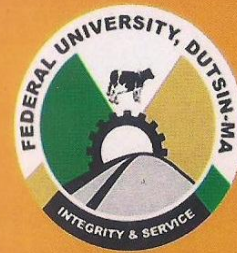




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**FUDMA JOURNAL OF ARTS
(FUDJARTS)**

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AFRICANISATION OF NUMERAL CONCEPT IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AMONG THE IGBOMINA IN EASTERN YORUBALAND

Aboyeji, Oyeniyi Solomon

Abstract

Human thoughts can be expressed both in words (letters of the alphabets-ABCDE...) and figures (symbols representing numbers - 12345...). Numbers are significant both in the secular (mathematical calculations or statistics) and the spiritual sense. This work reveals the biblical basis for the popular adoption of some frequently used numbers in both secular and religious programmes today. However, correlation of such numbers identified, reveals that some of such numbers had been sacred and prominent before the advent of Islam and Christianity. Methodology used include: oral interviews, observations, attendance at ceremonies and festivals for careful juxtapositions and scrutiny of printed materials. The study concludes that Christian worship today often appears to be ritualistic in nature due to the band-wagon effect of traditionalism. God must however, be worshipped in truth and holiness; His attributes does not customarily restrict Him to one-way traffic or formula in his deeds and actions. Neither His action nor attention can be won via repetitive or magical use of numbers.

Introduction

A number is a mathematical object used to count, measure and label. Numbers could be in various forms such as natural numbers, prime numbers, highly composite numbers, perfect numbers, integers, polygonal numbers, etc.¹ It is generally said that "numbers are innocent; the fault lies with the person who is playing with them".² Mystical and magical qualities have been ascribed to numbers both in antiquity and modern times. Numerology is the study of the occult use or supposed influence of numbers³ or any belief in the divine, mystical relationship between a number and one or more coinciding events. It is also the study of the numerical value of the letters in words,

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names and ideas.⁶ Christian worship otherwise called Christianity is the religion that is based on the life, teachings and examples of Jesus Christ. Worship, being a total response to the ultimate reality is expressed in words as well as in deeds. Igbominaland is the case study, though, there seems to be no clear cut peculiarity across other Nigerian Christians due to reasons that will be identified. According to Ayandele, the word Igbomina, refers to the people [one of the major ethnic groupings found in eastern Yorubaland –natively spread over five local governments across Kwara and Osun States i.e. Ifelodun, Irepodun, Isin, Ifedayo and Ila but also found within and outside Nigeria]; the language [Mfy¹¹ and Mosan dialects] and the land they occupy.⁴

Numbers have been known to be sacred and carefully selected by the ever theocentric Igbomina before the advent of Islam and Christianity. Observably, in all religions, certain numbers are frequently used due to their connotative, liturgical and therapeutic importance. This paper focuses on numerology in Christian worship –the Biblical basis of some frequently used numbers and the trend of unfounded use in some cases which is nothing other than a tool in the hands of the clergy or carryover of the ritualistic and magical formulae.

Church Groupings Based on Doctrine and Worship Styles

Universally, Christianity is divided into three main denominations: the Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and the Pentecostals. Christianity is hung on some doctrines. Different beliefs on or interpretations of some issues due to church leadership such as Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational inform the various denominational differences today.⁵ Nonetheless, I Corinthians 12:5-6 confirm that “And there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.” – *The Holy Bible*.⁶ Fawenu attests that the *Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)* has classified the numerous churches into:⁷

1. The CSN: *Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria*.
2. CCN: *Christian Council of Nigeria* comprising the Anglican Communion, Baptist Convention, African Church, Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church.
3. CPFN/PFN: *Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria*. The CPFN comprises of Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and The Apostolic Church while the PFN component includes all other charismatic/Pentecostal Churches such as Deeper Life Church, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Living Faith Church, etc.

4. OAIC: *Organisation of African Instituted Churches* comprising non-white Missionary founded Churches such as Cherubim and Seraphim Church and former Aladura Group of Churches and several others.
5. NEF: *Nigerian Evangelical Fellowship* is Kwara State fashion of what the National Constitution recognises as ECWA⁸/TEKAN⁹ Fellowship Mission minded Churches in the category of ECWA, UMCA¹⁰ and many others.

Biblical Basis of Frequently Used Numbers

Opinions are divided on the religious use of certain numbers in carrying out some activities in the act of worship. While some see the adoption of traditional repetition of certain words, prayers and injunctions to be unbiblical, carryover of ritualistic or magical form of liturgy; others see it (as characterised by many Christian worship today) to be well rooted and established in the scriptures. For instance, shouts of Halleluyah; Praise the Lord; the name of Jesus; Amen; the Blood of Jesus; the Holy Spirit; Holy Ghost Fire; Holy; or recitation of phrases and verses such as I shall not die, but live to declare the glory of God; surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me, all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever and ever, etc. often times in frequently and specific used numbers such as 3, 7, 21 are used in public worship. In spite of the various denominational differences and varying importance attached to numbers in the Bible, it is quite obvious that the Bible uses numbers in pattern which no doubts are not without deeper prophetic and spiritual connotations. The Prophecy Code bulletin reveals thus:

Both in the Old and New Testaments, numbers reveal hidden concepts and meanings that commonly escape the casual reader. And throughout history, men with great minds, like Augustine, Isaac Newton, and Leonardo Di Vinci, showed more than just a passing curiosity regarding the importance of biblical numbers. Once more, Jesus said, “the very hairs of your head are numbered.” (Matthew 10:30). So obviously, Bible numbers should be carefully considered.¹¹

This paper does not deal with all the numbers in the Bible but some commonly associated with Christian worship today. At least 12 numbers in the Bible stand out in this regard: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 40, 50, and 70. These examples well substantiated with one or two Biblical examples merely serve as an introduction and are not exhaustive by any means.¹²

1. The number of *Absolute Singleness, Beginning and Unity*: Deuteronomy 6:4 ("Hear, O Israel. The Lord our God, the Lord is one"); Ephesians 4:4-6; (One body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...), John 17:21, 22, (that all may be one...); etc.
2. The number of *Division, Union and Witnessing*: The Son has two natures: human and divine; two Testaments: The Old and New. Man is male and female. Romans 9 speaks of two vessels: one for honourable use and the other dishonourable use. Two types of people: sheep (good-heaven) and goats (bad-hell). There are two ages: this age and the age to come (Matthew 12:32, 13:39-40, 49, Mark 10:30). It represents the truth of God's Word i.e. two or three witnesses (II Corinthians 13:1) and a sword with two edges (Hebrews 4:12), Jesus sent the disciples forth by two (Mark 6:7), two witnesses and Olive trees in Revelation 11:3-4. Notably, it is used 21 times in the books of Daniel and Revelation.
3. The number of *Godhead/Trinity or Divine Perfection*: This number is more often used number among different denominations. The Trinity consists of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The angels cry "Holy" three times to the triune God (Isaiah 6:3). See also Matthew 28:19, I John 5:7-8 God's divine attributes are three fold: Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent; Love, Light, Spirit; Holy, Righteous and Just. To some, it is also the number of divine perfection. There are three qualities of the universe: Time, Space and Matter. To exist (except for God), all three are required. Each quality consists of three elements; therefore, we live in a trinity of trinities e.g. Time is one yet three (Past, Present and Future); Space is one yet three (Height, Width and Depth); Matter is one yet three (Solid, Liquid and Gas). Trichotomists believe that man is made of three parts: Body, Soul and Spirit.¹³ Human abilities are three (thought, word and deed); three bear witness-I John 5:8 (Spirit, Water and Blood); Christ is three Shepherds: a) (I John 10:14-15) The Good Shepherd-speaking of His death b) (Hebrew 9:24) The Great Shepherd-speaking of His resurrection c) (I Peter 5:4) The Chief Shepherd-speaking of His glory. The three appearances of Christ a) He has appeared in the past to put away sin (Hebrews 9:26), b) He is presently appearing in the presence of God (Hebrews 13:20) and will surely appear in the nearest future to those who await Him (Hebrews 9:28). Again, the Father (God) spoke from heaven three times (a) Matthew 3:17, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" b) Matthew 17:5 "This is My beloved Son...; listen to

- Him" c) John 12:28 "I have both glorified it [The Father's name], and will glorify it again." Both the Tabernacle and the Temple consisted of three parts: The Court, The Holy place and the Sanctuary.
4. The number of *Universal Truth or Creation*, as in the four directions (north, south, east, west) and the four winds (Matthew 24:31, Revelation 7:1, 20:8). In Acts 10:11, a sheet with four corners symbolises the gospel going to all the gentiles. The fourth commandment is the first that refers to the earth; the fourth clause of the Lord's Prayer is the first that mentions the earth. The materials of the tabernacle were four and so were the coverings and the ornamentations.
 5. The number of *Teaching and Grace (Redemption)*: First, there are five books of Moses. Second, Jesus taught about five wise virgins and used five barley loaves to feed 5,000. Israel came out of Egypt five in rank (Exodus 13:18), David picked up 5 smooth stones to fight Goliath (I Samuel 17:40). The Holy Anointing Oil was pure and composed of 5 parts (Exodus 30: 23-25).
 6. The number of *Man*: Man was created on the 6th day (Genesis 1:26, 31); man labours for 6 days only (Exodus 31:15); the Serpent was created on the 6th day; the 6th day commandment is "Thou shall not murder". Also, $6 \times 6 = 36$. $36 + 35 + 34 + 33 + 32 + 31 + 30 \dots 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 666$. 666 is the number of the antichrist significant in the book of Revelation, as "666" identifies the beast (Revelation 13:18). This number of man also signifies his rebellion, imperfection, works, and disobedience. It is used 273 times in the Bible, including its derivatives (e.g. sixth) and another 91 times as "threescore" and "60".
 7. Represents spiritual *Perfection* and is the *Sign of God, Divine Worship, Completions, Obedience and Rest*: The "prince" of Bible numbers, it is used 562 times, including its derivatives (seventh, sevens) See Genesis 2:1-4, Psalms 119:164, Exodus 20:8-11, etc. The number is also the most common in Biblical prophecy, occurring 42 times in Daniel and Revelation alone. In Revelation, there are seven churches, seven spirits, seven golden candlesticks, seven stars, seven lamps, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven parables in Matthew, seven promises to the churches, seven heads, seven crowns, seven last plagues, seven golden vials, seven mountains, and seven kings. There are also seven days in a week, seven colours in the spectrum. Seven of the Ten Commandments begin with the word "not". There are seven eternal in Hebrews (Hebrews 1:6, 9, 6:2, 9:12, 14, 15, 13:20). Jesus said seven things on the cross (Luke 23:34, 43, Matthew

- 27:46, John 19:26, 28, 30, Luke 23:46). Halleluyah occurs 28 times or 47; Hosanna occurs seven times; milk occurs 49 times or 77; Abaddon occurs 7 times; after the order of Melchizedek occurs 7 times; etc.
8. The number of *New Beginnings*: 8 people on Noah's Ark (II Peter 2:5); circumcision on 8th day (Genesis 17:12). God made 8 covenants with Abraham.
 10. The number of *Law and Restoration (Divine Perfection)*: Of course, this includes the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20; a- tenth of a Christian's income is his tithe (Malachi 3:10); there were ten plagues on Egypt (Exodus 9:14ff); 10x10 silver sockets formed the foundation of the tabernacle (Exodus 38:27); there are ten "I am" spoken by Jesus in John (i.e. I am the Bread of Life [6:35], I am the Bread of Life which came down from heaven [6:41]; I am the Living Bread [6:51]; I am the Light of the world [8:12]; I am One that bears witness of Myself [8:18]; I am the Door of the sheep [10:7,9]; I am the Good Shepherd [10:14], I am the Resurrection and the Life [11:25]; and I am the True Vine [15:1,5]). See also Matthew 25:1 (ten virgins); Luke 17:17 (ten lepers); Luke 15:8 (healing, ten silver coins).
 12. The number of *Church and God's Authority (Governmental Perfection)*: Jesus had 12 disciples and there were 12 tribes of Israel. In Revelation 12:1, the 24 elders and 144, 000 are multiples of 12. The New Jerusalem city has 12 foundations, 12 gates, 12 pearls, 12 angels, 12 thousand furlongs or stadia in measurements while the wall will be 144 (12x12) cubits, a tree with 12 kinds of fruit 12 times a year eaten by 12 times 12,000 or the 144,000 (Revelation 21). There are also 12 months on the Gregorian calendar.
 40. The number represents a *Generation and Times of Testing (Probation and Trials)*: It rained for 40 days during the flood. The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years (Deuteronomy 8:2-5), Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18), 40 days of Jonah and Nineveh (Jonah 3:4), Jesus fasted for 40 days, etc.
 50. Represents *Power and Celebration*: The Jubilee came after the 49th year (Leviticus 25:10) and Pentecost occurred 50 days after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2).
 70. Represents *Human Leadership and Judgement*: Moses appointed 70 elders (Exodus 24:1); The Sanhedrin was made up of 70 men; Jesus chose 70 disciples (Luke 10:1); etc.

Others which are given significant recognition in both spiritual and secular gatherings include the jubilees such as the silver (25), golden (50), diamond (60, 75); the centenary (100-year period in dating system), etc.¹⁴

Traditionalism in Modern Worship

Today, many people claim the Bible says what it does not. Lack of Biblical knowledge makes it very difficult for some church members to differentiate between traditions (occult/magical practice) and the Bible. Christians, like adherents of other religions are expected to relate with God in spirit, word and deeds. It is crystal clear that many of the converts (Christians) from African Traditional Religion (ATR) find it very difficult to consciously or unconsciously part with some words of incantations, Yoruba figures of speech and magical numbers in prayers or Christian worship. Some prayers are till date regarded incantatory in form. Inter-marriage between Christianity and some aspects of Yoruba figures of speech/proverbs, idioms, parables, similes, philosophy, and logic are evident. For instance, why must a Christian ignore making references to the scriptures during congregational prayers or sandwich such references with traditional expressions such as: water quenches flames as the showers of a fallen rain quench or put an end to dry season (*omi ní poró iná, òjò kàtākàtā ní poró ògbàlè*); the wind does not blow without touching the trees in the forest (*aféfé kan kòní fí kó má kan igi oko lára*); the river replenishes itself (*àbùdúw ní ti omi, àbùdúw ní ti odò*); flowing river does not look back (*odò kóí sàń kó bojú wèhòn*); a dog cannot snatch or kill a tiger cub from a tigress, its mother (*ajá kóíjá ímí léhòn íkún*); when fire dies, it covers itself with ashes, when banana tree dies, its sucker replaces it (*bí iná báku, afi eérú bojú, bí ògèdè báku, afi ímí è dípò*); it will be well with you till the end, it will be easy for you, cocoyam feels comfortable in the garden (*yí ó yí í kalé, yí ó ròò lórùn, gbèdè ní rí kókò lágbàlá*); just as the leaf falls off a tree without harming it (*gégé bí ewé tiún jábò lára igi tí kóí pa igi lára*); a vulture does not die young unless it becomes very old (*igúnnugúń kóí kú l'éwe, àfi kó dariúgbó kangá*); it will be well with you; it is always well with the pigeon, the dove always feels comfortable, so, like the pigeon, it will be well with you, and like the dove, you will always feel comfortable (*Yí ó yí ó, yíyí ní yí íyílé, ríró ní ró àdàbà lórùnù yíó dè ò lórùn mùkè*); parrot does not die in the cause of seeking its food (*odídíré kóí kú s'òko wá nkan jí*); a banana tree does not stay near the river and become fruitless/barren (*ògèdè kóí gbòdò kó yá àgàn*); etc. Usually, many of the items mentioned in the o like ethe incantations might have been used to prepare occult medicines because many of such medicines are accompanied with incantations.¹⁵

It stands to reason therefore, that when some people leave traditional religions, it takes many years before traditional religions can leave them. In the real sense, Christ and the Bible are above culture.

The use and application of some numbers in Christian worship today is nothing other than carry over practice of ritualistic formula in the ATR.¹⁶ For instance, some people say, "in the name of Jesus" 3x before they say any other thing in their prayers. Recently too, some church leaders in the course of leading public prayers and sermon, do instruct the congregations to repeat after them, tell somebody at the left and right or back and front several repeated words such as "Call the name of Jesus three times with fire on it" or "Call the name of Jesus three times and add the fire of the Holy Spirit to it", "You shall not die this year", "It is well" and response to concluded prayer in the superlative is "Amen/3x, in Jesus' name".

All said in these specific numbers, be it- three, seven or twenty-one times, are practices which have no root in the Scripture. Jesus Christ only publicly shouted in a loud voice "Lazarus" once when He raised him from the dead (John 11:44) and "*Talitha cumi*" meaning "little girl, I say unto you, get up" in that of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:41). There is no instance of repetition or use of long words in all His healing and nature miracles in the Gospels¹⁷ (Matthew 8:15, 9:6, 28, Mark 2:5, 3:5, 5:8, 34, 41, Luke 8:24, etc.). Efficacy or potency is therefore, not determined by the number of times the name of God is called but the state of heart of the petitioner with his God (or faith of the supplicant/clergy in conjunction with the congregation) and most importantly, the unmerited mercy and grace of God. Folaranmi attests thus:

We are told by our Saviour to pray in His name. Six verses are devoted to this injunction in the book of John (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24, 16:26 cf. Matthew 18:20)...The traditional way is to make or present your requests after some words of gratitude (with the congregations response of amen only at appropriate places) and end the prayer with "I pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour." Then the people will say (the final), "Amen." Each prayer item may not end with "in the name of Jesus". Prayer is like writing a letter; you do not sign your name on every paragraph or at the end of each point. No matter how long or how many pages your letter has, you only sign at the end of it.¹⁸

He (Folaranmi, 2013) further argues and submits that:

However, I do not see anything wrong ...where the name of our Lord and Saviour is mentioned several times at appropriate places. We can start or continue or even end the prayers using varieties of phrases but we must not employ words that will ridicule the church

and our Lord. Mentioning the name of Jesus a number of times before you say anything is a ritualistic formula, a magical use of the name of Jesus. Calling the Holy Spirit three times as a formula (in prayer meetings, night vigils, deliverance services, etc) is meaningless and unbiblical...Apostle Paul wrote, "Brethren, do not be children in your understanding..." (I Corinthians 14:20). He contended, "If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (I Corinthians 14:23). Similarly, if the whole congregation will shout "mi Mimí o! mi Mimí o!! mi Mimí o!!!" Holy Spirit Holy Spirit Holy Spirit, will people who are passing by not regard this as madness or insanity? God is not deaf (Isaiah 59:1). Praying this way is paganism... In the same manner, our Saviour did not tell us to pray in the name of "the blood of Jesus" (let alone repeating it at specific number of times).¹⁹

Symbolic Objects and Coded Numbers

Regular and irregular jingling of bells centrally hung around the church premises are traditionally decoded in most Igbomina villages to announce or remind of normal (scheduled) services and as well as emergencies (i.e. obituary). In most cases, bells are successively jingled or rung for the number of times at the discretion of the sexton. Usually, the warning (get ready) bell precedes the final, in the interval of thirty (30) minutes in order to ensure promptness and punctuality. When the hung bells are jingled intermittently (usually at interval of three), it suggests unpleasant occurrence or bad omen. Again, like the ringing of hand bells in most *Aladura* churches during worship, the Catholics do pray the rosary²⁰ (in numbers) which is the story of the New Testament. Through the beads, the life of Mary is followed from the angelic visitation till the day she was crowned Queen of Heaven as well as that of Jesus from the moment the Holy Spirit came down on Mary, through his childhood, his public life, his cruel death on the cross, the joy of Easter when He rose from the dead, to the day He ascended to Heaven in glory.²¹ Howbeit, the point of emphasis of this paper is not the prayers of the Rosary, its importance and formulae but the notable and specific numbers with which some of the actions involved are carried out. Such numbers include: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 20, etc.²²

For instance, praying the rosary include: Christ Have Mercy (once); One Glory Be and the "Fatima Prayer" to finish the first decade; Lord have Mercy (twice); Hail Mary (thrice); each Mystery²³ has five decades; seven Sacraments; Hail Marys (ten times after Our Father/Glory Be which ends the first decade); 12 The precious blood chaplet; there are

20 mysteries to think about - 5 the Joyful Mysteries, 5 the Mysteries of Light, 5 the Sorrowful Mysteries and 5 the Glorious Mysteries. Common during the Mass are: 3 repetitions of "Oh Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine-All praise and all thanksgiving, be every moment thine"; 3 times repetition of *Jesus I Love You, All I have is yours. Yours I am, Yours I want to be, do with me whatever You will*"; 3 Bible readings in every Mass (1st and 2nd by the laity and the 3rd by the priest).²⁴

Causes of Bandwagon Effect of 'Ritualistic' Use of Numbers in Christian Worship

- i. **Interdenominational Influence:** Frequent joint interactions during local/state/national Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) programmes, change of pulpit²⁵ arrangement during the annual Bible Society of Nigeria Week of Prayers, invitations (crusades, concerts, pilgrims' valedictory and thanksgiving services, deliverance services), ceremonies (weddings, burial) and use of external guest speakers are strong magnetic factors leading to liberal or relaxed doctrine.
- ii. **Traditional and Cultural Mentality:** Before the advent of Islam and Christianity, some numbers were frequently used and already had their spiritual connotations. For example, the tradition of *one* king (*Ìba*) on the throne per time; one human head; first (beginning) number of a kind; one sun; one moon; annual events/festivals; annual crops/farming; etc make number *one* (1) noteworthy. Pairs of some parts of the body or items; prerequisite for contests (two sides opposing sides in games and competitions); comparison; agreement/treaties; *Ifa* Corpus (*Òkànràn Méjì*); twins (*Ejì*); breaking or cutting of sacred items into two equal halves (kolanut, yam); palm tree with two heads in Odo Ìr¹ (*Ìp¹ ya meji ni Akitimí*);²⁶ two seasons of the year; etc. make number two notable. Number three is the most important in: making abracadabra; invoking the spirits of the dead (*'m¹ta laun pe oku ni popo*); calling upon the ancestral gods of most of the Igbomina gods; usually three strange sounds of a bird *Pogun! Pogun! Pogun!* or *Pígbín! Pígbín! Pígbín!* after which twenty or thirty people must die in Ila- Orangun²⁷; ritual foods taken to or found in T-Junctions-*Orita M¹ta*; three days celebration of *Esii* Festival in Oke-Oyí (propitiated with one fat pig and two big snails); triplets (*,ta*); three main times of the day and life (morning/afternoon/evening and birth/wedding/burial); etc. Other numbers prominent in their activities include: four, as in the

four cardinal points (*ìgun inèrèrin àgbáyé*), four-seeds play in Ayò Game (*jèrin*); five, as in fingers, a symbolic representation of a hand, sorting of money/coins in five, and the most common interval of five market days (*ljà Írúń*) days in popular markets such as Ganmí, Idífian, Oro, Omu Aran, etc.; tradition of the first seven crown princes and princesses of Yorubaland²⁸; seven days of the week; no false claim in *Ìta lji Shrine* lest such died before seven days in Iji Isin²⁹; seven days celebration of Alaguso Festival in Ijara Isin; eight (8th) day naming ceremony; *Ìdun Oro*-the Festival for the king in Ila-Orangun for thirteen (13) days starting with *Eka* ritual on day one to *Isinro* on the thirteenth day;³⁰ Aworo Ose Festival in Ila Orangun for fourteen (14) days; Egungun Festival in Ila Orangun and Oke Ila for seventeen days (17); twenty four (24) hours of the day; restraining from or performing ritual acts for specific times and dates prescribed by the seer or during festivals as dictated by custom; forty (40) days mourning by a widow usually in black attire; etc.

- iii. **Hymns and Lyrics:** An example is Hymn 22 "Holy! Holy! Holy!" in *Sacred Songs and Solos*;³¹ *Alleluya! Alleluya! Alleluya!* in *Yoruba ECWA / UMCA Hymn 111*,³² etc. Some of these are also found as bold inscriptions at church entrances, on the wall, banners, etc.
- iv. **Revelations/Prophecies:** Like Prophet Isaiah heard the angels say, "Holy! Holy! Holy!" (Isaiah 6:3), so can it be received of any in dreams, vision or trance to do certain things in a specific way. Like Pastor Isaac Omolehin, the founder of Word Assembly International's progressive graduation from forty (40), seventy (70), and now one hundred and twenty (120) days Shiloh Annual Crusade (though outside Igbominaland); so do others with varied instructions. Such could be good news, a message of impending doom or remedy with immediate action within 3, 7, 21, 40 days lest death becomes imminent following 3, 7, 21...days.
- v. **Apparition:** The origin of the Holy Rosary which is widely used by the Catholics can be traced to the receipt of the Holy Rosary by St. Dominic Guzman, the Spanish Priest³³ from the Blessed Mother Mary. Sequel to his futile efforts in Christianising the Cathars/Albigenses in Southern French countryside in the year 1208, he prayed fervently for their conversion and a remedy for his failure. Then, Mary appeared to him with the message of hope and taught him a specific method for preaching the Christian truths of salvation according to the mysteries.³⁴

- vi. **Special Services and Transfers:** Little is no influence of external preachers and service leaders in the course of the worship. They hold the pipe and thus blow the tune for the congregants to spontaneously, sub-consciously or hesitantly respond. Periodic transfers of clergies from a different background and from one region to another suggest importation and adaptation of new habit and practice.
- vii. **Quest for Miracle:** In the course of seeking solution to the multifarious challenges of man and his insatiable wants in solution grounds, seers, prophets, deliverance ministers like doctors prescribe or declare some things (reading/recitations of chapters in the Bible-usually Psalms, fasting, prayers, bathe) to be done at certain hours, days, months and postures without questioning.
- viii. **Case Study of Biblical Heroes:** Jesus for instance, started His Ministry at 12 years, fasted for 40 days, rose from the dead the third day (Luke 24:46); Prophet Elisha commanded Naman, the Syrian captain who became leprous to bathe in River Jordan seven (7) times (2 Kings 5:10,14); Esther and all the Jews in Shushan fasted for 3 days and nights to ensure victory (Esther 4:16); the Lord commanded Joshua and the Jews to march round Jericho seven (7) times on the 7th day (Joshua 6:15-20); Daniel was noticed to be praying three (3) times daily (Daniel 6:10); Job was noted for regular sanctification of his children early in every morning (Job 1:5); etc.
- ix. **Individual Will, Social Status and Societal Influence:** Remembrance services and anniversaries i.e. days, weeks, months, years, decade remembrance Silver Jubilee, 40th birthday, Golden Jubilee, 70th anniversary, centenary, can be done at will.

Purposes of Numbers

Generally, a number is a mathematical object used to count, label and measure. It could be a concise equivalence of words expressed in letters. Today, choice numbers have become a tool in the hands of Church leaders, events programme co-ordinators, prophets and testifiers in accordance to doctrine, leading of the Spirit, faith and prevailing culture of the environment. Choice numbers can be employed or emphasized by corporate and individuals for lumped-up purposes such as: Adoration/Doxology (i.e. Holy! Holy! Holy!); Prophecies/Revelations; Therapy (i.e. fasting, restraints, bathing in rivers, etc as prescribed); Prayers/Deliverance; Command/Instructions/Announcements; Records (dates, calendar) and Epoch-making anniversaries.

The Facts in the Study

To call upon the Name of Jesus in prayer is scriptural (Psalms 50:15, John 14:13-14). However, there is nowhere in the Bible where it is prescribed that Jesus' name should be called three, seven or any specified number of times at the commencement of a prayer. Neither is it scriptural to pray, as some people do, "in the name of the blood of Jesus".³⁵ The number of times to pray is simply put as "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17); to give thanks always (5:8); rejoice in the Lord always (Phillipians 4:4); making requests (Matthew 7:7); etc. No particular number of times is enforced.

The Bible does not negate mourning the deceased as it has records of those that were mourned i.e. Abraham mourned his wife (Genesis 23:2); Joseph mourned his father (Genesis 50:1); Israelites mourned the death of Samuel (1 Samuel 25:1); etc but it does not state specific period to mourn. Records of times/days the Israelites mourned their beloved vary i.e. Jacob was bemoaned for 70 days in Egypt (Genesis 50:3); Moses for 30 days (Deuteronomy 34:8); Aaron for 30 days (Numbers 20:29); Saul and his children for 7 days (1 Samuel 31:13); and no records of mourning days after the demise of Joshua (Joshua 24:29-30); Eleazar (Joshua 24:33); Miriam (Numbers 20:1); Eli and children (1 Samuel 4:18-22); Stephen (Acts 8:2); etc.³⁶ It therefore suffices, that the forty (40) days customary mourning for a widow is nothing but a carryover from the traditional practice.

Vis-à-vis forgiving one another and church discipline, truly, Jesus answered Peter to forgive 70 times 7 times (Matthew 18:20) but in the real sense, Jesus does not give a legalistic or mathematical formula. Rather, He means limitless forgiveness.³⁷ Holy Communion is also decided by the discretion of each church administration as the injunction in I Corinthians 11:24 is simply put after He broke bread "...do this in remembrance of me".

On the whole, only by the faith, obedience and holy living of everyone, shall he be heard, accepted and healed by God. The agreement of the congregation or an individual or oneness in the spirit with whatever is prophetically or prayerfully pronounced (i.e. prophecy, dreams, prayer and fasting) or prescribed (do's and don'ts) is germane.

Conclusion

It has been well established that from time immemorial, certain numbers have been so significant and sacredly treated because of what they connote. Often times till today, prayer becomes so repetitive that

efficacy comes to be attached to the correct repetition rather than to the spirit and content of prayer. It is also believed by many Igbomina that certain elements of prayers must be repeated or prayed a stated number of times or the whole prayers a prescribed number of times a day at prescribed hours, special divine names called a number of times in a certain order. This has erroneously come to stay. Since the Bible does not specifically and compulsorily recommend some commonly used numbers and repetitions of them as it is today, it only shows that the adopted use is principled on the cultural setting of the people, doctrine of the church as well as emulation from case studies from the Bible.

Endnotes and References

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number>.
2. W.B. Yahya, *The Use of Statistical Tools for Effective Research: Paper Presented at the Annual Workshop of Postgraduate Students' Association, University of Ilorin on September 1, 2011*.
3. Singer, James. "Number (Mathematics)." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008. b) Numerology-Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Numerology>.
4. O.S. Aboyeji, "Trends in the Religious Experience of Igbomina People, C. 1800-2000", Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ilorin, 2015, pp.56-57. See also E.A. Ayandele, "Ijebuland 1800-1891: Era of Splendid Isolation" in G.O. Olusanya (Ed.), *Studies in Yoruba History and Culture*, Ibadan; University Press Limited, 1983, p.88.
5. J.O. Olatunji, Oral interview on 10/04/18. The clergy clarifies simply that Episcopal leadership is based on individual authority (by a Bishop, an Overseer, etc.) i.e. Papal Rome (Roman Catholic Church, Anglican, Methodist Mission a number of Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches; Congregational relies on the members for its major decisions at periodic meetings (i.e. the Baptist Church) and the Presbyterian (i.e. ECWA) where elders are selected or elected.
6. Jack W. Hayford (Executive Editor) (2002), *I Corinthians 12:5 in New Spirit-Filled Life Bible* (New King James Version), Wellington, Thomas Nelson Inc.' 2002, p. 1596.
7. C.O.S. Fawenu (Ed.), *Programme of Events for the Harmonization of a New Beginning in the History of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Kwara State*, compiled by Harmonisation Committee., 2008, p.18. See also cannigeria.org/membership. To qualify for the membership of CAN, a church shall have been registered under

- companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990 or previous legislation and shall belong to one of the five Church Groups mentioned.
8. ECWA is an acronym for *Evangelical Church Winning All* (formerly called Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) and later. Evangelical Church for West Africa).
 9. TEKAN is Hausa acronym for *Tariyar Eklisiar Kristi a Nigeria*.
 10. UMCA is an acronym for United Mission Church of Africa.
 11. The Prophetic Code Bulletin, "Numbers in Bible Prophecy" in *The Prophecy Code-Prophetic Numbers of the Bible*, Sunday, Dec 04, 2005, P.1.
 12. *Ibid.* Pp.1-3.
 13. <http://www.carm.org-Biblical Numerology> -Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry.
 14. Oral interview: Chief S.O. Aboyeji, BASO Education Consultant, 20/04/2018.
 15. J.O. Folaranmi, *Common Errors in Prayer*, Ilorin; CrownGift Printing Press, 2013, pp. 12-27. Also, oral interview with Revd. J.O. Jolayemi, 12th ECWA, Ilorin, 10/05/2018.
 16. ATR is an acronym for African Traditional Religion.
 17. The Gospels are the eye witness accounts by four Saints, *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John* that tell the story of the life of Jesus Christ.
 18. J.O. Folaranmi, *Common Errors in Prayer....*, p. 147.
 19. *Ibid.* pp.148-149. Also oral interview with Chief S.O. Aboyeji, BASO Education Consultant, 20/04/2018.
 20. The Rosary is made up of "decades". A decade is one "Our Father" followed by ten "Hail Marys" and a "Glory Be". Whilst it is usual to say five decades at a time, it is better to say one decade well, rather than five decades badly.
 21. *How to Pray the Rosary-A Gift Card by Crowns of Thorns*, England, (N.D.). See also "Rosary." Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
 22. Oral interview: Olayioye, O.S., Secretary, Legion of Mary, St. Andrew's Catholic Church, Esie on 21/05/18; Asefu, Moses N., former seminarian and member, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Kulende, Ilorin, 30/05/2018.
 23. See the breakdown under each of the 5 Mysteries in *How to Pray the Rosary...*
 24. Oral interview: Okpara Joy, Member, Lay Readers; St Patrick's Catholic Church, Kulende, Ilorin, 29/05/18 and Aba, Mary Esther, St. Anthonies Catholic Church, Fate-Tanke, Ilorin, 30/01/17.
 25. Change of pulpit is a programme under CAN, BSN or denominational

arrangement where rosters are made for church pastors/Bishops within such ambit to go and preach in different churches on a set date in a year.

26. Oral interview: Chief Caleb Adeoye, Jagunmolu of Iwoland, Kwara State, 06/05/18.
27. Afolabi Fatai, *Igbominaland in the Context of Yoruba History*, Ibadan: Sceptre Prints Limited, 2006, pp 55-56.
28. Princess, the mother of Olowu of Owu Kingdom; Princess, the mother of Alaketu of Ketu; Ogiso, The Onibini of Benin Kingdom; Ajagunla, the Orangun of Ila; Onisabe of Sabe, Olupopo of Popo and the Oranmiyan, the progenitor of all the Oyo).
29. Oral interview with Prince Omiyale Olawoyin Aderemi of Iji Isin, 12/12/16.
30. Afolabi Fatai, *Igbominaland in the Context of Yoruba History*, pp. 78-82.
31. *Sacred Songs & Solos-Twelve Hundred Hymns* (ND) compiled under the Direction of Ira D. Sanky, Jos Plateau State, Challenge Publications.
32. ECWA/UMCA (2010 Revised) *Ìwè Orin fún Ìjì nàà Ìlṛun nw Ọ̀ Yorùbá*, ECWA&UMCA, Lagos, Victory Signs International, pp 90-91.
33. At the time of serious threat to Christianity in Europe lived a Spanish Priest, Dominic Guzman. Fr Dominic later became known as Saint Dominic, founder of the 'Dominican' Order of Preachers still in existence today.
34. See 'The Origin of the Holy Rosary' in *The Most Holy Rosary Prayer Book*, De Throne of Grace Religious concept, Enugu, (N.D.), p.20. Frank Duff, *Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary*, Concilium Legionis Mariae Pub, Brunswick (ND).
35. ECWA (Evangelical Church Winning All) *Sunday School Manual for Adults 2011*, Vol. 20, Lesson 20, p.32.
36. ECWA (Evangelical Church Winning All) *Sunday School Manual for Adults 2000*, Vol. 9, Lesson 15, p.34.
37. Jack W. Hayford (Executive Editor), *Bible Commentary in New Spirit-Filled Life Bible* (New King James Version), Thomas Nelson Inc, Wellington, 2002, p.2324.

THE NIGERIAN MILITARY AND INTERNAL SECURITY INTERVENTIONS SINCE 1999: ASSESSING THE CHALLENGES TO NATION-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Since the return of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, there has been increased involvement of the military in the maintenance of internal security in the country. Several Internal security operations have been undertaken by the Nigerian military under different codenames such as Operation *Lafia Dole*, Operation *Zama Lafia*, Operation *Crocodile Smile*, Operation *Safe Haven*, Operation *Python Dance* and recently, Operation *Ayem a Kpatuma* to forestall peace in different parts of the country. But certain questions that beg for answers by majority of Nigerians stand clear. For instance, why is it that the military are quick to respond to internal security challenges in other parts of Nigeria, but feet-drag in her responses to the same internal security challenge in another region in the country? Are there specific types of internal security challenges which the military are expected to defend against in the country? If not, why do they respond to other internal security challenges and totally ignore to do same to other similar internal security threats around the country? The way in which the military performs or responds to internal security challenges coupled with the politicisation of military are serious setbacks to nation building efforts in Nigeria. This paper through the use of documented information and oral sources, examines how the military's internal security operations in the country have impinged nation building process in the country. The paper suggested increased numbers of military personnel; reorientation and retraining of personnel, increased funding and purchase of equipment as well as entrenchment of professionalism in the institution enable it perform her functions to the nation adequately.

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