



The Influence of Emperor Constantine on the Present Day Church: A Case Study of Anglican Diocese of Ugheli.

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Abstract. Constantine was a Roman Emperor turned Christian. His reign was remarkable as he left indelible marks on the body of the church. His activities in the church of his time have generated much scholarly and theological debates bordering on his theological significance, political contributions, administrative impact and his socio-economic and spiritual inclinations. The issues mainly revolve around the question whether he helped the church positively or not; hence his impact has been viewed with ambivalence by theologians and scholars alike. Previous studies on this matter have focused on different aspects without adequately dealing with the question about how his legacies or antecedents have influenced the operations of the church, particularly as it affects the Anglican Diocese of Ugheli. The objective of this paper, therefore, is to investigate and examine the impacts of Constantine on the church in his time and how his influence extends to the Anglican Diocese of Ugheli. To achieve this objective, this study employed historical, phenomenological, analytical and evaluative methods. The study found out that most of the lifestyles and operations of the Church today have roots in Constantinean influence; while promoting the freedom of the church and enhancing her prosperity, he cast shadows on true Christianity and dimmed the light of spirituality by promoting apostasy, materialism, worldliness, politics and class consciousness into the church. It concluded that Emperor Constantine liberalised and reconfigured Christianity by introducing several secular principles and practices that have positive and negative impacts on the church today and these traits are evident in the Anglican Diocese of Ugheli.

Keywords: Constantine, influence, present day, church, Anglican Diocese, Ugheli.

1. Introduction

In church history, Constantine is a remarkable figure. Down the ages, there have been a lot of arguments on whether he was actually a blessing or a curse to the church in general (Salmon, 2022). This debate has not been satisfactorily laid to rest. As a religion, Christianity was believed to be simple until the time of Constantine. The argument is that Constantine interfered with Christianity to the extent that many things that are done in present day churches are traceable to Constantine, not to the early church. This has become a major problem for the present day church because there is need to understand Christianity in its basic form. The aim of the study is to examine the impact of Constantine's encounter with Christianity on the contemporary church, especially in the Anglican Diocese of Ugheli. Different methods were used to achieve the objective of the study which includes the analytical approach, descriptive and historical methods.

Contemporary church is incontrovertibly a remote offshoot of the early church. However in between the early and the contemporary churches there have been several developments and individuals that have helped in no small measure in shaping the church. In the imperial period of the church, Constantine was an eminent figure. His influence, however, is considered to be one of ambivalence. Gonzalez (1984) had long maintained that the church had remained under the influence of Constantine up till twentieth century. The church is a very important player in Nigerian society, and as Omosor (2013) aptly stated, the way clerics and political leaders go about their business of leading the people in their various capacities affect the society and its various cells and organs in certain ways, be it religious, social or political, and this have effect on the

security, stability and overall development of the society. A close look at the happenings in the Anglican Diocese of Ughelli in relation to Constantinean policies would show that his influence on the church today is still very significant; and that brings up the question about the positive and negative influence of Constantine to the front burner in contemporary times. It will also show that current happenings are influenced by past events.

1.1 The Birth and Early life of Constantine

Constantine, also named Flavius Valerius Constantinus, was born in the military city of Nis or Nassvs (Grant, 1998). Scholars differ on the possible date of his birth. Harry (2003) opines that Constantine was given birth to around A.D. 288. Smith (2012) believes that he was probably born near A.D. 272. Opuko (2015) opined that it was in 274 AD that Constantine was born. Therefore, one can safely suggest Constantine's time of birth to be around AD 270-290.

His father, Constantius, who hailed from Moesia, was a soldier in Roman army as a member of the imperial body guard in 272 AD; and his son, Constantine, did not spend much time staying with him. According to Lindsay (1998), Constantius grew through the ranks, and first distinguished himself by his military talent under Diocletian, the famous Egyptian expedition in A. D. 296. Subsequently he served under Galerius in the Persian war. In 305, the two Emperors, Diocletian and Maximian abdicated, and were succeeded by Constantius Chlorus (Constantine's father) and Galerius (Smith, 2012). According to Lindsay (2005), the birth of Constantine's mother, Helena, was obscure as it was not certain if his mother was legitimately wedded to his father or not. It is in is also conjectured that she became a Christian after Constantine's conversion. Writing about the growing up of Constantine, Drake (2006) submits that he had an imposing appearance, sagacious and full of understanding with high administrative ability. No doubt, Constantine was naturally meant to be a decisive forceful and accomplished influencer.

1.2 His Life before Becoming Sole Roman Emperor

There was a political crisis that erupted in the Empire after the death of Emperor Constantius. Diocletian's scheme was soon disrupted by a set of ambitious men who were thirsty for power (Fatokun, 1999). There arose six rival Emperors, three in the Eastern region and another three in the West. Severus the legitimate successor in the East was raised to the dignity of an Augustus, and others clamoured for the same.

Constantius the demise Emperor hastily made his way to Britain and was proclaimed Emperor at York by the army. Maxentius, the son of the retired Augustus put forward his claims, proclaimed himself Emperor at Rome, securing South Italy and Africa, his Father also laid claim to his abdicated throne. In the East, we have Galerius, Maximin Daia, (his Caesar) and Licinius (his comrade-in-arms). Fatokun (1999) rightly observes that this political pursuit also helped in a considerable measure in diverting the attention of the state from the church.

No doubt, Galerius and Constantius greatly influenced Constantine's appetite for power. Before he died, Constantius had proclaimed Constantine his successor. He was however opposed by Maxentius whom he had defeated three times. Tradition has it that Constantine claimed to have encountered the Christian God on the eve of the battle in which he saw a sign of a the Cross in the sky and above it were the inscriptions *in hoc signovinces*, meaning in this sign conquer. Then Constantine pledged that if he succeeded in winning the battle he would become a Christian. The next day, his army eventually had a complete victory, and Maxentius was drowned as he tried to escape across the Tiber river (Hasting, 1999). The seven years between 305 and 312, therefore, were extremely significant both for Constantine and the empire. Maximian had abdicated his successor Constantius had died, Maximian later committed suicide and his Son Maxentius was dead after military defeat. Hence at the age of twenty-four Constantine was supreme in the west. Constantine was now the only Emperor of the west. Similarly, by the death of Galerius in 311 and of Maximin in 313, Licinius ascended as sole Emperor in the East. Constantine's Victories were not events of accidents but rather are well calculated incidents. Gonzalez (1984) rightly observes thus:

An astute statesman, Constantine challenged his rivals one at a time always protecting his flanks before making the next move thus, although his campaign against Maxentius seemed sudden, he had been preparing for it both militarily and politically, for many years. His military preparations and campaign against Maxentius took only one fourth of his resources, thus making sure that during his absence there would not be a major barbarian invasion, or a revolt in his own territories. Diplomatically, he ensured that Licinius, Maxentius' neighbour to the east, did not take advantage of the campaign of Constantine to overrun and claim some of Maxentius territories. So as to prevent such possibility, Constantine asked Licinius to marry his half-sister, Constance; and this would avail him the privilege of having a secret agreement with his prospective brother-in-law. This seemed to be a ploy to cover his flank. Nevertheless,

he waited patiently for Licinius to have a conflict with Maximinus Daia invading Italy.

This Milvian Bridge victory gave Constantine control over the western part of the Empire, while the East was still partitioned between Licinius and Maximinus Dais. A less astute states man would have immediately moved against Licinus for it seems that at this time Constantine had already decided that he would eventually go to war with him. But Constantine knew how to bide his time (John, 1986). It appeared that his alliance with Licinius was strengthened by their meeting in Milvian which made Licinius to channel his efforts against their common rival, Maximinus Dais. In 312 they published what became *the Edict of Milvian*, which granted freedom of worship to the church and returned all previously confiscated properties to the church. There upon Licinius to meet Maximin and defeated him in two battles. Maximin died in 314 (Opoku, 2015).

In the East, like the west too, all power was now concentrated in Licinius alone. It soon appeared that two emperors were one too many. Constantine and Lacinius fought a battle in 314 which was undecided. There was, however, peace for the period of ten years during which there was onslaught against Christianity by Licinius. Licinius must have thought that an anti-Christian policy would gain him pagan support in the coming struggle with Constantine (Opoku, 2015). In 323, Costantine defeated and captured Licinius in a sea battle. Fausta, Constantine's wife, persuaded her husband that Crispus (his Son) was trying to kill him so that he could be emperor. Constantine therefore ordered the execution of his son. He also killed his wife, Fausta, when he later realized that she lied and deceived him (Henry, 1984). Having thus defeated all his enemies, and having killed his father-in-law Maximin, his brother-in-law Maxentius, his second brother-in-law Licinius, his son Cripus, and his wife Fausta, Constantine reigned as the sole Emperor of Rome without any challenge.

1.3 Life as an Emperor

Constantine had not sought absolute power for the mere pleasure of it. According to Gonzalez (1984), he also dreamed like Decius and Diocletian his predecessors, of restoring the ancient glory of the Empire. The main difference was that, whereas Decius and Diocletian had sought that end through a restoration of paganism, Constantine believed that it could be achieved on the basis of Christianity. Lietzman (1949) a church historian, with a resentment which one cannot but respect, deplores that Constantine as a rule, allowed barbarians to rise to the

highest imperial dignities and gave Christians administrative positions.

Some of the staunchest opponents of this policy were in Rome, particularly in its senates where old aristocratic members condemned the eclipse of their ancient gods and privileges. Several years prior to his last fight with Licinius, Constantine's interests had clashed with Roman Senate members' interest. Now, as sole Emperor, he boldly opted to rebuild and establish new city. Gonzalez (1984) in his description of Constantine's tall ambition maintained that it was going to be a New Rome, an unimaginably large and imposing city that would be named Constantinople, the City of Constantine.

Perhaps, it was the time of Constantine's anti-Licinius campaign that he realized the fact that Byzantium had strategic value. Byzantium sat at the fringe of Europe, almost touching on Asia Minor. It could therefore serve as to connect rod between the European and the Asiatic parts of the Empire. More so, if properly strengthened, Byzantium could control the Bosphorus, through which all shipping had to pass in a way from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea (Opuko, 2015). As Seston (2012) noted, the peace treaty entered into with Persia several decades earlier was about to expire, hence there was need for the Emperor to establish his Headquarters near the Eastern border. Opoku (2015) observes that during that time the Germanic tribes of the Rhine were always a threat, and therefore it would not be wise that the emperor would settle too far from the West. It is probably for these reasons that it became seemingly ideal to make Byzantine the new capital. Claiming to have acted on the instructions of by God, Constantine did not take the glory for his choice of Byzantine as the capital city. However, whether he was referring to the Christian God or to the Roman gods is debatable. Nevertheless, this may be true because the city he founded would play a strategic role for centuries to come (McIntock, 2016).

Since there was short of materials inadequate number of skilled artisans to meet Constantine's timetable, statues, columns and other such things were brought from various cities. Hans (1949) opines that Constantine imposed on the senators a class-tax according to their landed property to be paid, not in goods, but in gold. Constantine's agents scoured the Empire as they searched for anything that could embellish the new capital. It is worthy of note that Byzantine benefited from the pains of the other parts of the Empire. Several of statues of pagan gods were taken from their ancient temples and placed in such public places as the hippodrome, the public baths, or the squares. Thus used as mere ornaments, the ancient

gods seemed to be losing their old power. Perhaps the most famous statue thus taken to Constantinople was the image of Apollo which was purportedly Phidias' work, Phidias was said to be among the best sculptors of all time. This was placed in the middle of the city, a top a huge stone column brought from Egypt, and which was reputed to be the largest of such monolith in the World (Seston, 2012).

Scholar's views on the reign of Constantine as Roman Emperor differ. While some believe it was a time of under development in disguise others believe it was a time of prosperity and boom. While Gonzales (1984) sees it as a period of rebuilding and property, Lietzmann (1950) sees it as a time of no improvement in the economic outlook. Nevertheless, that many signs of ancient Constantinople can still be seen in modern Istanbul shows that Constantine must have embarked on some laudable projects during his reign as emperor.

1.4 Controversies over His Conversion

As regards the nature and motives of Constantine's conversion, there have been several debates. Some scholars doubt that Constantine was truly a Christian, while others are committed to proving that the Emperor's conversion was the goal towards which the church's history was formed. For instance Scholars like Eusebius went all the way to defend the view that Constantine's conversion into the Christian religion was genuine (Lindsay, 2005). For some others, Constantine was a crafty politician who knew and practically took the advantage of identifying with Christianity. Scholars who argue against Constantine's Christianity might have good reasons to do so. Even at the end of Milvian Bridge battle, and throughout his entire life, he never placed himself under the direction of Christian teachers or bishops which was a normal thing for Christians then. He considered himself as Bishop of Bishops (Gonzalez, 1984). After converting to the Christian religion, he participated severally in pagan rites and rituals which true Christians would never have taken part in, and none of the Bishops challenged such acts. The argument has been advanced that this was because he was powerful, dreaded and easily provoked as an Emperor; and more so, despite his pro-Christian disposition and his frequent attestation to the power in Christ's name, he was technically not a complete Christian yet since he had not been baptized. In fact he was only baptized while he was on his deathbed (Kolawale, 2007).

On the other hand, several reasons account for why Constantine may not overly be seen as an opportunist who embraced

Christianity to have their support. Such perspective is rather anachronistic because it does not take cognizance of the salient fact that supposing he was such an opportunist, he chose a poor time to seek the support of Christians. Boer (1985) was trite when he wrote that in spite of Constantine's sun-happy records, one would not take lightly the reports of his conversion. He made Christianity the empire's official religion. Controversially, almost to his dying Constantine continued functioning as the High priest of paganism. After his death around 337, the three sons who succeeded him did not oppose the senate's move to have him declared a god. Ironically, in spite of all his assault on paganism, Constantine was deified as a pagan god (Prane, 2023). On the basis of this, it is only a matter of sentiment for scholars of church history and other interested analysts to argue for or against the view that Constantine was a true Christian. At any rate, what should be of fundamental concern is how his conversion and reign as a Christian cum pagan Emperor affected Christianity both in his time and beyond his death.

2. The Policies of Constantine as a Christian

Kolawole (2024) rightly observes that Constantine's impact on the church was felt even as late as the 21st century. Evidently, Constantine could affect or influence the church. While some saw it as a blessing, others saw as curse. In the view of Gonzalez (1984),

Majority of Christians reacted to the prevailing situation ambivalently, neither totally accepting nor rejecting it. For most of the church leaders, the new circumstances offered sudden opportunities as well great changes. Since both danger and opportunity were great, these leaders faced a difficult task. It is probable that not all their attitudes, decisions and actions were correct; but nevertheless it was an age of giants who would mould the church and determine its lot for generations to come. Constantine influenced the church in the following ways.

2.1 On the Stoppage of Persecution

After the Milvian Bridge battle, Constantine met Licinius at Milvian where he concluded an alliance with him. Part of what was agreed upon was the stoppage Christians persecution, and that their churches, cemeteries, and other properties would be returned to them. This agreement, commonly termed the *Edict of Milvian* marks the date usually given for the end of persecutions (A. D. 313). Although In truth

"Galerius Edict" was much more important, and despite the Edict of Milvian, Maximinus Daia continued his policy of persecution. Galerius Edict came into existence when Galerius who has been cruel to Christians became ill with a painful disease, and perhaps convinced by those Christians who said that this was a punishment from God, grudgingly decided to change his policy. (Bettenson, 1989). This edict is very important because it ended the cruelest persecution that the church had to suffer from the Roman Empire. Eventually in 323 AD, when Constantine became sole emperor persecution came to an end. In fact, Fatokun (1999) rightly observes that, this complete victory of Constantine brought Christianity into a more favoured position.

2.2 The Development of Official Theology

Eusebius and Ossius respectively, held the view that Constantine was incontrovertibly a fulfillment of the church's history and the Empire also. Others, however, saw a church Apostate leading to monasticism, break with the Apostate church and a great deal of intellectual activities in the church at large (Ayerst, et al, 1987). A lot of people came out to openly declare their theological issues. A notable theological discussion in this era was Arianism, founded by Arius whose principal contention was that Jesus was inferior to the Father; hence he rejected the concept of trinity. According to Gonzalez (1984), Eusebius wrote various theses to prove that Constantine was God sent. It seems he was aware of some of Constantine's shortcomings, especially his irascible and sometimes blood thirsty temperament. Eusebius works were indicators of the degree to which, even unwittingly, Christian theology was being shaped by the new circumstances even to the point of abandoning some of its traditional themes. This period saw the birth of official theology. Also, the first ecumenical council, presently referred to as "The Council of Nicaea", was called at this time and the Council formulated and produced a document now christened The Nicene Creed.

2.3 On Worship

Relatively, Christian worship was simple prior to Constantine's regime. At first, believers could gather in individuals' personal homes to worship, but cemeteries like Roman Catacombs later became their place of gathering (Gonzalez, 1984). However, structures were already being set aside for worship in the third century. The oldest church which archaeologists have discovered is that in *Duro-Europos* which date from around A.D 250 (Ayerst, 1974).

Following Constantine's conversion, worship came under the influence of imperial protocols. Incense, originally used as a mark of respect or to honour the Emperor, started appearing in churches. Gonzalez (1984) remarked that officiating ministers, who have before then had worn every day clothes, started to dress in more in garments of luxurious. Similarly, various forms of gestures that indicated respect for the Emperor were then introduced as part of worship. The practice of beginning church services with a procession was also introduced. An elaborate and complex Choirs system was developed partly as a complement to the procession. Consequently, the active participation of the congregations began to wane as they played less devoted roles in worship (Gonzalez, 1984).

According to Fatokun (1999), in A. D. 321, Constantine made the old pagan *Dies Solis* (Sun-day) the day consecrated to the sun, an obligatory holiday in honour and worship of Christ. Thus, a parallel could be drawn between the *Sol Invictus* (the unconquerable sun) worshipped by the Roman army as a battle god and *Christus Victor* (Christ the Conqueror), the Christian God who made him victorious during the Milvian Bridge battle. Consequently, he pronounced *Christus Victor* as the real God of battle to be worshipped by the soldiers. It is imperative to note however, that such was not the first time *Dies Solis* (Sun-day) was declared Christian day of worship. From the inception, the primitive Christians were already meeting on week day for worship. Constantine only made it official.

2.4 Church Architecture

From the era of Constantine, churches built defied the usual simplicity for which churches like Dura-Europos was known. Constantine personally instructed that Saint Irene Holy Place should be built as a church in Constantinople. His mother, Helena, also built church of the Nativity on the Holy land and another one also at Mount Olives. Similar churches were built in the major cities of the Empire by imperial order sometimes; although the church could simply decide to replicate the patterns in the new capital.

This policy continued under Constantine's successors who sought to perpetuate their memory by building great churches. Even though several of these churches constructed by Constantine and later his successors now lie in ruins, evidences abound to show that the basic building plans, obviously copied by subsequent churches at that time, are still being replicated in many churches today.

2.5 Veneration of Martyrs

By the second century, it was already an established practice to commemorate the death of a martyr annually through the celebration of communion at the tomb of the martyr. However, in the era of Constantine, this practice came to national light. Church buildings were eventually built in several of these places. Incidentally, the idea that worship was better when conducted at such holy grounds where the remains of martyrs could be found (Fatokun, 1999). Resulting from this notion, the worshippers began to exhume the remains of martyrs to put them underneath the altars of the churches they were building. Yet some others started to claim revelations about martyrs that were either unknown or readily forgotten (Gonzalez, 1984). Some even claimed to have received visions of about the particular spot where martyrs were interred, like the example of Ambrose and the purported remains of Saint Gervasius and Protasius. Eventually the remains of New Testament Saints were believed to possess miraculous powers.

2.6 Constantines's Influence on the Kind of Christians Raised

The victory of Christianity was seen by pious church members as a curse in disguise (Fatokun, 1999). This is because a great number of nominal Christians were being turned out, instead of true worshippers. In other words many became Christians not because they really wanted Christ, but because of the great opportunities the church now offered. It was fashionable to be called a Christian. The Lords spiritual rapidly became the Lord temporal as well. Besides, Ecclesiastical politics was born, such that the church went into state politics and vice-versa. Some unqualified individuals bought their ways into the bishopric and other offices through simony, nepotism, and so on. The bishopric of Rome itself became highly contested for selfish gain and not really for service to Christ as revealed in the pagan Praxetatus joking remark to Pope Damasus in which he asked the Pope to make him Bishop of a Roman Church and he would become a Christian immediately (Paul, 1976). The clergy of ranks were affected by riches; there was also degeneration of morals among the laity. The church drifted from what it was prior to the persecution and Constantine's conversion.

3. Brief Historical Background of Ughelli Diocese

The Ughelli Diocese of the Anglican Communion was inaugurated on the 8th day of January 1998. At creation, the Diocese started with five (5) administrative units

which included All Saints Cathedral, Ughelli Archdeaconry, Ewheru Archdeaconry, Ughewwen Archdeaconry and All Saints Chapel, D.S.C. The Diocese was made up of over 154 Churches. At present however, there are 360 churches and 22 administrative units.

The Diocese was one of the 11 dioceses in Anglican Province of Bendel, which was among the 14 provinces in the Church of Nigeria (Peter, 2024). The first Bishop of the Diocese was Bishop Vincent Muoghereh. His successor, Bishop Cyril Odutemu was installed as the Bishop of Ughelli Diocese at 38, thus becoming the youngest Bishop in his time. In the year 2020, he became the Archbishop of Ecclesiastical Province of Bendel and also the Bishop of Ughelli Dioceses. Again, he became the first Urhobo man in Anglican Church to achieve such feat.

4. Implications of Constantine's Influence on Ughelli Diocese.

Constantine's influence have far reaching effects on Christianity today, and its implications for the Anglican Diocese of Ughelli cannot be overemphasized. A careful observation would reveal that some of the traits and elements he introduced into the imperial church in his time are still very much prevalent in Anglican Diocese of Ughelli today. Below are some of the significant influences.

4.1 The Relationship between the Church and the State

After Constantine's controversial conversion, Christianity gained prominence and became a state religion. Consequently, interactions between the state and the church started. Prior to Constantine's era, church activities and policies were parallel to that of state (Opoku, 2015). The union of state and the church brought about state interference in the affairs of the church. In contemporary times, one major concern of the church is for her to be totally liberated from the grip of the state. Although there is now separation of state and the church, the latter has become so much interested in politics while the state is also interested in the church. This has led to unwholesome politicization and materialization of Christianity.

4.2 Flamboyancy among Ministers

Among the influences of Constantine on the church was the ostentatious regalia and flamboyant appearance of clerics. Similarly, gestures that marked respect for the emperor have now become a culture and adapted into Christian worship, thereby breeding

eye-service Christianity in which members of the congregation now genuflect and literarily worship high ranking superiors. This has great implication for the contemporary church, like in the case of Anglican Diocese of Ughelli. Ministers are now looking gorgeous and some of these dressings are still present in orthodox churches such as the Catholics and Anglican Churches where their priests wear flamboyant-regalia. Many Evangelical and Pentecostal ministers also adorn themselves with expensive clothes. The Bishops' dresses even have the *Kai and rho* symbol, which was the sign Constantine claimed to have seen before his victory in the famous Milvian Bridge battle.

Although the advantage of this development is that it has greatly improved the appearance of the ministers and also as well as the respect accorded to them. On the other hand, some contemporary Christian ministers go to the extreme in their pursuit of fashion whereby distracting their members from worship, hence have made Christianity void of her simplicity which was evident in the early church.

4.3 Influence on the Order of Worship

Following Constantine's conversion, imperial protocols characterized Christian worship, which affected the way church services were organized, how the congregation sang and host of other formalities were introduced. These have also been introduced in all the churches around the world. In Ughelli Diocese for example, the custom of beginning service with processional has been the practice (Apiloko, personal communication, 2024). Also, the choir tradition was also developed. Before then, it was more of congregational singing. In Anglican Diocese of Ughelli, there are choirs in different churches (Okiemute, personal communication, 2024). Eventually the congregation came to have a less active role in worship. One of the implications of this in present day churches is the fact that the order of service has become more sophisticated. In orthodox churches such as Catholic, Anglican, Baptist and some selected Pentecostal churches such as Winners Chapel and the Redeemed Christian Church of God, members now have less active roles in the service. While most churches in the Anglican Diocese of Ughelli still retain the idea of beginning the order of service with processions like in the days of Constantine, a lot of Pentecostal churches such as Winners chapel and Redeem Christian have jettisoned the process (Emakpor, personal communication, 2024)

Another way this has affected church service is that there seems to be class and protocol in churches. Seats

are now reserved for Very Important Personalities (VIPs) in Churches; special seats are kept for the bishops and other ranking clergymen and even women as well as government functionaries. The reserve seats for Priests and Deacons Anglican Churches. Some churches even go to the extreme of making these special seats majestic and very expensive, like that of an earthly king (Oteri, personal communication, 2024). Obviously this idea of special seat began in the era of Constantine when the idea of Christ sitting on a throne was introduced; and consequently very much like a Roman emperor, Bishops were also given special seats. Although the idea was to give honour to whom honour is due, care should be taken so that contemporary ministers do not begin to assume the positions of Lords. Some men/women of God have misused some of these privileges to turn themselves into demigods.

4.4 Influence of Constantine on the Structures of Church Buildings

Constantine's influence on the architectural designs of church building is very significant. Ughelli diocese boasts of the presence of gigantic and conspicuous church buildings. Although churches built by Constantine's and his find successors have been destroyed, there is enough evidence that their plans were copied and used to reproduce the designs many churches in contemporary times and this has influenced or inspired other similar bogus, sophisticated and expensive church buildings. Churches are now very much concerned about where they worship. They are bordered about the conduciveness of where they worship (Ekiugbo, personal communication, 2024). It is not uncommon to see churches with highly sophisticated architectural designs, and fully air-conditioned. Before the time of Constantine, Christians bother-less about where they worshipped. Although this can be seen as necessary because of the ongoing developments in contemporary era, the church must make sure that emphasis is not shifted from true worship and believers' welfare to building sophisticated and stupendously expensive physical structures.

4.5 Economic Significance.

Constantine's era was marked with prosperity both for state of Roman and the church. The Emperor gave huge grants of money to clergymen. In Constantinople, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and other places, he erected magnificent church buildings. Present day churches are also prosperous in like manner. From his time, the church has prospered financially and is still prospering. This is evident in the land mark projects such as missions, church edifices, universities, schools,

hospitals and so on, that churches now embark on. Ughelli Diocese has equally embarked on many of such projects (Jonathan, personal communication, 2024).

4.6 Implication for Official Theology

The famous Nicene Creed which was developed Constantine's time is still effectively believed in the Anglican Diocese of Ughelli. The agreement reached on the trinity is still what the Anglican Church believes till date. The effect of the official theology which developed in Constantine's era could be seen in how it evolved the practice of training would-be priests in seminaries and some other theological schools. The monks' reactions in Constantinean period gave birth to the idea of seclusion, monastery, and personage in contemporary time, which are evident in the Anglican diocese of Ughelli.

4.7 Implication for the Type of Christians Raised

During the Constantinean period, a lot of people became Christians because of what they would gain and also because it was fashionable to be regarded as a Christian. In the same vein, many people profess Christianity today without being genuine converts but simply for what they think they can benefit from the church (Ekere, personal communication, 2024). Some also become Christians when there are no troubles, just as Roman citizens became Christians after the end of persecution during the era of Constantine's reign. When such people are faced with serious challenges they easily backslid. Some who identify with the Anglican Church in Ughelli today do so because it is fashionable to be classified as a Christian (Peter, personal communication, 2024).

Furthermore, this has also affected the passion for missions in the church of today. The Christians being raised now seem to be at sleeping and making funfair with Christianity like the church in Constantinean era (Bello, personal communication, 2024). Some ministers on the other hand care less of the state of their converts. Some of them no longer follow up converts; hence there are many believers in the churches today who are easily swayed by false doctrines.

5. Conclusion

The extent to which Constantinean legacies have impacted the church can only be imagined. Indeed, his influence cannot be undermined. However, the Constantinean influence on the church is two-pronged, being positive and negative. He laid the foundations

for most of the lifestyles of the church today as is evident in the Anglican Diocese of Ughelli. Ranging from the pattern and order of service/worship, the choir model, liberal and material Christianity against strict spirituality and self-denial, class consciousness in the church, bogus, patronage of pagan gods, sophisticated and opulent architectural designs of church buildings, the religio-political interaction between the church and the state, the declaration of freedom of worship, the introduction of official theology, to the introduction of ecumenical councils, Constantine left an indelible mark on the church and the vestiges of his influence are evident in Anglican Diocese of Ughelli.

The church today must be careful, circumspect and discerning to know when it is sliding dangerously into the world of ungodliness. It is true that freedom of worship is good as much as the prosperity of the church is desired, but believers must not allow corrupt and power-drunk people who come from the realm of secular leadership to interfere with the affairs of the church. The church and the state and, politics by implication, are two separate things that must not be fused together in any guise (Omosor, 2019). Church leaders and believers generally should reappraise the church and seek to understand aspects and dimensions of the Constantinean influences on the church so as to know is Christian and what is Constantinean. This will enable the present day church to sieve some of these influences. Those that are not in consonance with the bible should be discarded, while those that are scriptural and beneficial to the church should be retained and improved upon.

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List of Interviewees

S/N	Name	Sex	Age	Occupation	Place of interview	Date
1	Apiloko Tega	M	38 Years	Clergy	Ughelli	25-05-2024
2	Bello Sunday	M	82 years	Retiree	Warri	30-05-2024
3	Ekere, Josephine	F	25 years	Student	Ughelli	25-05-2024
4	Ekiugbo, Philip	M	37	Lecturer	Online	20-05-2024
5	Emakpor Ochuko	M	45 years	Clergy	Ughelli	26-05-2024
6	Jonathan, Akpos	M	33 years	Lecturer	Ughelli	25-05-2024
7	Kevwe Sonia	F	30 years	Teacher	Ughelli	26-05-2024
8	Okiemute, Gladys	F	28 years	Teacher	Ughelli	25-05-2024
9	OteriAghogho	F	35 years	Church Administrator	Warri	26-05-2024
10	Peter, Philip	M	55 years	Clergy	Ughelli	24-05-2024