

**PROPHECY IN CHRISTIANITY AND AFRICAN INDIGENOUS RELIGION IN
YORUBALAND: IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA CHRISTIANS.**

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ABSTRACT

Prophecy has been seen as a means by which most Christians and others seek to know future secrets about their lives and God's plan for them. This study concentrates on the modes and structures of prophetism and its practices in Christianity and African Indigenous Religion, problem of differentiating the true prophecies from false ones. The biblical teaching and the theological understanding of prophecy employed as a platform for contemporary prophetic activities in Yorubaland, Southwest of Nigeria. Divination practices in African Traditional Religion compared to prophetic operations in Christianity in some mainline and African Indigenous Churches (AICs). The writer elucidate the original and intended biblical meaning of prophecy and ascertain the biblical premise for contemporary manifestations of prophetic gift and the implications for Christians today.

The writer adopts descriptive, historical and phenomenological methods coupled with interviews and participants observations in gathering information on the subject matter. The results indicate a strong belief in prophecy by Christians and for African Traditional Religionists and adherents many seek to know their destiny through *Ifa* divination. However, many are skeptical about the spiritual authenticity of prophecies by the prophets in most Christian assemblies. The mould of prophecy should be the Scriptures with a sound theological cap indicative of God love and salvation plan. It is clear that prophetic practices needed to be censor, expurgate or control to curb the excesses and abuse. Mainline Churches should broaden their theological base to accommodate present move of the Holy Spirit through the prophetic gifts in order to experience deeper renewal in the Church. Some African Indigenous Churches should delete totally some relics of the African Traditional Religion practices yet found in the way and manner in which they practice prophecies.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The diviner, sometimes compared with the prophet, performs the priestly art of foretelling. His art is to augur or predict the future on the basis of hidden knowledge discerned through the means of *Ifa*. Prophetic gift depends completely upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So, to a great extent, growing in prophecy amounts to waiting on the Lord. To deliver a life-changing prophecy or to receive a revelation from the Lord that provides direct guidance for some difficult situation, the

prophet has to be willing to serve the Lord fully, pray and Seek God daily—not just for the sake of prophecy, but for his (prophet) own sake.

The prophet cannot receive any prophetic revelation from the Lord if he is not abiding with God in a deep and intimate personal relationship. When the elders in Jerusalem asked Jeremiah for the word of the Lord (Jer. 42), the prophet had to go off for ten days seeking the face of God before he received it.

God has created His church to be a Spirit-indwell group of people that directly receives revelation from Him (1 Cor. 2:9-16, 1 John 2:10, 27). The receiving of such revelation and passing it on to the church or individual is the role of those who prophesy. Nevertheless, such revelation needs to be properly discerned and tested. Although, there are significant differences between New Testament prophecy and contemporary prophecy, nonetheless we cannot use the New Testament model as normative for today's prophetic phenomena.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. One major challenge facing Christianity in Yorubaland is that of false prophets masquerading as seers and fortune tellers, deceiving and exploiting simple but gullible persons, in the name of Jesus Christ. African Indigenous Churches have to put in place both spiritual and physical measures to curb the indiscriminate usage of prophecy
2. Prophecy has always been present in the church but the presence of the prophetic gifts over the past several centuries has not been common enough to help us to actualize the blessings of this gift most especially in the mainline churches. The church have been led to think that such gifts are given only to “special people,” or only in rare and extraordinary situations.

3. Mainline Churches should broaden their theological base to accommodate present move of the Holy Spirit through the prophetic gifts in order to experience deeper renewal in the Church. If the mainline churches are going to expect and receive prophecy today, this will demand some changes and in order to meet the challenge of a renewed and vital charismatic and enigmatic activity in the 21st century church, the present pastoral structures have to be examined and, in many cases, adopt change. Though charismatic gifts are not the fullness of church renewal, but they can serve as a stimulus to a much broader and deeper renewal. In most mainline assemblies, the pastoral structures of these churches are not adequate to run and operate prophetic gifts and activities.

4. The mould of prophecy should be the Scriptures with a sound theological cap indicative of God love and salvation plan. It is clear that prophetic practices needed to be censor, expurgate or control to curb the excesses and abuse.

5. Some African Indigenous Churches should delete totally some relics of the African Traditional Religion practices yet found in the way and manner in which they practice prophecies.