



## THE ROLE OF *TIEN* AS SAVIOUR IN TIV: A CHRISTLIKE APPROACH

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### **Abstract**

*The gospel message preached by Western missionaries in Nigeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century can be summarized: “believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” The question is: who is this Jesus Christ, that the people were enjoined to believe? This is a perturbing question to indigenous people hearing this message for the first time, and from a strange person, a westerner. The message was quite foreign and strange to the Tiv. When the Missionaries preached about God and his love for mankind, the Tiv were totally estranged by the gospel. This teaching conveys the idea that Jesus is the saviour. The Tiv understands that, their saviour is their tien. This paper seeks to uncover tien as saviour in Tiv cultural setting. The paper utilized qualitative approach which makes use of secondary sources and participant observation in collection and presentation of data. The paper observed that, the role tien played as saviour in the Tiv socio-cultural context especially to the womenfolk has correlated to the ministry of Jesus Christ who is the saviour of the world. What Christ has done to the world (Christians), cannot exactly equal the role Tien is doing among the Tiv people. Jesus Christ therefore, is the reality of Tiv tien idea. The paper recommends that, tien is an important pedagogical concept in Tiv that could be used as a bridge to presenting Christ to the Tiv people for easy understanding and acceptance.*

**Keywords:** Tien, Ingyor, Ishuur, Tiv, Oryiman,

### **Introduction**

Every human being has identity. Our identities are shaped by our ways of life, popularly known as culture. Culture encompasses the whole life of a people such as food, religion, dressing, language, beliefs, and politics, among others. In view of the above Berker and Galip (2019), refer from a definition given by American Sociological Association about culture, he said: “Sociology understands culture as the languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make their social environments meaningful.”

The Tiv are highly cultured people, this can be seen in their dress patter,



method of food preparation, eating style, polity, religion, belief systems to mention but a few; they have a way of life that defines who they are. The cultured nature of the Tiv covers both the material and non-material things of culture. One cannot claim that a group's culture is the best, as each culture has its loopholes. However, there are some good sides of culture of any group which one can find. African theologians are of the opinion that Africans have a good culture that can help them have a good understanding of doctrinal issues in Christianity.

The researcher agrees with African Theologians such as Mbiti, Takatso, Kwame, Dzurgba etc. on the role of African culture in theological enterprise. According to educationists knowledge begins from the known to the unknown (International Montessori Teacher Training Institute, 2018). For understanding to flow easily there must be a point of contact in our knowledge. New and abstract concepts cannot be understood easily except by explaining them, using familiar experiences of the learner

It is in view of the above that this paper suggests that if the missionaries that worked in Tiv land understand the Tiv concept of *tien* and use it to explain to the Tiv people about Jesus and his role in human history and salvation, the Tiv would have better understanding about the person of Christ (Christology) and embrace Christian religion and Jesus Christ wholeheartedly. This paper identifies a gap in the missionary's approach of presenting Christ to the Tiv, by not employing the deductive approach which could have been the principle for teaching and learning. The missionaries did not explore a point of contact in Tiv tradition which they could have used to present Jesus as the saviour. As a result, both the Church and the people find it difficult to be on the same page. It is important to note that the White Missionaries met stiff opposition in Tiv land. This was the most reason why the Tiv were the last group of people to be subdued by the British Colonial authorities in 1915. In fact, during the time, a Tiv man was suspicious about the Whiteman, thinking he was a ghost and also a subject of slave master.

More so, the Tiv were staunch believers in their tradition, therefore, for the Tiv to easily discard their former belief and believe the Whiteman and what he was saying was not easy. In fact, when the Tiv people were approached and told that the Whiteman had come to teach them about God, they asked, teach what about God, what did God do? This was because, the Tiv have their religion and practices. The Tiv people were not easy to be approached, in the view of Casaleggio, the Tiv were very hostile. They were always carrying with them bow and arrows; very poisonous arrows for that matter. Casaleggio (1964), described the arrows to be the most poisonous arrows the whole of Africa; this contributed to the fearful nature of the Tiv. The above described situation made that the Tiv were the last to be subjected under the



authority of the British colonial masters. The final subjection was even by force.

Having established a relationship with the Tiv (as a mission ground), the missionaries were faced with the problem of lack of understanding the language of the Tiv. The Tiv too had not known any language apart from their language. The Missionaries too had thought and wanted to import and plant completely a new form of religion that is distinguished with the culture and worldview of the Tiv. If they were not influenced by the above described condition, they should understand the worldview of *Tien* as an important cultural personality that is very strong among the Tiv that cannot be undermined. Rather the belief of the Tiv on *Tien* can serve as a base to liken the work of Christ in the salvation of mankind. This will help the gospel message to be clearer and appealing to the Tiv without ambiguity, to accept. In Tiv society, a saviour intercedes, on behalf of his subject or person before the offended. The saviour role of *Tien* in Tiv is very paramount. Every Tiv man and woman is aware of this fact and can hardly do without *Tien*. *Tien* as saviour advanced in this study as a stepping stone for presenting and understanding Jesus as the savior is not strange or alien to the natives and the church. The people and the church teach and upheld this understanding. In a view presented by Mbahon (2020), in *Atsam A NKST* opined that Jesus is the supreme *tien* (*tien u atien*). Aernyi (2020) in *Atsam A NKST* also maintained this view that Jesus is our *tien* (*Yesu ka tien wase*) Corroborating with fact that Jesus is the supreme of all the *tien*, another source said, the *tien* nature of Jesus is distinct from all human *tien*; Jesus is immortal, He is not susceptible to death (*ka tien u nana va kpe ga*), since human *tien* eventually dies (Daniel. 2020). The idea here is who is *tien*, what role does he play in the work of salvation in Tiv and how does the Church understand this concept and relate it with the role Christ plays in the salvation of mankind?

#### **Definition of terms**

***Tien*:** *Tien* is a male child, especially a brother who has been chosen by his parents or family members and entrusted with a daughter, especially his own sister to become her guardian. The *tien* has a final say about the daughter. In addition to the above, *tien* is a male child or relation to a father either in an immediate or extended family who is chosen and assigned to a particular lady or daughter. In most cases it is someone within the family who is assigned to a sister to serve as a guardian. *Tien* in most cases is a blood relation to the girl.

***Ingyor*:** is a daughter especially a sister who has been entrusted to a male child especially a brother by parents or family members to whom she has to look up to, for her protection, welfare and security. In addition, this is a sister to a brother or a niece to an uncle who is assigned to a brother or an uncle.



She could be used by the brother or the uncle with another family in exchange for a wife.

**Ishuur:** this is a person who serves as a go-between the man who wants to marry and the family of the girl. The prospective husband to the girl chooses this man (the Ishuur). The choice of ishuur is on the condition that he shares connection with the man who wants to marry from a particular community. He is trusted by both parties.

**Oryiman:** This word is a combination of two separate words, one a noun (*or*) and another verb (*yima*). 'Or' stands for a person. The Tiv people would say: *m nenge Or*; I have seen a person. Yima is the verb, which means to save. Yima is the act of helping or rescuing a person or something out of trouble, danger or difficulty. Oryiman therefore is a person or someone who helps, protects, rescues, and delivers somebody or something from harm, difficulty, or danger.

### **Brief History of the Tiv**

Tiv people are in the North Central region of Nigeria. Other people prefer to call this area Middle Belt (Abejide, T.S., 2017). This is a people that share a common identity especially in language with the Bantu speaking group in Congo (Fuller & Roger n.d). They speak one common language-Tiv language. Dzurgba (2012) and Avar (1996), describes Tiv as a nation, this is because of their population. According to him, the British Colonial Government, following the census they conducted in 1946 and 1952, due to the population figures ranked the Tiv the fourth largest group of people in Nigeria after Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo.

Concerning their origin and migration, there are differing views; different authors have traced the origin and migration of Tiv people from different sources. To some authors, Tiv people migrated from Congo in East Africa or from *Ibinda* hills; a hill in the north of Obudu plateau in Cross River-Nigeria, or Ngokugh hill or *Swem* hill. Scholars such as Bohannan & Bohannan (1953), Abraham (1940), Downes (1933), Shii (2013), Casaleggio (Edited by Mbachirin 2017), Bohannan (1966), and others associate the Tiv with the Zulu people of Southern Africa, that probably, the Tiv people might have come from there. In the view of Weor, Tiv brevity in terms of war was taught and learnt from the Zulu People. Ihundu (n.d), backed the above view, giving reason for the migration to be the general historic *Mfecane* movement, in other words, the Great Trek in Southern Africa. Amase (2008) suggest the reason for the migration to be the upheavals in the region of Southern Africa due to the rise of the Zulu Nation. There were a lot of inter-tribal wars and smaller ethnics moving away due to the warring situation at the time. The Tiv



too could have migrated probably due to this reason. The Tiv are closely associated in language with the Bantu speaking group. Some of the characteristics of the Bantu people (and associates) are ethnology and linguistics.

According to Abraham as cited in Weor, the Tiv exhibit these characteristics. Their ancestral lineage is traced to their great grandfather *Takuluku*. Takuluku gave birth to two children Tiv and Uke. Tiv also gave birth to two children, *Ipusu* (the sons of *Ipusu* include Kpar, Shitile, Kum, and Tongo) and *Ichongo* (the sons of *Ichongo* include Ihar, Gondo, Nongo, Ikura, Mase, Nane and Turan) (Yakubu. 1991). Out of these two sons of Tiv came the rest of the Tiv nation (people). The sons have developed and formed clans. Though the majority of Tiv exist primarily in Benue State, Tiv are not only in Benue. They also exist in other states in Nigeria. These states include: Cross River, Nassarawa, Plateau, Taraba and even in Cameroon Republic. (Weor. 2012). The Tiv are predominantly farmers. The major food crops they produce include: yams, rice soyabeans, cassava, sweet potatoes, guinea corn, maize groundnuts, etc. Politically they are headed by the first class chief called *Tor Tiv* (His Royal Majesty), who works with other kings such as His Royal Highnesses (*U Ter*) *Mue Ter*, *Tyoor* (*UTyombaivorov*), *Ortar* (*Mbatarev*), and tax collectors (*ator a Kpande*).

### **Tiv concept of Tien**

*Tien* is a male person in the family. Tien could be any person from the immediate or the extended family. He is a brother or an uncle to a sister. Tien is a guardian of the sister, the exchange ward who is given to him as exchange partner. In the opinion of Ahua (2022) a father could also be *tien* to his daughter. The idea about *tien* is connected to marriage. A lady in Tiv who is up to the age of marriage, must in the process of her marriage, has *tien*. More, so a man cannot marry if he does not have *ingyor*. *Tien* is a title given to a fully matured adult who has come up of age to marry or ready to marry, such a person is assigned with a sister to help him exchange for marriage. He is *tien* in the sense that, a sister is assigned to him to help him marry. The man is now *tien* to the ward assigned to him. *Tien* claims responsibility over a sister that is given to him. The sister becomes *ingyor* to the man. It is until this act of associating a sister to a man is done, the man is not *tien* to nobody. Tien is responsible for the bride-wealth of the sister.

A man and a woman does not choose *Tien* and *ingyor* for him or herself, instead, they are assigned to each other, probably by the father who is the head of the family. The children are a product of the father, the father was responsible to marry (*kem kwase*) for his son(s), and due to the system, when the time for marriage is ripe, the father therefore assign one of his daughter to





one of his son for the purpose of marriage. The sister then becomes the *ingyor* and the man is the *tien* to the sister. Sometimes, when the father do not have enough daughters proportionate to the number of male children, the younger ones will have to wait for their elder brother to produce female children from whom the father chooses from his elder son a daughter and issue to the younger to serve as their *tien*. The uncle becomes the *tien* for the niece.

*Tien* is therefore a man who is assigned with a sister, to help him in the cause of marriage, *tien* exchanges the *ingyor* to any suitor who is ready to take her and in turn offer to him his sister as a wife. This is why this type of marriage is likened to trade by batter, the Tiv referred to it as *yamshe* (Dzurgba, 2012, Tarhon & Onyinye. 2020). This practice was abolished by the Colonial Masters in 1927 and introduced marriage through payment of dowry (Sai. 2015).

*Tien* sometimes could be the lineage of the mother of the girl (*Igba I wankwase*). What mostly give rise to this situation of *Igba* becoming *tien* for the girl is when the father is unable to make the necessary amends he was supposed to do concerning his wife. And so, when the union produces female children, the father therefore result to take one of his daughter, probably, the first among his daughters and give to the lineage of his wife to give out in marriage and anything they happen to get stands in place of the amends he the son-in-law was supposed to give to them for their daughter. In a situation where the father do not want to give his daughter to *Igba*, the father becomes the *tien* of his daughter by himself, he gives the daughter out, collect whatever he is able to get and use it in turn to pay for his wife bride price. (Nyityo. 2014 & Nyitse. personal communication December 12, 2022).

### **Tien as Saviour**

Saviour in Tiv means *Oryiman*. This refers to a person who rescues, saves, delivers and intervenes in difficult situations. Different people or groups play this role, but this is more general as compared to *tien*. *Tien* is the one who reports the situation that demands the kinsmen to intervene. After kinsmen's intervention, *ingyor* understands that the justice she has received is because of the role played by her *tien*. Tiv is a patrilineal culture, if a woman has problem, she alone is not considered worthy to summon the council of elders, and so she must report her ordeal to a man (*tien*). It is the *tien* in most cases, who takes her problem to the kinsmen who then invite the elders. One of these groups (people) include the kinsmen from the man's side (*Ityo I nomsoor*), the kinsmen from the side of the woman (*Ityo I*



*wankwase*) and the second group is *Igba*. This is the kinsmen from the maternal side of the man and or the woman.

*Ishuur* is another personality who plays a very significant role to the couples and family especially the family that he is committed in times of problem. His role is almost to that of *tien*. Since he stands in between the two people or families, he makes sure that nothing happens to the couples (Ayilamo. Personal communication, September 5, 2022). The man or the woman cannot go to *tien* when there is a problem or an issue without the *Ishuur* being aware. They must first report to him. *Ishuur* is the person who will report to the *tien* on behalf of the family, or *Ishuur* having heard what the matter is will guide them appropriately, in most cases to go and meet the *tien*.

*Tien* plays the role of a saviour to his *ingyor*. As stated earlier, every woman in Tiv has *tien*. The woman therefore looks at the *tien* for everything humanly. *Tien* in Tiv society is the last resort to a woman in all matters. In times of sickness or ill-health, death, maltreatment, injustice, evil forces/operations, spiritual attacks, maltreatment, assaults, barrenness, dreams/nightmare and so on that demand response or solution, the woman usually falls back to her *tien* for intervention (Idyu & Baaki. Personal communication, August 28, 2022). Usually, when *tien* intervenes in most cases the situation stops. The woman obtains justice over a matter that her *tien* is called upon. Even if the woman is at fault, the man pleads on her behalf and seeks for pardon. Where the woman is pardoned, it is on the account of her *tien* that she is mostly pardoned. In situation where the woman is maltreated either by her husband or the relatives of the husband unjustly, the *tien* warns the husband and the relatives.

In terms of sickness, there are sicknesses that are natural and there are artificial sicknesses that are caused by human activities (*angevmbu tan ata*) usually caused by an evil person. Be it whichever sickness, if after serious treatment and the sickness persist, the woman has no option than to go to her *tien* for intervention. Sometimes, some situations are spiritual, either the woman or her son/children are suffering from some form of spiritual attack. Even at this, the *tien* intervenes and demands for it to stop. Sometimes the *tien* does not have solution to the problem by himself, but he simply warns and forbids the in-laws that he does not like what is happening. He will demand that such a thing should stop. The in-laws in their way do so that the issue or the problem stops. *Tien* also has the power and the right to take away the *ingyor* and her children away from the husband's house depending on the matter. Most particularly, when the *tien* warns of a situation and is not stopped, if the situation persists, the *tien* would pack his *ingyor* (*kula ingyor*; *hembe ingyor*) and her children away from the husband's house.



The *tien* saves his *ingyor* both in the physical and metaphysical realms. Tiv believed that the world is divided into two; the planet earth is the physical world, and the spiritual world or the world of the spirits. This world is not viewed with the natural eyes. Evil activities are not carried out in the broad day light of the physical world, but in the spiritual realm. Not every-body has the ability or potentials to enter in the spirit realm, and this is the realm that people or a person is been attacked or caused using evil forces or powers. There is no length at which *tien* will not go in order to save/provide solution to a matter for his *ingyor*. If it demands consulting the spiritual world, the witch doctor (*Orishor* for the sake of *Kpehen ishor*), he is willing and allows it. In this case, if you have a weak *tien* who is not strong, you would not get the desired justice. *Tien* is a god to his *ingyor* because of the security she receives from him who saves and intervenes on behalf of his people to stop anything evil from befalling his people. If a *tien* is not tolerating and provides a good cover for his people, evil people will be scared to inflict any curse on his people, because if it is done *tien* will trace it to the root or the source to know why and or who is responsible (Sai. 2015). In view of the above Tavershima Shaapera in an interview describes the *ingyor-tien* relationship as treasure and security. That is *ingyor* is a treasure to *tien* and *tien* is utmost security to *ingyor*. Since treasures are well handled and kept, *tien* makes sure that he handles his *ingyor* in a special way so that she is not affected or worried by anything possible. The belief is that, if his *ingyor* is comfortable in his matrimonial home, she will think well of his *tien* and provide good things to him. *Ingyor* on the other hand believes in the security cover (the protection her *tien* is providing for her and her children in all aspects of life) her *tien* is providing for her. In such a circumstance, *ingyor* does not play or joke about *tien*, she is always appreciating that cover with good gifts. *Ingyor* cannot be swimming in wealth and not mind about the wretched *tien*, it means she is tempering with her security. Most *atien* (plural of *tien*) fight the course of protecting their *ingyor* not minding it will cost them their lives. *Tien* believes that since their treasure (*ingyor*) is alive, even if he dies, his treasure will still be providing for his children. In most cases, some *tien* because they are not willing to let go their *ingyor* (shielding their *ingyor* from harm and attack even death), they end up dying in place of their *ingyor*, just to make sure that *ingyor* is safe. Baaki (Personal communication, August 28, 2022)) in an interview buttresses on security and said since *tien* is part of the society and part of the meeting where matters are discussed and decisions taken, if the kinsmen want to find a daughter out of their daughters for sacrifice, *tien* will not allow that her *ingyor* be touched/used.

That is why in Tiv, *tien* is taken into high esteem by his *ingyor*. If a woman's *tien* dies, the woman cries very profusely because her god, helper, and saviour is dead. Most women consider it that they are finished because they do not have a person who could provide protection for them again. Such a





woman cries and makes such comments that she is laid bare without protection or cover (*m ngu hen tembe, kwaghembam*). This means she is vulnerable to all kind of attack with nobody to defend her. Dzugba (2016) also gave a similar condition of a woman who loses her beloved one in death. He said such a woman becomes distressed, frustrated, and hopeless. “She faces now a bleak future, a future without personal security, protection, love and care.” Normally when the men are discussing, women are not part of the discussion even if it is a matter that concerns the woman, naturally she has no role in the discussion. This is because she is considered to be *wan mbaior*. It is very rare for a woman to be called into the assembly of men to speak on an issue. Even if an issue concerns her the men discuss it to the end without consulting the woman and the decision the men take is binding on her. Sometimes if need arises the kinsmen of the woman will be invited to come and speak on her behalf.

When the husband of a woman (*ingyor*) is no more, that is when the husband is late, *tien* seeks to know who is responsible for the woman and her children. The relatives of the late husband assign someone who takes care of the family in the capacity of a husband and father of the children. The person will be intervening and speaking for the family. Where the relatives would not provide someone, *tien* takes to his home her *ingyor* with the children (Girgi & Idyu. Personal communication, August 28, 2022).

Tien also looks into the matter of his sister to make sure that the sister is productive; that is she gives birth to children. The sister (*ingyor*) too when she cannot give birth to children, it is her concern. It is the interest of every man who marries and who gives out a daughter or sister out in marriage in Tiv land to find the sister or daughter productive. This is due to the fact that, if she is not producing children it is dangerous under the *yamshe* system of marriage. Any suitor (woman) that fails to produce children, ordinarily, leads to the cancellation of the marriage transaction. Even if the other woman (the exchanged *ingyor*) produces, the *tien* will go and take back his sister and the children and return back the unproductive woman. This is what the Tiv say: *yamshe kpeishe* (marriage arrangement annulled). To avoid this unfortunate occurrence, *tien* traces why his sister is not bringing forth children and he tries to proffer solution to the unfortunate end (Hon & Sev. Personal communication, September 4 2022).

*Ingyor* has this confidence in *tien* such that whatever he said on behalf of her, she accepts the decision whole heartedly. Because she is aware that his brother will not speak against her, even when she is at fault, he pleads for her and accepts the blame on behalf of her. *Tien* shields *ingyor* such that, no one sees her but always the *tien*. In essence, anything that concerns his *ingyor*, if



the *tien* is not present the matter cannot be discussed. Any attempt to do so is offensive against *tien* (*kar tien wegh shatyo*). Even *ingyor* is aware and refuses to talk in such a meeting that unless her *tien* comes.

### **The strength of Tien as saviour in Tiv**

This idea is deeply rooted in the psyche of many traditional Tiv people. There is no Tiv woman that can do without *tien*. Although most Tiv are Christians today, but not all Tiv are Christians. There are still some Tiv people who are core traditional people and hold firm to the Tiv beliefs. Tiv are still practicing death inquisition. The Tiv still believes that anything that happens must have a cause and in which case, it must be traced to a person. The protection, survival and long life is subject to the person who is looking over a person, Tiv leave people in the care of other people who provides security for them. More so, the idea is so strong that even some Tiv Christians, given their faith and belief in the Christian religion are still influenced by it. There is the general belief that any Tiv who has accepted the Christian faith should transverse over this idea following the new faith and its belief in God and His supremacy. One may ask, is this thought still functional in Tiv society today, the answer is yes. The thought and belief is still functional in Tiv. Though, some families today do not assign *Ingyor* to *tien* and *tien* to *ingyor*, but this is due to the impact of Christian religion. The Tiv still give out their daughters in marriage and the money they have got used it to get a wife for their sons. The Tiv still invite the kinsmen from the side of the woman during happenings such as death. They still want to know who is responsible for the family if the father who is the head of the family is late. The woman is still inviting her relatives to intervene in situations that are so problematic and challenging to her. In an interview Igba said his daughter came and was requesting him to show her, her *tien*. The researcher's father has been called upon by her sister on several occasions to intervene in situations that were challenging to her, while in her matrimonial home. The daughters (*on-kasev*) are being invited during launching and fund raising. *Ishuur* too has taken a new dimension. The church too delegates an elder who will stand as a witness between the two families and the church. The elder plays the very role that *shuur* used to do, though it is only within the time of the marriage process.

### **Impact of Tien for understanding the gospel**

*Tien* as a saviour is an important concept in Tiv. Employing the concept in the Christian religion by the missionaries to evangelize the Tiv would be of great impact and ease. *Tien* as a saviour conveys the idea of salvation and a saviour. The Tiv are already aware that salvation is external; that is salvation is offered by someone external than oneself. To acquire it, require keeping active (trust) and good relationship with your *tien*. Believe in him



whole-heartedly, as the only and ultimate source of protection and security. A person do have one *tien* at a time, you cannot have more than one. This is applicable to the law which forbade and requires having only one God. Since *ingyor* loose contact and connection in this regard, he or she is really committed to looking up to *tien* for everything. *Tien* claims authority and responsibility to anything that happens to his *ingyor*. He watches over her and makes sure that nothing happens to her. This is likened to what the Bible says that; God is aware of the number of hair on our head and nothing happens to us without his consent. *Tien* is believed to be taking watch over her *ingyor* both in the physical and in the spirit (spiritual) realms. Such that in all spheres she is secured, just as God who watches over his People (Israel neither sleeps nor slumbers), He keeps watch both in the day and night. *Tien* fights for the course of his *ingyor*, he intercedes when her *ingyor* is ill-treated. Even when she is at fault, *tien* pleads on her behalf and make amends for her. *Tien* to some extent because he is so much shielding her *ingyor*, he suffers consequences, he offers himself as a ransom in exchange of her *ingyor*. In the same way, Jesus serve as our substitute, redeeming us from the curse of the law. *Tien* forbids her *ingyor* from involving in evil and hideous affairs, so that no one will have unjust reason against her and her people, to harm them. This up-right and righteous life and living gives the *tien* an edge in handling any matter that concerns her *ingyor*, because he is certain that his *ingyor* will be acquitted. *Tien* warns her *ingyor*, that if she is committed in hideous doings, he will be powerless to defend her case. In essence *tien* encourages her *ingyor* to be righteousness.

*Tien* correlates with Christ on His intercessory role that is why Christ fits in to be *tien* for the *Tiv*. Else, Christ is by far different from *tien*. He is God, eternal, immortal, saviour of the whole world (people), unlike *tien* who is just human, susceptible to death; mortal, and who could intervene only for the course of his *Ingyor*. This paper presents the role of *tien* *Tiv* traditional setting and shows how it correlates to that of Christ. Christ is the supreme *tien*.

### Conclusion

The paper looked at an important personality in *Tiv* worldview and thought; *tien*. *Tien* saves or protects his people from harm and danger that would have affected them. Due to the facts above, *tien* is feared and respected by all of his subjects. *Tien* is an important personality that no one can afford to do without him. In fact, in *Tiv*, every man and woman has *tien* since he is everything to his people. This is because a woman's *tien* is automatically her sibling's *tien*. Every *Tiv* man and woman looks up to his *tien* for any affair or matter that befall him or her. As it is in the case with *Tien*, Christ intercedes on behalf of the people, he protects them.



Employing this concept, the DRC Missionaries would have made the gospel clearer and practical for the Tiv to understand that Christ is the supreme saviour for their salvation.

### Recommendations

- i. **Tien as saviour is Tiv Christ-Like Typology:** Different African groups have Christological-theological thoughts. *Tien* as saviour is one of such kind. For the Tiv, *tien* is a prototype of Christ. The role Christ played is the role *tien* is playing in traditional Tiv society. The paper recommends *tien* personality as an important and a functional personality that is practical within the Tiv
- ii. **Tien as saviour, a bridge to understanding Christ:** Tiv people at first do not have a balanced view about God and his love. Therefore teaching the Tiv about God's love and salvation in Jesus was completely strange to them. The Tiv do not believe in heaven and eternity in heaven. The Tiv understand the role of *tien* in salvaging his people from dire affairs and evil. *Tien* showed love to his people. The paper recommends that, teaching the Tiv about God, His love and salvation in Jesus Christ using the Tiv-*tien* idea, the message would have been clearer and accepted.

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