

**THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE TRADITION OF PEOPLE OF  
IGARRA**

**BY**

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**BEING A RESEARCH WORK PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by Onoyenefu Michelle Ozishaiye, with Matriculation number ART1701776 in the Department of Religions, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is first and foremost dedicated to the Almighty God for His love and abundant mercies. Secondly, I dedicate it to my lovely family for their patience and support. Lastly, to my amazing friends and loved ones for the wonderful roles they played in my life, I shall forever be grateful.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Igarra traditional Religion and cultural values have undergone significant alterations. The Igarra way of life has been changed by the impacts of modernity. The community spirit, hospitality, and interpersonal relationships that were part of Igarra cultural history and values have been affected. Their ancient religious beliefs and patterns of god and divinity worship have been corrupted. In recent times the situation has changed. This study investigated the influence of Christianity and Western culture on the traditional religion and cultural values of the Igarra people. The best outcome was achieved using a phenomenological research historical approach. The argument made in the study was that the traditional religion of the Igarra and its cultural values had been significantly influenced by Western cultural forces, particularly those related to Christianity, education, and industrialization, to name just a few. This research work proposed, among other things, that Igarra people embrace their cultural history and regard western cultures as an alternative way of life in order to confront and prevent the extinction of Igarra traditional religion and cultural values.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

## **1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Prior to the advent of Christianity in Igarra Land, the Igarra society was a well-organized one, with an advanced social structure and a developed cultural system. The Igarra people are from the Northern part of Edo State, and are known as the Akoko-Edo ethnic group. The people had a religion with certain basic beliefs similar to those of Christian Religion. They have the belief in one supreme God who is worshiped through minor gods. These gods were worshiped by the Igarra, as intermediaries between God (Oshomoshi) and the people. These gods were created and delegated by God to see to the affairs of the people.

Asides that, the traditional Igarra society held its cultural values, such as family unit, respect for elders and constituted authority, brotherhood, ancestral worship, customs but to mention a few, in high regard. All these were strictly adhered to as the binding traditions and customs of the people. This was the position of Igarra land before the advent of Christianity and Western culture.

The coming of Christianity ushered in civilization that greatly influenced the economic, political, medical, religious, and in total, cultural life of the people. Aspects of the culture that was not of best interest of the people (as said by the missionaries), had to be done away with. This brought about negative and positive effects. There became a conflict of values. Now, much of our past has been forgotten and there is an urgent need for its revival for the survival of the society and retaining of the identity of the Igarra people. On

this basis, cultural revival is needed to help the society regain its lost values that are of relevance to the present people of Igarra and to preserve them from total extinction, as the Western culture seems to pose a threat to its very existence.

In this study, the cultural setting before the advent of Christianity will be discussed. The impact of Christianity and western culture on the cultural values of Igarra, shall also be examined. Conflicts between Christianity and cultural values of the Igarra people will be highlighted. Possible solutions to the conflicts will be proffered in order to bring to light the mistakes made against the cultural heritage of Igarra.

## **1.2. Definition of Terms**

Some terms would be explained to paint a clearer picture of the research topic. These terms are Christianity, effects, culture, heritage, and Igarra.

**1.2.1. Impact:** This refers to the major effect something has on a circumstance, a person, or a set of individuals.

**1.2.2. Christianity:** Christianity is a monotheist religion that is based on the traditions of Jesus Christ who is the center of the Christian faith. Christianity can still be referred to as religious activities carried out by religious people with the aim of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**1.2.3. Tradition:** A tradition is a way of thinking or acting (a folk custom) that has been passed down within a group or community and has symbolic importance or special historical roots.

**1.2.4. Igarra:** Igarra, is one of the many ethnic groups that make up Edo state. Historically, it migrated from Idah in Kogi state, and permanently settled in Edo north. It is made up of three quarters namely; Ugbobo, Utua and Uffa. Indigenes of Igarra are called Anetuno. Igarra is most famous for its Abba festival which is ranked as the 6th most indigenous cultural festival in West Africa.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

The general stance of some culturally grounded and highly placed men and women of Igarra land is that The Christian religion is detrimental to the development of the socio-cultural values of Igarra. From the advent of Christianity, it was always seen as a threat to the existence of the preexisting culture. However, there exist some positives from the advent of Christian. These positives contributions are in the aspects of commerce, health, housing, education, etcetera, in Igarra land. There are also some negative aspects of the advent of Christianity in Igarra land, such as the killing of early Christian converts in Igarra.

In spite of recognizing these developments, some have actually over looked the positive impact of Christianity to the cultural life of the Igarra people. This could lead to devastating effects on Christianity. Also the culture of the Igarra people is highly exposed total or partial extinction due to acculturation of Western culture that was ushered in through Christianity. The indigenous practices of the people, have given way for western culture. This also poses a threat to the existence of the cultural heritage of the igarra

people as certain practices which conflict with that of the Igarras are being accommodated. The statement of the problem is therefore to examine the effect of christianity on the religio-cultural heritage of the Igarra people.

#### **1.4. Aim and Objectives**

The entire aim of this study is to critically and carefully analyze the impact of Christianity on the cultural heritage of the Igarra people. The specific objectives are as follows:

- II. To establish that the traditional Igarra society was well ordered with a developed social structure, social institution and cultural values system, before the advent of Christian religion and western culture.
- III. To examine the negative and positive impact of Christian religion on the cultural values of the igarra people.
- III. To give relevant recommendations in addressing the conflict between Christian teachings and Igarra cultural heritage.
- IVI. To examine the concept of Christianity and western culture

#### **1.5. Research Methodology**

This study adopts the historical and evaluative methods of research. It relies on primary and secondary sources of information. For the primary sources, key informants such as chiefs and other highly placed traditional men and women of Igarra people, were interviewed, in order to get current and authentic data. The instrument used was the

simple random sample method. The second source, were materials such as journals, article handbooks that were relevant to the course of this study.

In this study, a historical analytic approach is adopted. The historical approach aided the critical analysis of the negative and positive impact of Christianity and the western culture, on the cultural heritage of the Igarra people. The evaluative method was used to achieve the main aim and distinctive objectives of this study.

### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

This study is set to examine the influence Christian religion and western culture has on the cultural heritage of the garage people. The area of concentration is Igarra, headquarter of the Akoko-Edo ethnic group of Edo state. It is centered on the cultural heritage of the Igarra people, prior to the coming of Christian religion and western culture. However, in this course of study, setting challenges were faced. There was a challenge of financial constraints for mobilization; the lack of ample literature in the subject area; unavailability of historians on the pre-colonized eager society and limited time to have an in-depth investigation only subject area.

### **1.7. Significance of Study**

It is expected that an objective historical and evaluative study as this work, will give recent perspectives on the impact of Christianity and western culture on the cultural values of Igarra people. With this knowledge, there would be consciousness of cultural revival of the Igarra people.

Lost values that gave the Igarra people an identity and helped in sustaining the society would be revived. It will also give room for their assessment, revaluation and development of the Igarra culture, which still has traits of disabilities and has not gotten a definite position.

This knowledge will be of benefit to indigenes of Igarra historians and subsequent researchers of the Igarra culture.

### **1.8. Division of Work**

This essay is divided into five chapters. The first is the introductory chapter consisting of the background to the study, definition of terms, statement of problem, aim and objectives, significance of study, scope and limitation of study and research methodology. In chapter two, the relevant literature to the study was reviewed. In chapter three of this project, a briefing sight on the concept of culture is given. Proceeding from here, this work exposes what culture is in Igarra land by giving a historical account of the people, their values and belief system, prior to the advent of Christianity. In chapter 4, a brief history of the advent of Christianity into Africa, specifically Igarra, is taking into account. Furthermore, accounts of the spread of Christianity in Igarra land, and the conflicts that arose due to this cause (clash of values between Christianity and cultural cultural heritage of Igarra), the impact of Christian religion on the cultural values of Igarra people was equally discussed. Each prominent cultural value is critically analyzed to evaluate the influence of Christian religion, has on it. The role of Christian religion in the religious,

social and economic development of Igarra people is looked into. The closing chapter 5, focused on the evaluation, conclusion and recommendations of the work are provided.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Concept of Culture**

From the start of one's life to death, there are certain traditions or culture that guides one.

Culture, is a complex concept that has various definitions as defined from different

perspectives. These definitions are given from different perspectives. According to sociologist Charon(1980), “culture regulates every stage of one’s life, all through the period between birth and death, constant pressure is on one to follow certain types of behaviors that have been created by other men”. This implies that every aspect of man’s life is influenced by culture. People’s behavior, philosophy and personality, are influenced by culture. It also shows that culture is learned and acquired from older members of such societies.

Parson (1958) understands culture as “a factor that sharpens human behavior, by transmitted and created patterns of values, ideas and other symbolic meaningful systems”. Culture guides one’s behavior. It dictates the code of conduct on all aspects of man’s life, through a system that is unique to the particular group of people. This is determined by the environment of the society.

It is important to note that culture differs from society to society. However, there are still similarities found among cultural system of societies.

Culture is comprised of two forms; the intangible aspects (immaterial) and the tangible aspects (material). Deep intangible aspects are expressed through ideologies, values and language, while the tangible covers the aspects of culture that are physical. These include symbols, artifacts, food, dressing, utensils, sculpture, mode of transportation, tools, clothing etc. Every aspect of culture is expressed through language. Language is the means through which culture is transmitted by abstract symbols and meanings, which are

understood by orders. It is the major means of passing cultural heritage of a people. Sanford (1960), is of the opinion that “Man, through the use of linguistic symbols, transmits immaterial cultural heritage”.

In all cultures, one can notice slight similarities and enormous differences. An instance is the African culture with the European culture. Differences in culture do not imply that one culture is superior to the other. The differences do not make a culture less of the other, when compared. This is important to note because in later parts of this study it will be shown how the early Christian Missionaries to Igarra, had the attitude of a superior culture, coming to an inferior culture. They had the notion, that their culture was superior to that of the Igarra. Hence, all relationship was based on superior- inferior dealing.

## **2.2. The Historical Origin of Igarra**

The Igarra society traces its origin to the 14th century. Archive records have it, that Igarra was founded by emigrates from the north. Others claim that it originated from the West, Ile Ife of the present Ibadan state of Nigeria. According to the Otaru(king) of Igarra, Oba Emmanuel Adeche Saiki II, the founding fathers of Igarra came from the Kwararafa Confederacy of the Junkun kingdom of Wukari in the present day Kogi state, under the leadership of Ariwo Ovejijo, the right heir to the throne in Idah. Centuries ago, he left Idah on account of being cheated of his right to ascend the throne of Attah of Igalla. He left in company of some supporters. His family and he made up all the families in Igarra.

He founded Igarra and became the first ruler in the new kingdom of Igarra. He carried the title “Otaru Ariwo Ovejijo” meaning Ariwo Ovejijo, king of Igarra people. On getting there, Ariwo Ovejijo and his emigrants met few inhabitants in Igarra. They were the Anufuas (dwarfs), Anivas (the unwise People) and Andokonis. The much known about these people, is that they lived in caves and their lifestyle was simple, unrefined and crude, when compared to the Igarra.

Anufuas were cunning people who channeled the strength of the Anivas to their advantage. The Anufuas were good traders in beads. They exchanged beads for farm products, hence, the use of cowries as legal tender. It was the medium of exchange among the people of Ancient Igarra. Ovene, Isu, Ofa and Opa were the different types of currencies in trading. The Anivas are known to be very powerful such that they used this to intimidate their enemies. All these groups were eliminated in warfare, when there was a clash of interest and values between both cultures. They were killed and driven. Some others fused into some kindred and pledged allegiance to Igarra king. Having left Idah, Ariwo Ovejijo and his followers stayed briefly at Ajaokuta before migrating westwards from Idah to the present place, traditionally named, Etuno.

The Igarra people settled first at the root of the kukuruku hills, but later moved to the ridge caves of the hills, due to tribal wars.

Another school of thought says that Igarra people migrated from Ile-Ife of present Ibadan state, before moving to Igbira land then finally settling in Etuno of Edo state. While they

lived with the Igbira people, they coexisted in harmony and peace. However, the Igarra people prospered well among the Igbiras. They were very prosperous in farming, trade and arts, that the Igbira people felt threatened that the Igarra might take over their land. Hence, they sought to chase the Igarra from their land. They achieved this by putting up unwelcoming attitude to the Igarra.

The Igarra then moved from Idah to the present day Etuno. There they met inhabitants and stayed with them. As time passed, they conquered the inhabitants and took full possession of the land. They derived the name Igarra from the phrase used to address them which is (E-Garra) which means we are scattered. Why this name was given was due to the fact that the community was not formally organized as an official community. At that early stage, they were more like wanderers.

### **2.3. Geographical Location of Igarra**

Igarra society traces its origin to the early 14th century. It is located in the southwestern region of Edo state, Nigeria. Igarra is one of the many villages that make up the present Edo North. From records, it is said that Igarra was founded by immigrants from Idah, Kogi state. Igarra has inhabitants of over 14, 647(2006 census record). Inhabitants of Igarra are called Anetuno. It is a rocky town surrounded by the Kukuruku hills with an area of 1,371 km<sup>2</sup>.

Igarra is also known as Etuno. It happens to be the headquarters of Akoko-Edo local government. Akoko-Edo is made up of 11 villages and these villages form the neighbours

of Igarra. In the west it shares boundary with Enwan. In the North it shares boundary with Somorika. In the east it shares boundary with Uneme and in the south, it shares boundary with Ojirame. Igarra is made up of Ugbobo, Utua and Uffa quarters.

Igarra is known for its beautiful geographical features such as mountains, hills, caves, streams and rivers. In all, it has a landscape that is endowed with tourist attraction. Igarra has cool refreshing spring water from hills such as Ifege, Idiko, Ivokoto and Usege spring. It is blessed with a fertile agricultural soil for crops like yam, cassava and palm produce. The land faces humidity tropical climate which is defined by wet and dry seasons. Igarra has a good climate that is cool. This must have intrigued the fore fathers to settle there.

#### **2.4. Occupation of the People of Igarra**

The main occupations of the people of Igarra are; farming, hunting and production of textile. The pre-colonial Farmers engaged in subsistent farming of crops like yam, palm fruit, groundnut, maize, corn, cocoa, coco yam, cassava, iron beans et cetera. However, in recent times these crops have been produced in commercial quantities. Now, people from all parts of Edo and Nigeria at large, come to buy food items that have been cultivated in Igarra. Market days are now flooded with people engaging in buying or selling of goods and services. Farming was the major occupation for men. They also hunted animals to provide good food for themselves. This was mostly done by men. As for the women, they engage in traditional cloth weaving and processing of food e.g. cassava to corn flakes (garri). They are well known for weaving the native attire traditionally called Itive.

Hunters of Igarra are skilled in hunting animals found within that vicinity for consumption or trade. Example of such animals is grasshopper, bush meat, snake, bat, etc.

Itive, is a rich native attire worn on special occasions such as naming, wedding, chieftaincy celebration and festivals. Women from neighboring villages, come to place order for clothes to be woven for them. Itive is rich native attire worn on special occasions such as naming, wedding, chieftaincy celebration and festivals. Women from neighbouring villages, come to place order for clothes to be woven for them.

## **2.5. Values of Igarra People**

According to Ezeaku (1990), “Norms and values refer to a set of ideas, or opinions generally upheld, upon which member's actions and achievements are measured and evaluated”. This implies that what is accepted by the society constitutes the norms of that society. No society exists without values. The Igarra society had rich cultural values that affected the moral, social, economic, religious and political aspects of the people. The traditional Igarra society was characterized by a host of values which include respect for elders and constituted authority, communalism, hard work, chastity, language, dressing, et cetera. Behaviors and conduct were assessed through the lens of the community. Good deeds were rewarded accordingly and bad deeds were sanctioned in the same vein. Deeds were classified based on their effects on the society. Those that threatened the existence of the society were discouraged through negative sanctions. While those that were perceived as helpful, were encouraged through positive sanctions.

**2.5.1. Communalism:** Communalism is a social system that is based on a group of people who share common values, traditions, philosophies, code of conduct and laws. Communal life was appropriated by the people of Igarra. No individual lived in isolation. Communal spirit prevailed all members of the society despite their personal activities. Mbiti (1989) is of the opinion that “in traditional life, the individual does not exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of the past generations and his contemporaries”. Therefore, a member of the society is bound by what the community approves it decides upon. If the society says one should not come out on a particular day, no one comes out or if the society says a particular ritual must be done for one’s passage into the next stage of one’s life, it must be done. Values were not made in consideration of a particular individual but rather in consideration of the whole society. The Igarra conceived communalism based on sense of kinship. Every individual belonged to a kin either by birth or marriage. Social interaction was guided by the sense of kinship. Kinship created a sense of relation and community. Everyone felt related to each other through distant or close relationship. The sense of kinship creates a binding of the entire tribe.

In Igarra communal life, children were not parented by only their biological parents. There was the belief that children are for the society. Consequently, the whole elders of the community were parents to the child. Fellow children of the same age grade were called brothers and sisters of each other.

Communal life outlined the code of conduct for its members. There was no room for individuals acting based on self-intuition because every individual's action was believed to have effect on the whole society. If one did something terrible against the gods, the whole society might be endangered. Hence, the community took interest in every individual's conduct. The communal life of the Igarras is also shown in the pattern of house structure. Houses were built with multiple rooms, having a large compound. This was to accommodate all members of that kindred. Some built houses linked to each other, in order to maintain a close relationship. Despite the challenges involved in living together, they still enjoyed it.

**2.5.2. Respect for Elders and Constituted Authority:** Respect for elders and constituted authority, was held in high regard. This was an important value of the people. The young ones were expected to show total respect and regard for older ones, in different ways. This was shown in the manner of greeting, addressing of the older ones, and their attitude towards them, which was to be guided by what the culture saw as respectful. As a sign of respect, the younger one prostrates (for boys), or kneels down (for girls), while greeting an elder. They call them Ada (for an elderly male) and Onya (for an elderly female). They also help them out in tasks like; farming, carrying of loads, washing, running of errands, cooking (optional) et cetera. It was a moral obligation to help an elder.

This was done on the basis of the belief that such noble act attracts blessings from the old, therefore, a young person who disregards the old brought curses upon himself. The young people were taught to respect the old because of the wisdom, knowledge and experience they possessed. By respecting them, one bequeaths the treasures they carry.

Through respect for elders and constituted authority, the traditional society was able to achieve stability and effectiveness. There was a well-defined hierarchical system. In the wisdom of the elders, the society maintained peace, stability and harmonious existence. Once the council of elders passed a judgement or decree, it was followed by the individuals without questioning. This was one of the factors that held the Igarra society together. Respect and loyalty to constituted authority was not due to weakness of the individual or compulsion. Rather, it was a voluntary act and it enhanced social solidarity. This loyalty was a sign of self-control and respect for the community.

**2.5.3. Chastity:** Chastity was a moral value that was regarded and revered among the Igarra. Young members of the society were obliged to abstain from intercourse before marriage. Emphasis was made on the chastity of a lady. A lady's virginity was to be kept intact before marriage and given as an honorable gift to her husband. A lady who lost her virginity before marriage was a disgrace to herself and her family. In order to prevent any chance of such occurrence, certain measures like genital mutilation, were applied. In addition, sanctions were imposed on individuals who fell out of chastity.

Sanctions are of the positive and negative types. The positive sanctions are in form of praise and reward, given to those who do not go against the norms of the society. A girl, whose virginity was kept until marriage, was spoken in praise of. Her parents are praised and given gifts in appreciation of grooming a decent lady. As for those that were discovered to have been defiled, no praise is sung of them. They are sent back to their parents or retained with scorn. In contrast to how the female are groomed to be chaste, the males are less burdened. Rather emphasis is laid upon them to be responsible husbands that can take care of multiple wives. However, an indecent male was seen as irresponsible to be married to, since bad behavior was not to be identified with.

Adultery, fornication, rape, incest and all other forms of sexual immorality, were condemned in order to promote chastity. In Igarra, offenders faced dehumanizing punishment like walking naked or paying sacrifices to the gods for cleansing. Those sexual behaviors were seen as grave sins. Adultery was seen as a personal insult to the husband of the adulteress. Hence, any action taken by the husband was supported by the people. A girl, who fornicates, stood the risk of not getting married again. These offenders were excluded from their age groups. All these measures were geared towards deterring people from unchastely.

**2.5.4. Unity:** The Mariam Webster dictionary defines unity as "the state or quality of being in harmony". In order words unity is the condition of being in agreement in opinion, action and feeling, despite the different individuals involved. The existence and progress

of a society is dependent on the harmonious function of small units that make up the society. Out of the many values of Igarra, unity was most upheld. Unity was encouraged among indigenes of Igarra. This was on the bases of the belief that all members came from a particular ancestry. Unity began from small families that made up the community as a whole. Unity existed in the traditional Igarra society.

There was a sense of common identity, interest and mission, helped in manifesting unity. This value is promoted in one of the traditional festivals known as Aba. All indigenes of Igarra comes together to celebrate the newly initiated chiefs. In the process, people are made to eat together from the same plate, dance together and share possessions with each other. Another means that enhanced unity is the age grade system. Once one enters a particular age group, he becomes a brother or sister to everyone in that group. In these age groups, there is close affiliation among members. There existed the “We Feeling”. Each individual becomes loyal to the group. Even in their differences members have a sense of togetherness. In general, the concept of unity was based on the concept of communal decent.

**2.5.5. Language:** Igarras speak Etuno which is similar to the language of the Igbira. They share no linguistic affinity with any of the ethnic groups in Edo state. Etuno language has a common ancestry with the Igbira and Egbura languages spoken in some parts of Kogi and Nassarawa states of Nigeria.

**2.5.6. Mode of Dressing:** The traditional attire of Igarra is mainly shokoto, Buba and Agbada. These are styles sown with the traditional hand woven material. These clothes are often made by women. It was made with the use of a loom. This was found in almost all Igarra homes. The traditional attire is worn on special occasions and ceremonies like Irepa, Azi, marriage or burial ceremony. While the elder ones dressed in these rich styles, the young ones simply tied wrapper around their waist and across their chest. These hand woven clothes are locally called Itive, Itowoji, Ibanku, Itishezi, Angere and Itaresufa. This trade thrived within and outside Igarra.

**2.5.7. Marriage:** In the pre-colonial Igarra society, marriage was based on the prescription of the individual's parents on an intended spouse. That is, people practiced a system of marriage where the parents look out for a suiting spouse as a husband or wife, for their child. While looking for a spouse, the individual's family background, personality and status (optional), is put in consideration. Their findings determine whether to commence with the marriage process or put a stop to it and look elsewhere. Sometimes, the parents make arrangement of marriage between both individuals while they are children. When the individuals show sign of maturity, they are given into marriage to each other.

The sign of maturity for a girl is when she experiences her first menstrual flow. For the boys, his maturity shows when he starts exhibiting manly capabilities or showing a sense of responsibility. After this, a date is fixed for the boy to go and sleep in the girl's house.

The boy would prepare himself and his friends to work in the father-in-law's farm. This is popularly called "Izure". Of recent this aspect has been monetized. On return from the farm, the girl's mother would prepare "Apapa" (Bean Loaves). Most times when the boy goes to the girl's house the first night, he might be driven back by the girl's parent in the claim that their daughter was not ready for marriage. The boy would go back and relay the message back to these parents. He returns with his parents to plead with the girl's parents. After this, he is accepted. The significance of the first disappointment is to tell the boy and to warn him of the difficulties involved in taking a wife. The boy sleeps at the girl's house but would wake up very early in the morning to go home. The boy would then go home to report his findings to his parents, on whether the girl is a virgin or not. If she was a virgin, the parents of the boy would send to the parent of the girl gift praising them for taking good care of their daughter. If not a virgin, the parents of the boy would not communicate with the parents of the girl.

The girl who was a virgin becomes the pride of her parents and also a pride to herself in her husband's house. The wife does not go to live in the husband's house until after one or two issues. Having undergone those preparatory processes, the next stage is to conduct a traditional marriage ceremony, where the bride price is paid and the lady is officially handed over to the man. Among the things paid as bride price are:

1. Tubers of yams
2. White cloth

3. Some amount of money not exceeding one hundred naira nowadays (thirty naira in the olden days).
4. Whatever the parents demand for

**2.5.7. Festivals of the Igarra People:** There are many traditional festivals that are celebrated in Igarra. They include Enu (Yam) Festival, Echie, Azi, Ekwochi, Abba , Inyama festival.

- V. Enu (YAM): The New Yam festival is a sign of new beginnings. In Igarra, yam is highly appreciated. It is prepared in pounded forms and is best eaten on special occasions. On July, August, the arrival of new yam (Evina-Owowa) is celebrated in The New Yam Festival, Enu/Omsi.

The celebrations and festivities are offered to the gods for providing for the people throughout that year. The first stage of this annual festival is the planting of guinea-corn Osi-Sku-Mete to appease the land. The Eziakuta-Onfere family, performs this rite alone. This ceremony celebrates the presence of New Yams. New Yams are harvested by farmers. The second stage of the festival preceding Enu (New Yam festival) in Igarra is to set the date for the festival. Once the ENU lunar moon is seen, the New Yam feast is set for 14 days (Egena) with a short ceremony called Ojirekushi-Enu(planning the New Yam Festival). This ritual is performed by the leader of the Opa-Irepa (Irepa group) from Eziakuta kindred. This period of 14 days allows the larger harvest of yams which ushers in the

celebration of the festival. On the eve of the festival, old yams are thrown away. The elders bless the new yams and celebration commences with dancing, eating and singing.

- V. Echitete festival: This is a special festival where unions, association and clubs come together at a venue selected for that purpose, in one attire to celebrate. This festival is done to commemorate ancestors and the departed loved ones.
- V. Azi festival: This festival is often celebrated by grandparents who have their first grandchild. This festival is commonly celebrated in Igarra. The grandparents make merry by dancing, singing, playing drums and other instruments (optional). They go about the village with other group of people to show appreciation to God for the new grandchild.
- V. Ekwochi festival: It comes up in two parts, first one comes up in the later part of November while the second part comes up in December period. This is a borrowed festival from Ibirá speaking people of Okene in Kogi state. The first form is that of Ekwochi dance which is only seen by men, and the other is a masquerade festival which is for all, in this particular case the people sing and others sing along side with the rhythms. This festival is an annual event.
- V. The celebration of Aba festival in Igarra ushers in the commencement of Irepa/Azebani title ceremony. It is celebrated every seven lunar or six calendar years and usually on the third day after Enu (New Yam Festival), which is usually in the month of August. The New Yam Festival is an annual event. In this festival,

one of the main events is the graduation of the town's Legislative and Executive age group, called Opoze to the highly revered council of Elders traditionally called the Azebani.

On the day of the event, as a mark of honour, no other person is allowed to wear any white attire except the celebrants (the graduating Opoze) who would all climb a sacred Opoporiku Hill in the community's Cultural Headquarters Opoporiku. This special day is preceded in the evening of the previous day by the shooting of ceremonial Dane guns, first in the compound of the Odovidi-leader of the Age Group who must be the oldest celebrant from Eziakuta Opoporiku family by 2pm and followed by all the other celebrants by 4pm. In the morning of the D-day, all celebrants prepare pounded yam for members of his kindred along with drinks which could be extended till everybody is satisfied. Once it's noon, the celebrants dress up in complete pure white Agbada, white shoes and cap to match assemble at designated places to dance to Ofumamo at Ugbogbo to complete the celebration.

- V. Inyama festival: Inyama means commerce. This festival is celebrated by the Anonyete family. It is celebrated annually on Ube market day and around the end of May. The Anonyete family gathers around the shrine to offer prayers for a favorable season of moderate rainfall and sunshine during farming season for a bountiful farm harvest and successful trading for traders within the year. During the festival the chief priest Oshinyama along with other priests of inyama, go into

the shrine and come out with a bowl of cowries, which is randomly thrown to the crowd. People scramble to pick the cowry which is kept in a secret place of their choice as a token of vow that if the gods grant answers to their prayers, they will come back with their gift to show appreciation. Only inyama drum are beaten during the festival.

**2.5.8. Belief System:** The Igarras believe that there is the almighty God called Oshomoshi. They believe that He is hidden up in the sky such that even if one climbs the tallest tree or mountain and stretches his hands, it will never reach Him; hence He is qualified as; (Oshomoshi, Ogederisha, Ogodogodo Onuvoza-e-metu) meaning – He is so far high above that your hands cannot reach Him. He is also referred to as Ishineba. Before the advent of the Christian religions, the Igarras believed that God can be approached through miniature gods. The Igarra hence appease these gods to help them in times of tribulations. The following are some of the gods which serve as intermediaries between the people and the Almighty God. The following are examples of minor gods of the traditional Igarra society Idakoriko Ubaru Asau (Idowo) Ori Ubete, Echetete, Enu, Etare (generic name for gods that have no definite name, but are prayed to for a particular purpose).

During the appeasement of these gods, the name of Oshomoshi (God) is first called before the libations. The god Idakoriko is generally worshiped by the people of Igarra and it is worshipped by all the families on behalf of them all. It is believed to be very

powerful and offer shelter to all the Igarra sons and daughters in times of hardship. It is known or believed to cleanse away barrenness, offer protections in journeys, helps to secure good jobs on the condition that the persons concern would not go against its (Idakoriko's) rules and regulations. The most important thing is that the person must not steal in his working place. In times of difficulty, the victims or the person concerned would make a promise to the god –Idakoriko. Things ranging from cock, hen to ram are given in return, if his or her wishes are granted. Failure to offer the sacrifices promised to the Idakoriko would lead to detrimental consequences. Object of sacrifices like cock, ram are slain for consumption. The meat is consumed there and there alone. No part is taken out. The bone of the animal is never cracked or broken with the teeth i.e. only the flesh is consumed. Members affirm to positive response from the gods. The god Idakoriko was also believed to have helped Igarra during inter-tribal wars. This was as a result of appeasement to the god –Idakoriko. This was to protect the soil of Igarra which as to be used as a battle field. The Igarra (Eutons) believed in (Eshe) – the world of the living or the universe, and also believed in (Idanelu) – the world beyond of the world of the dead. They believe that Eshe (life) is made up of good and bad people. They refer to the good people as “Azoiza as “Azeshi” “Opechi” or “Arebe” and the bad people, as “Opochi”.

There is the belief that when these bad people die, they are not buried in the home rather they are buried in the bush very far away from home. These bad people are known to confess in one form or the other their past atrocities at the point of death. The Igarra believe deeply in re-incarnation. Children who often fall sick are re-incarnated (Ofifuto

or Oyiye). The child would then be called by the name with which she/he is re-incarnated. The name might be that of an extended relation or even be named after an ancestor that died very long ago who they believe has come back to life. Whether one is re-incarnated or not, the Igarras believe that every son and daughter of Igarra has an 'Ozu' (re-incarnate).

Some of the popular shrines in Igarra are:

- I. Idakonko Shrine
- II. Idowoor Asawu Shrine
- III. Inyama Shrine
- IV. Opete Shrine
- V. Okute Shrine
- VI. Ubauru Shrine

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. CONCEPT OF WESTERN CULTURE**

#### **3.1. Foundation of Western Culture**

Western culture refers to the culture that has been developed by the people of the western part of the world. It is linked to the classical definition of the western world. This definition comprises of the heritage of norms, values, customs, philosophies, that are shared by the cultures of the western world. Much of these traditions and Knowledge are

collected in the western Canon who stop the culture is cited in the ancient Greece, Roman Empire and Judeo-Christian culture. It is a broad term used to refer to the social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems, political system and specific artifacts and technologies that have their roots in Europe or are associated with Europe.

It is popularly believed by scholars of the West that western culture was formed on the basis of three distinct traditions, the classical culture of Greece, and the Roman Christian religion and the Enlightenment of the modern era.

Western culture could also be termed western civilization or occidental culture. This culture passed through different stages of assimilation from the three main cultures stated previously, before becoming an independent and sovereign culture. Over the years, it has spread through almost every continent of the world, and has overshadowed some cultural practices of the indigenous people. Today, the western culture has become the dominant culture in prominent parts of the world like Africa. It has influenced the African philosophy, theology, society, tradition and custom.

**3.1.1. Elements of Western Culture:** Western culture constitutes of values, beliefs, philosophies and customs that make up its tradition. These set of philosophies, religion, science, literal principles, marked the difference between the western culture and other cultures of the world. Much of these set of traditions are documented in the western Canon.

I. Social Norms of the West: In every social gathering, there exist some shared standards of acceptable behaviors peculiar to the group of people. A social norm of the West is embedded with ideas values beliefs that define its culture. However, this has passed through processes of development before it spread throughout the world. The Christian doctrine promoted peaceful relationship wheezing and outside the body of believers. Everyone related with each other we still believe that each person is the human representation of God. Having so much reverence for God, behavioral pattern was tailored to suit the best interests of each other. As a result, any practice that was likely to cause harm and disrupts the peaceful coexistence of the society was discouraged and shunned. Meanwhile, practices that would promote peaceful existence were embraced. Since the inception of enlightenment which was from the period of 1700 to 1800, the basis of their cultural norms shifted its soul gaze from the Christian doctrine and dwelt more on individual philosophies of pioneers of enlightenment. Dispatched norms based on individualism, secularism and nationalism. Norms were now modified by their ideologies and beliefs that were related to enlightenment.

For instance, rationalism in western philosophy that regards reason as the ultimate test and source of knowledge, in fact that knowledge was not based on unproven facts books by empirical evidence. Hence human behavior was not based on the church's doctrinal perception but based on how practical any action is within the society. Individualism was centered on lean emphasis on personal autonomy true

stop it replaced norms that were communal based. Presently, the western culture has its norms patterned to suit individualism. As the cultural norms kept evolving, secularism came on board. Secularism is an ideology and Political belief that separates religion from ordinary social and political activity of the society. It is simply the separation of the church from the state. The church controlled all aspects of man who stop it defined the norms of the state and knowledge. As secularism took over the West, no answer redefined.

- II. Traditional customs of the West: Traditional culture is shared experiences that are transferred from one generation to another. It is a body of beliefs that are generally accepted by the society, that give it continuity with past and present generations. Some western cultural practices include democracy, Christianity, human rights, scientific thinking, and individualism.
- III. Democracy: Western democracy is characterized by the process of frequent elections between different political parties, separation of power into distinctive branches of government, freedom of press, protection of human rights ETC.
- IV. Human Rights: Do western culture promotes the rights of individuals. It is a body of laws that dictate regulates and define the privileges of individuals in a society. It denotes a special category of moral claim that's all individuals, are entitled to. This knowledge is commonly known in the western society. Therefore values and norms are made in favor of the rights of individuals.

For instance some persons believe in same sex marriage, certain moods or dressing, certain rituals. It is their right to be accepted for who they are their ideologies, their philosophies, and appearance. This created room for accommodation of all members of the western society, on the contrary the rights of non westerners were not recognized.

The following are rights of the western people:

- a) Right to life
- b) Rights to freedom from torture and inhuman treatments
- c) Rights to privacy
- d) Right to freedom of thoughts, religion, opinion and expression
- e) Right to asylum
- f) Right to education

- V. Western science: Western science is a body of knowledge that is predicated on a set of rules that have been discovered via the application of the scientific method to events in our environment. The scientific method starts with an observation, followed by a prediction or hypothesis, which is then put to the test.

Greek philosophy and the Renaissance in the West have a significant influence on modern science. Methods that are analytical and reductionist are encouraged. The data is quantitative and objective. It has a literary and academic foundation. Some

consider it to be the deciding factor in what is true. In order to interpret things, extensive thinking is required.

VI. Individualism: Individualism includes a set of moral principles, a view of human nature, and a commitment to particular political, economic, social, and religious institutions. All values are human-centered, according to the individualist. All people have equal moral standing, and the person is of utmost importance. The following are the ideologies of individualism:

- a. Self-Reliance
- b. Reliance on personal resources and abilities.
- c. Independence
- d. Absence of external influence.
- e. Entitlement
- f. The conviction that you have no need to repay society for what it has done for you.
- g. Freedom from restriction or interference to do as you please.
- h. Fundamental rights or freedoms that every person is entitled to the right to education and to free speech, for instance.
- i. Self-Fulfillment
- j. A system of ethics and politics that upholds the dignity and equality of every person.

VII. Western religion: Christianity can be traced to the teachings and life of Jesus, a Jew who lived in Palestine during the first century of the Common Era (c.e.). He advocated the idea that everyone should turn from their sins because we are all God's children. The New Testament accounts of Christian sacred literature claim that he was executed by Roman colonial authority but was revived three days later. He was the son of God, according to Christians, and his death and resurrection delivered people from sin and death.

Christianity is founded on a specific experience or plan aimed towards the act of saving-that is, returning these divine creations to their source in God by bringing them back or "buying them back," which is part of what redemption means. Jesus Christ serves as the redemptive process' agent.

### **3.2. Concept of Christianity**

**3.2.1. Belief System:** Christianity is the religion that places the greatest emphasis on the person of Jesus Christ. Faith here refers to both the act of trusting on the part of the believers as well as the substance of their beliefs. Christianity is more than just a belief system when it comes to culture. It has also produced a culture, a collection of beliefs and rituals, as well as artifacts that have been passed down from generation to generation. Thus, the culture that Christianity leaves behind is both a living tradition of faith and a living tradition of faith.

When Christianity first emerged as a movement within Judaism, it soon spread beyond the Jewish population; by the late fourth century, it had become the state religion of the Roman Empire. The division between the Western Church and the Eastern Church (also known as the Eastern Orthodox Church) occurred in 1054 as a result of doctrinal and political disagreements between the supporters of the patriarch in Constantinople and the pope in Rome during the Middle Ages. The Western Church split even more in the sixteenth century between various Protestant factions and Roman Catholics. Christianity is currently a worldwide religion despite being divided into hundreds of large and tiny groups.

- a) The Belief in God: One of the most challenging concepts in Christianity is the belief of the Trinity, but Christians must adhere to it because it explains what Christians think God is like and who he is. In worshiping a "unobjectifiable and incomprehensible God," Christians place a major emphasis on this. God's fundamental differences from people are emphasized. It is fundamental to the concept of being Christian. God can only be comprehended as a spiritual experience, whose incomprehensibility inspires awe rather than rational comprehension. The implication of this doctrine is that there is only one God, who is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- b) Food Ritual: Many of Christianity's customs, especially those involving food, are modifications or adaptations of Jewish ones as it started as a movement inside Judaism. Judaism includes precise regulations for appropriate eating behavior,

such as a restriction on some "unclean" foods (pork and shellfish, for example) and standards for how other foods should be prepared. Christians disagreed throughout the first century CE as to whether they had to follow Jewish law. There isn't anything in Christian scripture that forbids following such dietary restrictions; in fact, a number of verses specifically exempt believers from prior rules. The Jewish food regulations were nevertheless upheld by some Christians, while others believed that Jesus' teachings abolished these limitations. Western Christianity has little influence on followers' daily meals and no official dietary taboos since the latter group has gained dominance.

- c) Sacred Food: The religion is centered on a particular meal ritual. Christians hold that on the eve of his death, Jesus gathered with a small group of his disciples for a meal. According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, this meal was a Jewish Passover dinner; however, the Gospel of John claims that it was a berakah (blessing) prior to the Passover. Jesus presided over the meal and, in a prayerful act of thanksgiving, declared that the bread and wine were his body and blood. He then commanded his followers to partake in the meal once more in his honor.

Under many names, Christians continue recreate that dinner today. The Mass or Eucharist is the name given to this recreation by Catholics (from a Greek word meaning "thanksgiving").

Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, the Last Supper, or just Communion. It was a real supper with a full menu in early Christianity, commonly called as an agape (love feast). Today, just the remnants of the meal are consumed during the rite, and devotees often only consume a small slice of bread and a small bit of wine or grape juice. The ceremony places more emphasis on words than on food; participants recount the account of Jesus' life and death and thank God for saving them.

- d) Christian Fasting: The customs have evolved through the years. Early Christians fasted twice a week, although on distinct days from their Jewish colleagues. Fasting became less popular as Christianity gained popularity; instead, religious elites like monks and nuns more frequently engaged in the practice. Many of the fasts were abandoned after the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century by newly created Protestant groups; however some continued to fast during designated periods of penitence and prayer. In contemporary Protestantism, fasting is uncommon, yet some Protestants do it as a spiritual physical discipline. The Roman Catholic Church has eased its rules about fasting in recent decades. Christians who were exceptionally austere throughout the Middle Ages might go months without eating anything other than the bread and wine during Communion. The forty days (excluding Sundays) leading up to Easter, the spring celebration honoring Jesus' resurrection, were marked by the majority of Christians as the penitential season of Lent. Most Christians would abstain from eating or some

other luxury instead of fasting. The medieval Church also instituted a weekly fast, ordering all of its members to abstain from meat on Fridays in observance of the day of the week on which Jesus was crucified.

- e) The Bible: The Bible is written by God. The tale of God's love for people is shown there. It is trustworthy, authoritative, filled with the Holy Spirit, and appropriate to daily life.
- f) Prayer: An interaction with God occurs during prayer. Christians are demanded to be open at heart. God is unafraid of anything.
- g) Grace: The undeserved favor that God extends to us is known as grace. It keeps us alive. God's grace covers our sins when we put our trust in Jesus to save us, and He entirely regenerates us into new beings. The old is over and the new has arrived. Grace gives us the tools we need to carry out the plans God has for our life. Even if we don't deserve it, God nevertheless offers it to us because He has an unwavering love for us.
- h) Community: Life changes occur in the Christian community. Nothing compares to that when it's done right. Every Christian should be involved in a group of people who will support them in good times and bad, lift them up when they are down, offer a shoulder to weep on when they are happy, and can also help them with their questions concerning God.

### **3.3. Advent of Christianity in Africa**

Beginning in the middle of the fourteenth century, when the western coast of Africa was first discovered, Europeans were the first to arrive in Africa, and their settlement along the continent's shore became entrenched as a result. Christianity was established as a rigorous institution that had been regulated and modified according to the western tradition and invested on the African people who had no opportunity to challenge its presence during this period.

The church at this time had very little appeal to the people of Africa because it was considered to be only a side project of the commercial enterprise. Christianity was in peril at the time, despite the fact that few people, including African chiefs and community leaders, converted. Early in the eighteenth century, when slavery was incorporated into the mission strategy, the second period of Christian presence in Africa began. However, this attempt failed because it was not sustainable, and the first period of Christianity in Africa continued until the end of the century. With the cooperation and involvement of many Africans, missionary groups from Europe and America were able to successfully plant and grow Christianity across the continent of Africa. Only a few places, including Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, still showed some evidence of Christian influence after the northern part of Africa had been completely Christianized.

It is important to recognize the work being done by Roman Catholic Orders like the Franciscans and Dominicans to reestablish Christianity in this region of Africa that is

predominately Christian (Sawyer & Youssef, 2005). This was required since Islam had greatly displaced Christianity and had infiltrated the region. Since ignorance and superstition had previously tarnished the courage of the few who could have ventured to discover sub-Saharan Africa, the Portuguese catholic missionaries were the first to introduce Christianity to West Africa as part of the expanding quest for adventure and the discovery of new places. The exploration of the world during the fourteenth and fifteenth century included the discovery of sub-Saharan Africa. By leading several journeys to the western coast of Africa in search of opportunities in trade, science, the military, and evangelization, Henry, the son of the Portuguese monarch John I, played a crucial role.

Following numerous years of exploration, Henry and his crew reached the area beyond Cape Bojador and found a sizable area of inhabited coastal land. Around 1445, they forged trade ties with the locals before departing and crossing the Senegal River. Portuguese traders had established themselves on the island of Cape Verde after his death in 1460, but some had also crossed the Gambia River and arrived in Sierra Leone in 1465 at Cabo Mensurado, which is now the site of Monrovia. Additionally, they made contact with Elmina in modern-day Ghana and Benin, which is situated between modern-day Nigeria and Togo (David, & Kpobi 2005).

### **3.4. Advent of Christianity in Nigeria**

The beginning of Christianity in Nigeria can also be traced to the fifteenth century. Due to their greater interest in trade and business than in spreading Christianity, the

Portuguese missionaries' attempt to convert the inhabitants of Benin and Warri to Christianity failed. Slavery replaced sylvan goods like timber and related products as the primary trade item in the sixteenth century, and it persisted for more than 300 years.

The Efik inhabitants of Old Calabar at this time were so assimilated into European culture that they adopted English social customs and adopted Anglican names (Ayandele, 1966). The Igbo customs and traditions, with which the Efik were then grouped or connected, remained unaltered despite all of these developments. According to Ade Ajayi (1965), the early 14th century's religion was ineffective. This was said in Benin and Warri. When Portuguese missionaries were sent to Benin in 1515, the Oba of Benin was preoccupied waging war, but the author remembers his casual demeanor. When he had more free time to spend on leisure, he told them to come back. He then dismissed them (Ade Ajayi, 1965). The king no longer had any interest in the faith when they came back in 1538. As a result, traditional religion persisted and even thrived in Benin, which severely weakened its ties to white men. The Spanish and Italian Capuchins made another attempt to Christianize Benin in the middle of the seventeenth century. They believed that winning the love of the Oba, whom his subjects adored, might also win the hearts of all of the subjects since they would always obey him.

They were dissatisfied, however, to be denied access to the monarch because they only had two encounters with him in ten months while being imprisoned in the rooms that had been set aside for them. They were expelled in 1651 after they tried to disrupt a ritual

festival that involved using human sacrifice as part of the ritual sacrifice. This was considered to be too daring, and they were punished.

Despite the Olu of Warri's enthusiasm for the Christian faith and his decision to send one of his sons, Domingos, to Portugal for education in 1570, the Warri axis of the Niger-Delta did not likewise prove to be fruitful. Only the fact that the Warri kings from 1570 to 1733 embraced Christianity was a result of this relationship. So only the palace had access to Christianity.

The lucrative slave trade was outlawed in 1807 after Britain passed a law known as "The Slave Trade Abolition Act" to that effect. Other countries, such as America and Denmark, did the same. Following this, the antislavery movement, led by Evangelical church leaders, Methodists, and Quakers, launched numerous campaigns, inundating the British government with requests. This prompted the passage of the Emancipation Act, which ensured the freedom of all slaves within British territories (Hanciles, 2005). The Mansfield Ruling of 1772, which declared that any slave who stepped foot on English territory became a free man, took approximately 35 years to be put into effect because slavery persisted throughout this time between the ruling and the abolition act.

Slaves who had just arrived gave the settlement the name Freetown. This band of abolitionists was already fervent and prepared spiritually to carry on with their faith. The first black church in contemporary Africa was founded as a result of this. It is important to note that the missionaries' initial entry point into West Africa was Sierra Leone.

Sending missionaries to Sierra Leone to serve the needs of the African Christians was how the Church Missionary Society implemented their mission strategy for that country. Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther was invited to join the group and thought about relocating to the planned agricultural colony. He agreed to this suggestion, however he decided against staying at Lokoja due to obligations to his family. The importance of an African ministry and the possibility of admission into Yorubaland were brought to light by this expedition.

### **3.5. Advent of Christianity in Igarra**

Around 1750 at the beginning of the colonial era, Christianity arrived. The Catholic Church was the conduit for the first missionary endeavor. Saint Joseph, which happened to be the first Catholic Church, was founded in Oria Basu. Chief Amune, the ancestral father of Sir Augustine Oladele Amune, a well-known political figure in contemporary Igarra, was the first early Christian. As a result of Chief Amune's tenacity, piety, and dedication to church building duties, he rose to the position of Chief Christian in Igarra. He was connected to the traditional Igarra natives who eventually converted to Christianity. He served as the community's de facto leader in religion. He worked for the Catholic Church of St. Joseph.

Later, the Anglican Church arrived in Igarra as greater efforts were made to Christianize Nigeria. In the city of Ofunamo, the church was founded. It was unfortunate because it was at a location where a traditional religious event was being place. The Christians and

Traditionalists were now engaged in conflict. Being an unrecognized religion, Christianity received little support. The Otaru of Igara was outraged that Christianity, whose doctrines did not accord with custom, was threatening to claim land against the traditionalists after learning of the conflict between both sides over the property. Traditional worship took place at the sites where churches were constructed. He then kicked them off the site as a result.

A new location had to be found for them. The new location is in Ozuwo Quarters, which is the current location of the former post office. They investigated a different area at the Ugbobo quarters, where late Sir Jangbadi was the leader and a Christian. Preacher Akinbeyin was recognized as the first native pastor. They subsequently submitted an application for a plot of land to the Oshinoroko family of the Ugbobo quarters. Their goal was to transform that location into a permanent Anglican church. Fortunately, they got what they wanted.

Anglican and Catholic churches currently make up the majority of the religious institutions in Igarra. In contrast to those who wanted to maintain Igarra's native indigenous religion, those who wanted Christianity to prevail still have devoted followers today. Unfortunately, Christianity completely rejected culture. Tradition is something that Christians believe ought to be eliminated. Some Igarra natives are concerned that this could result in the complete annihilation of the Igarra people's traditional religious heritage.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON IGARRA TRADITION**

#### **4.1. Spread of Christianity in Igarra**

Igarra was initially evangelized by a Christian mission by the Roman Catholic Mission. In 1750, the mission was sent on the mission and soon, all of the clans were involved in the expedition. Additionally, as the older denominations entered the country, new ones either arose from them or came into being thereafter. After the Roman Catholic Mission, the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S. ), subsequently known as the Church of Nigeria, was one of the churches that entered Igarra land (Anglican Communion). By 1908, it was evident that the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) had won many people over to the Anglican religion. Unlike the Roman Catholic Mission, this kind of Christianity was not

the product of actions carried out by foreign missionaries. Natives who interacted with C.M.S. missionaries and were converted on their travels to various locations in pursuit of better trade prospects than the peasant agriculture they were involved in, in Igarra at that time were the ones who presented the Anglican faith to the locals (**Kio-Apori, 2000**). After being converted to Christianity in their various destinations, they returned home and started to share the good news with people in their age group. They also converted some people who then helped spread the word.

Scholarly and respondent-provided information clearly shows that other Christian Missions were active in Igarra during the first decade of the 20th century, proclaiming the gospel.

There are several factors that contributed to the early Anglican achievements, but one of the most important factors may be the part that the laity played (**Olu-Akomolafe 1996**). They were not ordained ministers of the word or educated in evangelism, but rather they were men whose zeal for the word inspired them to share the good news of the Lord with their neighbors. In some instances, it is appropriate to say that they received training to serve as church wardens and agents. But what motivated men like Pa Amune and others to act as they did was their initial enthusiasm. As opposed to these early Anglican converts, the laity of the Catholic mission was unable to carry out mission activity in the same capacity. The formation of outposts and the propagation of Catholic doctrine in the

Roman Catholic Church back then, as it is now, have necessitated clergy participation **(Kio-Apori 2008)**.

There was some conflict and even confusion among the locals as a result of the emergence of a new variety and another denomination. The reasons for the variances baffled them. They could not fathom the justification for the proliferation of Christian churches.

It is not shocking to understand how the community could be confused by the arrival of a new church, especially among those who cherish unity in their culture. The people had also been informed of how the Christian Bible promotes harmony among God's people. As a result, accepting a new Church was difficult.

Without exception, every church, especially the pioneering ones, had the growth of their own denominations in mind. The early missionaries, as we have argued, arrived for a variety of reasons. Therefore, outside of trade and diplomacy, it was challenging to discuss a Church that was solely missionary-minded. British colonialists and missionaries arrived in Igarra wearing these clothes. The white man "did not divulge his imperial goals but presented himself as a friend" (**Emmanuel Ayandele 1966**)

The development of educational institutes was one of the ways the Churches demonstrated their friendliness and advanced their ambition for expansion. In the churches, classes for converting newcomers were organized. Since the Bible and the primary language of communication were not in the local languages of the Igarra people,

the converts were also taught how to read and write through the use of these methods in addition to the fundamentals of their new faith.

Primary and high schools were built in Igarra by both Catholic and Anglican missionaries. The purpose of establishing these institutions was to spread Christian principles and values. As a result, the Churches profited from these institutions of learning. Most of the time, those schools were only open to Christian converts' children. People with such education were employed as interpreters in churches, as well as clerks and messengers in the native courts. In order to be eligible for school and the education provided there, those who desired to perform these tasks regularly visited church.

The growth of Christianity in Igarra was influenced by a number of other crucial elements as well. The first of these is what people believe about God. The Esans had faith in a Supreme Being. He is one of those Beings that the eyes cannot see. Igarra culture does not contain an image of the Supreme Being because of this. Christianity, in its own way, also arrived and propagated the idea of a Supreme Being. In addition, they had a strong belief in ghosts and gods. The idea of the Holy Spirit and angels, who are considered to be ministering spirits, are part of the Christian religion. There was some compatibility between old religious ideas and Christian teachings. The Igarra people were able to accept these teachings without any trouble. Some people were able to join the Church with ease as a result.

Igarra's use of intermediaries was another factor in the growth of Christianity there. As has been mentioned, in Igarra Traditional Religion, the ancestors serve as intermediaries. It was simply a matter of giving the "ancestors" the people already knew new titles when the Christian Church arrived and began discussing the intermediary functions of Jesus Christ and Mary. The needs that Christianity filled, notably in the area of healings, also led to people embracing it. People were plagued by illnesses as a result of ignorance and fear. While the aforementioned were all beneficial causes, there were also some unfavorable elements that contributed to the growth of Christianity in Igarra. Existing churches split apart for doctrinal, political, or financial reasons. People who disapproved of the mother churches' doctrines split apart.

According to Paul Horton and Chester Hunt (1980), who have a point, religious sects are the result of people trying to reclaim the purity that was reportedly lost when the parent organization abandoned the religion's founding principles. People who wanted to be in charge of the organizations' money or leadership split out and started other churches. The converts themselves were another method for the quick growth of the Christian churches. They were used as tools for evangelization and the conversion of others to the new faith. They made an effort to spread the churches they are a part of. These so-called "home missionaries" had a huge impact. According to **Waibinte Wariboko**, "new studies have proven that Christian evangelism was a collaborative afro-European activity.

African craftsmen and businessmen were frequently the pioneers who successfully spread Christianity well outside the areas under the authority of European missionaries.

These elements all worked together to encourage the expansion of Christianity in Igarra throughout the past century. Igarra now has more than fifty different denominations and sects.

#### **4.2. Conflict Between the Western Culture and the Indigenous Religion of Igarra**

Christianity which originated from the West has its origin from the Greco-Roman and European cultures. Have been developed from it's became a rich culture and was bound to spread to other parts of the world. In the presence of its spread, it came in contact with variety of cultures which were developed or in the process of developing. In Africa the culture was interpreted by the European missionaries as underdeveloped, barbaric and fetish. They concluded that the people had no idea of God and needed to be introduced to God. Their conclusion was based on misinterpretation of the culture of Igarra. The missionaries then sought to introduce Christianity to the "under developed" traditional community. The best method they could employ to bring the people of Igarra to Christian fold was forceful imposition of the European culture through Christianity.

The people of Igarra were not presented with the option of gradual assimilation of culture. Their culture was overshadowed by that of the Westerners. To your coming, the people of Igarra had an existing belief system that controlled all aspects of their lives. The Religion was welcoming. It expressed the worldviews, belief and ideology of the people. It had

good traditional practices that fostered unity and stability in the community. On the other hand, there also existed some unhealthy practices. Unfortunately, the European missionaries focused on the negative aspects of the religion and used that to condemn the religion as a whole. They ignorantly categorize the indigenous religion as unpleasant and then introduced theirs through acculturation, suggesting it as a means to “help” the people. The people of Igarra who had been groomed in their culture, could not easily absorb the foreign culture of the West. On the other hand, the Europeans felt the need to acculturate Igarra in order to develop.

In the guise of introducing Christianity, the Europeans introduced their culture which encompassed beliefs that were alien to the people. For instance people of Igarra believed in a God who punishes people instantly for wrongdoings. This instilled fear and consciousness against sin, in the minds of the people. However, Christianity presented a God who forgives. Not just that, he also erases punishment for sin when asked for forgiveness. This idea made people less conscious and more relaxed to see. This has contributed to some ills experienced in the society till date. In all, European culture through Christianity overshadowed the culture of Igarra causing an underdevelopment of the people’s culture and a sense of double identity among indigenes.

#### **4.3. Effect of Christianity on the Culture and Religion of Igarra**

**4.3.1. Marriage:** African cultures' kinship ties were maintained and deepened by the customary institution of marriage. The union of the families and clans to which the

couple belonged was seen as being bond or solidified by marriage in the African cultural context. In traditional African cultures, marriage brings together not only the woman and the man but also the families and tribes. The act of being married was marked by ritualized transactions that marked the couple's entry into social maturity. As part of these exchanges, tokens in kind (dowries) were given and received in order to solidify the social bonds and bind the couples together.

The Christian religion came along and changed many of the traditional marriage rituals that had existed for centuries. The Christian wedding was offered as a new event in African culture and religious life. It was carried out in the church, adhering to a liturgy that was unusual to African religious tradition.

The Christian wedding was a brand-new cultural experience, and the wedding party dressed in brand-new attire were representative of the new culture. At the party, new foods and beverages were provided, including wedding cakes, wine, and international cuisine. African Christians acknowledged their membership in the Church, but they could not and did not completely break their relationships with their relatives. Dual marriage developed from a Christian's desire to satisfy both conventional and church formalities in order to obtain both his relatives' and the Church's blessing before being married happily.

As a result, the question of when a young man and a woman who have decided to get married can be socially referred to as a married pair has become necessary. Is it following the performance of African traditional marriage ceremonies or after the Euro-American

church wedding ceremony? Which one or both of these proves a marriage? According to Oynima (2014), a white wedding, during which one must be blessed by a pastor or priest, is the only way to get married in the majority of Christian households in Africa. This conflict between tradition and modernity has seriously threatened our sense of cultural identity, which is undoubtedly true to a large extent.

**4.3.2. Music and Dance:** Igarra as a traditional community had its own dance and music. They were often performed to either celebrate a particular deity or mark a significant event in the community. These dances are sometimes done at specific events or for specific purposes. For instance, Shoko is a dance or (drum of hunters), that is performed on significant occasions like the death of an Oshi (a well known hunter) or when an uncommon animal such as a lion or tiger, is caught during hunting. There was also the Ikede dance which is performed at the coronation celebration of Otaru (a king). It is particularly performed by young ladies. Sometimes other members of the community participate. One significant thing to note is that these traditional dances go along with a particular drum. The songs are then composed, to fit the rhythm from the beat of the drum. Other traditional instruments include: Asisha (maracas) kongs and guns.

Different cultural dance and their drums are:

<b>DRUMS</b>	<b>DANCE</b>
<b>Abba</b>	Igede

<b>Arido</b>	Ijavi
<b>Arigade</b>	Ikede
<b>Agada</b>	Iko
<b>Iko</b>	Ishoko
<b>Inyame</b>	Ogugu
<b>Ishoko</b>	Otindi

These traditional dance and songs promoted the rich culture of Igarra and expressed the values we the people held to heart. It also reflected the belief they had in spirits, divinities, and the Supreme Being. By the coming of western culture through Christianity, there has been a gradual replacement of the traditional songs by westernized songs. Some Christian songs even express the misconceptions the Europeans have against the culture. The traditional worship of Supreme Being and deities are tagged fetish and evil. People are encouraged not to worship the ancestral deities, through these songs. This has caused gradual loss of the artistic music and dance of the Igarra people.

Now, people patronize western music more than the traditional music which happened to be one of the key instruments that promoted the language of the people. Not only was western music and dance made popular among the Igarra people, other cultural dances from the West, north and particularly the East were made common among the people. Today young indigenes tend to be more fluent in other traditional songs and better

exposed to their dance, than that of Igarra. As for the local instruments, they have been well preserved to date. Other western instruments have been introduced to improve the quality of songs and this has helped the people to a certain extent.

**4.3.3. Effect on Burial Rite:** Nowadays, over-zealous Christians have totally exempted themselves from the traditional practices that are associated with burial of an individual. Since it is associated with culture, they have misinterpreted it as Pagan and for this reason they tend to disassociate themselves with all rites pertaining to burial. They fear that participating in it, will taint their image as Christians or even distort their spirituality. All the traditional practices and now replaced by church funeral mass or service. The traditional rights have been totally abandoned by Christians. Christian burial is now recognized as the official burial for an individual. Not only has Christianity affected burial rites, the introduction of certain ideologies and lifestyle of western culture has influenced these rites too. In place of symbolic *Irashé* procession, money is paid to authorities to skip that aspect. The *Irashé* procession is a procession that informs the community officially of the individual's death. The family of the deceased sometimes feels no need for active participation in the whole traditional process so they use money to replace all that can possibly be eased off. Although it eases stress but it deprives the family the opportunity to come together and socialize with each other. The symbolic shearing of beef, cow meat (Uno) is so valued but now it has been monetized to a few thousands or even 1000 for each member of the family.

**4.3.4. Effect on Birth Rite:** At the inception of western culture, this celebration of the first grandchild, known as *Azi* is gradually eroding. Participation in this traditional activity is reducing. Some individuals in the society no longer see the need to celebrate this in the traditional way. The Christians in particular, show indifference to this because they believe that any participation in traditional practice of the community implies that they have been associated with Pagan rituals. Now naming ceremonies are not done in traditional setting. It has been replaced by the Christian rite.

Another dimension to this is that some boycott the practice in order to avoid the “stress”. They then use money to replace the whole celebration. This has deprived the community the celebration of childbirth. A name which reflected the culture and promoted the language of the people is systematically becoming a thing of the past. Almost all indigenes have a tribal name but oftentimes, we see individuals bearing westernized names which are Christian based. Beautiful names as Avoku (praise), Ofuje ( joy of the Lord), Onaseremi (fitting gift), Meyimi (God did), Onoyenefu (God knows), have beautiful meanings attached to them. Nowadays parents translate the meanings of these names to English and name their children by them. The excuse given is that these traditional names are substituted with English names for “ease” of pronunciation. This is only preventing exposure of the culture.

Before the child’s birth, there were rules that regulated a pregnant lady. Certain diets were encouraged and traditional rituals were done to either purify her or help her through

the period of pregnancy. For instance, the pregnant lady was not allowed to have intercourse with her husband at early stage of conception. The early missionaries interpreted these as fetish, unnecessary and Pagan. So these practices were ignored. Recent scientific studies have shown that those diets were healthy and some of the taboos for pregnant lady were necessary. Unfortunately these have been abandoned for too long and some have gone into extinction. Even after the realization of the benefits of the traditional taboos and regulations, there is still no credit given to culture. Rather, it is being solely accredited to scientific culture of the West.

**4.3.5. Effect on Dressing:** Prior to the coming of the European missionaries, the traditional dressing of the Igarra people was a strap of cloth made from plants that were worn around the waist for both male and female. The ladies only covered the lower part of their body. The men also had their chest open with the lower part of their body covered. Christianity introduced an upgraded form of dressing. It's emphasized the need of wearing better covered clothes.

By the help of technology, needle and thread, and sewing machines were introduced. Better materials were produced. All these elements helped to improve the dressing of the people. The ladies sew Buba with wrapper, while the men sew Agbada. Gradually, the whole community was clothed in decent dressings.

As things advanced more style suggestions came from the West. Fitting dressings, decent gowns, skirts, suits and coats, trousers, were introduced. Sadly, the more things advanced

the more indecent dressings were introduced. Today, we see ladies dressed indecently. When approached they shun all suggestions of decency arguing that since the addressing is promoted in the western world, they have every right to dress as exposed as they please. Then, ladies took pride in keeping vital parts of their bodies hidden. These days ladies wear exposing clothes. Some are even termed “Asahwo” gowns. These gowns are termed so because, they are really exposing. This has led to moral decadence in the society.

**4.3.6. Effect on Religious Rituals:** Rituals as explained by Summer (2001), is a ceremony that is often performed in the same way, in order to make an important religious or social occasion. **Ekoporia (2005)** describes rituals as a symbolic approach which embodies social relations status or even the role of individuals within the society. The traditional religion of Igarra is deeply rooted in rituals. These rituals are included in childbirth, burial, ceremonies and other religious aspects of man’s life. These rituals are specifically for cleansing of individuals, sacrifice for petition and veneration of gods and deities. In the aspect of worship, the first form of ritual is the individual self preparation before visiting the shrine. Before visiting the shrine of Ivokoto, one is required to abstain from sex, avoid eating old food and be in the state of purity, in order to worship freely and present petitions without trespassing against the gods.

These rituals have been brought to an abrupt stop by the coming of Christianity. They have been totally shunned by indigenes. Only a handful still practices it. Rituals that ensured peaceful transition of souls and purified the land or offered Thanksgiving to gods

for bountiful harvest have all been deserted to a large extent. They were abandoned because they were considered as fetish, barbaric, and evil. Why they got this notion was because of the missionary misinterpretation and experience they had encountered with actual evil spirits. Unfortunately they used this to generally tag the religion as evil. At first they had no belief that the Igarra people knew God. They only came to realize after more research had been made to prove that they had the consciousness of God before the coming of the European missionaries.

**4.3.7. Effect on Festivals:** Some festivals in Igarra like the Ekwochi, are religious festivals that culturally display the deities or spirits of the community. In these festivals, cultural dances are performed, the people gather around to celebrate the masquerades who are the representatives of the spirits. This is accompanied by play of local instruments and a special Cantor to lead songs in praise of the spirit. These masquerades are colourfully and culturally dressed. The parade of the masquerade is to venerate the ancestors and celebrate the spirits. This cultural festival is colorful and entertaining. It exhibits the rich culture of the people.

Since this practice is alien to the Europeans, they were quick to condemn it through Christianity, as heathen. The missionaries having an upper hand over the people were able to reach to convince them to withdraw from participating in these festivals. This has limited the avenue for display of the people's culture. Although other cultural festivals

like ABBA festival held every seven years, is still attended by indigens and non indigens but with the exception of overzealous Christians.

**4.3.8. Effect on Sacred Days:** Just like other religions that have specified days dedicated to the worship of God, the traditional society had its days specifically for worship of gods. These days have restrictions attached to them. On some of these days women are not allowed to come out. For some others, the market is not allowed to function.

Unfortunately these days had clashes with Christian days of worship. This caused a shift of attention. On days that were traditionally prescribed as holy days with restricted movements, Christians walked freely and broke those laws. This caused an uproar in the society and it reduced the patronage of traditional religion. This has systematically contributed to the death of the traditional religion of the Igarra people.

#### **4.4. Implication of Effect**

Their cultural values and overall way of life have been impacted by the Christian religion. Their religious, social, educational, and economic lives have seen some substantial changes. The standard of living of the populace has significantly improved. Enlightenment and consciousness have spread widely. Because of how Christianity has civilized people, Igarra culture has deteriorated. In response to what is perceived as enlightenment and the apparent abandonment of the processes for transmitting such value systems, they have lost some of their most cherished cultural values.

**4.4.1. Negative Implications:** Igarra culture has suffered because of the civilizing effects of Christianity. They have lost some of their most valued cultural values as a result of what is viewed as enlightenment and the apparent abandonment of the mechanisms of passing along such value systems.

#### Misconceptions

- I. According to Sarpong (2006), African traditional religion has sadly been misinterpreted and is currently misrepresented, despite the fact that it should be used for its potentially beneficial effects. The mistake is clear; given the numerous incorrect labels that traditional religion of the Igarra had been given. The traditional religion has been persistently referred to as a primal religion. Evidently, the word is used to set it apart from the supposedly great or universal Christian religion.
- II. Animism, paganism, and fetishism are just a few of the terms that educated indigenes have been known to use to describe the traditional religion. They also sometimes refer to traditional priests as fetish priests. Unfair disparaging terms are employed to denote the Traditional Religion out of utter ignorance. The term "paganism" is offensive since it was imposed on the people by missionaries and used in a derogatory manner. Generally speaking, the term "pagan" connotes racial or social discrimination depending on how it is used.

**4.4.2. Forceful Acculturation:** Suarez (2013) explains that "acculturation is a process when members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviors of another group." This is coupled with the fact that acculturation typically leads to minority groups, adopting the customs and languages of the dominant group. Igarra has its rich cultural values and so does the western culture have. It is important to note that Christianity is praise worthy religion. However, religion is inseparable from culture. The missionaries had the intention of introducing Christianity but in the process they introduced their culture. This was forcefully done. They failed to indigenize Christianity. In order to still achieve their aim of Christianize the community, they took out measures that led to imposed acculturation.

There was no provision made to tolerate indigenous culture. The freedom to assimilate, their culture was not provided. Rather all cultural practices were expected to be adopted by the people. This was because the culture of the Igarra people was not appreciated or even recognized by the missionaries. Today this has deprived the latter generation the opportunity to understand the culture of Igarra. What is in existence is only a limited portion of the tradition of the people. Since it is seen as primitive and local people tend to pay less attention to the values embedded in them. This has led to some social issues experienced till date.

Another effect is that it has led to loss of customs and norms. These customs give the people of Igarra a distinct identity. But with its loss one is limited to grasp the full culture

in its richness. One can only tell from the remnants of what is known that if Igarra culture had been allowed to blossom, it would have been qualified among the world respected cultures. Saddening as it is, things can only get worse if a conscious effort is not made to preserve what is left of the culture.

**4.4.3. Decline of Moral Values:** No African cultural community is without values. These values have been formed over time from experiences of the people. Before being regarded as a social value, there is every possibility that these actions have been tested and were probably proven to be of benefit to the community hence, they were highly placed and respected by the people. Some of these include respect for elders, chastity, modesty, honesty, high morality amongst a few to be mentioned. Christianity, helped to even improve some of these values. More were added and encouraged, courtesy Christianity. But being that Christianity came together with western culture, some values of the West found its way into most African Basically, this caused relaxation of piety to these values.

This led to a host of vices which include promiscuity, disrespect for elders, increased rate of theft, disunity, foreign practices like same sex marriage, but to mention a few. All these are responsible for the social instability experienced presently. This can partially be accredited to the advent of western culture because western culture brought new ideologies such as individualism, human rights, secularization, that gave room for these social vices to thrive.

Initially these teachings were of benefits to the people but subsequently it was proven to be of more harm than good as cases of moral vices continue to challenge the peaceful social stability of equal community.

**4.4.4. Loss of Language Identity:** Every religion is expressed in a certain culture. Christianity was introduced into Igarra land through western culture. Culture touches every aspect of man's life. His language, dressing, belief system, philosophy and others are all tailored by culture. Since Christianity was taught to the people in western culture, the early converts were exposed to the language of the western Europeans. The early converts had to learn the language in order to be Christians. Catholic Church taught Christianity in Latin while the Anglican Church introduced Christianity in English. The people had no choice but to forsake their language in order to adopt the western language through practicing Christianity. They became well grounded in them because schools were established to give education on foreign culture. Gradually, western language started replacing the people's language. This was possible because parents now used foreign language to train their children from birth. It also became a thing of pride for one to be fluent in the foreign language. Scholars of educational institutions were given more respect than elders of the community on the basis of their knowledge of western education. This made indigenes unconsciously drop their lingual identity. Today, there are more people who only understand but cannot speak fluently the language of Igarra. Some words have been totally replaced by English language. On the long run this would cause discontinuity of language because young indigenes, who barely understand the

language, would pass the language to their offspring. The offsprings in turn will pass the little they know to their children. Gradually, the language finally fades out. This can only be stopped if language of the indigenes will be better promoted in educational institutes. It is pertinent to note that language is best transmitted through verbalization. Should this not be taken into practice, the language of the people will face off.

#### **4.5. Positive Implications**

The Christian religion has had an impact on their cultural values and way of life as a whole. Significant changes have taken place in their religious, social, academic, and economic life. The population's level of living has greatly increased. A lot of people have attained enlightenment and consciousness.

**4.5.1. Abolition of Harmful Traditional Practices:** As it has been earlier stated, every religion and culture has negative and positive aspects. The tradition of the people was at its early stage when it was invaded by western missionaries. Due to this, there were some harmful practices common in the community. These include female genital mutilation, unprofessional medical practices and human sacrifice. Every religion had stages its passed through before becoming developed enough to counter subordinate religions. Most harmful practices were done against women. All these were brought to a stop by the teachings of Christianity. Female genital mutilation was discouraged and the sanctity of human life was promoted in order to discredit the practices of human sacrifice that was common among the people.

On the aspect of marriage polygamy which was in vogue. This was preached against because it contradicted Christian teachings. However it was of benefit to be discouraged because, a lot of problems stemmed from it. Some of which were are still suffered till date. Unhealthy rivalry was inseparable from this form of marriage as they were always quarreling and fighting. But with Christianity, this was discouraged. The doctrine of one man one wife helped to curb these issues. Now there was a reduction of the case of rivalry amongst wives and children. This and other unusual practices were shunned courtesy of Christianity and western teachings.

**4.5.2. Improved Standard of Living:** In terms of technology, the western world was already well-developed. This system was brought along by the beginning of colonialism. Better structures, better phones, better sewing machines, better kitchen utensils, and better ways of communicating all came with it. The people of Igarra's quality of life were enhanced by all of these factors and more. The traditional religion of the Igarra people also suffered its effects. The construction of roads made it simpler to reach Igarra.

Road development made it possible for the traditional village to communicate with other communities and made transit within the community easier. This accelerated the rate of information dissemination.

New techniques for food production, bettering healthcare, education, and industrialization have all been eagerly accepted by Igarra. Improvements in medical care brought about by

the establishment of the health care system have helped to cure many diseases that were previously considered to be terminal by custom.

**4.5.3. Economic Development:** It is evident that there has been a major development by looking at the early phases of the Igarra people's economic existence. For instance, the society has developed from subsistence farming to becoming a significant producer of agricultural goods in the modern era. The Igarra people have succeeded in transforming their region into the food basket of the south west. Other sources of revenue in the area include trading, material weaving, production of palm oil, and processing cassava. The Igarra palm oil factory, which was on the verge of disappearing, has reappeared. With government support for farmers, the market will be flooded once more in a few years. As a result, the Igarra society's economy would expand even further.

All of these economic developments can be attributed to the missionaries who spread Christianity and opened up channels of communication with different ethnic groups. So, just as those other people had the privilege of partaking in the Igarra people's abundant resources, Igarra benefited from the wealth and services of others.

**4.5.4. Educational Value:** There was not any kind of formal schooling in Igarra before the spread of Christianity. Un-literacy was a way of life. When the Church arrived, it brought with it a means of educating the populace, especially adherents, to be able to read the Bible. In each village with a church, the missionaries first established classes. These classes, which originally served as Sunday school sessions, provided instruction to the

converts. The lectures included certain aspects of reading even though they were primarily religious rituals for Christians.

Their education was designed to produce teachers, catechists, clerks, and interpreters for the government.

Other ways it has helped the Traditional Religion

- a) Improved structure: In the typical traditional setting, shrines were situated in forests. There was no roof, it was just secluded from other parts of the forest by bamboo sticks, marked trees, piece of hand woven materials, rocks and molded images. But now, with the help of technology better structures have been erected as shrines. Some shrines are no longer exposed but are dignified ably secluded from the society by better structures that can comfortably be inhabited by the chief priests. Some shrines do not necessarily have a house structure but they are covered by machine produced materials mostly in red and white color, that give the shrine a better look. The physical appearance of the shrine now has a more presentable look courtesy of technology introduced by western culture.
- b) Tools for worship: Formerly, the tools used in the shrine were basically calabash, calories, iron rods and skin of animals. These tools were used in the process of worship. Technology introduced the production of native chalk, modernized knives and advanced implements for sculpting images of deities. Also it produced guns for hunting animals for sacrifice. These contributions had an impact on the

traditional mode of worship. Hunting was made easier by the use of guns, images of deities were better sculpted with ease, the modernized worship tools like knives, candles, flammable instruments such as matchstick and lighter, all proved more efficient.

- c) Documented doctrine: By the coming of Westerners, Igarra traditional worship was condemned and partially led to total extinction. This was due to misconceptions and misinterpretations by early missionaries. Unlike other world religions, Igarra's traditional religion had no formal, documented peace of its doctrines. It was basically transmitted orally. In the process, some original practices were tampered with, while some others were probably lost.

Fortunately, some others who got to study the traditional religion for its intrinsic values got to appreciate it and made efforts to document what was left of the religion. This today, has helped the indigenous religion of Igarra to be properly studied and understood. The indigenous religion of Igarra is now well documented and better appreciated by present day indigenes.

- d) Economic influence: due to the well-constructed roads introduced by technology which improved interaction with neighboring villages, the indigenous religion was more patronized. The shrines not only accommodated strictly Igarra people but also accommodated individuals of different communities. It was open for all to worship especially those who had faith in it.

In Igarra traditional religion sacrifice is an integral aspect of worship this sacrifice is given in forms of animals, money (cowries), gifts and other items as prescribed by the chief priest. These sacrifices were either offered to cleanse an individual or send petitions to the deities. On account of the influx of people from different villages, this shrine was patronized more by people this implied that more gifts items were given to the chief priests. He then had an increased source of income. Resulting from this, he had an upgraded living. He no longer lived solely on the little amount of money offerings gotten from the people of Igarra. To an extent there was a financial boost.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. EVALUATION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Evaluation**

Africans are known for their religiosity, and as each group has its own unique religious beliefs and practices, it is difficult or impossible to always segregate them. Conflicts between the traditional culture and religion of the Igarra people and Western culture inevitably emerge.

Due to misunderstandings, the Igarra Traditional Religion has been labeled things like "fetish," "paganism," and "animism," among other things.

The investigation of how modernity has affected Igarra traditional religion and cultural values is a bold decision taken by this research. Modern influences like Christianity,

education, secularization, and industrialization have all been identified as agents that made it easier for Igarra cultural values to evolve, modify, and be distorted. Modernity has certain good aspects, nevertheless, and these seem to outweigh its shortcomings. Western education had an impact, but not just in a negative way.

In order to prevent the Igarra traditional religion and its cultural values from being corrupted as a result of cultural fusion between the western world and the Igarra, proposals were made that the Igarra elites help.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

Through time, all cultures evolve. Cultures are not unchanging. According to Sarpong (2006), religion infuses the ideal African from birth until death. As a result, African Indigenous Religion plays a crucial role in determining the future of Africans. Infiltration of foreign culture and Christianity, is not allowed to erase our essential values and cultural identity, even though it is unavoidable that some cultural practices cannot be maintained in modern society due to westernization.

Due to false impressions or Western brainwashing, there is an urgent need for cultural restoration in Igarra in order to prevent cultural extinction. Because a people without a culture lack an identity, this is really vital.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

In the aforementioned, recommendations are based on perceived problems in the body of the work. The impact of Christianity on the cultural values of the Igarra people must be taken into account. There are certain points in this historical account where problems arise that give rise to comments. As a result, the following are advised:

1. Instead of eradicating the Igarra way of life, Christianity ought to be modeled after a real vision of social change.
2. In order to reconnect those in the diaspora with their family members and revive their cultural legacy, the Igarra nobles should occasionally host cultural events.
3. Missionaries should understand cultural validity (also known as cultural relativism), which calls for careful consideration of a culture's own values, aims, and focus points before attempting to compare it to any other culture.
4. Because there are certain positive aspects of Igarra culture, particularly the religious component, Europeans and Christians should appreciate, accept, and not reject these components.
5. European nations should not exhibit a superiority attitude or display cultural pompousness toward Igarra culture since this will cause conflict between Igarra culture and Westernized Christian institutions.
6. Conscious effort should be made to protect what has not been eroded of the culture of Igarra.

7. Igarra Traditional Religion should be better studied in order to explore more of its benefits, to be used for the good of the society.

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