



# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Globalisation of Christianity and Theology: A Search for the Right Framework for Christianity and Theology in Africa and Beyond

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## ABSTRACT

The study discussed trajectories of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the challenges it presents to globalisation of Christianity and Theology, especially African Christianity and Theology. It used the historical-critical and phenomenological approach which provided the framework and analysis of emerging issues and new pathways. The study examined the role Greco-Roman, Western/European, and African socioreligiocultures and spiritualities have played in the definition of the contexts and contents of Christianity and Theology. It identified three major events in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which have been most critical. They include (1) decline of Western/European hegemony, (2) shift in the centre of gravity of global Christianity from the global West (Europe and America) to the global South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) and (3) Africa's emergence as the new centre of gravity of global Christianity. These three events have presented two demands which include (2) the need to re-examine Western/European frameworks that have defined the contexts and contents of Christianity and Theology to decipher their continuous relevance in the face of changing religiographic and dynamics (2) the need to recognise Africa's alternative as legitimate, competitive frameworks for Christianity and Theology. The ailure of which is the result of religeopolitics and relativism, which only present tensions. The study concludes that although the 21<sup>st</sup> century presents grave challenges for Christianity and Theology, it also presents new pathways. The study recommends that it is important to the success of the globalisation of Christianity and Theology that Africa is bold to embrace elements within its socioreligioculture and spirituality that present competitive alternative to Christianity and Theology. The study contributes to the scholarship on contemporary issues in African Christianity and Theology the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to the globalisation of Christianity and Theology.

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## INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century presents critical challenges to global Christianity and Theology. European Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, Hegemony of the West/Europe, and Shift in the centre of gravity of global Christianity from the West (Europe and America) to the South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) have all presented peculiar challenges. However, the rise of the global South or Africa as the new centre of gravity of global Christianity presents a bigger challenge. It engenders new pathways

and frameworks that refuse to accept the status quo or Western/European (Missionary) Christianity hegemonic frameworks and nomenclatures and rather embrace the tapestry of rich, legitimate, and competitive alternatives within the African (indigenous) socioreligiocultures and spiritualities. The result notwithstanding is what seems relativist religiosities and spiritualities encompassed by a prejudiced and polemic idiosyncratic assessment of the relevance of the elements within African (indigenous) socioreligioculture and spirituality that provide competitive alternatives to Christianity and Theology beyond their borders.

Notwithstanding, the challenge presented, trajectories of the 21<sup>st</sup> century may be the greatest, and the quest for alternative frameworks that present legitimacy and competitiveness to Christianity and Theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond is the most critical. This is why this study is important. It examines the various challenges presented by trajectories of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to Christianity and Theology and how they could be approached to find the right answers for them. Although it does not discuss all the issues involved, it creates a platform for further engagements.

### **The Historical Context of Western/European Christianity in Africa**

Christianity in Africa is presented in two forms; Western/European Christianity and African Christianity. Western/European Christianity is the form of Christianity introduced from the global West/Europe. African Christianity on the other hand is Western/European Christianity that has been enculturated or represented in ways that recognise the relevance of Africa's socioreligioculture and spirituality. Scholars like Isichei Fatokun and Salvaing have provided a critical overview of their contexts and contents.<sup>1</sup> Others, like Wilhite, Hastings and Kalu, have discussed their African perspectives.<sup>2</sup> That notwithstanding, the history of Christianity in Africa is a trajectory of painful experiences. Bulhan and Oforka talk about how it was used to push the agenda of the West/Europe and its hegemony or exploitation of Africa.<sup>3</sup>

However, it has played an important role in the development of Africa, as Africa has played in world history, economics, and politics. Shillington, Fage and Oliver trace Africa's connection with Christianity to Babel (cf Gen. 11:7ff).<sup>4</sup> Palomar.edu traces it to around 300,000-250,000 years ago when *hominids*, the archaic humans emerged.<sup>5</sup> In modern times, according to Dawson and Levitin history of Christianity in Africa is traced to the religeopolitical trajectories of Greco-Roman and the West/Europe in 380 CE when Constantine (AD 272-337) became a Christian, legalized it in 313 and proscribed state persecution of Christians.<sup>6</sup> According to Bauer, this official involvement in the affairs of the Church began a strong Church-State relationship that reintroduced Christianity to Africa and other parts of the world.<sup>7</sup>

According to Procter the Church's contact with Africa never was an intentional agenda of the West/Europe but for the multiple losses of territories to Muslims, the quest to reclaim territories lost and stop Muslim expansion.<sup>8</sup> Nwaokoro and Bond argued that trade, slavery, and rash for Africa's

<sup>1</sup> E. Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995); Samson A Fatokun, "Christianity in Africa: A Historical Appraisal," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 26, no. 2 (2005): 357-68; Bernard Salvaing, "Sundkler, Bengt & Steed, Christopher.--A History of the Church in Africa. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 1 232 Pages.. Sundkler Bengt, Steed Christopher," *Cahiers d'études Africaines* 41, no. 162 (2001).

<sup>2</sup> David E Wilhite, *Ancient African Christianity: An Introduction to a Unique Context and Tradition* (Routledge, 2017); Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity, 1950-1975* (Cambridge University Press, 1979); O.U Kalu, *Africa Christianity: An Africa Story, Perspectives on Christianity Series*, vol. 5:3 (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, publication of Department of Church history, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Hussein A Bulhan, "Stages of Colonialism in Africa: From Occupation of Land to Occupation of Being," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 3, no. 1 (2015); Venatius Chukwudum Oforka, *The Bleeding Continent: How Africa Became Impoverished and Why It Remains Poor* (Xlibris Corporation, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Kevin, Shillington. *History of Africa*, (London: Macmillan, 1989); Donnelly, J. Fage and Roland Oliver, Eds. *The Cambridge History of Africa*. Vol. 3. Cambridge University Press, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> "Evolution of Modern Humans: Early Modern Homo sapiens". Www2.palomar.edu. Retrieved 2024-03-28.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher, Dawson. *The making of Europe: An introduction to the history of European unity*. CUA Press, 2002; Dmitri, Levitin. "From sacred history to the history of religion: Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity in European historiography from Reformation to 'Enlightenment'." *The Historical Journal* 55.4 (2012): 1117-1160.

<sup>7</sup>Susan, W. Bauer. *The history of the medieval world: From the conversion of Constantine to the First Crusade*. WW Norton & Company, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> George Procter, *History of the Crusades: Their Rise, Progress, and Results* (R. Griffin and Company, 1854).

resources rather were the major initial motivations for the West/Europe's interest in Africa, and not because they were concerned about Africa's need for Christ or the salvation of their souls.<sup>9</sup> The Church became a tool to spread or perpetuate the hegemony of the West/Europe. According to Brown, Craton and Milwood in Africa, when the Transatlantic Slave Trade ended, the Church remained the only powerful system available.<sup>10</sup>

The result was the surge of Christian activism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the invitation of Colonial Governments. Stanley and Lindenfeld argued that it was not until after World War I (1914-1918) that Western/European Christianity in Africa began to look at ways it could empower Africans. Scores of Western/Europeans strove the nukes and crannies of Africa.<sup>11</sup> They built schools, colleges, hospitals, etc. transcribed difficult African languages into writable forms. From earlier contact, the Church in Africa presented a strong alternative to African Traditional Religion and Knowledge Systems. It provided the impetus for Africans to rise to demand independence from Colonialism. Even though it cannot be said that the objective has been achieved or that the Church single-handedly spurned such a task, it can be said that it most certainly played a critical role.

### **African Christianity and Theology: A Non-Western Framework**

Gifford and Walls argued that Western/European Christianity in Africa has gone through several changes.<sup>12</sup> Africans have enculturated it in an attempt to make it relevant and meaningful to their socioreligioculture and spirituality. This has informed epistemologies and nomenclatures that do not only provide the right answers to the questions and existential problems emerging from the spirituality of the African cosmology and Traditional religion but also the indigenous socioreligioculture. For Nthamburi, the African Church is a growing force that needs nurturing.<sup>13</sup> He maintains that the paradox of context confusion presently facing it, however, is contemporaneous and creation of insistence on Western/European hegemony and failure to acknowledge the competitive and legitimate alternative Africa presents.

According to Heath and Studebaker Africa's socioreligioculture and spirituality present a tapestry of rich nuances that provide a relevant framework for Christianity and Theology.<sup>14</sup> The frameworks of Western/European Christianity and Theology are no longer the only option. Sanneh and Carpenter contended that African Christians and Theologians over the years have been able to enculturate Western/European Christianity and represent the same in ways that recognise the significance of Africa's socioreligioculture and spirituality.<sup>15</sup> Fashole-Luke posits that in Western/European Christianity, no provision is made for Africa's socioreligioculture and spirituality.<sup>16</sup> Africans had to look within their socioreligioculture and spirituality for frameworks out of which they could conceptualise a Christianity and Theology meaningful to their context and experiences.<sup>17</sup>

Bediako and Ukpong highlight three theologies that emerged; African or enculturation Theology, Black or liberation Theology, and Decolonisation or Postcolonial Theology.<sup>18</sup> Adamo maintained that the refusal of Western/European Christianity to recognise the alternative presented by

<sup>9</sup> Ugochukwu Nwaokoro, *The Plunder of Africa: Exposing the Exploitation of African Resources and How to End It* (Gatekeeper Press, 2023).

<sup>10</sup> Christopher Leslie Brown, "Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade," in *The Routledge History of Slavery* (Routledge, 2010), 281–97; Michael Craton, "Christianity and Slavery in the British West Indies 1750-1865," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, 1978, 141–60. Robinson A Milwood, *Western European and British Barbarity, Savagery, and Brutality in the Transatlantic Chattel Slave Trade* (Xlibris Corporation, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Brian Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': Providence Theory, the Missionary Movement, and the Imperialism of Free Trade, 1842–1860," *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 1 (1983): 71–94.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Gifford, "Trajectories in African Christianity," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 8, no. 4 (2008): 275–89; Andrew F Walls, "African Christianity in the History of Religions," *Studies in World Christianity* 2, no. 2 (1996): 183–203.

<sup>13</sup> Zablun Nthamburi, *The African Church at the Crossroads: A Strategy for Indigenization* (Uzima, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Gordon L Heath and Steven M Studebaker, *The Globalization of Christianity: Implications for Christian Ministry and Theology*, vol. 6 (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter, *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Edward W Fasholé-Luke, "The Quest for African Christian Theology," *Journal of Religious Thought* 32, no. 2 (1975).

<sup>17</sup> Fasholé-Luke, "The Quest for African Christian Theology."

<sup>18</sup> Kwame Bediako, "Understanding African Theology in the 20th Century," *The Gospel Coalition* 20, no. 1 (1993); Justin S Ukpong, "The Emergence of African Theologies," *Theological Studies* 45, no. 3 (1984): 501–36.

Africans brought tensions.<sup>19</sup> Mulago and Chitando highlighted the derogation and repugnance towards the African Traditions and Culture.<sup>20</sup> They were described as instruments of devils used to keep Africans in prisms of witchcraft, voodoo, and barbarism with a cosmology pervaded by demons (idols) and ancestor worship. According to Kirwa and Lowery in Western/European Christianity, Africans lost their identity.<sup>21</sup> They were considered incapable of becoming Christians until they had rejected or abandoned every identity they possessed, including their names, language and dresses.

It is for these reasons and more that Mbiti presented a Christian Theology of African Traditional Religion to prove that, different from the misperception of Western/European Christianity, the African socioreligioculture and spirituality possessed frameworks that are compatible with Christianity and Theology.<sup>22</sup> African Christianity therefore is enculturated ways that Africans have conceptualised the essence and theology of their socioreligioculture and Spirituality. In this context, the gospel is presented with an understanding of the values it provides for good living, justice, and peace among families, communities, and society.

### The 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Globalisation of Christianity and Theology

According to Kim, the trajectories of the 21<sup>st</sup> century present serious challenges to the globalisation of Christianity and Theology.<sup>23</sup> Laing highlights the wane of Western/European hegemony, the Southern shift of the centre of gravity of global Christianity.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, it has necessitated a demand for re-examination of the relevance of Western/European frameworks that have defined the context and content of global Christianity and Theology in the past. Andreyeva and Ilesanmi argue that the globalisation and changing faces of global Christianity defy the continuous hegemony of the Western/European framework as the only option.<sup>25</sup> There is a challenge to de-Europeanise global Christianity. This means that global Christianity needs to reinvent itself in forms appropriate to the cultures and spiritualities that it finds itself in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

Woodhead argued that just as Western/European culture and spirituality formed a context for the definition of the main frameworks and nomenclatures for global Christianity.<sup>26</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> Century demands a reappraisal within the context of new issues emerging as a result of the changing dynamics and demographics of global Christianity. This will enable it to decipher alternatives that could provide relevance beyond the West/Europe and the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For Kollman, the need to reexamine normative frameworks of Western/European Christianity and Theology is no longer an option but critical for its survival.<sup>27</sup> Anderson and Sanneh observed that, notwithstanding, new initiatives to present Christianity and Theology within new contexts that have become strategic have already begun.<sup>28</sup>

Now people are sensitive to the relevance of the values of their culture, and tradition and that they do not have to limit themselves to the hegemony of the West/Europe any longer. They have come to realize that the ubiquity of the Western/European framework is a hegemonic paradigm that no longer wiled the monopoly. For that reason, the global South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) which has

<sup>19</sup>David, T. Adamo. "Christianity and the African traditional religion (s): The postcolonial round of engagement." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32.1 (2011): 1-10.

<sup>20</sup> Vincent Mulago, "African Traditional Religion and Christianity," *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*, 1991, 128; Afeosemime Unuose Adogame, Ezra Chitando, and Bolaji Bateye, "African Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa: Emerging Trends, Indigenous Spirituality and the Interface with Other World Religions," 2012.

<sup>21</sup> David Kirwa Tarus and Stephanie Lowery, "African Theologies of Identity and Community: The Contributions of John Mbiti, Jesse Mugambi, Vincent Mulago, and Kwame Bediako," *Open Theology* 3, no. 1 (2017): 305–20.

<sup>22</sup> John S. Mbiti, "Christianity and Traditional Religions in Africa," *International Review of Mission* 59, no. 236 (1970): 430–40.

<sup>23</sup> Elijah Jong Fil Kim, *The Rise of the Global South: The Decline of Western Christendom and the Rise of Majority World Christianity* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> Mark Laing, "The Changing Face of Mission: Implications for the Southern Shift in Christianity," *Missiology* 34, no.2(2006):165–77.

<sup>25</sup> Larisa Andreyeva, "The De-Europeanization of Christianity in the 21st Century: The Phenomenon of 'Southern' Christianity," *Social Science* 48, no. 001 (2017): 124–35; Dele A Ilesanmi, "The Changing Faces of World Christianity in the 21st Century," *Mature Journal of International Institute of Theologians, Scholars, and Professionals* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–17.

<sup>26</sup> Linda Woodhead, "Spirituality and Christianity: The Unfolding of a Tangled Relationship," in *Religion, Spirituality and Everyday Practice* (Springer, 2011), 3–21.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Kollman, "Understanding the World-Christian Turn in the History of Christianity and Theology," *Theology Today* 71, no. 2 (2014): 164–77.

<sup>28</sup> Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: Africans Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Africa World Press, 2001); Sanneh and Carpenter, *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World*.

become the centre of gravity and home of global Christianity is challenged to mobilise every expertise and develop frameworks that possess the capacity, legitimacy, and competitiveness to redefine its context for Christianity and theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. This demand requires a special epistemology. Horsfjord, et al analysed a re-Christianisation of global Christianity. In their view, there is an overwhelming bias of Western/European culture in Christianity and Theology.<sup>29</sup>

The quest therefore for the globalisation of Christianity requires that attempts are made to remove the hegemony of a particular framework as the only legitimate without which every other remains legitimate. The challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, therefore, is that every culture must be permitted to define the context and content of its framework for Christianity and Theology without prejudice or polemics. In this approach, it must be recognised that there exist other contexts that possess legitimacy and competitiveness to define the framework for its form of Christianity. Frederiks and Nagy talk about decoloniality and interculturality, religious belonging and identity, and convergence of methodological framework in the globalisation of Christianity.<sup>30</sup> For them, there is inconceivable difficulty in thinking that a single framework can provide answers to the many questions emerging from the globalisation of Christianity and Theology.<sup>31</sup> Webb painted a trajectory that bedevils the quest for alternative frameworks for global Christianity and Theology. According to him, now every culture understands the importance of being relevant or recognised. They no longer want to be second-class. They are convinced that their cultures also possess extensive relevance that presents significance for any rational activity including Theology.<sup>32</sup> Using African Christianity and Theology experience as a typology, Bediako and Van highlighted how the enculturation of Christianity has been relevant within the African socioreligioculture.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Rise of Reli-Geographic Politics, Relativism Spirituality and Syncretistic Practices**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought many challenges to existing frameworks for Christianity and Theology. The three trajectories, the collapse of Western/European hegemony, the southern shift of global Christianity, the emergence of Africa as the new centre of gravity of global Christianity, and the rise of the relativity of religious expression which has placed lots of emphasis on spirituality instead of religion and the struggling of all cultures to establish recognition and significance on the global stage. The collapse of the hegemony of Greco-Roman and Western/European frameworks has created a great vacuum. This void has brought about relativity that begs for universalizability. The challenge engendered by the rise of this relativity is that every culture gains legitimacy to define its frameworks that describe the context and content of its understanding and expression of Christianity as long as it is relevant and meaningful within its socioreligioculture and spirituality.

It is for this reason that in recent times, much emphasis has been placed on spirituality instead of religion. People have come to think that religion places lots of limitations and restrictions on the expressive context of religion, which makes it an instrument for control and propaganda. Marx and Engels posit that religion is like a narcotic, it only provides a false sense of security, like opium, an illusion.<sup>34</sup> According to Geertz, it is a system of control that creates emotions and motivations in people and an understanding of existence in a way that the emotions and motivations seem real.<sup>35</sup> Spirituality, on the other hand, as described by Ojo, is the attempt to connect with the supernatural. It is like a void that possesses a presence and is to be filled with deep feelings of awe and connectedness.<sup>36</sup> McSherry and Cash argue that it is the recognition and sensitivity to the existence of something greater than

<sup>29</sup>Vebjorn, L. Horsfjord, Sven Thore Kloster, Gina Lende, and Ole Jakob Loland. *Global Christianity: Current Trends and Developments*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2022.

<sup>30</sup>Martha Frederiks and Nagy Dorottya, *World Christianity: Methodological Considerations* (Brill, 2020).

<sup>31</sup>Frederiks and Dorottya, *World Christianity: Methodological Considerations*

<sup>32</sup>Adam, K. Webb. *Beyond the global culture war*. Routledge, 2013.

<sup>33</sup>Kwame Bediako, "Africa and Christianity on the Threshold of the Third Millennium: The Religious Dimension," *African Affairs* 99, no. 395 (2000): 303–23; Adriaan Van Klinken, "African Christianity: Developments and Trends," in *Handbook of Global Contemporary Christianity* (Brill, 2015), 129–51.

<sup>34</sup>Karl, Marx, and Friedrich Engels. *On religion*. Courier Corporation, 2012.

<sup>35</sup>Clifford, Geertz. "Religion as a cultural system." In *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion*, pp. 1–46. Routledge, 2013.

<sup>36</sup>Matthews, A. Ojo. "African spirituality, socio-political experience and mission." *Mission spirituality and authentic discipleship* (2013): 47–61.

oneself, that there is something more to being human, the greater whole of the void of which humans are part is divine (supernatural).<sup>37</sup>

According to Flanagan and Jupp, spirituality is therefore a very important aspect of life.<sup>38</sup> Even though it has no specific form, Magesa argued that it is not an abstract conundrum but a tangibility that presents a framework for a connection with the supernatural.<sup>39</sup> It is this relativity that has created the greatest of the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century even though at the same time it provides an opportunity to explore the religious and spiritual void. The vacuum has created religeographic politics, relativism spirituality and syncretistic practices and segmentation which has presented a peculiar challenge. As a result, syncretic practices and elements in some cultures present serious disputes and contests for legitimacy. It is within this context that practices such as polygamy, abortion and homosexuality present their challenge. For Baloyi and Mann, there is confusion about how the practices find their place within Old and New Testament narratives.<sup>40</sup>

While early Old Testament theologies seem to endorse especially polygamy, late Old Testament and New Testament narratives condemn it. The reasons for the rejection, however, are not emphatically placed on general biblical teachings. For instance, Gitari and Beaman argue that contrary to the misconception of polygamy as having many women, in the right sense polygamy is a form of marriage recognised within the concepts of marriage in the African Culture.<sup>41</sup> In Joffe's view, it is the intolerance and arrogance of Western/European hegemony forced on Christianity that has created the misconceptions.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, Nasimiyyu and Oduyoye argue that even though no marriage (monogamy/polygamy) is without problems polygamy presents serious challenges to women notwithstanding the strict criteria that exist for the institution of polygamous marriage.<sup>43</sup> The state of African Christianity and its role as the new centre of gravity of global Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century place a serious responsibility on it.

African Christianity cannot afford to experiment with any practices that possess the capacity to destroy everything it has achieved in the many years past. According to Agboada, the reintroduction and popularisation of practices, invocations and use of items such as charms, magic, and talismans (amulets) which used to be the reserve of African Traditional Religion in contemporary African Christianity must be critically evaluated since they present critical challenges including the capacity to cripple the success made by the African context as a legitimate and competitive framework for Christianity, Theology and Biblical Scholarship in Africa and beyond.<sup>44</sup> However, Esoh cites OT prophetic literature and the versatility of African socioreligioculture and spirituality as justification for their reintroduction.<sup>45</sup> In his view, the usage of such items for power, protection, and healing is evidence that African Christianity has not been able to fill the impasse created by the failure of Western/European (Missionary) Christianity to provide the right answers to the challenges that emerged from Africans leaving their Traditional Religion for Christianity.

Levin says that even though the practice has been present in the history of the Church for very long.<sup>46</sup> It foreshadowed true interpretation and practices in the NT as intimated by Apostle Paul (cf 1

<sup>37</sup> Wilfred McSherry and Keith Cash, "The Language of Spirituality: An Emerging Taxonomy," *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 41, no. 2 (2004): 151–61.

<sup>38</sup> Peter, C. Jupp, and Kieran Flanagan. *A sociology of spirituality*, (Routledge, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Laurenti Magesa, *What Is Not Sacred?: African Spirituality* (Nairobi: Acton publishers, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> Elijah M Baloyi, "Critical Reflections on Polygamy in the African Christian Context," *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 41, no. 2 (2013): 164–81; Pamela S Mann, "Toward a Biblical Understanding of Polygamy," *Missiology* 17, no. 1 (1989): 11–26.

<sup>41</sup> David Gitari, "The Church and Polygamy," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1984): 3–10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026537888400100102>; Lori G Beaman, "Church, State and the Legal Interpretation of Polygamy in Canada," *Nova Religio* 8, no. 1 (2004): 20–38.

<sup>42</sup> Lisa Fishbayn Joffe, "What's the Harm in Polygamy? Multicultural Toleration and Women's Experience of Plural Marriage," *Journal of Law and Religion* 31, no. 3 (2016): 336–53.

<sup>43</sup> Anne J Nasimiyyu, "Polygamy: A Feminist Critique," 1992; Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "A Critique of Mbiti's View on Love and Marriage in Africa," *Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in Honour of John Mbiti*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993, 341–65.

<sup>44</sup> Edward Agboada, "Charms, Talisman and Amulets in Contemporary African Christianity," *American Journal of Biblical Theology* 2 (2020): 13–30.

<sup>45</sup> Felix Kang Esoh, "African Religio-Cultural Heritage of 'Charms and Amulets': 'Ritual Wrist Bands' as Power, Protection, and Healing Symbolism in African Neo-Pentecostalism," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1, no. aop (2023): 1–20.

<sup>46</sup> S Levin, "Talismans and Amulets: Vestigial Safeguards for 20th Century Children," *Clinical Pediatrics* 12, no. 4 (1973): 195–201.

Cor. 13:10). This is why Isaiah proscribed it (cf Isa. 3:18-20). However, for Agboada, while these practices provide avenues for African Christians to reconnect with their Traditional Religion routes without critical evaluation, they create more confusion in the attempt to decipher the right context that sufficiently and adequately fills the impasse created by the foreignness and hegemony of Western/European (Missionary) Christianity's or its refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the African context. For Umoh and Dih, however, African Christianity, if it would maintain the recognition it has received over the years, then practices that have emerged from its context characterised by syncretism have to be critically examined and their relevance derived for the present and future.<sup>47</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The study has discussed the trajectories of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the challenges it presents to the globalisation of Christianity and Theology. It used the historical-critical method, which provided the framework and analysis of emerging issues and pathways. It was observed that certain trajectories have emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, including the globalisation of Christianity, and Theology, a shift in the centre of gravity of global Christianity from the global West to the South, and Africa as the new centre of gravity and permanent home of global Christianity present incredible challenges. Loss of the hegemony of Western/European (Missionary) Christianity context as the sole legitimate framework for Christianity, and Theology or Biblical Scholarship and Africa's paradigmatic framework as an alternative present critical trajectory to the globalisation of Christianity.

That notwithstanding, the study observed that the emergence of practices, invocations and use of items such as charms, talismans and amulets in contemporary African Christianity which provide avenues for African Christians to reconnect with their Traditional Religion without critical evaluation seems to prove the failure of African Christianity to fill the impasse created by the inability of Western/European (Missionary) Christianity to provide the right alternative and the African context as a legitimate and competitive alternative. The study recommends that even though the 21<sup>st</sup> century presents many challenges to the globalisation of Christianity and Theology, it also presents many opportunities for new reflections and methodologies that can provide the right context for the globalisation of Christianity and Theology that can provide relevance beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That is to say that, within each religeographic context, every step should be made to objectively assess emerging frameworks that possess the capacity to create unnecessary syncretistic theological epistemologies or nomenclatures.

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