

RELIGION *and* DEVELOPMENT *in* NIGERIA



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Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd

St James House
13 Kensington Square,
London, W8 5HD
United Kingdom

Website: <http://www.adonis-abbey.com>
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Suites C4 – C6 J-Plus Plaza
Asokoro, Abuja, Nigeria
Tel: +234 (0) 7058078841/08052035034

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 9781909112995

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Preface

Religion is being stigmatised and bastardised by different people from different cultures. While Karl Marx sees nothing in religion but mere "opium of the people", Sigmund Freud describes it as "child neurosis" which should not be given any serious recognition. In Nigeria, the numerous challenges bedevilling the nation ranging from political and ethnic crises to socio-economic instability and insecurity have been attributed to religion. These have been amplified and over-publicised that positivity about religion has been downplayed. This prompted the Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka to describe religion as an instrument of division and brutality and that unless religion is tamed in Nigeria, religion would kill the Nigerians. He instigated hatred of religion saying: "I do not say kill religion though I wouldn't mind a bit if that mission could be undertaken surgically, painlessly perhaps under anaesthesia effectively sprayed all over the nation or perhaps during an induced pouch of religious ecstasy." This stand and others of such nature are nothing but a clever way of putting religion into disrepute as if religion has not done the nation any worthwhile good.

The fact is that non-recognition of religion as a viable instrument of moral and virtuous development has done the world no good. A society or nation which relegates religion to personal affairs of her citizens witnesses social degeneration, increased murder and crime, euthanasia and other unnatural acts like sodomy, homosexuality and sadomasochism. One therefore needs to acknowledge and appreciate the role of religion in the generation and advancement of selflessness for enhancement of development in the nation. Indeed, hardly can any meaningful development take place in the absence of discipline and God consciousness which all religions teach. In addition, it is difficult to separate religion from man's physical and social environment both at the level of state or social institution where religion influences policies and general societal development; or at the level of individual where the behaviour of individual is not only affected by religion but also confers on him a form of identity. This is corroborated by the submission of Ibn Khaldun that religion provides ethics that the society lives by and guides the society towards development by encouraging cooperation, knowledge and creativity among the people as they begin to found their civilisation. However, when religion is taken with levity, impunity becomes the order of the day.

Numerous pressures mounted on religion to relegate it to the churches, the mosques and the shrines may be an effort in futility in a country like Nigeria where religion is indispensable in the lives of Nigerians and has influenced them in all spheres. Those who kick against religion have failed to recognise the roles religion has played and is still playing in the development of Nigeria, hence the purpose of this book. The book is set to showcase the values of religion in Nigeria and its contributions to the general development of the nation, especially in the areas of education, health, economy and politics. Chapters in the book concentrate on the nexus between religion and development in Nigerian society. This rich compendium contains well-researched articles written by seasoned scholars of religions in the area of African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam, to demonstrate that religion is not an antithesis of development.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One

Religion and Development: Religiosity and its Effect on Development in Nigeria	9
---	---

Chapter Two

Religious Conflicts, Political Stability and Development in Nigeria.....	29
---	----

Chapter Three

The Spiritual and Ethical Implications of Oath-Taking in Nigerian Politics	43
---	----

Chapter Four

Religious-Based Dispute Resolution Mechanism of Independent <i>Shari'ah</i> Panels and their Contributions to the Development of Judicial System in Nigeria	59
---	----

Chapter Five

Religion and Development: A Study of Developmental Dynamics of <i>Adamu Orisa</i> Festival in Lagos	79
--	----

Chapter Six

The Role of Muslims in Healthcare Service Delivery in Nigeria	95
--	----

Chapter Seven

Christianity and the Development of Health Care Services in Okun land, Kogi State, Nigeria Since 1900	119
--	-----

Chapter Eight

Christianity and Educational Development in Delta State, Nigeria	143
---	-----

Chapter Nine

The Impact of Christianity (Sudan Interior Mission) on Igbomina land, Kwara State, Nigeria	171
---	-----

Chapter Ten

Islam and the Attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria	189
--	-----

Chapter Eleven

The Impact of Sokoto Caliphate on Post-Colonial Political Development in Nigeria: A Focus on Selected Personalities	217
---	-----

Chapter Twelve

The Church and Socio-Economic Development of Ilorin Metropolis: A Case Study of Anglican Church in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria	233
---	-----

Index	249
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CHAPTER NINE

The Impact of Christianity (Sudan Interior Mission) on Igbomina Land, Kwara State, Nigeria

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Introduction

Over the years, religion has been seen as an instrument of promoting conflict and war, to a very threatening level, instead of as an instrument for building blocks for peaceful co-existence in the society. This has made some to question the relevance of religion in this age. According to Malomo, religion in Nigeria today has been devilled with religious intolerance and disharmony culminating in wanton destruction of lives and property.¹ He cited so many instances of religious violence from year 2001 to date especially in Northern Nigeria.

At the global level, the story is not different. The September 11 terrorist attack on the United States of America quickly comes to mind. The list is endless of various religious conflicts in many parts of the world. This is why Shadrack Best sees religion as becoming a divisive

issue that has constituted a growing conflict flash point not only in Nigeria but the whole world at large.²

However, religion has been and would still be an agent of social-economic transformation of any society, including Nigeria. The benefits of religion in the society can never be over emphasised. The evil seen in religion is as a result of the adherents of different religious groups not practicing it as it should be. Religion has no evil in itself, after all religions teach against evil practices in the society. All religions encourage religious tolerance, peaceful co-existence and love. In agreement with this submission, Oderinde noted that if people (adherents of various religions) apply their religions to their social, emotional, economic, intellectual and spiritual life, there would be unity and peaceful co-existence in all societies.³ In other words, the religious violence and uproars witnessed so far are not caused by religions but by the inability of the Muslims and the Christians to follow strictly the teachings of these religions.

The impacts of religion in Nigeria are enormous. This chapter focuses on the impacts of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), one of the major Christian Missionary Agencies in Igbomina land, Kwara state.

The Igbomina People: A Historical Survey

The Igbomina people are also called *Ogbonna*. They are a sub-ethnic group of Yoruba people who occupy some parts of Kwara-South and the Northern part of Osun State, Nigeria and speak a dialect also called *Igbomina* or *Igbonna*. In Osun State, Igbomina people live in Ifedayo and Ila Local Government Area Councils.⁴ In Kwara State, they live in Irepodun, Ifelodun and Isin Local Government Areas of the State. Some major Igbomina cities/towns in Osun State are Oke-Ila, Orangun, Ora, and Ila Orangun. In Kwara State, which has the majority of Igbomina people, some major towns are: Omu-Aran, Idofian, Igbaja, Share, Ganmo, Amoyo, Ajase-Ipo, Oke-Ode, Isanlu-Isin, Ekun Mesan Oro, Oro-Ago, Babanla, Iwo, Oke-Onigbin etc.⁵

The origin of Igbomina people is still a subject of historical conjecture. However, we agree with Dada who indicated that available oral evidence and scanty written records explain that some Igbomina migrated from Ile-Ife, the cradle of human civilisation according to the Yoruba mythology, while others are said to have migrated from other

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established Yoruba kingdoms such as Oyo.⁶ Closely related to this is the tradition which says that the area now called Igbomina land was given to and founded by *Orangun* of Ila as his own share of inheritance from his grandfather, *Oduduwa*, the purported progenitor of the Yoruba race.⁷ *Orangun* was the second son (and the fourth child of *Okanbi*), the only son of *Oduduwa*, he (*Orangun*) founded Igbomina through the use of *Ogbo*. It was this *Ogbo* that was supposed to know the way to the bank of River Niger, the ultimate destination of this itinerant way-farer, hence the name *Ogbomo ona* i.e. *Ogbo* knows the way, which became Igbomina with the passage of time.⁸ However, Ibitoye noted that there exists also a tradition in Omu-Aran which claims the possession of similar *Ogbo* as that in *Orangun's* custody.⁹ We, however, noted that the duplication of *Ogbo* is closely associated with leadership rivalry in Igbomina land since the possession of the genuine *Ogbo* would have stronger claim to the leadership and headship of the entire Igbomina land.

However, Igbomina people have traditions that attempt to explain the origin of their common language (Yoruba), culture and political institutions from descent through a single ancestor, *Oduduwa*. They share to a degree, a common culture and social life that can be classified into two distinct sub-groups based on dialectic variations. The two dialectic groupings in the land are the *Mo yee* and *Mo san* groups. The *mo yee* includes Oro-Ago, Ile-Ire, Ora, Oko/Ola, Oke-Ode, and Agunji districts, while the *Mo san* groups comprise Ajase-Ipo, Igbaja, Isin, Omu-Aran, Oro, Esie, Omupo, Idofian, Ila-Orangun and mostly those areas that constitute the southern outpost of Igbomina.¹⁰ Each group possesses a dialect slightly different from the other. Nevertheless, they are mutually intelligible. The headquarters of Igbomina is Ajase-Ipo in Irepodun Local Government, Kwara State.

The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) in Igbomina land

The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), just like the Sudan United Mission (SUM) was borne out of the burden of the Sudan. This mission was not from an ecclesiastical organisation as the Church Missionary Society or the Church of England or like other Church Mission Boards, such as the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the Catholic Missions.

SIM was borne and founded by some individuals who had the burden to take the Gospel of Christ to places where it had not been preached. Today, this non-denominational mission has become a renowned Christian denomination in Nigeria. According to the trustees of ECWA, her name was changed to Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) in 1954 in an attempt to indigenise her. In 2010, her name was equally changed from Evangelical Church of West Africa to Evangelical Church Winning All.¹¹ This was done in order to accommodate other branches opened outside Africa, particularly in the United States of America.

The sole objective of the SIM was to open the Sudan which includes Igbomina land to the Gospel of Christ. Sudan, in this context does not mean the Sudan in East Africa, but a geographical or vegetation region in West Africa, South of the Sahara that is characterised by the Savannah vegetation of level land covered with low vegetation, treeless or dotted with trees or patches of wood.¹² In short, Sudan, here, refers to the land of the Black people from West to East of Africa between the Equator and Sahara desert that are yet to receive the gospel of Christ. It was the belief of the Mission that the gospel was incomplete until it gets to the people in the 'dark world' i.e. the black people in the Sudan who are yet to become Christians.¹³ However, Turaki added that the word 'Sudan' is an Arabic word meaning 'the land of the black.'¹⁴ Nonetheless, what is important here, is that the name Sudan in this context only refers to the land of the black people who were yet to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

One wonders how easy and convenient it was for the white men and women to leave their 'comfortable' countries to come into places labelled as 'the white man's graveyard'.¹⁵ The mandate of Jesus to go and preach the gospel to the whole world (Matt 28:19-20) must be the great reason for this missionary enterprise. Fleck sees this call as faith in action where people who obey this command change their spiritual lives forever.¹⁶

The vision that gave birth to SIM was of a Scottish Canadian woman named Mrs. Margaret Gowans in the 1890s.¹⁷ She had a great burden for the Sudan, having learnt that millions of people lived therein without the knowledge of Christ in the interior. After praying, she passed the burden of the Sudan to her son, Walter Gowan and Rowland Victor Bingham, an English Canadian. These two men were later joined by Thomas Kent, an American. They arrived Badagry on December 4th 1893 without any sponsorship. Olatayo submitted that "even though, they knew that it

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was a venture that could lead to the loss of their lives, still they were determined to risk it to faith".¹⁸

At the beginning, they did not get enough support from local churches in their home countries. Not only that, they were told about the death of many missionaries who attempted to evangelise the Sudan, and that they and their unborn children would not be able to see the Sudan. However, these discouragements did not stop these missionaries from being obedient to the missionary call from God. The churches in America, Canada and Britain were reluctant to support them because they knew that many missionaries from the West had died in West Africa as they attempted to take the gospel to that land. It seemed to them that there was no value in supporting those who were likely to die soon.

Indeed, their coming to the interior part of Nigeria was a great risk of life considering the hot weather, transportation problem, shortage of food and finances, health challenges, etc. As noted by Fleck, these men reached Lagos with only about thirty British pounds.¹⁹ They had no mission board at home to stand behind them. When giving the command to go and preach the gospel, Jesus gave his promise: 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Matt. 28:20 NIV). 'This led them to depend on God without any reservation. They left for Nigeria in the same manner that Jesus requested his disciples to go: 'Take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandal, or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep' (Matt. 10:10). When considering the lives of these three pioneers, it is easy to see how the SIM motto, 'SIM by prayer,' developed. From Badagry they got to Lagos. Other missionaries discouraged them from embarking on the journey that could lead to their untimely deaths in the Sudan but they did not listen to their warning. Bingham's ill health made him to stay back in Lagos while Gowans and Kent left in April 1894 for the Lake Chad via Kano and got to Bida in June 1894. The roads were not good, the heat was excessive and they had much trouble keeping their carriers together.

Gowans was the first to die just almost after a year that they got to the Sudan. He died of dysentery at Girku, close to Zaria (Kaduna State) on the 17th November 1894.²⁰ Kent also took ill at Bida (Niger State) and died on the 8th of December 1894.²¹ Only Bingham managed to survive and returned home. That ended the first attempt to open up the Sudan

with the gospel of Christ. Not giving up on the Sudan, Bingham came back to Lagos on March 13th 1900 with two other missionaries: Albert Taylor and A. J. Moline. As it was with Apostle Paul, who said, 'for Christ's love compels us...', (II Cor. 5:14), so it was with Rowland Bingham. However, this second attempt failed also as Bingham took ill with fever in Badagry and was rushed back home. The other two missionaries later joined him, they arrived England via the next ship. This ended the second attempt without any thing to show for.

The third attempt was the fruitful one that opened up the Sudan with the gospel of Christ in 1901. As at that time, Bingham had succeeded in having a council that would be sending missionaries to the Sudan. This group of missionaries: Mr. Albert Taylor, Mr. Charles Robinson, Rev. E. Anthony and Mr. Alex W. Banfield, were the first to be sent. They got to Patigi via River Niger on 15th March 1902. Thus, Patigi became the first preaching station for this mission in the central Sudan. This was because Patigi was the first town they settled in through River Niger. It was from Patigi that the gospel spread to Egbe and other towns among the Yagba people, in Kogi State through Rev. Tommy Titcombe called *Oyinbo Egbe* by the indigenes. From here, the SIM mission launched out to Igbomina land in 1912 through Rev. Guy William Playfair, popularly called *Oyinbo Oro* by the indigenes.

Thus, Oro-Ago became the cradle of the SIM/ECWA mission in Igbomina land. Before the coming of these white missionaries into the land, the indigenes knew nothing about the gospel of Jesus. They were all traditional worshippers except for some that were Muslims. The SIM Missionaries faced lots of persecutions from the Traditional worshippers and the Muslims in Igbomina land. Islam got to Igbomina land before the Ilorin onslaughts that began from 1835 C.E.²² Some were attacked physically, while others were attacked spiritually and some even lost their lives in the process. Nevertheless, Christianity is a religion to reckon with in Igbomina land today. The introduction of this religion in to the Land has great impact on the lives of Igbomina people. Their ways of life were greatly influenced by the activities of these missionaries in the land. Their economic, social, and cultural lives were equally greatly influenced.

The Impacts of SIM / ECWA Mission on Igbomina land

The impact of SIM / ECWA on Igbomina land, Kwara State is enormous and could be felt in all ramifications of life of Igbomina people. Indeed, the impact of Christian missionaries in Nigeria as a country can never be over-emphasised.²³ Many scholars have written a lot on such impacts. Among them are: E.A Ayandele in a book titled *Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1941*²⁴ and E.A Odumuyiwa in a paper titled "Christianity, Governance and Development: A case study of Nigeria in the 21st Century."²⁵ From all indications, it becomes clear that Igbomina people were not exposed to western civilisation before the coming of the SIM and the Church Missionary Society missionaries into the land beginning from 1912. Thus, for a better and objective evaluation of the impacts of SIM / ECWA on Igbomina land, it is necessary to examine the religious, educational, socio-cultural and economic impacts of this mission in the land under study. This justifies the fact that religion (Christianity) is a veritable instrument of peace, unity, cohesion and development not only in Igbomina land, but Africa as a whole.

Educational Impact

The development of Western Education in Igbomina land cannot be treated in isolation from traditional forms of education in the land. Traditional education was a way of life before the advent of Western education that was introduced by the Christian missionaries.²⁶ SIM/ECWA and CMS are the agents of Western Education in Igbomina land, Kwara State. However, it has been noted by some scholars that the Christian missions in Nigeria including SIM have not hidden their intention that establishment of schools was meant for evangelism. Such scholars include Fafunwa who indicated that the primary aim of the early Christian missionaries was to convert the 'heathen,' or the 'benighted' to Christianity via education.²⁷ Omotoye also added that:

This was a strategy adopted by the early missionaries to win converts to their various missions. The Christian missionaries have been consistent

and dogged in their aspiration of the establishment of schools in this regard.²⁸

As far as these missionaries were concerned, human intelligence is to be cultivated as an instrument of understanding Christian message. Faith, which enabled man to hold fast to God grows out of the conviction induced by intelligence. Before the coming of Playfair into Igbomina land, a few indigenes had gotten opportunities to travel to other parts of Yoruba land, such as, Abeokuta and Lagos and had learnt that western education brings with it western civilisation. As a result, Playfair's effort to introduce western education was welcomed at least by those who were aware of it. In Yoruba land, according to Ayandele, western education was looked upon as the only agency that could bring about the social revolution that Nigeria envisaged.²⁹ So, it is not surprising that mission schools were eagerly welcomed.

Dosumu notes that early development of education in Igbomina land owes much of its success to the emergence of mission communities in 1918 established by SIM/ECWA at Oro-Ago, the Catholic Mission in late 1930s at Oro and the United Missionary Society (UMS) at Share in early 1940.³⁰ There were other mission organisations, but they did not establish mission outposts because their members operated from various towns and villages outside Igbomina land. We perceive that western education has revolutionary influences in Igbomina land and by extension, the whole country, Nigeria. Like in all other parts of Africa, such as Kenya, Malawi, and South Africa, western education was a product of missionary work.³¹ Until the approach of independence in 1960, the Christian missions in Igbomina land were the first and the only organisation willing to provide western education to the people.

The period between 1930 and 1960 was significant in the development of primary education in Igbomina land. This was a period of transition from church oriented education to a full-fledged primary education long demanded by the people. That is to say other subjects beyond reading, writing and Christian religious knowledge, were introduced into the School curriculum. By the middle of 1950, there had been many mission-based primary schools in Igbomina land.³² Thus between 1913 – 1965, SIM/ECWA had up to forty five primary schools across Igbomina land. Among them were Primary Schools in Oro-Ago, Agbeku, Alabe, Atiran, Eggi Oyopo, Elesin Meta, Odo-Eku, Ola, Oke-

Ode, Patako, etc. Adult education programmes was equally established especially in those towns and villages where the SIM Missionaries settled, such as, Oro-Ago, Igbaja, and Omu-Aran. Secondary education was developed after the primary education. Teachers' Colleges were established in Igbaja in 1944 and Omu-Aran in 1948. The theological College/Seminary was established in Igbaja in 1942. This was the first seminary of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria.³³ A College of Education was also established in 2014 at Igbaja by ECWA Theological Seminary Igbaja, Kwara State.

Many Nigerians have benefitted from western and theological education introduced by the SIM/ECWA mission in Igbomina land. The former Deputy Governor of Kwara State, Chief Joel Afolabi Ogundeji, was a product of the SIM Teacher's College at Igbaja, Rev. Dr. J. B. Lawal, former Provost of ECWA Theological Seminary Igbaja and Professor Yusuf Turaki former Provost of Jos ECWA Theological Seminary were both products of ECWA Theological Seminary, Igbaja. The bulk of the educated Civil Servants and professionals in the land and beyond had their humble beginnings from mission education programmes and institutions in the land.

Thus, the major contributions of Christian missions in the area of education has been in literacy, social, moral and spiritual up-bringing and general development of the people and societies, even though the mission favoured Theological education over general (secular) education. This was one of the reasons for Government take-over of mission and church schools in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

Socio – Cultural Impact

The socio-cultural heritage of a society inter-alia embraces norms, morals, beliefs, attitude, taboo, superstitions, religion, festivals etc. Afolabi in his book titled: *Igbomina land in the context of Yoruba History*, noted that quite a lot of these and the like have been bequeathed to descendants of Igbomina people over years by words of mouth (verbally) and by imitations.³² So, it is obvious that Igbomina as a group of Yoruba people have their indigenous beliefs before the commencement of the activities of SIM/ECWA in Igbomina land.

The passage of life (naming, puberty, marriage and death ceremony) of Igbomina people has been greatly influenced by the activities of SIM/ECWA in the land. The ceremonies attached to all these differ from what it had been before the coming of the western civilisation that was introduced by the missionaries. English wears are now worn by Igbomina people, people now live in modern houses. This was not so before Guy Playfair stepped into Igbomina land.³³ According to a write-up in the 90th Year Anniversary Booklet of SIM/ECWA in Iwo-Isin, mud houses with thatched roofs with small windows and palm frond or guinea corn stalk doors gave way to modern block houses and corrugated iron sheets when Christianity came in to Iwo in 1924. Round family long room houses with *Ilo* suddenly gave way to two, three or four flats and storey buildings in the town as well.³⁴ Motherless babies were no longer buried along with their dead mothers in Oro-Ago and environ. Indeed, the establishment of Orphanage Homes in Igbomina land by the SIM missionaries was an outstanding impact and contribution of the mission to the development and welfare of Igbomina people. Among the babies rescued from being buried with their dead mothers at birth was S.K.S. Olubadewo, a wealthy man who was the first person to own an aircraft in Igbomina land, and Janet Funmilayo Ibitoye, a former Principal of ECWA Nursing School Egbe.³⁵

The abilities of the people to know how to read and write brought great enlightenment to them. Playfair was the first to have a bicycle in Igbomina land Kwara State.³⁶ From here, transportation system in the land got significant improvement. The custom of isolating those with leprosy to die all alone was put to an end in the land since 1943 when a lepers' home was opened in Omu-Aran by the SIM missionaries.³⁷ Thus, rehabilitating lepers, which is today a government policy is altogether a heritage inherited from the Christian mission. The custom and practice of killing of twins was put to an end in Igbomina land through the activities of these missionaries. Like Mary Slessor in Calabar,³⁸ the SIM Missionaries in Igbomina land fought and won the battle against this barbaric act. They would collect such babies and raise them up under their own roofs.³⁹

Another outstanding influence of Christianity on Igbomina land was adding or introducing new names to some Igbomina towns and villages. Owode-Ofaro in Ilere District, Ifelodun Local Government was an example here. The name of this community was Ofaro before an SIM

Missionary Miss Dick (popularly called *Ebun Oyinbo*) stepped in to the town and advised them to migrate from the hill top and settle on the plain land on 26th November 1945. She added *Owode* (literary translated: money has come) to the name of the town as we have it today Owode-Ofaro.⁴⁰

Linguistic development of African indigenous language was another heritage from the Christian mission. While the European Missionaries can be well criticised for their cultural imperialism, they did positively well in the development of Nigerian indigenous languages and helped in the translation of the Bible into many local languages. Guy Playfair was the first to introduce Igbomina people of Kwara State to Yoruba alphabet and helped in documenting many oral traditions and customs of the people.⁴¹

Medical Services

SIM/ECWA was the first agent to introduce modern medicine into Igbomina land Kwara State. This mission body built dispensaries, maternity homes and leprosarium centres in the land. The superiority of this modern medical care to the traditional medicine was apparent in the land. Turaki noted that the SIM was the largest contributor in Northern Nigeria towards fighting diseases and ailments.⁴² The missionaries started treating the sick ones in their homes and later built dispensaries to cater for the increasing demands of medical services.

At its introduction, the Whiteman's medicines *Ogun Oyinbo* and medical practice were accepted by the people with great suspicion and contempt, but as time went on, the people grew to accept them. However, SIM Medical services in Igbomina land were also used as a tool for the propagation of the Gospel in the land.⁴³ Those who came for treatment were first of all preached to. We observe that the medical work of the SIM was as wide as the spread of mission stations in Igbomina land. This explains why mission medical work had great impact upon the people and the society and was indeed the strongest mission activity in the land. Between 1902 and 1960, SIM/ECWA in Nigeria had about 110 dispensaries and treatment centres in the Mission Field. Three out of these were in Igbomina land between 1912 and 1947. The one in Oro-

Ago was established in 1912, the one in Igbaja was established in 1933, and the one in Oke-Ode was established in 1947.⁴⁴ Dispensaries were later opened at Babanla, Agunjin, Ora, Omu-Aran to mention but a few. Prominent among the pioneering Nurses were Miss. Moulding, Miss. Margaret Lang, and Mrs. Playfair.⁴⁵ Later, indigenes were trained as nurses and posted to different dispensaries in and outside Igbomina land.

The impact of medical services on the Igbomina people can never be over-emphasised. People were taught hygiene and how to give first aid treatment. This reduced the death rate among the people drastically in the land. Health Education was given from time to time and free medical services were administered. Immunisation was also given from time to time to the people.⁴⁶ Thus, immunisation which is today sponsored by Nigerian government is altogether a heritage inherited from the Christian missionaries.

However, regardless of the impact of these medical services of the SIM/ECWA on the land under study, we note that only very few of these dispensaries and maternities survive till date. They are the one at Igbaja and the one at Omu-Aran (renamed Herbold Hospital), and the leprosarium Hospital at Oke-Igbala Omuaran. Reasons for this were poor management and the establishment of local government clinics and state Hospitals in Igbomina land. The charges of these government clinics and hospitals were lower than what the missions charged. For this reason the government clinics and hospitals got more patronage than the missions. Thus, ECWA could not sustain this legacy from SIM.

Economic Impact

Christianity and economic advancement have long been in partnership not only in Igbomina land but anywhere the religion is practiced. SIM/ECWA has not only preached against indolence but condemns it and encourages her members to be industrious. In the area of Agriculture which is the major source of economic development in Igbomina land, SIM/ECWA has done a lot to its improvement. Igbomina people are predominantly farmers. At the arrival of Playfair in the land, he introduced new crops like tomatoes, mangoes, vegetables, American maize and cross breed cotton to Oro-Ago community. The non-converts also got involved in planting of these newly introduced species.⁴⁷ Elaborate training were given by the SIM Missionaries in the

land in new farming techniques along with western education. Hunting techniques were also improved on. It is on record that Playfair was the first to use a rifle for hunting games in Igbomina land.⁴⁸ All these put together improved food production in the land, especially with the establishment of ECWA Rural Development (ERD).

Apart from agricultural development that was championed by SIM/ECWA mission in Igbomina land, tailoring, carpentry and bricklaying were introduced to the land by the SIM Missionaries. Tailoring was introduced by Mrs. H.E. Mouldling, Miss. K. M. Dick and Miss. S. J. Buller in the 1930s. The first house to be roofed in Igbomina land Kwara State with corrugated iron sheet was in 1936 by J. K. Adeniyi, the first SIM convert in Igbomina land.⁴⁹ Many people, even outside Igbomina land came to Oro-Ago to learn these modern professions. This did not only improve the economic status of the land but aided the spread of the gospel because those apprentices became Christians and went back to their villages and towns to spread the gospel. Among such people were Olokoba Oluode, an indigene of Babanla. He learnt bricklaying in Oro-Ago and became one of those who introduced Christianity into Babanla around 1925.⁵⁰

Today, SIM/ECWA is involved in programmes that bring more economic development, not only in Igbomina land but Nigeria at large. One of them is called People Oriented Development of ECWA (P.O.D.). Its Headquarter is in Jos, with staff in all ECWA District Church Councils throughout Nigeria. Wells are being dug for different communities, toilets are being erected for the villagers, and even houses are being built for them. Also, Church and Community Mobilisation Process, (CCMP) is an arm of People Oriented Development (POD) of ECWA. CCMP helps in empowerment of the people in the community. Among those empowered was Mrs. Abifarin, a widow, from Iwo-Isin in 2013 via this programme.⁵¹

ECWA has many Nigerians that are gainfully employed under her. The number of Pastors and other staff members who work in the three District Church Councils of ECWA in Igbomina land is over 300.⁵¹ ECWA Theological Seminary Igbaja has more than sixty Nigerians that are gainfully employed. The College of Education and ECWA Staff Nursery and Primary Schools in the land equally provide employment

opportunities for the citizenry. The Seminary and Radio ELWA Igbaja have brought much popularity to Igbomina land and Kwara State as a whole,⁵² and have improved the social and economic status of the land.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the impacts of SIM/ECWA on Igbomina land Kwara State are enormous. The effects are reflected on different aspects of life and the social institutions in Igbomina land. It is observed that her impacts on the education, medical, economic and socio-cultural life of the people under study are positive. We however, agree with Salami who observed that Nigerians (Igbomina people inclusive) were introduced to Christianity and taught Christian truths that were heavily tinged with Western culture,⁵³ but with the passage of time, especially in the 21st century, Christianity has been contextualised. Thus, we would like to recommend that ECWA must work very hard to sustain all SIM heritages, especially the Medical Services that have almost faded away.

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