

## RELIGION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF IN THE BAKOSSI COMMUNITY

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**Abstract:** Religion constitutes an inextricable part of the Bakossi community which is situated in south west region of Cameroon precisely in Kupe Muanenguba division. As such, political, social and economic activities are often flavoured with religious expressions and rituals. Religiosity is expressed in many ways within the daily activities of the people. Source" Abwezor Williams.M. "God in Africa traditional religion and the old Testament", nyasoso based on the Bakossi traditional religion, 1978, P. 31.) With this, poverty and corruption are rife on the Africa continent as quoted by (Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart, 2015, p.1. The question which comes in our mind is does Bakossi religiosity pave the way to poverty and corruption among the Bakossi people or does religion has a crucial role to play in the liberation of communities from poverty, morality, corruption and other aspects? This article investigates the role of religion in political malpractices, poverty, corruption, political crisis and others things facing the Bakossi community. (Source: E. Ngalame, the belief in the death and life after death in the old testament and in the Bakossi traditional religion, end of year dissertation in the school of theology Bambui, 1979). It equally demonstrates the fact that, Christianity has been an instrument of social change in the Bakossi community; it remains a crucial component which has greatly contributed to moral, socio-political and economic transformation. Our statement of problem here is how has religion transformed the Bakossi community? For a better realization of this project, there were two main methods that have been used. Firstly, there was an intensive field work which has permitted us to collect data through interviews on how religion has changed the Bakossi community. Secondly, we also visited libraries which helped us in consulting written document which permitted us to complete our oral information. We have examined Religiosity as an endemic of social capitalism, Poverty and Corruption, part II. The Role of Religion in Political and Social Development in the Bakossi community, Part III. Religious resources for Social Change. Our expected results here is that at the end of this article, we have shown different areas where social transformation has occurred the Bakossi communities due to religion.

**Keywords:** Bakossi, Religion; African Traditional Religion; Christianity; Social Transformation;

### LA RELIGION ET la TRANSFORMATION SOCIALE LA COMMUNAUTÉ BAKOSSI

**Résumé:** La religion constitue une partie inextricable de la communauté Bakossi qui est située dans la région sud-ouest du Cameroun précisément dans l'arrondissement de Kupe Muanenguba. Dans ce cas, les activités politiques, sociales et économiques sont souvent agrémentées par d'expressions religieuses et rituelles. La religiosité s'exprime de plusieurs manières dans les activités quotidiennes de ces dernières. Avec cela, la pauvreté et la corruption sont des moyennes courantes sur le continent africain, comme l'a cité (Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart, 2015, p.1). La question qui nous vient à l'esprit est la suivante : la religiosité ouvre-t-elle la voie à la pauvreté et à la

corruption chez les Bakossi ? Ou la religion a-t-elle un rôle crucial à jouer dans la libération des communautés de la pauvreté, moralité, corruption et d'autres aspects ? Cet article étudie le rôle de la religion dans les malversations des crises politiques, pauvreté, la corruption, et d'autres problèmes auxquels la communauté Bakossi est confrontée. (Source: E. Ngalame, the belief in the death and life after death in the old testament and in the Bakossi traditional religion, end of year dissertation in the school of theology Bambui, 1979). Cela démontre également le fait que, le christianisme a été un instrument de changement social dans la communauté Bakossi; elle reste une composante cruciale qui a grandement contribué à la transformation morale, sociopolitique et économique. Notre problématique ici est de savoir comment la religion a transformé la communauté Bakossi ? Pour une meilleure réalisation de ce projet, nous avons utilisé deux méthodes principales. Premièrement, il y a eu un travail intensif sur le terrain qui nous a permis de collecter des données à travers des entretiens sur la façon dont la religion a changé la communauté Bakossi. Dans un deuxième temps, nous avons également visité des bibliothèques qui nous ont aidés à consulter des documents écrits qui nous ont permis de compléter nos données orales. En ce qui concerne notre plan, nous avons examiné la religiosité comme endémique du capitalisme social, pauvreté et corruption, (I) deuxième partie nous avons examiné Le rôle de la religion dans le développement politique et social de la communauté Bakossi, (II). Et troisième partie nous avons examiné la religion comme ressources pour le changement social. Les résultats attendus ici sont que, à la fin de cet article, nous devons montrer les différents domaines où la transformation sociale s'est produite dans la communauté Bakossi en raison de la religion.

**Mots-clés** Bakossi, Religions ; Religion Traditionnelle; christianisme; transformation

## Introduction

“Religion constitutes an inextricable part of African society. But although religion is flourishing in Africa” (Cf. Obaji and Ignatius Swart, 2015, p.1), many communities include the Bakossi community are growing poor and poorer. Not only are these communities been the poorest, but there is constant increase of corruption, immorality, social capitalism and many other forms of undesirable aspects in their communities. In 2010, New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) whereby, “Cameroon was ranked among the seventeen most corrupt countries in the world nor matter her level of religiosity” (NEPAD, 2012, p.14). Today, Challenges of poverty, corruption and underdevelopment has become the order of the day among the Bakossi people.

Religions therefore constitute an enormous terrain that overlaps with the socio-political and economic spheres. To this effect, religion is of integral importance: it concerns the deepest root of human existence and integrates human life into a coherent whole.(Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015, P. . According to Mbiti’s analyses, it is difficult to define religion. It is even more difficult to define religion in the context of African traditional life. Despite

these difficulties, he asserts that for then Africans, religion is an ontological phenomenon: it pertains to the question of existence or being<sup>1</sup>.

Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015, p.)

Before today's increase religiosity, religion was a conduct that guided life within a social group and it was often organised and practised by the community and not an individual or personal affair. All African societies including the Bakossi people viewed

[...] life as one big whole and religion permeates all aspects of life. In terms of this thinking, it is the whole that brings about the unification of the parts. "(J. Mbiti, 1999, P. 15. Among the Bakossi people, there was no division between matters of religious practices as it is the case of today. (source: Sone Ivo Etuge "the *ndie* cultural festival as a factor of harmony and a uniting factor between the physical and the invisible world to the Bakossi people" unpublished article. As such, in the African worldview religion permeates the political and socio-economic life of Africans, just as politics, economic activities and other vital components of life permeate religion. In many African countries people who do not subscribe to any form of religion make up less than 0.1% of the population<sup>2</sup>. J. Mbiti 1999, P. 17 quoted by Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015)

Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015, p.)

Thus, religion cannot be excluded from the root cause is the level of contemporary societies. It will be uncultured for any scholar to underestimate the simple fact that; Religion constitutes the main roots of the Bakossi community which englobes the socio-political life, economic and social development of this great community. "This article wishes to reconsider the role of religion in eradicating poverty and corruption and in doing so contribute to the socio-political and economic transformation of Bakossi people" (E. Staube, 1936, p.15). By using the concept of religion, African Traditional Religion and Christianity, we shall be answering to the question; to what extent has religion contribute to poverty and corruption on the Bakossi community? In striving to answer these questions, we will first seek to develop a better grasp of religion as a major constituent of the worldview of African people. How the of endemic poverty affects the Bakossi community despite the phenomenon their religiosity?

### **1. Religiosity as an endemic of social capitalism, poverty and corruption**

There is massive movement of people today towards religiosity of all its kind. It has become so common to listen to people call "men of God" make pronouncements about the lives of their followers. But it is ironical that, endemic, immorality, tribalism, Poverty Corruption and many other forms of unreligious

<sup>1</sup>J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Heinemann, 1999, P. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 1999, P. 17

behaviours have over taken the Bakossi community at the wake of overt Religiosity. “The recent economic statistic performance of the Bakossi people proves that religion does not promote economic diversification, job growth and social development thereby increasing the level of poverty of the people” (UNECA, 2012). According to the 2013 statistic of UNECA (2021), “millions of Africans are economically backward”. According to our research, “it is established that not only does religion encourage social capitalism, corruption nor poverty” (Cf. Kolade, 2001, p.87) but it equally encourages laziness. Poverty and social capitalism continuous to swallow the Bakossi community because of their constant and persistent propagation of religiosity (Sone Etuge, 2017, P. 113).

### ***1.1 Religiosity and immorality within the Bakossi community***

This is one of the greatest areas which mostly affected in the Bakossi community in particular and Africa in general as far as religiosity is concerned. “Religious confrontation has left people with no choice than to question greatly the religiosity in the entire Africa and the Bakossi people in particular” (Ejedepang Koge, 1986, p.87). The intensity of tribalism, discrimination, favouritism, corruption and many other forms of illegal practices among societies in the midst of intense religiosity is alarming. Today, morality, discrimination, looting, remains questionable in this predominantly religious community. It develops questions such as; what are the consequences of this form of religiosity? How does the moral experience and performance of Africans conform to the requirements of biblical and African traditional religious morality? After a critical observation about moral vacuum in the Bakossi community today and with the level of their religiosity, our point of view however, is that religion could play a prominent role in the transformation of the Bakossi community looking at the number of religious practitioners religious institutions. It is also viewed that; religion and religious practitioners could play a more transformative role in society if they were liberated from certain limitations such as accumulation of wealth, constructions of luxurious institutions and other exorbitant practices.

### ***1.2 Religiosity and poverty among the Bakossi people***

[...] The perception and definitions of poverty varies and there is no consensus on the definition of the concept Recently, the concept of poverty was under discussion by the United Nations Development Programme, where they affirmed that “people can be said to be in poverty when they are deprived of income and other resources needed to obtain the conditions of life like diets, material goods, amenities, standards and services that enable them to play the roles, meet the obligations and participate in the relationships and customs of their society

White & Tiongco (1997, p.22-26)

[...] poverty in terms of basic needs talks of lack of food, education, cloths and many other things. It is important to underline the fact that, there is poverty and absolute poverty. Absolute poverty refers to the inability for an individual, or a community to meet basic needs such as the need for food, shelter, potable water, healthcare and education (Stan Burkey, 1993, p.4). The Bakossi community can be classified within the range of absolute poverty category as explained by P. Townsend (2021). The Bakossi community for instance is suffering from financial incapacity and the inability to meet the basic needs of individuals and even the community. This in effect has deprived the people from their happiness and good health. Been aware of how religiosity has increased the level of poverty are the people ready to dissent from religiosity?

### ***1.3 Religiosity and corruption in the Bakossi community***

Corruption “is the offering, giving, receiving or soliciting directly or indirectly anything of value to influence improperly the actions of another party” (Auteur, année, p.)(Ndem Ndiyo, 2008, P.175) In the same line of action, Corruption is dishonest or illegal behaviour especially by powerful people such as government officials or police officers (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/corruption>. Accessed 30 June, 2020.) Corrupt practice varies enormously from persons to persons from place to place, but neither the place nor the person, it is usually considered as fraudulent and obstructive practices (Ndem, 2008, p.175). In most cases, corrupt practices emanates from selfishness, egoism and the inability to put in practice religious values despite the level of the Africans religiosity. In another angel of argument, the level of poverty of the African is also another great influence of constant corrupt practices. Seen the level of religiosity of the Bakossi people, one could have expected a drastic decrease in corruption but it is not the case. With this, support programmes which will enhance religious cooperation and accelerate development through diversification are needed. Poverty has expose so many people to corrupt practices in the community. Bakossi and many others communities should take into consideration their religiosity before putting into value any practice. Despite the fact that, Cameroon is considered one the most corrupt countries in the World; it is unbelievable and irreconcilable to see the significant numbers of religious centres and activities in Cameroon (Okafor, 2009, p.117). Cameroon stands in direct competition with Nigerian as far as corrupt countries are concern in Africa continent (Onaiyekan, 2010, p.2).

If Christianity and traditional religion are the norm, how then should the remarkable rise in instances of corruption, looting of public treasuries, electoral malpractices, cultism, bribery and other forms of criminal activity be explained in our communities today? What constitutes the actual moral authority of Christians (Magesa, 2010, p.5) and traditional religionists? With the above questions, religion has failed to “live up to their religious vocation, especially in terms of enacting

sound moral values in the minds of the present generation. With such extremely difficult and disturbing questions, there is need for a call of deep reflection on the part of religious scholars and practitioners". Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015), Pp.8-9

## **2. The role of religion in political and social development**

### ***2.1 Religion and political attitude among the Bakossi***

Before the era of globalisation, political structures were strictly under religious norms. Today, with the concept of globalisation, there is a wide distance from religion and socio-political and economic life of the people. Today, philosophical and ideological basis for the modernisation agenda do no longer tie with reasons and religious analyses of the Bakossi people (Ngole, 1997, p.8). Initially, reason and faith were constructed as oppositional, mutually incompatible which was at the counter of development. This explains why religious reasoning was inflexible on social and political change. Today, the engagement between faith and development are moving on opposite direction. Within the Bakossi community, religion to an extent remained at the center of all aspects of life. Historically, all communal matters were resolve based on religious principles. During that period of time, Poverty was not a pronounced feature among the Bakossi people. Today traditional norms still exist until religiously informed which ensure there is care for all members of the community. Such norms and practices communal life and a sense of sharing even with strangers. The notion of material accumulation for personal gain had never been the concerned of politicians in the past. The political principle of wealth or riches meant to be surrounded by many people in the community. It also meant good health, ethically sound, and to be in good term with one's creator, ancestors and community. The concept of honour and shame was important "as it prevented people from stealing in order to gain prestige or win fame in the community. Poor political behaviour was considered as a taboo and stigmatised" (Magesa, 2010, p.71).

There are critics who argue that the African patterns of social behaviour are basically responsible for the material backwardness of African societies. However, within the corpus of alternative developmental approaches, humankind is being urged to return to communal and sustainable lifestyles, as they are now believed to be the solution to the global economic and environmental challenges. Despite the erosion of many religiously informed traditional practices by the forces of modernity and globalisation, religion, whether African Traditional or Christian, still has a vital contribution to make to the progress of those communities where modernity has been planted. Religion has provided and can still provide a frame of reference to the society mostly through devotedness of the Bakossi people.

H. BALZ (1991, p.120)

Religious values have greatly informed practitioners and as a consequence, these values should be cherished immensely because their benefit may serve as conceptualisation and development of modernity by giving more values to democracy and democratisation in the face of globalisation. It is important to underline the fact that, one of the most political problems that the Bakossi people are faced with in this era of globalisation is lack of human equality, morality, freedom and human dignity. Within the Christian understanding, this is the prophetic function of religion. "The Bakossi traditional religion had always measured the credibility of the people's sense of reasoning and thus it became indispensable in implementing moral values in the community". (Swart, 2001, p.8).

Religion plays an indispensable role in fostering values such as honesty, integrity, openness, forthrightness and tolerance. Such values are crucial for the developing good democratic political systems which the Africans in general and the Bakossi people in particular are in dying need. The Bakossi political systems are still grossly underdeveloped despite the level of religiosity of the people. The low level of forthrightness and transparency within political institutions and by leaders is hindering political progress due to constant corrupt practices and this has stifled development of the Bakossi community. The indirect religious influence on political activities through the transference of religious values was beneficial to political institutions in Africa. As far as the Bakossi Traditional Religion was concerned, social values were fostered in community through the immersion of the individual in the activities of the society through active participation in the community. The indigenous spirituality and morality was done through active participation in communal engagement. Thus, spirituality and morality were inseparable in improving political behaviours of the citizens. The immersion of the individual into the community always began with the house to family setting from family to the village setting and from village setting to community setting. There was need to undertake all these levels which usually occurred simultaneously and reflected the moral formation of the individual the entire community thus, giving a concrete accountability of communal engagement. (Cf. Magesa, 2010, p.71)

This clearly explains the fact that the Bakossi traditional religion establishes a link between spirituality and morality and this proves that Religion resonate with Christianity. Christianity pays attention to moral formation through Bible study. Thus, Religious teachings are generally aimed at moral formation which contributes substantially to developing in every community and deplorable socio-political conditions of the Bakossi community today (Kalu Globalization and Religion, 2010, p.84). Religion stood a test of time in creating hope in areas where human reasoning failed. Through religious festivals, other celebrations in honour of the Supreme Being, the people gained confidence on their political engagement. On the sphere of Christians, they used the Bible as mediator through emphasis on the power of the Word of God in spiritual formation and in resisting evil forces. They organised Bible studies and Sunday worship with notebooks to take down

the message with the aim of improving on their understanding of the works of God and applying the words during the week while hoping for a better tomorrow. "The aim here is to relate the promises in the Bible to the existential problems being experienced by the people so that no worshipper leaves the service bearing 'the burdens of yesterday'". Religion in its understanding fought and is still fighting towards consciences of religious practitioners in order that their actions respond to the challenges of the Bakossi society mostly their political challenges. As a result, the religious person becomes a source of social capital.

## 2.2 Religiosity as social capitalism

Religion has become a key source of social capital. The concept of spiritual and religious capitalism (Pp. 163-164) is similar to the more general concept of social capitalism because this is a resource based on relationships that individuals and religious groups can access for their personal well-being. The same resources can also be donated as a gift to the larger society. They provide a network of social and economic transactions.

Ejedepang-Koge (1975, p.12)

[...] between traditional and Christian spiritual. Initially, religion was often used as a social factor in mobilising resources at the interest of the community (Balz, 1991). With the advent of globalisation and intense religiosity, resources are no longer mobilised to address community issues but for a certain group of individuals who belong in a particular religious grouping. It assists in raising consciousness about community problems. "This is mostly among people who would not otherwise be aware of those problems created by religion in the community. It creates linkages between social groups that would not normally exist. Religious communities such as churches assist in empowering social groups that usually have little influence on the society", (Balz, 1991, pp.18-20). The entire community benefited from such activities thereby creating social capital. A nexus between social capital of the past and the present situation is quietly different. Today, with the division of religion into different doctrines social capitalism has widened among these different religious groups such as Christianity and traditional religion. There is a kind of collaboration between the state and the church where the churches have:

[...] been forced by the economic collapse and the political legitimacy crisis to assume greater visibility in the public space. In the past, churches have built schools, hospitals which helped in reducing the burden of civil society organisations and in a bit to responding to both the state and the enormous social service burdens. Soure (S.N.Ejedepang-Koge, *the task ahead: the centenary of the spread of the gospel in the Bakossiland*, Yaounde, SNEK publication, 1996, Pp. 25-30) Churches are strategically very important in terms of the formation of social capitalism to promote social development. Their engagement can be seen especially on the sector of ordinary people and the way in which churches inspire the activities of voluntary outreach, caring and social services. (Source:



sone Ivo Etuge, 2017, P. 187) Their interventions in effect helped to mobilise social capitalism. Churches also provided platforms that enabled civil society to survive even under oppressive regimes such as the recent Anglophone crisis, the Bakossi Bamileke revolt of 1966 and many other forms of oppression. (source: Victor T. Levine *the Cameroon federal Republic*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971, P. 155-157) As such, religious communities still remain viable platforms for civil society sustainability of the people. Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015, P. 4)

Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015, p)

### ***2.3 Religion as a unifying factor***

Unity has always been a symbol in the life of the Bakossi people. This explains why there had always existed religious interventions to justify and portray religion as a unifying factor in society. The Bakossi as a religious community has remained united for a very long period of time (Kobia, 1978). Their religious practices are serving as a unifying factor and as a vehicle for social, economic and political development. Today, there is laxity in religious practice because the Bakossi traditional religion suffered acute fragmentation as a result of colonisation and globalisation. Despite the fact that, Christianity as a religion was introduced in the Bakossi community and thousands of people embraced it, religious fundamentalism attributes much important contribution to it, the Bakossi traditional religious communities before the advent of Christianity provided viable and crucial networks that were able to serve as social transformation of their community (Adamo, 2011, p.9). "The role of churches in promoting social cohesion is with no doubt important but that of traditional religion remained indispensable" (Atabe Sone, 1979). One of the most important particularity of Christian role as a unifying factor is that, as a congregation of people who have come together from different socio-political and socio-economic status are brought together into one family. They come together in one brotherhood that helps them to withstand the socio-political and economic chaos in and out of their congregation. This bond becomes the crutch upon which the people are able to come together into one single-family unit and domesticate their problems together despite their own misunderstandings. The importance of religion in the socio-political life of the people remains undeniable despite the fact that; Christianity remains one of the highest factors of political instability in our Africa continent today. Religious revival may in one way or the other improve the scope of religion as a "uniting factor, as a source of empowerment in relation to socio-political challenges of the Bakossi people and as a force for the recovery of collective consciousness.( Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015Pp.10-11) "The role of religious communities such as church and the Bakossi traditional religion proves how indispensable religion in general is to the development of any continent" (Cf. Balz, 1991, p.21).

### **3. Religion and social change in the bakossi community**

#### **3.1 Traditional religion and social changes**

All religious traditions cherish moral values such as human dignity virtue, justice, equality and above all truth. (Source: Atabe Thomas Sone, religion in the bakossi traditional society, Yaounde, SOPECAM, 1979, P. 64.) There is also the belief in the Supreme Being (God) or *Dube* to whom all beings channel their worries and give accountability of their wrong doings. Among the Bakossi traditional leaders, their restraint of leadership was based on their traditional religion through the symbol of justice. "The symbols of justice were respected and belief in restoring justice was very strong" (Agi, 2008, p.132). Thus, this promoted the well-being of the people and gave value and interesting political activities. Today one may think that, religion do no longer have that same potential but it is not true. With some existing traditional institutions which constitute the Bakossi traditional religion, religion still has the potential to influence socio-political and economic changes of the people. Such influences could ameliorate the detolerating conditions in which the Bakossi people fine themselves today such as; "occultism, corruption, poverty which has resulted to the negative socio-political and economic transformation of their community" (Staube, 1936, p.31). For traditional religion to play its much awaiting and needed role in social transformation and liberating can only be done through the return to the values of their much cherished religiosity. This is crucial, as religious values are an important resource for religious communities in their quest for the socio-political and economic development.

#### **3.2 Christianity and social changes**

With regard to Christian religious values, the challenge of Christianity may be looked at in terms of moral practice. A discussion on morality would automatically touch on Christian and African Traditional religious theology and vice versa, as theology and ethics are intimately connected. Therefore, Christian messages that were passed on during the missionary era was wrapped in a culture that was alien to Africans; "this meant that both Christian message and culture were treated by the messenger as one and the same thing" (Kunhiyop, 2008). "The negative impact of Christianity on the African left them with a moral vacuum which is neither rooted in African traditional religious morality nor in Christian morality". (Ejedepang-Koge, 1996). Due to this lack of roots in religiosity by the Bakossi people, there is urgent need to retrieve and restore some positive moral foundations and beliefs which were rooted in the Bakossi traditional religion These moral foundations and beliefs may be transform through serious interaction with the word of God and inculturated into Christianity. As a solution to the restoration of religious values has African Christian moral crisis which gives impetus to poverty and corruption, African Christians in particular and other religious communities like the Bakossi community, should approach life holistically, living

with a socio-political and economic institutions. The complicity of the church during social crisis in the Bakossi community has complicated the role of religious group. Therefore, there is an urgent need for religious group mostly the church needs to be in solidarity with the poor who alone deserve this support. Christianity today has become more of a business institution which has greatly influenced social changes among the Bakossi community. It is important to relate the economic sector which includes businesses owned by churches, partnership institutions, ecumenism and other forms of church business. Today, there exist a lot of church conflicts which other result from these businesses. The inter-church conflicts witnessed on daily bases in the society has brought a lot of question on the credibility of the Africans religiosity. For example, following the death of a recent prominent man of God in Nigerian T.B Joshua, a series of postings have been parading social Medias to discredit his works thereby increase the rate of inter-church conflicts in Africa. Conflicts among church members have not equally stopped discrediting Africans religiosity. For example, the situation of Evangelical church of Cameroon that witnessed some conflicts leadership recently. (Source: Emmanuel Dekane, "les conflits de leadership entre majorité et minorité ethniques représentées dans les églises protestantes émergées à l'Extrême-Nord Cameroun", in *géopolitique du fait religieux au Cameroun* Pp.177-180) situation is made even worse when religious leaders are seen as exploiters of the faithful. It is for this reason that, Obaji M Agbiji & Ignatius Swart (2015, P. 14) explain that; "When religious leaders are self-critical of their own negative conduct they can renounce the opulence and greed of corporate entrepreneurs and politicians who play such crucial roles in the pauperization of Africans and African Nations".

## Conclusion

The focus of this article was to examine how religion has contributing to the socio-political and economic transformation of the Bakossi community. Thus, religion whether African Traditional religion or Christianity remains a major constituent of the Bakossi community. Unfortunately, the realities of poverty, moral vacuum corruption and other things remain challenging among the present generation despite the phenomenon of religiosity which has gained ground in this community since 1889. The use of religion by African leaders has helped to sustains and enhances the structural entrenchment of poverty and corruption of the people. All religious traditions preach moral values such as justice, equality and human dignity. These moral values are reflected in forms of religions Traditional Religion or Christianity. Religious practitioners should therefore be self-examination which will permit them maintain stance towards socio-political and economic institutions together with private lives of the followers. There is need for continuous reminder by religious practitioners for the necessity of accountability in all matters. With such spirit of accountability under the watchful eyes of a Supreme Being will not be used to scare but will rather be a reminder.

Looking at the economic and socio-political role of religion in the Bakossi community, the religious sector had been distinctive source of spiritual, socio-economic and political and social capitalism among the people.

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