

Contextualization Theology for Evangelism and Mission of Propagating the Gospel of Christ in African Context

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Abstract: Syncretism is a serious issue in Africa. Contextualization of the Gospel to the African people is always in conflict with the African cultures and traditions. They see Christianity as a white man's religion, hence the need for proper contextualization of the gospel message that will pass through their culture for understanding and acceptability. There is danger in accepting various views to come into in the name of inclusiveness. The type of approach that Christianity should be inclusive like Hinduism to incorporate wide variety of views has a theological implication compromising the position of the scripture, leading to wrong teachings or heresy. Charles H. Kraft(2009 456), asserts that, "The theologizing process involves people reflecting upon God and his working as presented in scripture and experienced in contemporary life from their own perspectives. Contextualization does not suggest that people's opinions should form part of Christian doctrines but that the existing sound doctrines of Christianity based on scriptures should shape people's cultures and worldview.

Keywords: Contextualization, Syncretism, propagating, Mission, Evangelism and Theology

1. INTRODUCTION

Contextualization has historical background by which the missionaries always present the message of the gospel in culturally relevant terms to different people with different approaches. This Article seeks to explain and evaluate contemporary understanding of and approaches to contextualization and to discuss some controversial theological issues that may arise in the practice of it from an evangelical perspective. African Theology is needful for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the African People in a contextual manner. The gospel should go through their cultures for proper understanding, acceptability and for relevance. Up till now some African people refer to Christianity as white's man religion, with western Cultural orientation. Contextualization concept is necessary to overcome barriers of cultural differences in propagating the gospel. Contextualization, when properly done, can stop the practice of syncretism, since the gospel message will replace the Worldviews in religion and Culture generally. There are several contemporary understandings of the concept. David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen (2000 37 & 38), assert that, "Ancient or modern testifies that some sort of contextualization is necessary if we are effectively to go cross cultural barriers with the gospel to attempt the kind of contextualization that pleases God, conforms to his word, communicates to the world, and commends itself to the body of Christ." David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen (2000:33), quoted Byang H. Kato, Bruce J. Nicholls and George W. Peters definitions of contextualization as, "We understand the term to mean making concepts or ideals relevant in a given situation." (Byang H. Kato) (2000:34), "Contextualization is the translation of the unchanging content of the gospel of the kingdom into verbal form meaningful to the peoples in their separate culture and within their particular existential situation." (Bruce Nicholls). (2000:34), "Contextualization, properly applied means to discover the legitimate implication of the gospel in a given situation. It goes more than application. Application I can make or need not make without doing injustice to the text implication is demanded by a proper exegesis of the text." (George W. Peter).

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

The concept on syncretism is a serious problem to contextualization approach of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ in Africa. Some Africans prefer to combine Christianity and Paganism together.

Explanation and Evaluation of Contemporary Understanding of an approaches to Contextualization

There are several approaches to contextualization by contemporary contextualizers either for schools, churches or missions generally around the world. The followings are some of the approaches made overtime for effective `contextualization of the gospel of Christ to the people of the world.

2.1. Role of European Theology

Jurgen Moltman (2000:40-41), examines the role of European theology as an effective means of contextualization.

European theology can be viewed as the guardian of tradition. European theology can serve as mediator between other theologies and as coordinator of the many theological models now being developed. European theology is itself called upon to remain teachable by engaging in open dialogue with the other theologies. European theology provides protection from the dangers threatening other theologies.

Moltman examines the role of European theology as an effective means of contextualization that stands as guardian of tradition and mediator between other theologies. European theology was also expected to provide protection from the dangers threatening other theologies, unfortunate the European theology cannot shape the western traditions, modernism and other social ills like, Gay marriages, lesbianism abortion etc. The European theology can no longer provide protection from dangers threatening the church and the society, since we can have Gay Bishops in the west today. There is need to seek for a biblical sound theology that can stand the test of time in the west and beyond. European theology cannot adequately answer some serious African questions both in religion and culture. For example, witchcraft, polygamy and some serious African issues in the spirit world and the family which the western theology is yet to adequately address.

2.2. Theology of Hope

Another approach to contextualization is a theology of Hope published by Jurgen Moltman (2000:42), According to him, “eschatology had become nothing more than the sterile teaching of death and dying rather than the living vital hope which is supposed to rise out of the inherent contradiction between present and future. End-time events such as the second coming, the last judgment, and the resurrection of the dead were relegated to some future last day.” He further talks about political theology that concentrated on reflection upon life itself rather than upon vague and abstract theories. He also reflected on the Hermeneutic of Hope, where there should by proper understanding of the historic past as well as the hope for the future. Moltman in the concept of theology of hope states that there should be inherent link between the present and future in eschatological teachings, of judgment, second coming and resurrection of the dead. He advocates for political theology that concentrates upon life and not abstract theories. I agree with Moltman that there should be political will power to address the situations of the people politically, economically and socially under every existing Government globally. However, the concept of eschatology of end times cannot really fit in, in the present times, since the present world is imperfect but eschatology is all about end times leading to a perfect world of eternity, while the present world is temporal. God did not completely allow judgment only for the end times, but he exercises some levels of judgment in the present world, for instance, Cain was judged and punished (Gen. 4:13). Ananias and his wife Sapphira, were also punished (Acts 5:6 x10), meanwhile eschatological judgment is talking about everlasting judgment. But any judgment before then, may be temporal, but there is final hope for believers at the end. Contextualization Debate (2000: 48),

Contextualization proposal gave, expression and impetus to a profound change that was already taking place in the churches of the English-speaking world, especially in Britain and America, American ecclesiastical and cultural provincialism, at least at the leadership level, missiologists, theologians and other scholars came to appreciate that even though there is but one Bible, one mediator, and one gospel, nevertheless Christians of various cultures have their own ways of going about the task of understanding and communicating the Christian message.

2.3. Dogmatic Theology

Some pace setters in the process of contextualization involved themselves in making the scriptures and the gospel available to people of other cultures. Bruce J. Nicholls, (2000:51), under Dogmatic Theology developed an approach to contextualization. “He desired to develop an approach that would be more biblically defensible and missiologically sound.”

I concur with the concept of contextualization debate that missiologists, theologians and other scholars came to appreciate that even though there is one central Bible one mediator Jesus Christ and one single gospel of salvation. Christians of different cultures and backgrounds have to develop their own ways of going about the task of understanding and communicating the gospel message in their own context without changing the truth and the salvation message in it. That is the meaning of contextualization, for example Jesus’ film has been produced and presented to the Mwaghavul people in their language, likewise the Bible was also translated in their language and other gospel literatures. That is the dividend of contextualization debate, that the gospel message should reach the people in their context or worldview for clear understanding and acceptability of the message for achieving the goal of salvation.

2.4. Alternative Contextualization Approach

Linwood Barney, concept of alternative contextualization is deeply rooted in culture. He says, (2000:52), “The surface layers build on the deeper layers so that values are based on worldview and give rise to institutions such as law, marriage, education, religion and so on, therefore influence all layers but, when genuinely held, always involves the deepest layer of culture, ideology, cosmology, and worldview.” Nicholls noted on the same view of alternative contextualization that the church is faced with various sets of alternatives. According Nicholls (2000: 53), there are two levels of contextualization that are cultural and theological.

Anthropologists and sociologists largely concern themselves with cultural level. They operate in the more visible surface layers of culture that have to do with institutions, artifacts and observable behavior. Their approach is phenomenological and their product is ethnotheology. Theologians, on the other hand, primarily operate the deeper layers of culture that have to do with worldview, cosmology, moral and ethical values.

Nicholls also mentioned two approaches to contextualization as existential and dogmatic, (2000:54), “The ecumenical or synthetic, approach to contextualization is basically existential. Two basic principles interact with each other in this: (1) the relatively of text and context, and (2) the pursuit of truth via the dialectical method.”The Dogmatic approach according Nicholls, (2000:54), “begins with an authoritative biblical theology whose dogmatic understanding is contextualized in a given situation, it can therefore be termed dogmatic contextualization.”

I go with Barney and Nicholls that there should be alternative in contextualization that will address both the cultural and theological issues of the people at all levels. The anthropological issues within institutions, artifacts and Behaviour should be contextualized, likewise the theological issues of worldview, cosmology, moral and ethical concepts should be address in the light of the gospel under contextualization. I align with Nicholls on the ecumenical approach to contextualization where all believers irrespective of denominations and doctrinal affiliations should come together and agree on some doctrinal issues or principles that are related to the text and context of the scriptures in pursuit of truth and salvation that the gospel seeks to achieve. Ecumenical approach always takes a dialectical method, where people come up with a voice on an issue or issues. That also forms what Nicholl regarded as dogmatic concept with an authoritative biblical theology that is acceptable in the body of Christ by the universal church of Jesus Christ.

2.5. Christ-Centered Syncretism

Arnold Toynbee (2000:73), in his opinion under a contextualization approach named Christ-centered syncretism says that, “if Christianity is to be the religion of the future, it must become less exclusive more open to change and accepting various ways expressing the results of the religious quest stated another way, Christian must become more inclusive, more like Hinduism in its ability to incorporate a wide variety of views without losing its own identity.”Toynbee, in Christ centered syncretism

approach to contextualization, suggests that if Christianity is to be religion of the future. It must become less exclusive and more open to change and accepting various ways expressing the results of the religious quest thereby making Christianity more inclusive like Hinduism in its ability to incorporate a wide variety of views without losing its own identity.

I disagree with Toynbee, that Christianity is an exclusive religion that should not in any way be inclusive to accommodate wide variety of views for religious quest, like Hinduism, infact, Christianity does not seek to be like any religion or accepts any view outside Christ and his gospel. Any institution that does not holds to its unique structure, but incorporate wide variety of views will automatically lose its identity. This approach to contextualization will lead to compromise the true gospel for other gospels that are heretical and syncretism in nature. No anyone is allowed to add to the gospel of Christ or the words of God. “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of the book, if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in these books” (Rev. 22:18).

2.6. Indigenous Christian Theology

(Anthropology) MM Thomas suggests an approach of contextualization toward an indigenous Christian theology. He (2000:73), wrote a book titled. “The acknowledge Christ of the Indian renaissance. Theological insights for secular anthropology, the epilogue of secular ideologies of India and the secular meaning of Christ use is also made of man and the universal of faiths.” M.M Thomas (2012:38), suggests an approach of indigenous Christian theology that will address the worldview and culture of the people in their context in India. Bevans took note of some contextualizers using the same concepts as translation. Translation model or approach is also called accommodation or adaptation. “Involves the reinterpretation of a given phenomenon, whether the Bible, church structure, ritual, or symbol in a new context where the meaning and impact of the response are equivalent to those felt by the first Christian community.”

I am in support that, the Bible, the early church structured by Christ, rituals and symbols of Christian faith of the early church; should be a reference point in new phenomenon and context, most especially the impact of the gospel in the life of the early church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Louis J. Luzbetak, S.V.D (1988:67), states the vocation and task of missionaries’ contextualization under accommodation approach as, “To make the beautiful in the so-called pagan heart even more beautiful to seek out the naturally good in order to make it supernaturally perfect to present Christianity as a friend possessing the secret that will enable the non-Christian culture to reach its God-intended perfection.” It is true that the gospel should not be seen as an enemy to paganism, but as a means to shape paganism from darkness to light and from the power to Satan to the power of God. Therefore, the Christian culture should be an instrument to lighten the non-Christian culture.

2.7. The God above, but through Culture Position

Charles H. Kraft (2005:88),in his model approach towards contextualization namely, “The God above, but through culture position” opines that, “the Christian God should be perceived either as against, merely in, or simply above culture, it sees God as outside culture, but working in terms of or through culture to accomplish his purposes.”Charles suggests here that, God should not be seen as against human culture, or he is in human culture or he is outside human culture. But that God can use human culture to accomplish his purpose. I will like to add that man can use his culture negatively or positively. God can use his culture or human culture for man positively, while Satan can use his culture or human culture against man negatively. That is to say that there is God’s culture, Satan’s culture and human culture, but contextualization seeks to lead man to the right culture of God.

2.8. African Theology

Byang H. Kato states the need for African Theology as an approach to contextualize the gospel in Africa. He (2000:99), asserts that, “African theology is vague and ambiguous, but he understands it as the product of liberal theologizing. It presupposes that God has revealed himself in African traditional religions and therefore gives expression to that kind of revelation, understood in this way, African theology constitutes an important aspect of the contemporary challenge to biblical Christianity.”I reason with Kato that, an African theology is necessary to address African anthropological and

theological issues, but the African theology should carefully address what he called, vague and ambiguous in African traditional religions, which he asserts that God has revealed himself to the African through those religions. A liberation theology in the gospel is what is needed in Africa for economic, social, political and religious reasons, Africa is still facing, issues of poverty, illiteracy and paganism. The Africa theology should also address issues as, polytheism, spirits world, polygamy, witchcraft and some doctrinal issues within the church, dressing, tribalism and Favouritism are controversial issues in the church.

2.9. Liberation Theology (Praxis)

Miguez- Bonino pointed out theology of liberation in Latin America. (2000:107), He says, “theology of liberation provides the frame work for the Christians response to economic and social injustices. The classical conception assumes an absolute Christian truth which some low enshrines in the scripture or in pronouncements of the church. It is then applied to a particular historical situation.”

I concur with Bonino’s contextualization concept in which the truth of the gospel should fight injustice and response to the positive economic and social wellbeing of the people. The God is God of justice. He distributes rewards of justice (James 1:12, 2 Tim. 4:8).

2.10. Theology of Ontology

John S. Mbiti (2012:41),brought out a contextualization approach to African Christianity known as theology of ontology, He asserts that, “In a sense Christians must begin all over again. Their starting point must be to develop for African church to accommodate theology communicated by missionaries of the past.”

My concern here is that there should be African cultures that are in harmony with God’s divine culture, should be contextualized for world mission. However, Mbiti is right to say that, applying western theology on African culture may not have positive impact. But that does not mean that western theology communicated by the missionaries of the past should not be appreciated. It should be taken into consideration that past missionaries left some legacies for the Africans both spiritually and physically. For example, education, economic, social Health care and they planted many churches.

2.11. Transcendental or Subjective Approach

The concept of transcendental or subjective approach is a personal human experience of phenomena that could be conditioned by history, geography and culture. A Scott Moreau (2012:41), asserts that, “To the extent that a person of faith obeys the transcendental precepts, be responsible in trying to articulate and deepen his or her faith, he or she is doing genuine theology. And to the extent that a person does this as an authentic human subject conditioned by history, geography, culture and so forth he or she is doing genuine contextual theology.”

This concept of contextualization to is the use of metaphysical and philosophical quest searching for meanings and purpose of things conditioned by history, geography and culture, through intelligent gathering, reasoning and articulation by use of common sense and not by theological and religious quest, that gospel mission seeks to addresses for ultimate reality that is deeply rooted in God through biblically sound theology that can stand the test of time in the light of the gospel. I am of the same opinion with concept of contextualization that it can lead to genuine theology but may mislead someone concerning the true concept of God.

Countercultural Approach: The countercultural or prophetic encounter or epistemological model. Countercultural model does not look at culture as completely evil, but cannot trust culture completely. A. Scott Moreau (2012:41), says:

Practitioners of the countercultural model take context with utmost seriousness. At the same time, however, they are deeply suspicious of culture, while they do not see culture as inherently evil, they recognize that it is tainted and not trustworthy. As a result, their goal is to truly encounter and engage the context through respectful yet critically analysis and authentic gospel proclamation in word and deed.

It is true that there is not perfect culture, but the purpose of contextualization is the shape the imperfect cultures, since human beings cannot stay out of culture. For that reason, I partly disagree with this concept that because culture cannot be trustworthy, therefore it should be completely avoided. But to engage the context through respectful gospel proclamation in word and deed is accepted to shape all cultures that are contrary to the will and purpose of God.

Some controversial theological issues that may rise in the practice of Contextualization from an evangelical perspective

Abortion

The European theology as mentioned by Moltman supposed to be the guardian of tradition and serve as mediator between other theologies, can encounter some theological issues in the process of contextualization due to some contemporary issues in the western concept and worldview. For example, the legalization of abortion is a theological issue that may rise in contextualization “you shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13).

Divorce

Divorce is also a theological issue Jesus gave an answer to divorce in Matt. 19:1-12, Mark 10:1-12 Tokunboh Adeyemo says “God created Adam and Eve, male and female, showing that his design for marriage involved, a man and a woman and God”.²³ Jesus does not support divorce and remarriage in his teaching. He emphasizes that divorce and remarriage was practiced in the past due to hardness of hearts(Mathew 19:8).

Gay Marriage

Marriage of the same sex as husband and wife is a serious theological issue in contextualization man. God is against marriage of the same sex to be husband and wife. Marriage should be only between man and woman as husband and wife. (Gen 2:23-25).

2.12. Transcendental Concept of Contextualization

Contextualizing the gospel message to the people in their context, does not in any way suggest that people should go on personal reflection of an individual independent human experienced conditioned by history, geography and culture, through intelligent gathering reasoning and articulation of facts that deepen one’s faith. That view is contrary to contextualization from the evangelical point of view. Every Christian faith depends on the teaching of scriptures and the revelation of God, not on human experience of phenomena. Paul G. Hiebert (2008:319), opines that, “It is important that Christians provide a credible alternative to the existing paradigms of the world. It is not only the message we preach, but the live that will draw people to the gospel.”

2.13. Countercultural Concept of Approach

This concept of contextualization is a hindrance to the idea of contextualization itself, since this concept does not trust culture. The proclamation of the gospel to the people in their context cannot escape their culture and worldview. Benezet Bujo and Juvenal Ilunag Muya state the essential aspect of contextualization to the people involving their culture. (2006: 28),They say, “The main aim of inculturation is double, evangelizing the culture on one hand and inculturation of the gospel on the other.” Bujo and Muya state the importance of the gospel to influence both culture and the salvation life of the people, so avoiding culture in the process of contextualization is to avoid the contextualization process itself.

2.14. Synthetic Approach

Synthetic approach can form a controversial theological issue in contextualization; since the emphasis of this concept is on experience of the past and present, concerning context, experience, culture, social location, social change under both scripture and tradition. Stephen B. Bevans (2002 88-89), says, “The synthetic model might rely as well on theories of doctrinal development that understand doctrine as emerging from the complex interaction of Christian faith and changes in cultures society and thought forms.” This concept seeks to combine the scripture and tradition in one new whole. In my

opinion that idea is a challenge in contextualization. The scripture is meant to shape tradition and not allow the tradition to exist contrary to biblical principles. In evangelical view of contextualization, the scripture is not to dialogue with traditions, but to influence it.

3. CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL IN ADDRESSING CULTS PRACTICES

False teaching has bombarded the Church. In recent decades, this deception has come in like a wave which has swept in the church. Surprisingly, false teaching has received credibility in the Christian world by its echoes from pulpits and teaching positions in some churches, schools, and seminaries around the globe. Some believers today have accepted false teaching as truth and have placed error on a level equal to Scripture.

What then is false teaching? Is any perspective or statement that claims to be truthful yet contradicts what the Bible teaches (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, 1957:158).

Similarly, cult is a religion or sect considered to be false, unorthodox, or extremist, with members often living outside of conventional society under the direction of a charismatic leader. Walter Martin described a cult as "A group of people gathered around a specific person's misinterpretation of the Bible" (Walter, 1997:17). Hence Cults are groups that claim to be in harmony with Christianity but deny foundational Christian doctrines such as the Trinity or the unique deity of Jesus Christ.

- A. In the same vein Sect is a body of persons adhering to a particular religious faith. A group regarded as heretical or as deviating from a generally accepted religious tradition. More so, a sect is a group with distinctive religious, political or philosophical beliefs (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, (1957:35).

Cults and sects are indivisible. In other words, it manifests in the pollution of religion. one cannot understand the origin of cult and sect without the history of religion. This fosters us to go back to the origin of religion. Religion literally means an act of searching for God, or Supreme Being. Hence religion could be seen as ancient as the history of man; it is belief that man is created by a Supreme Being. Therefore, one could be right when one believes or holds it that religion comes after the fall of man. The religious person especially, the people of the book hold it that man is created in the image of God for the purpose of worship (Genesis 1:27-29).

This group of people believe that prior to the fall, man had been in good relationship with his creator. Thus, there was no need of religion, since the creator and man were not far from each other. In the same vein, religion is an act of searching for God. On the contrary man was in tune with God but there was chaos which makes the creature (man) becoming an enemy to the creator. To bring it nearer home, religion is instituted by man himself to search for his creator. This composition of religion is done by the imperfect being that is man, in a summary religion was born after the fall of man as revealed in the account of Genesis chapter 3.

Cult is possibly the outcome of religion considering the imperfect man searching for a perfect "God". A sinful man looking for the Holy God, the weak looking for a powerful God, to mention but a few. In view of the forgone, certainly one cannot constitute an acceptable religion before God. Thus, every religion that is constituted and originated by the fallen man is cultic. Hence, a religion that is not cultic is such that is revealed by the Holy and perfect God. It is for this reason that Christianity and Judaism are not cultic organization.

In Judaism God is searching for man as He calls Abraham, the Patriarch and uses Moses to institute Judaism. That is why Yahwehism is the worship of the only one true God. In another development God is searching for man through Jesus Christ as he incarnated to seek for him? Thus, Christianity is established by Christ. Hence one is not far from the truth when one declares that Christianity is the child of Judaism. In other word, Judaism lays the foundation for Christianity, while Christianity is the fulfillment of the predictions in Judaism.

In view of the above, the Christian believe that the Old Testament is the foundation of the New Testament, while the latter is the fulfillment of the former. Hence the Old Testament finds it's Yes in Christ. Conclusively, Christianity is not just a religion. If one will accept it as a religion, then one

should certainly understand that it is a reveal religion. There is no iota of doubt that biblical Christianity is not diluted, thus it is not cultic. On the contrary, all other world religions are cultic since they are established by some individuals who claim divine or mysterious revelation.

4. CONTEXTUALIZATION IN ADDRESSING ESCHATOLOGY

In view of the above, eschatology comes with diverse things. The prophet Daniel spoke of “the Time of the End”. The apostle Peter said, “There shall come the last days, and Paul also confirmed it that in the last day’s perilous times shall come. Before this greatest of all events occurs, the Bible speaks of a period called “The last days”, “The time of the end; “The end of the world (age)”, “The end of these things”, “The end of the days” and of a time when the course of human history is at the climax.

Of course, some professing Christians do not believe in a literal return to earth of Jesus Christ of those who do, most believed that it could be hundreds of years away. Some believe it could be “a thousand years in the future”.

Christ himself teaches on the last days. The apostles especially Paul and Peter are not exempted. Thus, this book highlight on the eschatology as revealed by Daniel.

The name Daniel means God is my judge. Daniel was written within “606-536B.C”. The content of the book of Daniel reveals God’s sovereignty in human history in other words, the kingdom of God surpasses that of man prior to the tragedy on Judah by Nebuchadnezzar where the Assyrian power who had conquered the Northern Kingdom. Hence Samaria the capital of the Northern Kingdom was ruled by the Assyrians. The defeat of the northern kingdom was too severe as consequences for their apostasy. In other words, the worship of Baal and other god’s which was introduced by the first king of the northern kingdom Jeroboam who had replaced the worship of YAHWEH with that of baalism. King Ahab through his wife Jezebel where devoted to baalism and this invoked the wrath of God upon the nation of Israel.

In like manner Judah was deceit (destroy) by Nebuchadnezzar in the third year of the reign of king Jehoiakim (Dan. 1:1-2). Interpreting this biblical text king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was able to defeat Judah not for the sake of being great. However, the defeat of Judah was punishment that God permitted upon his people for their sin. Consequently, the book of Daniel can be divided into two; the first section portrays Daniel’s personal life, his relationship with God. Hence his faith in God is demonstrated in all circumstances. The light of God in Daniel is manifested and seen in the darkness hence the king was convinced that Daniels’ God is the sovereign God. The section reveals that Daniel is God’s kingdom minded. Daniel and his friends hold firm to their faith in YAHWEH despite oppositions, tribulation and persecution (Dan. 1-6). However, Jesus himself and the apostles the students of theology undoubtedly know that the apocalyptic books include: Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation. Hence Prophet Daniel begins to talk on eschatology according to Daniel chapter 2. This is best on the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:24-49).

The second section of the book of Daniel (Dan. 7-12) contains visions reveal to him by God. This was in the days of king Belshazzar of Babylon and Darius of Medes and Persians. Likewise, Daniel had a vision in the reign of king Cyrus of Persia (Dan. 8:1-3, 10:1-2, 11:1-2). Hence, this second section of Daniel is on eschatology in other words, Daniel is privilege to receive divine revelation pertaining things that will happen in the last days. Thus, the entire section is in unity. This part of the book is too similar with Christ teaching on eschatology as reveal in the synoptic gospels (Matt. 24:1ff, Mk. 13:1f). It is clear that apostle John has similar revelation.

No wonder the message that John received is an encouragement to the persecuted church the Asia world specifically the seven churches. Hence revelation is a continuity of the prophecy of Christ as well as Daniels message. The book of Revelation points to the coming suffering and tribulations, the antichrist and Christ victory over all. Therefore, the saints are people of hope who will sometimes someday inherit God’s kingdom (Rev. 1-21).

In view of the preceded, there is no iota of doubt that Gods’ message is one. Consequently, Daniel 7 and 8 reveals that in the last days kingdoms will rise against kingdoms. Daniel 7 can be summarized that in the last days four kingdoms will rise against one another. The four beasts that Daniel saw refer to four kingdoms. Ten kingdoms will rise from the fourth kingdom. In his vision Daniel saw four

beasts. The fourth beast had ten horns. Thus, it is the most powerful beast; fortunately, he saw the vision of the ANCIENT of days (YAHWEH). He also had a vision of the son of man. The four beasts are four kings who shall arise on the earth. As for the fourth beast, is the fourth kingdom that appears on earth it will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom after them another king will arise different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the most high and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and laws the holy people will be delivered into his hands for a times and half a time. But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the most high. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him”.

The antichrist feature himself in diverse ways and continuously one should know that any kingdom, leadership, organization, sects and any other individual that does not only speak blasphemous against the highest but opposes the gospel and even claim to be God is an antichrist. In other words, the creature or human being that is worship rather than God is antichrist. Therefore, many antichrists have existed in human history in like manner several other antichrists are coming especially in this 21st century. The joy of the believer is that the ancient of days (sovereign God) has delegated the authority and victory to the son of the highest. Hence the kingdom of God triumphs over that of darkness. No matter the degree of suffering that the saints encounter it is momentary. The saints will reign in the glorious kingdom (Jn. 14:1-3, Rev. 21:1-7).

Similarly, Daniel is privilege to have another vision on kingdoms that will rise on earth this is reveal in Daniel 8:1-27. He sees a vision of two beasts; the first is a ram while the second is the goat. This vision is the manifestation of things that will happen in the last days. “The two horned ram that you saw represents the kings of media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. The fourth horn that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will be emerged from his nation but will not have the same power.

In the latter part of their reign when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue will arise. He will become very strong but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does; he will destroy those who are mighty, the Holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the prince of princess. Yet he will destroy but not by human power.” (Dan. 8:20-25)

Reflecting on the above text, the end times comes with power toast. The ram with two horns portrays the two powerful kings of media and Persia that are powerful while the goat is a symbol of the Greece Empire. The kings that arise in the Greece kingdom will be powerful. However, the most powerful king will come. The saints will be persecuted by this king. He will not only molest God’s people but he will persevere to struggle with the highest. In other words, this king will claim to be God himself. Although he will appear to be victorious but at last, he will be defeated and his kingdom will come to an end. Indeed, no human being will compete with him but the ancient of days, the I Am and Son of the Most High who is omnipotent is not to be compared with any other power. He is the creator of all the prince of the air or the devil who is the source of power for evil people is subjected to him therefore no matter the mysterious act of any other person he is not to be worshiped.

Daniel 9 is the prayer of the servant of the Lord Prophet Daniel who is in tune with the Lord intercedes for the deliverance of God’s people from exile. Daniel 10 and 11 are in unity. Here in chapter 10, Daniel holds a fasting for three weeks in continuity of his prayers for the restoration of his people Israelite. Hence Daniel has another vision whereby the angel of the Lord encouraged him and reveals to him that his prayers for his people have been answered. The Lord reveals to Daniel that his prayer was answered since he started intercession but the priest of Persia has delayed the answer. Fortunately, the Lord sent angel Michael to support the messenger who brought the message to Daniel. Hence the prince of Persia was defeated and so the answer of his petition has reached him. The Lord promises that he will confirm his word as he restores the Israelite from exile.

In another development Daniel 11 is the manifestation of the vision he received concerning the last days. There will be wars within, kingdom and kingdoms. The kings of Persia will raise one after the other. Consequently, there will be Great War between the kings of the north and the south. The last powerful king will come from the south. He will blaspheme the highest but his kingdom will come to an end. This is also possibly anti-Christ but glory be to God that he will be divinely defeated. The climax of Daniel revelation could be sum up as the kingdom of light, that the kingdom of light will overcome the kingdom of darkness Daniel 12 is too similar to the ESCHATOLOGICAL teachings of Christ and the revelation of apostle John (Matt. 24, Rev. 22).

Daniel 12 verse 1 and 2 reveals the characteristics of the last days. In the last days there will be sufferings, persecutions, tribulations, hunger to mention but a few. Apostle Paul clearly reveals the signs of the end times (2 Tim. 3:1-8). On the contrary there is hope for the righteous. The righteous that die in the Lord will rise. One could say that this encouragement to Prophet Daniel, God's people in the Old Testament period and the saints is applicable to believers in the 21st century. At the glorious return of Christ his believers will appear.

In other words, this serves as encouragement to God's people in exile who are facing great tribulation. In another development the persecuted church is encourage to wait upon the great shepherd who will soon come for his people (1 Pet. 5:1ff).

In the light of the above Daniel 12:3, is a source of comfort and strength to God's people. Hence there will be great transformation at the return of Christ. Believers will not only clothe with immortal bodies but they will enjoy the glorious home where there is no element of suffering. One could be right when one says that this is a revelation that believers will be transform to be like angels.

Another important sign of the end times is the zeal for knowledge as well as its increase. The last days certainly comes with knowledge. The desire for knowledge or enlightenment in this 21st century is always on the increase. No wonder we are in the computer age. Information Communication Technology (ICT) has cut across almost every part of the world. This is good but knowledge without the fear of God is destructive hence believers should take precaution (Daniel 12 verse 5-9).

The time of the happening is not specified although pronouncement of blessing is poured upon one who waits for 1335 days, "Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1335 days" (Daniel 12:12). The calendar of the Lord is only in HIS hand. However, the fullness of time will come after the fulfillment of every prophecy or predictions in the scripture, the time given here in Daniel is only a symbol for God's time is not human time. The Bible clearly reveals that a day, an hour, minute and a second twinkle of an eye is just like a thousand years vice versa (Psalm 90:4, 2 Pet. 3:8). Hence, the signs of the end are plain (2Tim. 3:1-8, 2Tim 4, 1 John. 4:1f) but the exact day of Christ return is known only by YAHWEH. No wonder as Prophet Daniel insisted the Lord could not reveal the exact time for him. Here the believer is expected only to live by faith and wisdom, the believer is expected to be on alert ready for the glorious return.

Daniel 12:10-13, is an encouragement to the faithful. It is also an appeal as well as an opportunity for unbelievers to repent. The wise refers to God's specifically believers who anticipate the glorious return try to live a holy life despite difficulties. The wise are people who set their heart on things above rather than carnality. They are people that are washed by the blood of Jesus, they also people who wait upon the Lord for purification and sanctification (1Jn. 3:1-2, Col. 3:1-3, 1Jn. 5:1-5, Rev. 5, Rev. 7). On a contrary the foolish are the wise of this age they employ human wisdom for spiritual things. Thus, they disbelieve for they could not understand. These are people who approach God sight not by faith. There is no iota of doubt that the foolish are the unbelievers. They often deny the existence of God. Unfortunately, among the Christendom are the foolish for they do not know the time (1 Chron. 12:12). They live as if the world will not collapse. These people do not know that we are in the end times (Eph. 5:15). The unwise live in sin just as in the days of Noah and Lot (Genesis 6:1f, 19:1f).

In the light of the preceded the evangelical pastor is expected to redouble his effort in shepherding God's flock especially in the last days. He is to hold firm to the sound doctrine. A pastor will not be fruitful in his ministry if he lacks a complete knowledge about things that will happen in the last days. Daniel is a role model for the pastor in the 21st century. One who is in tune with God will always

receive divine revelation to equip him shepherding God's flock. The book of Daniel reveals clearly that the end time comes with kingdom rising against kingdom. In other words, the world powers of our time are just like the Babylonian empire, media and Persian kingdom, Greece, Roman Empire etc. The 21-century pastor should be on the alert for false prophets and antichrist will continue to come. They may appear in the name of religion or political rulership. Thus, the pastor himself should be wise to take care of himself and the flock of God (Act 20:28).

The 21 century comes with so many terrorists' outbreaks. These groups often cloth themselves with religion. The most popular religious fanatic group is the Boko haram in Nigeria. This organization has spent more than 10 years terrorizing nations especially the believers, hence the pastor is call upon to serve as instrument of encouragement to believers. The people of God are always seen as victims or rated as crisis people but God is our judge. Many at times political policies or government policies are to the favour of some fewer religions or specific religion but God remains our judge.

Daniel reveals that all the earthly kingdoms will one day come to an end. Hence, the joy of the believer is in Christ; knowing that one day someday the Lord will judge the entire world. The righteous will be saved but the wicked will be condemned eternally. He that overcomes he shall wear the crown of life. The pastor and the entire body of Christ are urged to live as people of wisdom anticipating the glorious home (Rev. 21:1-4, Jn. 14:1 & 2).

In summary the sovereign Lord has revealed some happenings on the last days to King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar could not understand the dream. None of his wise men or astrologers could understand and interpret it. Fortunately, God uses Daniel not only to narrate the mysteries of the dream but to interpret it. The dream is concerning the rising of kingdoms against kingdoms in the last days. The first kingdom is that of Nebuchadnezzar that is the Babylonian Empire. Thus, no kingdom will shake his own kingdom. However, the second kingdom will rise but it is inferior. The third kingdom will rule the whole earth, but it will come to an end. In the same way the fourth kingdom will be strong desiring to rule the whole world, but it will be divided. The subject matter possibly is the last kingdom; this is the prediction of a kingdom that will be established by God himself. There is no iota of doubt that this prophecy is on Christ kingdom. It is much related to other OT predictions such as Isaiah 9:6-7, Micah 5:2. When one critically analyzes Daniel's teaching in relation to the rising kingdom one will certainly accept that it has come to fulfillment, this is sure for kingdoms such as the Babylonian Empire, the Assyrian, the Greece, the Roman Empire, they have existed as world powers in the history of the world. Biblical theologians understand that Daniel's prediction have been fulfilled but not in fullness. One holds this view for the sake of the fact that Christ is on the throne. Throughout the New Testament time, the Kingdom of God is reigning in the hearts of men and demonstrated in Christ Church. But the fullness of the kingdom will appear in His glorious return.

Consequently, the appearance or presence of false prophets, sects and cults inclusively are some characteristics of the last days. Hence the evangelical pastor should be caution of the happenings. Thus, he is to be watchful of himself and be able to shepherd God's flock as apostle Paul teaches. (Acts 20:28).

5. CONCLUSION

Every contextualization approach should take an evangelical form of presenting the gospel to the people under sound biblical principles, that can meet the will and purpose of God for the people. The essence of contextualization is to address the spiritual, moral economic political and social needs of the people with the gospel. Contextualizers should focus on the values and virtues of the gospel for transformation of cultures and worldviews in the right direction that will bring glory to God and development to the people in a wholistic manner. Sherwood Lingenfelter (1998 12-13),says. "The idea of contextualization is to frame the gospel message in language and communication forms appropriate and meaningful to the local culture and to focus the message upon crucial issues in the lives of the people." It is always wise to stick to the divine order of priorities as God's plan for humanity and not to stick to traditions and worldview based on human judgment that cannot always be trusted. Whatever God wants is superior to what human beings see as pleasurable and satisfying. There should be adjustment on cultural programme that will be in conformity with what God wants. Therefore, contextualization should be focused on what God's wants for the people within their culture and worldview. Let God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Mathew 6:10).

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