

Idolatry is the worship of idols. An idol is anything other than the one true God. Idol worship includes both physical and spiritual practices where people devote themselves to idols, false gods, or concepts that take the place of God in their hearts.

The Greek word *εἰδωλολατρία* (*eidololatria*), meaning **idol worship**, emphasizes the act of giving divine honour to something other than God. Idolatry is considered one of the gravest sins in the Bible, as it leads people away from the worship of the Creator and toward destruction.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word *עֲבֹדָה זָרָה* (*avodah zarah*), meaning **foreign worship**, highlights the dangers of turning to false gods or practices outside the worship of Yahweh. This is



condemned in the Ten Commandments: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). Both *eidololatria* and *avodah zarah* illustrate that idolatry not only dishonours God but also corrupts the hearts of people, diverting their devotion and leading them into spiritual ruin.

Idolatrous Practices Forbidden by God in the Bible

The Bible is explicit in its condemnation of idolatrous practices, and God's commands make it clear that His people are to worship Him alone. Below is the scriptural position against idolatry.

1. Worship of False Gods

- **Exodus 20:3** – "You shall have no other gods before me." God forbids His people from worshipping any other deity, affirming that only He is worthy of worship.

2. Creating or Worshipping Images

- **Exodus 20:4-5** – "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything... You shall not bow down to them or serve them." The command forbids making and worshipping images or statues of anything in creation as substitutes for God.



3. Sacrifices to Idols

- **Leviticus 17:7** – "They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons." God condemns offering sacrifices to idols or false gods, which often represents a deeper spiritual defilement.

4. Consulting Occult Practices or Diviners

- **Leviticus 19:26** – "Do not practice divination or seek omens." Engaging in occult practices, witchcraft, and other forms of divination is forbidden, as they divert worship from God.

5. Worship of Nature or Heavenly Bodies

- **Deuteronomy 4:19** – "Do not be enticed into bowing down to them." The Bible forbids worshipping natural elements, such as the sun, moon, and stars, emphasizing that God alone is the Creator.

6. Child Sacrifice

- **Deuteronomy 12:31** – "They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods." Child sacrifice, particularly in connection with the worship of false gods like Molech, is abhorrent to God.



What Did God Say About Idolatry in the Bible?

God's warnings against idolatry permeate the entire Bible, illustrating the seriousness of this sin.

1. The First Commandment

- **Exodus 20:3-5** – "You shall have no other gods before me... You shall not make for yourself a carved image." God commands exclusive worship and prohibits idol-making or any physical representation of Him.

2. God's Jealousy Over Worship

- **Deuteronomy 4:24** – "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." God's jealousy emphasizes His demand for exclusive worship, and He will not tolerate the worship of idols.

3. Idolatry Leads to Destruction

- **Deuteronomy 8:19** – "If you forget the Lord your God and follow other gods... you will surely be destroyed." Idolatry leads to destruction and judgment, as it separates people from the source of life—God.

4. Futility of Idol Worship

- **Isaiah 44:9-10** – "All who make idols are nothing... those who would speak up for them are



blind." The Bible highlights the futility and blindness of idol worship, as idols cannot offer life or guidance.

5. New Testament Condemnation

- **1 Corinthians 10:14** – "Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry." Paul urges believers to flee from idolatry and any practices that lead them away from God.

Arguments of Idol Worshippers Against Christianity

1. Cultural or Traditional Practice

- Idol worshippers often argue that their practices are rooted in culture and tradition, passed down through generations.
- **Counterpoint:** While tradition has value, worship must align with God's truth (Matthew 15:3-9). True worship is directed to God alone.

2. Representation of the Divine

- Many claim that idols are mere representations or symbols of the divine, serving as focal points for worship.
- **Counterpoint:** God is spirit (John 4:24) and cannot be contained in physical images (Acts 17:24-25). Idolatry distorts God's true nature.



3. Multiplicity of Deities

- Some argue that polytheism reflects the diversity of the divine realm.
- **Counterpoint:** God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4), but He reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Only the one true God is worthy of worship.

4. Tangible Worship

- Idol worshippers believe that having physical objects of worship brings them closer to the divine.
- **Counterpoint:** Faith is about worshipping God in spirit and truth (2 Corinthians 5:7; John 4:24), not through visible, tangible idols.

Can a Christian Be Involved in Idol Worship?

No, a Christian should not be involved in idol worship. It is clearly condemned throughout the Bible. However, many Christians are unknowingly or ignorantly getting involved in idol worship through different subtle forms in our modern world, such as prioritizing anything—money, relationships, power—above God. We must be vigilant in avoiding both ancient and modern forms of idolatry.



Modern Forms of Idolatry

1. Money and Materialism

- **Matthew 6:24** – "You cannot serve both God and money." Placing wealth or material things above God is a modern form of idolatry.

2. Fame and Power

- **1 John 2:16** – "The lust of the flesh and the pride of life." Seeking fame or power above God's will can become an idol.

3. Relationships

- **Matthew 10:37** – "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Relationships can become idolatrous if they take precedence over God.

4. Self-Idolatry

- **Romans 1:25** – "They worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator." Prioritizing oneself—ego, achievements, desires—over God is also idolatry.



How to Renounce Occult, Idol Worship, and Voodoo Practices and Accept Jesus Christ

Those involved in the occult, idol worship, or voodoo practices can renounce these forms of worship and receive freedom in Christ. Renouncing such practices involves a firm rejection of the demonic powers behind these practices and turning fully to the Lord.

1. Confess and Renounce

- **1 John 1:9** – "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." The first step is to confess to God involvement in these practices, acknowledging them as sin.

2. Burn or Destroy All Idolatrous Objects

- **Acts 19:19** – "A number of those who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly." Just as the early Christians destroyed their occult items, those renouncing idol worship must remove all idolatrous objects, symbols, and paraphernalia from their lives.

3. Receive Forgiveness and Deliverance

- **Colossians 1:13** – "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the



kingdom of His beloved Son." God promises forgiveness and deliverance from the spiritual bondage of occult and idolatrous practices.

4. Accept Jesus Christ

- **Romans 10:9** – "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. By accepting Him as Lord and Savior, a person is set free from the bondage of idolatry and the occult.

5. Walk in the Power of the Holy Spirit

- **Galatians 5:16** – "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." After renouncing idolatry, the believer should seek to live a Spirit-filled life, allowing God to lead them into deeper worship and holiness.

Whether in the form of ancient practices like statue worship or modern forms like materialism and self-centeredness, idolatry is a sin that separates people from God. The Bible is clear that only God is to be worshiped.

Those who are involved in idolatry, the occult, or voodoo can renounce these practices and accept the salvation of Jesus



Christ. True worship is found in a personal relationship with God through Christ. Believers are freed from all forms of bondage and led into the light of God's truth.

How to Spiritually Destroy Idols and Shrines

Christians must rely on biblical principles, prayer, fasting, and the authority given to believers through Christ. The Bible teaches that the spiritual battle against evil forces is fought not with physical weapons but through the power of God's Word and prayer. Evil forests and shrines, which often symbolize idolatry and demonic strongholds, can be dismantled spiritually through faith in God, declarations of His Word, and acting under divine authority.

Understanding Spiritual Strongholds

Evil forests and shrines associated with the *Osu* system are believed to be places where demonic forces and ancestral spirits operate. These places hold people in bondage to fear, superstition, and generational curses. Biblically, such practices are rooted in idolatry, which is strictly condemned.

Idolatry: The worship of anything other than God is forbidden in Scripture. Evil shrines represent the worship of false gods or spirits, and they must be spiritually confronted and destroyed.

- **Exodus 20:3** – "You shall have no other gods



before Me."

- **Deuteronomy 7:5** – “But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.”

Steps to Spiritually Destroy Idols and Shrines

1. Recognize and Renounce Idolatry and Ancestral Ties

The first step in destroying the spiritual power of evil forests and shrines is renouncing any form of idolatry or ancestral ties. A Christian must declare that they no longer submit to the powers associated with these practices.

- **1 Corinthians 10:14** – “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”
- The *Greek word* for "flee" is *φεύγω* (pheugō), which means to run away or escape. Christians must spiritually and mentally escape the entanglement of these practices by declaring allegiance only to God.

Sample Prayer of Renunciation: “Heavenly Father, I renounce every connection to the evil forests, shrines, and the *Osu* Caste System. I reject the spirits associated with these practices and declare my allegiance to You alone, the Most High God.”



2. Destroy the Spiritual Power Behind These Places

The Bible emphasizes the power of prayer, spiritual warfare, and the Word of God in pulling down strongholds. Believers are given authority in Christ to destroy every work of darkness.

- **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** – “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God.”
- The *Greek word* for "destroy" is *καθαίρεσις* (kathairesis), meaning to demolish or overthrow. Through prayer, believers can demolish the spiritual strongholds of evil shrines.

Sample Prayer of Destruction: “In the name of Jesus Christ, I take authority over every demonic spirit operating in this evil forest and shrine. By the power of the Holy Spirit and the blood of Jesus, I destroy every altar, idol, and stronghold. I declare that these places are rendered powerless and are uprooted in the name of Jesus.”

3. Declare the Supremacy of Christ

Evil forests and shrines represent the presence of darkness. To overcome them, we must declare the supremacy of Jesus Christ, who has already conquered every power of darkness through His death and resurrection.



- **Colossians 2:15** – "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."
- The *Greek word* for "disarmed" is *ἀπεκδύομαι* (apekdyomai), meaning to strip off or divest. This shows that Jesus has stripped away the power of evil forces, leaving them powerless over believers.

Sample Prayer of Declaration: "I declare that Jesus Christ has triumphed over every power of darkness. I proclaim His victory over every evil forest, shrine, and the spirits connected to the *Osu* Caste System. In the name of Jesus, all spiritual forces bow before His lordship."

4. Pray for the Fire of God to Destroy Idols

In the Bible, the fire of God is often used as a symbol of His judgment and purification. Praying for the fire of God to destroy evil shrines and idols is a biblical approach to purging places of wickedness.

- **Deuteronomy 9:3** – "Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them."
- **1 Kings 18:38** – When Elijah prayed, the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, and even the



stones of the pagan altar, demonstrating God's supremacy.

Sample Prayer for the Fire of God: “Lord, send Your consuming fire to destroy every evil shrine, altar, and demonic influence in this place. Let Your fire burn away every trace of idolatry, and may Your light shine in every dark place.”

5. Invoke the Power of the Blood of Jesus Christ

The blood of Jesus Christ is a powerful spiritual weapon that breaks every curse and renders evil powerless. Pleading the blood of Jesus Christ over a place of spiritual darkness invites divine protection and sanctification.

- **Revelation 12:11** – “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”
- The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses and protects, as well as destroys the works of darkness.

Sample Prayer using the Blood of Jesus Christ: “In the Name of Jesus Christ, I use the blood of Jesus Christ, to cleanse this land and all who have been oppressed by these shrines and forests. The blood of Jesus Christ breaks every curse and chain. I declare freedom and cleansing in this place by the blood of the Lamb of GOD.”



6. Replace the Evil with the Word of God and Worship

After spiritually dismantling these strongholds, it's essential to replace the atmosphere of darkness with the Word of God and worship. Plant Scriptures in the community and declare the lordship of Christ over the land.

- **Jeremiah 1:10** – "See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."
- The *Hebrew word* for "plant" is נָטַע (nata'), which means to establish or firmly set. After uprooting the evil, believers must plant God's Word and righteousness in the land.

Sample Prayer for Planting God's Word: "Lord, in the Mighty Name of Jesus Christ, we plant Your Word in this place, declaring that Your kingdom is established here. May the truth of Your Word flourish, and may worship rise from this place as a testimony to Your greatness."

Evil forests and shrines connected to the *Osu* Caste System are rooted in idolatry and spiritual strongholds that contradict the Bible. Through the power of prayer, faith, and the Word of God, Christians can destroy these demonic altars and reclaim the



land for God.

Believers are given the authority in Christ to uproot every evil work and to replace it with the truth of God's Word, bringing spiritual freedom and restoration. By renouncing idolatry, declaring the supremacy of Christ, invoking the fire of God, and pleading the blood of Jesus Christ, these spiritual strongholds will be demolished, and the land will be reclaimed for God's glory.

Traditional rulers are encouraged to partner with Christian churches and their Christian lieutenants in dealing with these spiritual matters.



CHAPTER



HOW TO DESTROY IDOLS AND IDOLATRY AND THE CHALLENGES INVOLVED



The cure for idolatry is straightforward, but it requires sincere commitment. First, we overcome idolatry by repositioning God at the center of our lives. God cannot accept second place; He must be supreme. The moment we make God subservient or equal to something or someone else, we have removed Him from His rightful position. As Jesus emphasised, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind” (Matthew 22:37).

Christian traditional rulers face a unique challenge in confronting idols and idolatry within their domains. Balancing their religious convictions with cultural traditions is a delicate task that requires the Greek virtue of *σοφία* (*sophia*), meaning **wisdom**. This wisdom allows rulers to navigate complex cultural



dynamics while remaining faithful to God. They also need the Hebrew quality of *אֱמוּנָה* (*emunah*), meaning **faithfulness**, to stay steadfast in their commitment to God, even when traditions and societal pressures tempt them to compromise. With *sophia* (wisdom) and *emunah* (faithfulness), Christian rulers can lead their communities away from idolatry, ensuring that God is honoured above all else.

APPROACHES TO DESTROYING IDOLS AND IDOLATRY

Education and Awareness: Christian rulers can promote Christianity's teachings, emphasising the worship of one true God. By educating their subjects on Christianity, they can gradually shift their people's belief systems away from idolatry.

The truth about Idolatry: Idolatry takes you away from God and what only He can provide. Idols always overpromise and underdeliver. Everyone who looks to the created for satisfaction will always be unsatisfied, but those who look to the Creator will always be satisfied. You guard yourself from idols by turning to the true and living God.

Dialogue and Engagement: Engaging in meaningful dialogue with the community, including traditionalists, can help people understand the Christian perspective. Respectful conversations can also lead to a peaceful transition away from idol worship.



Loving Jesus Christ More: We can keep ourselves from idols by knowing and loving Jesus Christ more than everything else. Jesus has given our hearts understanding that we may know who He is. He is the true God, and He alone gives eternal life. If we know Him as the one and only true God, why would we let our hearts be satisfied with less?

Promoting Christian Alternatives: Introducing Christian symbols, practices, and places of worship can provide alternatives to traditional idols. By offering a new spiritual focus, the ruler can guide the community toward Christian worship.

Gradual Phasing Out: Rather than outright destruction, which may cause unrest, gradually phasing out of idolatrous practices can be more effective. This might involve replacing idol-related rituals with Christian ceremonies over time.

Intercessory Prayer: Christian rulers can lead by example in prayer, asking for divine intervention to change their people's hearts. This spiritual approach is often seen as a way to combat the spiritual stronghold of idolatry.



CHALLENGES INVOLVED

Cultural Resistance: Many communities have deep-rooted traditions involving idols. Any attempt to destroy these practices may be met with significant resistance, leading to social unrest or even violence.

Loss of Cultural Heritage: Idols and related practices are often intertwined with the cultural identity of a community. Destroying them could be perceived as an attack on the people's heritage, leading to a loss of cultural pride.

Political Ramifications: As traditional rulers, these leaders may rely on the support of various factions within their community, including those who practice idolatry. Alienating these groups could weaken their political power and influence.

Spiritual Backlash: In some cases, the destruction of idols may be perceived as inviting spiritual consequences, both from the community and within the belief systems that uphold idol worship.

Ethical Considerations: The ethical dilemma of whether it is right to impose religious beliefs on others, even with good intentions, is a significant challenge. Respecting religious freedom while promoting one's faith is a delicate balance.

Christian traditional rulers who seek to destroy idols and idolatry must approach the task with sensitivity, wisdom, and a clear strategy. By understanding the cultural context, engaging in dialogue, and gradually introducing Christian practices, they can lead their communities toward a new spiritual path. However, they must also be prepared to face the challenges of such a significant cultural and religious shift.



CHAPTER



13

HOW TO COMMIT YOUR TOWN TO JESUS CHRIST



Committing a town to Jesus is often seen as an expression of faith, seeking both divine guidance and protection for the community. For believers, this act symbolizes a desire for the town to align with Christian values, fostering unity, compassion, and moral integrity among its residents.

Committing a town to Jesus invites **spiritual leadership** and divine wisdom, guiding its decisions and direction, especially in difficult times. The Greek word *καθοδήγησις* (*kathodigēsē*), meaning **guidance**, captures the essence of seeking God's direction for the community. This commitment can also strengthen the bonds within the community, as shared faith and values foster a sense of belonging and mutual support among residents.



Another critical reason is to take control of **territorial spirits**. These are spiritual forces, either angels or demons, that rule over specific geographical regions, as exemplified by Daniel's experience with the prince of Persia. Daniel 10:2 shows that when Daniel prayed, God responded by sending an angel, but opposition delayed the angel's arrival for 21 days. Daniel's *חֲזָאק* (*chazaq*), meaning **steadfastness** in Hebrew, was key—he continued to pray until there was a breakthrough. This teaches the importance of persevering in prayer despite spiritual resistance.

The only way to “take” a city in a biblical sense is to confront the demonic powers over the city and disarm them through prayer in the name of Jesus. Spiritual warfare is real, and prayer is a powerful tool for transformation. Committing your town to Jesus Christ is a profound spiritual endeavor, involving prayer, community engagement, and intentional actions to bring about change through God's *kathodigēsē* (guidance) and *chazaq* (steadfastness).

1. PERSONAL PREPARATION

Deepen Your Faith: Strengthen your relationship with Christ through prayer, Bible study, and worship. Seek guidance and



wisdom for the journey ahead.

Pray for Guidance: Ask the Holy Spirit to lead and direct you in this mission, ensuring your actions align with God's will.

2. ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Build Relationships: Foster connections with local churches, community leaders, and residents. Understanding the needs and challenges of your town will help you address them more effectively.

Start a Prayer Group: Gather a group of like-minded individuals who share the vision of committing the town to Christ. Regularly pray together for the town's spiritual and physical well-being.

3. ORGANIZE EVENTS

Prayer Walks: Organize prayer walks around your town, praying for specific areas, schools, businesses, and homes. This helps to cover the town in prayer spiritually.

Community Worship Services: Host inter-denominational worship services or revivals where people from all churches can come together to worship and pray for the town.



Outreach Programs: Initiate outreach programs that address the community's needs, such as food drives, youth programs, or support for the homeless, all done in the name of Christ.

4. SPREAD THE GOSPEL

Evangelism: Encourage and equip individuals in your town to share the Gospel with others. This could be through personal testimonies, literature distribution, or community events.

Christian Media: Utilize local media, such as radio, social media, and newspapers, to share the message of Christ. Promote positive, Christ-centered content.

5. FOSTER UNITY

Collaboration Among Churches: Encourage local churches to work together, transcending denominational boundaries. This unity is a powerful testimony to the community.

Community Service: Engage in service projects that meet the town's needs, showing Christ's love through action.



6. FOLLOW UP

Discipleship Programs: Develop or support discipleship programs that help new believers grow in their faith. Mentorship and Bible studies are key.

Regular Check-Ins: Continually assess the spiritual health of your town and adjust your approach as needed. Keep the vision alive by reminding the community of the commitment to Christ.

7. CELEBRATE VICTORIES

Testimonies: Share stories of how God is working in your town. Celebrating victories, no matter how small encourages the community and builds faith.

Thanksgiving Services: Host special services or gatherings to give thanks for what God has done and to renew your commitment to Christ.

8. PERSISTENT PRAYERS

Continuous Intercession: Continue praying consistently for your town, believing that God is working even when you don't see immediate results.

Pray for Leaders: Regularly pray for your town's leaders so that they may have wisdom and be guided by God in their decisions.

Committing your town to Jesus Christ is a journey that requires faith, persistence, and love. By actively engaging in prayer, service, and evangelism, you can help create a community that reflects the values and love of Christ.



CHAPTER



14

HOW DOES CHRISTIANITY DESTROY TRADITIONS OR TRANSFORM IT?



Christianity has been intricately intertwined with the history and formation of Western society. Throughout its long history, the Church has served as a significant source of social services, such as schooling and medical care, and has been an inspiration for art, culture, and philosophy. Additionally, it has played an influential role in politics and religion.

The Greek word *μεταμόρφωσις* (*metamorphōsis*), meaning **transformation**, reflects the transformative power of Christianity in shaping societal norms and values. However, depending on context and perspective, Christianity's impact on traditions can be both destructive and transformative.



The Hebrew word *תַּחַשׁ* (*shachath*), meaning **corruption** or **destruction**, highlights the potential negative effects of misinterpretations or abuses of Christian teachings that can lead to societal harm.

Thus, while Christianity has the capacity for *metamorphōsis* (transformation) in fostering social good and cultural advancement, it also carries the risk of *shachath* (destruction) when its principles are distorted or misapplied. This dual nature of Christianity's influence underscores the complexity of its role in Western society throughout history.

DESTRUCTION OF TRADITIONS

Religious Practices: Christianity often challenged and replaced pre-existing religious practices, particularly in regions where it spread. For example, the conversion of European pagans led to the decline or elimination of many traditional religious rites and rituals.

Cultural Norms: In some cases, Christian teachings led to the suppression of customs incompatible with Christian values. This could include certain festivals, rites of passage, or social practices.

Christianity led to the demise of the African customs, which it



viewed as pagan and evil; the religion also led to the implementation of apartheid (to which it gave its theological support) and undermined the leadership role of women.

TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONS

Syncretism: Christianity has often adapted and incorporated elements of local traditions into its practice. For example, many Christian holidays, like Christmas and Easter, have roots in or coincide with earlier pagan festivals.

Cultural Integration: Christianity has also preserved and transformed cultural traditions, giving them new meanings or aligning them with Christian theology. In many cultures, traditional art, music, and folklore have been infused with Christian themes.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON IGBO SOCIETY

The arrival of Christianity brought significant changes to the people of Igboland. Social events like birthdays, marriage ceremonies, and funerals underwent profound transformations with the coming of European missionaries.

Some key shifts included encouraging the conversion of extended family members, legitimizing marriages, eradicating certain occultic practices, and developing the roles of Eze



(priest-king) and titled elders to align with European concepts of lordship and authority, especially under indirect rule. The impact of Christianity is evident in the people's newfound understanding of life after death. The Church is now viewed as a spiritual community where members are seen as disciples of Christ. Social pressures are exerted to discourage certain traditional practices, and the Church employs various rites and social forces to maintain conformity. Additionally, the Church exerts its spiritual authority in educational matters, shapes social life, upholds recognized societal norms, enforces supernatural sanctions, and promotes universal values.

CHANGES IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND HIERARCHIES

Christianity changed the social organization and structure of Igbo communities. It introduced the idea of equality of all before God, and abolished the “Osu system,” thus undermining individual and shared differences that were based on belonging to different deities, family lines, or age groups. Christianity also introduced the idea of the soul, a moral conscience springing from an individual soul, and a sense of individual responsibility for one's actions.

But it also removed the sanctions that enforced moral behaviour according to traditional Igbo beliefs, as well as those that demanded and coerced social cooperation, provided a formal means of resolving disputes and conflicts, and some



measure of mutual assistance and mutual safety.

Christianity's idea of the soul removed the force of traditional morality with a religion-based moral code. More significantly, it removed the sanctions that enforced traditional morality, and in their stead, it proposed an after-death eternal sanction, namely, heaven, hell, or purgatory. Christianity created a new religious hierarchy and a new social hierarchy. Instead of the 'numerous deities that regulate society, and the wisdom of ancestors that guides the living patrilineage', Christianity offered one deity and a single religious leader of a small group which made itself the mediator between the living and this deity.

This institution of a priest-class, acted as moral police, thereby favouring the moralistic over the factual history of the traditionalist, the supernatural over the mundane, and faith over skepticism. In doing so, it also supported the development of new social relations of authority, leadership, and domination.

CULTURAL IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY

Impact was witnessed in the social, political, and religious cultures of the Igbo people. Spirituality, commerce, the judicial systems, timetabling, and the educational systems of the Igbo society were also subject to change as a result of the impact of



Christianity.

The changes were drastic as Christians believed their old ways were degrading, paganistic, wicked, and ungodly. The old system of Igbo has ingrained in them a religion of propitiation through woods, animal skins, metals, stones, sand, etc. However, with the advent of Christianity here in our land, general modes and forms of living had been freely given up. Most of the population embraced the new religion and became so rich in its practices. For example, Catholics adopted and lived out the practices of Catholicism while Protestants adopted and lived the practices of Protestantism.

Most people embraced the Christian way of life and in no time, churches spread everywhere. Almost every short distance, you'll see so many churches and it is even much more today. This alone is sufficient evidence that proves that religion has brought about some noticeable changes in our society.

This includes general lifestyle changes like: food, dressing, how they marry, or remarry, involvement of women in institutions, etc. Traditionally, for example, women who were cruelly dealt with and humiliated in society were acknowledged and given a social standing and recognition in the church.

The missionaries have also dealt a deadly blow to how we accorded respect, honor, and dignity to people. While the



church insists on the fact that every single human being is one of God's creation and we all have a function and work to do here on earth, tradition proposes dignity basically for only men and the aged. This position of the church has gone a long way in ensuring the welfare of women. They are better clothed, better fed, and better taken care of than before because they have been converted to Christianity. The new Christian culture gives the widow a better status in the church and general community. Radio stations and press have been introduced by Christian-oriented institutions through which news and information are propagated.

CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The introduction of the Christian religion brought about changes in tradition, thus, affecting many aspects of life. Some of these changes affect the traditional way of worship and social organization, while others concern aspects of the legal and political systems which were very important for the coherence of the traditional system.

Traditional attitudes to human rights were also subject to radical transformation and were modified by Christian influence. When a man becomes a Christian, his allegiance shifts away from the traditional gods of his fathers.

He no longer relies on the intercession of his ancestors' spirits



for success in yielding his crops, the fertility of his wives, the well-being of his children and cattle, or his protection from his enemies. Instead, he places his faith and trust in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, for the needs and wants of his life. This has however paid off better.

Overall, Christianity's interaction with traditions is complex and multifaceted, involving both the erasure of certain practices and the adaptation or transformation of others.



CHAPTER



ORGANIZING TRADITIONAL FESTIVITIES FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE



Nigeria, and many African countries, are lands of many customs, traditions and rituals that have become a part of life for most of the locals living in the region. African people are famous for knowing how to party. A similar trait is visible in their enthusiasm for celebrating their traditions and colourful festivals across the continent.

According to Jacob J. Olupona, 'Ceremonies, festivals, and rituals' occur on calendrical cycles. They often dictate when the community honours a particular deity or observes specific taboos. Community rituals may include agricultural rituals designed to persuade the gods to deliver rains and successful harvests and to guarantee healthy livestock.



Other rituals which mark personal transitions include rites of passage, funeral rites, marriage rituals, etc. African traditional religions usually feature festivals honouring deities or cultural heroes. Festivals renew the bonds between ancestors and their progeny, emphasize cyclical time, and keep track of the community's legacy and orientation by carrying forward its predecessors' memories.'

The Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria have a rich cultural heritage, with festivals and ceremonies playing a central role in their community life. These events often serve as occasions for communal bonding, spiritual reflection, and the celebration of various aspects of life. Below are some of the key festivals and ceremonies in Igboland:

1. New Yam Festival (Iri Ji or Iwa Ji): The New Yam Festival marks the end of the farming season and the beginning of the harvest period. The festival is a way to thank the gods and ancestors for a bountiful harvest. The festival involves the symbolic roasting and eating of the first yams of the season. There are also dances, masquerades, and other cultural displays.

2. Mmanwu Festival (Masquerade Festival): This is a traditional celebration involving masquerades, believed to represent ancestral spirits. Often held during significant



cultural events such as the New Yam Festival, funerals, or other important communal gatherings, the masquerades perform dances and rituals, and their appearances are considered a way to connect with the spiritual world.

3. Ofala Festival: Celebrated by the Igbo kings (Obis) to mark the annual celebration of their reign. It is a time for the king to connect with his people, seek their support, and perform important rituals. This usually involves a grand parade, where the king, dressed in elaborate regalia, appears before his subjects. There are also cultural dances, music, and feasting.

4. Igbo Wedding Ceremony: Known as "Igba Nkwu" (Wine Carrying), is a vital rite of passage in Igbo culture. The bride presents palm wine to her groom in a symbolic gesture of choosing him as her husband. The ceremony also includes the exchange of gifts between families, traditional music and dance, and a feast.

5. Ozo Title Taking: This is one of the most prestigious titles in Igboland. Taking this title is a significant event in the life of an Igbo man. It symbolizes leadership, social status, and spiritual elevation. The ceremony involves a series of rituals, including slaughtering of animals, presenting gifts, and traditional dances.

6. Ekpe Festival: Associated with the Ekpe secret society, it plays a significant role in maintaining social order and spiritual



balance in some Igbo communities. The festival celebrates the society's power and influence and includes masquerades, music, and rituals performed by members of the Ekpe society.

7. Funeral Rites: This is an elaborate and profoundly spiritual event, especially for elderly individuals. It signifies the celebration of life and a transition into the ancestral world. Depending on the status of the deceased, the ceremonies can last for several days. The funeral is a way for the community to honour the dead and ensure that their spirit is guided adequately to the ancestral realm.

8. Igu Aro: This is a festival that marks the beginning of the Igbo traditional year. It is a time for the community to reflect on the past year and prepare for the new one. The festival involves rituals and sacrifices to the gods and ancestors and public addresses by community leaders. It is also a time for communal feasting and celebrations.

FESTIVALS IN YORUBA LAND

OSUN: Osun has a unique festival that is held annually in August. It is held in honour and celebration of the goddess 'Osun' (the goddess of fertility). The Osun festival has seen visitors from other parts of Africa and all over the globe for many decades now.



The festival goes on for twelve days and takes place at the Osun Sacred Grove, which is home to a dense forest and several sanctuaries, sculptures, shrines and other forms of artwork.

OJUDE OBA The term ***Ojude Oba*** which could be translated to mean “king's front yard” rightly so is to honour Awujale, the prominent leader of the Ijebu-Ode in Nigeria. The festival first took place in 1892 when Awujale gave a massive piece of land to the Muslims to build a mosque. The leader also gave land to British missionaries, who built the first church in Ijebu. The festival eventually began as a religious festival by the Muslims. But, over the years, the festival has become popular with everyone from the Ijebu region.

EYO: The festival may not be the most colourful festival in Nigeria. But, it is one festival that piques the interest of anyone witnessing the festival for the first time. The festival is actually a fake festival that the locals believe takes away sickness and poverty while bringing in prosperity and wisdom. The masqueraders don on white regalia while wearing decorated hats of colours that depict their tribe.

NORTHERN NIGERIA

DURBAR FESTIVAL, also known as '*Hawan Daushe*' in the Hausa language, takes place two times a year as a part of the festivities of Ramadan and Eid-ul-Kabir. This festival is one of the most colourful festivals in Northern Nigeria.



The festival witnesses horsemen wearing regalia of different colours and patterns representing their tribe. The horsemen line up and form a parade which eventually covers a massive ground with the Emir (the traditional ruler), in his royal robes, majestically entering, as he receives the accolades of the colourful parade.

The most important event of the festival is the *Jahi* race. Which witnesses the horsemen race towards the Emir at full speed and suddenly leave their track in a direction away from the Emir. And while this happens, each horseman raises their sword or flag in honour of the ruler.

ORGANIZING TRADITIONAL FESTIVITIES FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Organizing these local festivities and annual events from a Christian perspective involves a thoughtful approach to honouring cultural heritage while aligning with Christian values. Here's a guide on how to achieve this:

1. Understanding the Cultural Significance

- **Research the History:** Understand the origins and cultural importance of the New Yam Festival and masquerade traditions. This knowledge helps in



determining which aspects align with Christian values and which might need adaptation or modification.

- **Identify Core Values:** Focus on the underlying positive values, such as community, gratitude for the harvest, and respect for tradition. These values can be emphasized in the celebrations.

2. Incorporating Christian Elements

- **Begin with Prayer:** Start the festivities with a Christian prayer, asking for God's blessings on the event and the community.
- **Incorporate Scripture Readings:** Select Bible passages that resonate with the themes of gratitude, celebration, and thanksgiving. For example, scriptures that relate to harvest, or the unity of the community can be shared.
- **Praise and Worship:** Include a session of praise and worship music that reflects both the festive spirit and Christian faith.

3. Adapting Traditional Practices

- **Review Rituals:** Some traditional practices may involve elements that conflict with Christian beliefs (e.g., invoking ancestral spirits). These can be respectfully adapted or replaced with Christian prayers or blessings.



- **Promote Inclusivity:** Ensure that the events are inclusive of all community members, regardless of their religious beliefs, and that no one feels excluded or uncomfortable.
- **Focus on the Symbolic Import:** Highlight the symbolic import of the traditions, such as the breaking of the yam, as an act of thanksgiving to God rather than a ritual to other deities.

4. Community Involvement and Dialogue

- **Engage with Community Leaders:** Work closely with both religious and traditional leaders to find common ground and ensure that the festivities are meaningful and respectful to all participants.
- **Education and Sensitization:** Educate the community on the significance of the adaptations from a Christian perspective, ensuring that changes are understood and appreciated rather than seen as dismissive of tradition.

5. Organizational Logistics

- **Planning and Coordination:** Set up a planning committee that includes representatives from the church and the community. This committee will ensure that the event is well-organized and that all voices are heard.



- **Budgeting:** Plan a budget that covers the cost of the event, including decorations, food, and any required materials for the adapted practices.
- **Venue and Timing:** Choose a venue and time that are convenient for the community and do not conflict with religious services or other important events.

6. Celebrating with Respect

- **Emphasize Unity and Peace:** Use the event as an opportunity to foster unity and peace within the community. Encourage reconciliation and the strengthening of relationships.
- **Promote Christian Virtues:** Throughout the event, encourage participants to embody Christian virtues such as love, kindness, and generosity.

7. Documentation and Reflection

- **Document the Event:** Record the event through photos, videos, or written accounts, capturing how the celebration reflects cultural heritage and Christian values.
- **Reflect and Improve:** After the event, gather participant's feedback to understand what went well and what could be improved for future events. This reflection helps refine the balance between tradition

and faith in subsequent celebrations.

By thoughtfully blending cultural traditions with Christian values, you can create a celebration honouring the past, enriching the present, and guiding the community's future through God's Word. Your primary goal is to bring all traditional actions and festivities under God in the Mighty Name of Jesus Christ.



CHAPTER



16

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS THAT CONTRADICT THE SCRIPTURES



Several traditional beliefs from various cultures around the world can be contradictory to Christian teachings. The divergence between the two is rooted in fundamental differences in worldview, cosmology, and religious practices. These differences shape how adherents of both belief systems perceive the nature of the divine, the role of ancestors, the afterlife, morality, and the practice of religion.

This divergence highlights the complex and diverse nature of human spirituality. While Christianity introduces a universalistic and often exclusive worldview, the Greek word *κόσμος* (*kosmos*), meaning **universe** or **order**, reflects the Christian understanding of a divinely structured world created



by God.

In contrast, African traditional beliefs are deeply rooted in specific cultural contexts, focusing on community, ancestral reverence, and maintaining *ḵavod* (*kavod*), the Hebrew word for **glory** or **honour**. This term captures the significance of honouring ancestors and the spiritual connection between the living and the deceased within these traditions.

Despite these differences, the interaction has led to various forms of syncretism, where elements of both belief systems coexist and influence each other in many African societies. These beliefs often stem from deeply rooted cultural traditions predating Christianity's introduction in Africa, leading to complex interactions between faith and culture. Below are some examples of the divergences:

1. Concept of God and the Divine

African Traditional Beliefs: African traditional religions are generally theistic but often incorporate a form of polytheism or henotheism. This is typically a belief in a Supreme Being, who is often distant and not directly involved in daily affairs, and a pantheon of lesser gods or spirits that oversee various aspects of life. These lesser gods are more actively involved in the lives of the people and are often venerated or appeased through rituals.



Christian Teachings: Christianity is monotheistic, teaching the belief in one God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. This God is personal, transcendent, and immanent, revealed in the Holy Trinity: Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit.

2. Role of Ancestors

African Traditional Beliefs: Ancestors are central to many African traditional religions. They are considered intermediaries between the living and the spiritual world. Ancestors are venerated, and guidance is sought through rituals, offerings, and ceremonies. The belief is that the ancestors continue to influence the lives of their descendants and must be honoured to ensure harmony and protection.

Christian Teachings: Christianity teaches that the dead do not interact with the living after death and that human destiny after death is determined by one's relationship with God during life. The Bible explicitly forbids practices such as necromancy or communicating with the dead.

3. Afterlife and Eschatology

African Traditional Beliefs: In African traditional religions, the afterlife is often seen as a continuation of life on earth in a different realm. The dead join the community of ancestors, who



continue to exist in a spiritual state. There is often less emphasis on judgment and more on maintaining harmony with the spiritual world through proper rituals and respect for the ancestors.

Christian Teachings: Christianity teaches that after death, individuals face judgment and are destined either for heaven or hell based on their faith in Jesus Christ and their deeds. The resurrection of the dead and the final judgment are key aspects of Christian eschatology.

4. Morality and Ethical Codes

African Traditional Beliefs: Morality in African traditional religion is closely linked to the community's well-being, cultural norms, and taboo observance. Ethical behaviour is often guided by the need to maintain social harmony and avoid offending the spirits or ancestors. Retribution for moral failures is usually believed to come from the spiritual world, manifesting as misfortunes or illnesses.

Christian Teachings: Christian morality is grounded in the teachings of the Bible, particularly the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus Christ. It emphasises love, compassion, forgiveness, and humanity's inherent sinfulness, which can only be redeemed through faith in Christ.



5. Religious Practices and Worship

African Traditional Beliefs: Worship in African traditional religion is often conducted in sacred spaces such as groves, rivers, or mountains. It involves rituals, sacrifices, drumming, dancing, and the invocation of spirits or deities. Ritual specialists, such as priests, diviners, or shamans, often lead these practices.

Christian Teachings: Christian worship is centred on the reading of scripture, prayer, hymns, and sacraments like baptism and the Eucharist. Worship is often communal and is conducted in churches, with ordained clergy leading the services.

6. Conversion and Syncretism

African Traditional Beliefs: African traditional religions are typically more inclusive and less focused on conversion. They often absorb elements from other religions, leading to syncretism. In many African communities, people identify as both Christians and adherents of traditional beliefs, blending practices from both traditions.

Christian Teachings: Christianity often emphasizes evangelism and conversion, urging believers to spread the gospel and convert others to Christianity. Historically, this has often led to clashes with indigenous African beliefs, particularly during the



colonial period.

7. Worldview and Cosmology

African Traditional Beliefs: African cosmology is often cyclical, emphasising the continuous interaction between the physical and spiritual worlds. The universe is a dynamic, interconnected system where balance must be maintained between the seen and unseen forces.

Christian Teachings: Christianity presents a linear worldview with a clear beginning (Creation), a central event (the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ), and an end (the Second Coming and the final judgment).

8. Reincarnation

African Traditional Beliefs: Some religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, hold that the soul is reborn into new bodies across different lifetimes, depending on karma.

Christian Teachings: Christianity teaches that each person has one life, followed by judgment and eternal destiny in heaven or hell (Hebrews 9:27).



9. Animism

African Traditional Beliefs: Animistic religions believe non-human entities (animals, plants, inanimate objects) possess a spiritual essence.

Christian Teachings: Christianity teaches that God created the world and everything in it, but only humans have souls and are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

10. Fatalism

African Traditional Beliefs: Some traditional beliefs emphasise a fatalistic worldview where all events are predetermined and inevitable, often attributed to fate or destiny.

Christian Teachings: Christianity acknowledges God's sovereignty, it also emphasises human free will and moral responsibility, believing that people can choose right from wrong (Deuteronomy 30:19).

11. Magic and Sorcery

African Traditional Beliefs: In many traditional cultures, magic and sorcery influence the natural world or spiritual realm, often through rituals, spells, or charms.

Christian Teachings: Christianity condemns the practice of



magic and sorcery, viewing it as relying on powers other than God (Deuteronomy 18:10-12, Galatians 5:19-21).

12. Totemism

African Traditional Beliefs: Totemism is a belief in a spiritual connection or kinship between a group of people and a particular animal or plant species.

Christian Teachings: Christianity does not support the idea of spiritual kinship with animals or plants; instead, it emphasizes the unique relationship between humans and God.

13. Nature Worship

African Traditional Beliefs: Some cultures worship natural elements such as the sun, moon, earth, and rivers, believing them to be deities or divine beings.

Christian Teachings: Christianity teaches that God created nature and that nothing else should be worshipped; only God, the Creator, is worthy of worship (Romans 1:25).

14. Karma

African Traditional Beliefs: In Hinduism and Buddhism, karma is the law of cause and effect, where one's actions in this life influence one's future life.



Christian Teachings: Christianity teaches that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not through one's works or actions (Ephesians 2:8-9).

15. The Divinity of Rulers

African Traditional Beliefs: In some cultures, rulers, such as kings or emperors, were considered divine or semi-divine; often seen as gods or descendants of gods (e.g., Ancient Egypt, Imperial Japan).

Christian Teachings: Christianity teaches that only God is divine, and no human should be worshipped or considered divine (Acts 14:15).

16. Polygamy

The traditional Beliefs: polygamy is widely accepted and practised. It is often seen as a symbol of wealth, social status, and the ability to care for multiple families.

Christian Teachings: emphasize the union of one man and one woman. Many Christian denominations have interpreted verses such as 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6, which speak about church leaders being “the husband of one wife,” as supporting monogamy as the ideal.



17. Divination

Consulting spiritual forces for guidance, conflicting with the Bible's prohibition against sorcery and divination (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

18. Sacrifice to Spirits

Offering sacrifices to appease spirits or gods, which is contrary to the Christian belief in Jesus as the final sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10).

19. Libation

Pouring out drinks as offerings to gods or spirits, which contrasts with Christian practices of prayer and communion (1 Corinthians 10:21).

20. Hereditary Priesthoods

Some African traditions believe that the priesthood of their traditional worship is hereditary. On the other hand, Christianity teaches that all believers are priests in Christ (1 Peter 2:9).

21. Traditional Healers (Sangomas)

Believes in consulting healers for spiritual insight and healing.



This conflicts with the biblical call to seek God for wisdom and healing (James 1:5; Psalm 103:2-3).

22. Rainmaking Rituals

Relying on traditional rituals to bring rain conflicts with the Christian belief that God controls nature (Matthew 5:45).

23. Rites of Passage Linked to Pagan Practices

Certain initiation rites linked to appeasing spirits, conflicting with the Christian belief that initiation into the faith comes through baptism (Matthew 28:19).

24. The Use of Charms or Amulets

Wearing charms for protection, contrary to the Christian belief that protection comes from God alone (Psalm 121:7).

25. Ancestral Curses

The belief that ancestral curses can affect descendants is in direct conflict with the Scriptural teaching that individuals are responsible for their own sins (Ezekiel 18:20).



26. Blood Rituals

Certain African traditions involve blood rituals that are seen as contrary to the New Testament teaching that Christ's blood is the ultimate sacrifice (Hebrews 9:12).

27. Necromancy

The practice of communicating with the dead is forbidden in the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 18:11).

28. Sacred Groves

Some African traditions hold specific groves or natural sites as sacred, which can conflict with the Scriptural teaching that God is not confined to specific locations (Acts 17:24).



CHAPTER



IS CHRISTIANITY A WHITE MAN'S RELIGION DESIGNED TO DESTROY AFRICAN TRADITIONS?



The idea that Christianity is a white, European religion is possibly the single most significant argument many traditional Africans raise as a reason for not accepting the faith. This perception is deeply rooted in the historical context of how Christianity was introduced to Africans, particularly through the transatlantic slave trade, which has led many to view it as alien to the spiritual heritage of African ancestors.

The belief is that since it was forced upon them and used as a tool to subjugate an entire people for economic gain, it ought to be rejected by Africans and descendants of slaves everywhere.



This notion that Christianity is a "white man's religion" designed to destroy African traditions is a complex and controversial topic. The Greek word *ἀποικισμός* (*apokismos*), meaning colonialism, reflects the historical realities that contributed to this perspective. The traumatic history of colonialism often intertwines with the spread of Christianity, leading to a perception of faith as an instrument of oppression rather than liberation.

To gain a deeper understanding of this viewpoint, we must also consider the Hebrew term *שָׁלוֹם* (*shalom*), meaning peace or wholeness. This concept highlights the desire for reconciliation and harmony within cultural identities, suggesting that true acceptance of Christianity should not come at the cost of African traditions but rather through a framework that respects and honors those traditions while finding a place for faith.

To fully appreciate this perspective, we need to delve into history, theology, sociology, and cultural anthropology, as these disciplines provide critical insights into the complexities surrounding the relationship between African spirituality and Christianity.

Historical Context

1. Early Christian Presence in Africa: Christianity was not originally a European religion; it began in the Middle East. By



the time it reached Europe, Christianity had already been established in Africa, particularly in Egypt and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, for instance, traces its origins to the 4th century. The ancient city of Alexandria in Egypt was a significant centre for Christian thought and scholarship long before Christianity gained a stronghold in Europe.

2. Middle East Factor: It's a Middle Eastern religion which includes people of colour. People think it's a white man's religion because, unfortunately, white people stole it from people of colour in a way. White Europeans built their own churches not based on Scripture and claimed to be authorities on the Scriptures.

As they translated the Scriptures from Koine Greek and Hebrew to English, they made biased translations. They removed the ancient culture of the Scriptures and replaced it with their own. Artists from the Middle Ages painted Jesus and other people in the Scriptures as white.

Whites added so many things like dress codes, music, doctrines, etc., not originally belonging to the people of the Scriptures. Whites created their version of Christianity, which has become mainstream and forced on people of colour.

3. The Role of European Colonialism: The perception of Christianity as a "white man's religion" is deeply rooted in the



history of European colonialism in Africa. In the 15th century, European powers colonised large parts of Africa.

Alongside the colonisers came Christian missionaries, who were often part of the colonial project. These missionaries sometimes promoted the view that African religious practices were "pagan" or "savage" and sought to replace them with Christianity. This association of Christianity with European colonial power contributed to the idea that religion was a tool for domination and cultural erasure.

DESTRUCTION OF AFRICA

The idea that Christianity is a "white man's religion" designed to destroy African traditions is a perspective that arises from the complex history of colonialism and the often-destructive impact of European missionary activities in Africa. However, this view is not the whole story. Christianity has a long history in Africa, predating European colonialism, and has been adapted and reshaped by African communities to reflect their own cultural and spiritual identities.

While it is true that European colonial powers used Christianity as a tool of cultural domination, it is also true that many Africans have found Christianity a source of strength, identity, and resistance. The relationship between Christianity and African traditions is not one of simple opposition but of



complex interaction, adaptation, and transformation.

The question, therefore, is not whether Christianity is a "white man's religion" but rather how Christianity has been and continues to be understood and lived by African people.

POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY TO AFRICA

Christianity has had a profound impact on Africa, with both positive and negative contributions over the centuries. Here's a breakdown:

Agriculture: Christianity shaped the life of the people of Nigeria to a reasonable degree. The missionaries came with their varieties of crops, which proved to be of better quality than the ones in existence in the area. They started to teach people how to use artificial fertilizers to boost production.

It was the missionary agents and the colonial masters who introduced different species of beautiful flowers, carpet grass, fruit trees, and vegetables, which we take for granted today. The missionaries also taught the people how to rear different types of animals and the best species among them. For example, the English fowl was better than the local fowl.

Education: Missionaries established schools and educational institutions across Africa, increasing literacy rates and



spreading Western education. Many prominent African leaders, thinkers, and professionals were educated in missionary schools free of charge.

Healthcare: Christian missionaries set up hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries, contributing to improving healthcare infrastructure in many parts of Africa. They introduced modern medical practices and helped fight diseases such as malaria and smallpox.

Social Welfare: Christian organizations have played a significant role in providing social services, including orphanages, care for the disabled, and support for the poor. They advocated for the abolition of practices like slavery, child labor, and other forms of exploitation.

Human capital development: Human capital development is one great contribution made by Christianity to the development of Nigeria. The missionaries were concerned about the emancipation of the poor Africans, so they established industrial schools to train them in various skills.

Cultural Exchange: Christianity facilitated cultural exchange between Africa and the West, leading to the introduction of new ideas, technologies, and practices.

Human Rights and Social Justice: Christian teachings on human



dignity and equality inspired movements against colonialism, apartheid, and other forms of oppression. The church has been involved in promoting peace, reconciliation, and justice in conflict-ridden areas.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CHRISTIANITY TO AFRICA

Cultural Disruption: Christianity often led to the suppression or alteration of indigenous African religions, cultures, and traditions, causing a loss of cultural identity in some communities. The imposition of Western values sometimes undermined traditional social structures and norms.

Colonialism: Christianity was sometimes used as a tool to justify and facilitate European colonization of Africa, with missionaries often acting as agents of colonial powers. The religion was used to subjugate African peoples and justify the exploitation of their lands and resources.

Division and Conflict: The introduction of Christianity sometimes led to divisions within communities, between converts and non-converts, and between different Christian denominations. In some cases, these divisions contributed to social tensions and conflicts.

Economic Exploitation: Missionaries often promoted



economic practices that favored European interests, sometimes at the expense of local economies and traditional livelihoods.

The church's alignment with colonial powers sometimes facilitated the exploitation of African resources.

Mental Colonization: Christianity, as introduced by missionaries, often promoted a sense of inferiority among Africans, encouraging them to adopt European ways and view their own cultures as inferior.

This contributed to a lasting legacy of psychological and cultural colonization. Christianity's influence in Africa is complex and multifaceted, with both significant positive impacts and deep-rooted negative consequences.



CHAPTER



18

THE AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN BIBLICAL DOCTRINE AND TRADITIONS



The Areas of Agreement

Traditional beliefs and Biblical doctrines share common ground in several areas, although the specifics can vary widely depending on cultural, religious, and denominational contexts. These areas of agreement illustrate the common moral and ethical frameworks that underpin many traditional belief systems and Biblical teachings.

For instance, the Greek word *ἀρετή* (*aretē*), meaning virtue or excellence, reflects the shared values found in both traditional and biblical teachings that promote moral integrity, justice, and compassion. These virtues serve as a foundation for ethical behavior in both contexts, emphasizing the importance of living a life that reflects one's values.

However, it's important to note that while there are similarities, there are also significant differences depending on the specific cultural or religious context. The Hebrew word *תּוֹרָה* (*Torah*),



meaning law or instruction, highlights the structured guidelines present in biblical teachings that govern the moral and ethical conduct of believers. While many traditional belief systems have their own sets of guidelines, the *Torah* emphasizes a covenant relationship with God, offering a framework that may differ from traditional practices.

In summary, the balance between biblical and traditional doctrines showcases both the shared virtues of *aretē* (virtue) and the distinct legal and moral teachings of *Torah* (law), illuminating the complex interplay between faith, culture, and ethics. Below are some balances between biblical and traditional doctrines:

1. God is Supreme: Both African traditional religions and Christianity regard God as the ultimate authority, the foundation of existence, and the source of life. Humans are seen as temporal mirrors (*imago Dei*) of God, reflecting His nature and purpose in the world.

2. Moral Values: Both traditions emphasize the importance of honesty, truthfulness, and integrity as foundational moral principles guiding behaviour and interactions.

3. Respect for Others: Both belief systems uphold the value of respecting elders, authority figures, and fellow human beings, fostering harmony and social cohesion within



communities.

4. Generosity and Charity: Helping those in need and being generous are vital values shared across many traditional beliefs and Biblical teachings, reflecting a commitment to social responsibility.

5. Importance of Family: Both Christianity and traditional beliefs stress the significance of family as the foundational unit of society, promoting strong familial bonds and responsibilities.

6. Respect for Marriage: Many traditional and Biblical teachings emphasize the sanctity of marriage, highlighting the roles and responsibilities of both husband and wife in maintaining a healthy union.

7. Community Support: Supporting one another within a community aligns with both traditional and Biblical views, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual assistance.

8. Sanctity of Life: Both traditions teach that life is sacred and must be protected, advocating for the dignity of all individuals regardless of their circumstances.

9. Care for the Vulnerable: Caring for the elderly, children, and the sick is a common teaching in both traditional religions and the Bible, reflecting a commitment to



compassion and social justice.

10. Justice: Both belief systems place a strong emphasis on justice and fairness in dealings with others, promoting equity and moral rectitude in society.

11. Retribution and Forgiveness: The principles of addressing wrongdoing through punishment, alongside the importance of forgiveness, are shared values that highlight the moral complexity of human relationships.

12. Belief in a Higher Power: Many traditional beliefs acknowledge the existence of a higher power or deity, similar to the Christian understanding of God, reinforcing a spiritual framework for understanding the universe.

13. Moral Accountability: The belief that humans are accountable to a higher power for their actions is common across both traditions, fostering a sense of responsibility and ethical behavior.

14. Rituals and Worship: The practice of prayer and worship is prevalent in both traditional beliefs and Biblical doctrines, serving as a means of connecting with the divine.

15. Rituals for Significant Life Events: Ceremonies or rituals for birth, marriage, and death hold significant



meaning in both spheres, marking crucial transitions in life and community.

16. Ethical Living: Both traditional beliefs and Biblical teachings emphasize living a virtuous life, which includes cultivating virtues like humility, patience, and kindness.

17. Avoidance of Sinful Behavior: Both traditions advocate for avoiding behaviors considered sinful, such as theft, adultery, and murder, promoting moral integrity and ethical standards.

18. Divine Guidance: Both systems encourage seeking divine guidance in decision-making, recognizing the importance of a spiritual compass in navigating life's challenges.

19. Communal Worship: Both African traditional religions and Christianity emphasize the significance of communal worship and gatherings, fostering unity and collective identity among followers.

20. Ritual Cleansing: Rituals of cleansing and purification are important in both traditions, symbolizing renewal, forgiveness, and the restoration of spiritual harmony.

21. Intercession: The practice of seeking the intercession of ancestors or saints reflects a common belief in the power



of prayer and the interconnectedness of the spiritual and earthly realms.

22. Sacred Texts and Oral Traditions: Both traditions rely on sacred texts or oral traditions to convey moral teachings, history, and spiritual truths, ensuring the transmission of cultural values.

23. Cosmic Balance: The importance of maintaining cosmic balance and harmony is a shared value, reflecting a holistic view of life where the spiritual and physical realms are interconnected.

24. Community Festivals: Celebrations and festivals play a crucial role in both traditions, serving as opportunities for community bonding, cultural expression, and spiritual reflection.

25. Legacy and Ancestry: Both traditions place importance on legacy and ancestry, recognizing the influence of past generations on present beliefs and practices, and instilling a sense of continuity and belonging within communities.

THE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

The following are some of the areas of disagreement between biblical doctrine and traditions:



Concept of Spiritual Authority

- **Biblical Doctrine:** The Bible teaches that God is the supreme and sovereign authority over all creation and that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity. The teachings of the Bible are considered the final authority in matters of faith and practice.
 - *Example:* 1 Timothy 2:5 (NIV) states, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."
- **Traditions:** In many cultures, spiritual authority is often understood through the lens of ancestors, spirits, and deities that are believed to have influence over the living. These entities are frequently revered and consulted in various aspects of life.
 - *Example:* Ancestor veneration is a common practice in many African cultures, where ancestors are believed to play a role in the well-being of their descendants, sometimes even being offered sacrifices or prayers.

Worship Practices

- **Biblical Doctrine:** Worship in Christianity is directed exclusively toward God, and it is to be conducted "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The focus is on a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, with



practices such as prayer, reading of Scripture, and communal worship.

- **Greek Term:** "Latreia" (λατρεία) meaning "worship" or "service," referring to the worship that is due to God alone.
- **Traditions:** Worship in many traditions involves rituals that may include offerings to spirits, deities, or ancestors, and the use of specific symbols or rites to appease these entities. Such practices may involve animal sacrifices, libations, or the use of charms and amulets.
 - *Example:* The use of ritualistic ceremonies to communicate with the spirit world, asking for protection, blessings, or guidance, is common in various cultures.

Moral and Ethical Values

- **Biblical Doctrine:** Christian morality is based on the teachings of the Bible, which emphasize love, forgiveness, humility, and the following of God's commandments. The moral code is rooted in the belief that humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and are called to live holy lives.
 - **Hebrew Term:** "Tsedakah" (צְדָקָה) meaning "righteousness" or "justice," often associated with living a life that is pleasing to God.



- **Traditions:** In different traditions, moral values are deeply tied to communal life, respect for elders, and the maintenance of harmony within the community. While many of these values align with Christian principles, there are practices such as polygamy, certain rites of passage, or revenge customs that may conflict with biblical teachings.
 - *Example:* Polygamy, which is accepted in some cultures as a traditional practice, is generally seen as contrary to the biblical model of marriage between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5-6).

Approach to the Supernatural

- **Biblical Doctrine:** The Bible acknowledges the existence of the supernatural but teaches that God alone should be worshipped and relied upon for protection and guidance. Christians are warned against practices such as divination, witchcraft, and consulting the dead, which are considered incompatible with faith in God.
 - *Example:* Deuteronomy 18:10-12 (NIV) warns against practices like divination and sorcery, which are seen as detestable to the Lord.
- **Traditions:** In some traditions, there is often a strong belief in the supernatural, with practices that include consulting diviners, using charms for protection, and



engaging in rituals to influence the spiritual realm. These practices can create tension with Christian teachings that emphasize reliance on God alone.

- *Example:* The role of traditional healers in some cultures, who are believed to communicate with the spirit world to heal or protect individuals, may be seen as conflicting with Christian reliance on the Holy Spirit, prayer, and faith in God for healing.

The disagreement between biblical doctrine and traditions largely revolves around the sources of spiritual authority, the focus and object of worship, and the moral and ethical framework guiding life. While there are areas of convergence, particularly in values like community, respect, and care for the family, there are significant points of tension where biblical teachings may challenge or conflict with traditional practices.

Christian traditional rulers must be aware of these areas of disagreement. Navigating these disagreements requires sensitivity, cultural understanding, and a commitment to uphold biblical truth while engaging respectfully with the rich cultural heritage of their traditions.



CHAPTER



19

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN PROPHETS TO KINGS



The relationship between kings and prophets in the Bible is central to Israel and Judah's governance and spiritual oversight. Prophets served as God's messengers, often delivering difficult truths to kings. This relationship is evident in the Old and New Testaments, where examples of positive and negative interactions abound.

Old Testament: Positive Relationships

One of the clearest examples of a positive relationship between a king and a prophet is that of **King David and Prophet Nathan**. Nathan acted as David's spiritual guide and counsellor, delivering God's messages with both encouragement and



warning.

When David sinned by committing adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrating her husband's death, Nathan boldly confronted him with a message from the Lord (2 Samuel 12:1-15). Rather than rejecting the prophet, David repented, showing humility and respect for God's word delivered through Nathan.

Another example of a positive relationship is **King Hezekiah and Prophet Isaiah**. Isaiah provided spiritual guidance during Hezekiah's reign, encouraging him to trust in God even in the face of threats from Assyria (Isaiah 37:1-7). Hezekiah's willingness to heed Isaiah's prophetic counsel led to the miraculous divine intervention, where God delivered Judah from destruction (2 Kings 19:32-37).

Old Testament: Negative Relationships

In contrast, there are instances where kings resisted or persecuted prophets. **King Ahab** had an antagonistic relationship with **Prophet Elijah**. Ahab, influenced by Jezebel, introduced widespread Baal worship in Israel, which was contrary to God's commandments. Elijah declared drought as a divine judgment (1 Kings 17:1), and Ahab, along with Jezebel, sought to kill him, showcasing how kings who reject God's messengers often invite disaster.



Another negative example is **King Saul's** relationship with **Prophet Samuel**. Though Samuel initially anointed Saul as king and provided guidance, Saul's repeated disobedience, especially in his failure to utterly destroy the Amalekites, led to his downfall. Samuel rebuked Saul for his disobedience, and as a result, Saul was rejected as king by God (1 Samuel 15:10-23).

New Testament Reflections

In the New Testament, the prophetic office transitions from one primarily focused on kings to one where the Holy Spirit guides believers themselves. Yet, the need for divine counsel remains important.

John the Baptist, the greatest prophet (Luke 7:28), had a confrontational relationship with **King Herod Antipas**. John condemned Herod's immoral relationship with his brother's wife, Herodias. As a result, Herod imprisoned and eventually beheaded John (Mark 6:17-29). This highlights how the rejection of prophetic voices often leads to spiritual and moral consequences.

The Need for a Prophetic Voice

Throughout Scripture, kings who aligned with God's will through prophetic counsel prospered, while those who resisted



suffered. **David**, despite being a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), needed the guidance of Prophet Nathan to stay aligned with God's purposes. The prophetic anointing corrected, directed, and protected leaders from the consequences of pride, sin, and error.

While Christians today have the Holy Spirit within them to lead and guide them (John 16:13), every leader—whether in a kingly or spiritual position—still benefits from the wisdom of a genuine prophetic voice. As Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors, there is safety." Just as David flourished under Nathan's guidance, today's leaders must seek out wise, godly counsel to stay aligned with God's purposes.

Seeking Genuine Prophetic Voices

In seeking a genuine prophetic voice, it is crucial for kings (and leaders) to pray and be led by the Holy Spirit. **Discernment** is key, as not every person claiming to be a prophet is truly sent by God. Genuine prophets exhibit the following biblical characteristics:

1. **Called by God:** True prophets are called and sent by God, not self-appointed (Jeremiah 1:5, Amos 7:14-15).
 - Hebrew: נָבִיא (*navi*) – meaning "prophet," one who is divinely inspired to speak on behalf of God



(Deuteronomy 18:18).

2. **Faithful to God's Word:** They speak in alignment with God's written Word, never contradicting Scripture (Deuteronomy 18:18-22).
3. **Boldness in Speaking Truth:** They do not fear man but speak God's truth, even when it is unpopular or uncomfortable (Jeremiah 1:17, 2 Samuel 12:7).
4. **Humility and Righteous Living:** True prophets display humility and personal righteousness, living as examples of God's will (Numbers 12:3, 2 Peter 1:21).
5. **Accuracy in Prophecies:** Genuine prophets' predictions come to pass, as their words are directly from God (Deuteronomy 18:22).

Kings must avoid so-called prophets who are driven by greed or charge money for their prophecies. **Jesus warned against false prophets who would come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves** (Matthew 7:15).

Prophets who are **"in it for the money"** deviate from the biblical model, as God's true prophets do not use their position for financial gain (Micah 3:11, 2 Peter 2:1-3).

- Greek: **πλεονεξία** (*pleonexia*) – meaning "greed" or



"covetousness," a characteristic of false prophets who seek profit instead of truth (Ephesians 5:5).

Dependence on God, Not Prophets

Finally, while prophetic voices are important, kings and leaders must not place their ultimate dependence on prophets. **God alone** should be their source of wisdom, guidance, and strength.

Prophets are merely vessels, delivering God's message, but the focus should always remain on a personal relationship with God. **Jeremiah 17:5** warns, "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength," emphasizing that reliance on God is paramount.

The biblical relationship shows that while kings benefited from the counsel of prophets, their success was ultimately tied to their relationship with God. Just as King David listened to Nathan but ultimately sought the Lord, today's leaders must prioritize seeking God's direction, praying for discernment, and depending on Him above all else.



CHAPTER



CONCLUSION



JESUS CHRIST, THE BEST DECISION FOR WISE KINGS

A Poem by Dr. Ezra Aniebue

What shall it profit you, to gain the world's delight,
Yet lose your soul forever, in the shadows of the night?
For treasures here are fleeting, like the morning dew,
But love for God is steadfast, and He waits for you.
God is worthy of your love, in darkness and in light,
Worthy of your voice proclaimed, when you stand up for
what's right.



If you confess Him boldly, He'll confess you, too,
But if you choose to turn away, your heart will bear the rue.
Created with a purpose, in leadership, you stand,
To make decisions anchored firm, to guide with a steady hand.
Don't be swayed by passing thoughts, or by the crowd's disdain,
For people come and people go, like shadows in the rain.
When all is said and done, and the dust returns to Earth,
How you treat God's dear Son will mark your soul's true worth.
So do not wait or hesitate, accept Him while you may,
With wisdom in His holy name, let Him guide your way.

Yes, leadership is challenging, with choices carved in stone,
But choosing Christ is wisdom, the best path ever known.

In the end, this choice will be your crown, your shield, your guide,

To lead with faith and trust in Him, with Heaven at your side.



CHAPTER



PRAYER OF SALVATION



PRAYER TO ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR AND LORD

Almighty God, in the Name of Jesus Christ, we humbly ask for Your grace and humility to embrace fully our roles as kings and priests in Your Kingdom.

Grant us the wisdom, courage, and humility to remain faithful to our callings, leading and serving in ways that honor You and bring transformation to the world around us.

Let our lives be a reflection of Your glory, and may our leadership advance Your divine purposes on earth, as it is in heaven.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

CHAPTER



DAILY CONFESSIONS OF TRADITIONAL RULERS FOR CHRIST



1. I confess that GOD ALMIGHTY is my FATHER and my King of Kings.

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26, NKJV); "And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:16, NKJV)

2. I confess that I speak with my mouth and believe in my heart that JESUS CHRIST is my SAVIOR and LORD of LORDS.

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9, NKJV) "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.'" (Romans 10:11, NKJV)



3. I confess that GOD made me a king. As a king under GOD, I totally submit my life, family, and kingdom to GOD ALMIGHTY forever.

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9, NKJV)

4. I confess that I am a righteous ruler who will never serve Satan all the years of my life.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24, NKJV)

5. I confess that in my kingdom idolatry will be removed and be replaced with the worship of the MOST HIGH GOD.

"You shall have no other gods before Me." (Exodus 20:3, NKJV)
"Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21, NKJV)

6. I confess that no weapon formed against me and my family will ever prosper in any realm or from any evil kingdom.

"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn.



This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me," says the LORD." (Isaiah 54:17, NKJV)

7. I confess that I will not multiply wives. I am committed to only marrying one wife, not many wives.

"You shall not multiply wives for yourself, lest your heart turn away; nor shall you greatly multiply silver and gold for yourself." (Deuteronomy 17:17, NKJV)

8. I confess that GOD is with me, and I totally trust in GOD.

"The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" (Psalm 118:6, NIV)

9. I confess that I will rule in the fear of the LORD and love for my people.

"The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.'" (2 Samuel 23:2-3, NKJV)

10. I confess that I will never support evil but will do everything in my power and abilities to promote JESUS CHRIST in my kingdom and everywhere!

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."



(Colossians 3:17, NKJV)

11. So, help me GOD in the MIGHTY NAME of JESUS CHRIST!

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
(Philippians 4:13, NKJV)





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LEADING AS A CHRISTIAN TRADITIONAL RULER

GOD ALMIGHTY, the ultimate leadership architect, is the foundational origin of all governance and authority. The essence of Christian leadership, whether as a traditional ruler, king, or queen, finds its roots in the divine nature of GOD.

Those in positions of authority must recognize that their leadership is not merely a temporal role but a divine calling with divine blessings or consequences.

This understanding will embolden rulers to ensure that their reign and governance reflect the righteousness and love inherent in GOD's design for leadership. This book is a must-read for every king, ruler, or traditional ruler.

Dr. Ezra Aniebue

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