

CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TODAY.

The Christian Church today has become so varied and numerous, appearing in different name with different modes of worship to propagate the gospel of Jesus and the faith in the word of God. Some of these churches may be classified into Orthodox, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterians etc. One thing that is common with all these churches is their profession of faith in the bible as the word of God.

The Unity among Christians

The demand for unity among Christians is of old as Jesus our Lord prayed for it in John 17:11, 20-21., He wants Christians also to be united as He is united with His Father.

Paul also in his letter to the Ephesians, advised Christians to, “Endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace”. He went on to say, “There is one body and one spirit”. That shows that since the church is the body of Christ, it must have one spirit and one body.

However, in recent times attempts have been made to form some organization that could foster unity among Christians of various churches or denominations.

Christian Organizations in Nigeria

There are many Christian organizations in Nigeria formed to foster a common ground for the churches to come together and have a common representative when the need arises. These include; the World Council of Churches (WCC), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pentecostal fellowship of Nigeria (PN), Nigeria Association of Biblical Studies (NABS), etc.

1. World Council of Churches (WCC)

This was founded in the late 19th and early 20th century. At this time, Christians from different denominations began to pay and work together with the aim of achieving Christian unity.

Goals of WCC Include:

1. To foster visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship.
2. To promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism.
3. To engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people seeking justice and peace and upholding the integrity of creation.
4. To foster renewal in unity, worship mission and service.

Achievements of WCC

1. Theologians from different church traditions worked together in (WCC) faith and order commission to produce a statement of baptism, Eucharist and ministry that has led to new worship pattern within churches.
2. It has created a greater understanding and changed relationship between churches of different confessional traditions.
3. It has supported and inspired church participation in struggles for justice, peace, etc.
4. Improvement in the recognition of inter-religious dialogue and relation with other faiths.

2. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) is an umbrella organization of all Christian denominations in Nigeria. That is to say, that CAN is made up of all the Christian denominations in Nigeria.

CAN was also established in 1976 and was officially launched in 1980. It has five main objectives which are:

1. To serve as a basis of response to the unity of church.
2. To act as a communication committee for consultation and common action.
3. Be a watch-dog of the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation.
4. It promotes understanding among various people, state and society in Nigeria and above.
5. To promote the Gospel.

Membership Composition

The members of the CAN include the following:

- A. Churches which belong to the Catholic Church and the Christian church of Nigeria.
- B. Churches outside the Catholic Church and the Christian Council of Nigeria that –
 - i. Worship one God in the Trinity, of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. Churches that accept the scriptures of old and new testaments.
 - iii. Churches that teach their members the Christian way of life.
- C. Churches which have been recommended for membership by the standing committee of the association and are accepted by all members of CAN.

Functions of the CAN

1. To serve as a basis of action for the church as intended in our Lord's prayer.
2. To act as a strong body or means of which its member churches can consult together and make common statement and take common action where necessary.
3. To be a watch-dog of the spiritual and moral and moral welfare of the nation.
4. To propagate the gospel.
5. To promote understanding among the various people and society.

Achievements of CAN

Through the CAN, Christian denomination in Nigeria unite and co-operate in various issues like health, education, social welfare and politics. *Others include:*

1. CAN now contributes and encourages the translation of the Bible into Nigeria Languages.
2. CAN opposed the Nigerian government in attempt to make Nigeria a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).
3. In the year 2000, CAN boldly condemned the adoption of sharia in some states in the North.
4. CAN through its executive has openly condemned Muslim violence against Christians.
5. Recently, CAN has opposed the legislation of gay-marriage in Nigeria. It has as well denounced openly Christian countries that have legalized gay-marriage.

Nigeria Association of Biblical Studies (NABS)

The formation of this association is an attempt to teach and nurture Nigerian Christians on the Bible through interaction with people from other denominations.

FAITH AND WORK (JAMES 1:23-27, HEBREW 11:1-3)

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen. By faith, one belief, trust or hope in the Living Saviour. Faith is the attitude whereby a man abandons reliance in his own efforts, goodness or anything else. Faith is stronger than reason. Faith is the foundation upon which Christianity is built. By faith, we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen is made out of things we do not appear. Faith implies reliance on God and full obedience to God. In bad, faith, in good, faith.

Work means manual job or occupation. It is performing moral or religious act or obligation.

Work can also be or means vocation.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND WORK IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

Genuine faith is evidenced by work. Faith and work are inseparable. Show me your faith without work and I will show you my work. Faith is the force behind works. Work is finality of faith.

Faith and work are essential to each other as the body and the Spirit. Faith does not exist without work.

Humility: The quality of not thinking that you are better than other people, the quality of being humble.

IMPARTIALITY (JAMES 2:1-13)

This is the principle that recognizes equality and brotherhood of all men irrespective of race, social background and influence.

The act of accepting others as they are equal before God. There should be equality, love and fidelity among them.

God shows no partiality, therefore, neither should Christians.

The Bad of Partiality in The Society

1. It brings disunity among various groups.
2. Partiality breeds nepotism, tribalism and favouritism.
3. It does not foster a sense of belonging.
4. It promotes distrust.

Advantages of Impartiality

1. There will be trust among them.
2. Impartiality is a form of righteousness.

3. Manifestation of equality before God.
4. Brings unity among various ethnic groups in the society.
5. A sense of belonging will be fostered among tribes.