

**THE GROWTH AND IMPACTS OF EVANGELICAL CHURCH WINNING ALL IN
ÌGBÓMÌNÀ LAND, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA (1912-2012)**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this thesis The Growth and Impacts of Evangelical Church Winning All in Ìgbómìnà land Kwara State, Nigeria (1912-2012) was written by ABOLARIN Isaac Adeşina with Matric No O8/68CO001. It has been read and approved as meeting the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Christian Studies, Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father; Elder Matthew Arẹmu Abólárìnwa who slept in the Lord on 3rd March, 1990, and my mother Mrs. Maria Amina Abólárìnwa who worked relentlessly to ensure my sound upbringing. Others are my beloved wife: Lady Evangelist Rachael Bósèdé Abólárìn and our Children: Richard, Marvelous, Ìmólẹ-Ayò and Ọdún-Ayò.

Declaration

I, Abolarin, Isaac Adeşina hereby declare that this thesis entitled The Growth and Impacts of Evangelical Church Winning All in Ìgbómìnàland, Kwara State, Nigeria (1912-2012) is a record of my research work. It has neither been presented nor accepted in any previous application for a higher degree. All sources of information have been specifically acknowledged.

In addition, the research work has been ethically approved by the University Ethical Review Committee.

Abolarin, I.A

Date

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ABSTRACT

The Sudan Interior Mission/Evangelical Church Winning All (SIM/ECWA) was one of the mission agencies that brought Christianity to Nigeria. The Mission was introduced to Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State, in 1912. Prior to the coming of SIM/ECWA, into the land, significant development was a mirage. The aim of this study was to document the impacts of this mission in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to: (i) examine how SIM/ECWA penetrated Ìgbómìnà land; (ii) investigate the level of development of the mission in Ìgbómìnà land over the period of one hundred years (1912-2012); (iii) document the various impacts of the mission on Ìgbómìnà land; (iv) appraise the contributions of Nigerian converts to the spread of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land; (v) examine the ability of ECWA to sustain the legacy passed to her by SIM; and (vi) assess the impact of SIM/ECWA as an agent of socio-economic transformation of Ìgbómìnà land.

This study employed qualitative research design using the historical method. Historical method was used to trace the history of the development of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land and to give a vivid description of the various means through which the Church penetrated the towns and villages in the area. A total of thirty-two people including clergymen, elders, chiefs and members of SIM/ECWA who were indigenes and non-indigenes of Ìgbómìnà land were purposely selected for interview. Participant observations were also used for eliciting information.

The findings of this study were that:

- (i) SIM/ECWA came into Ìgbómìnà land through Òrò-Àgò in 1912 via Rev. Guy William Playfair and penetrated other towns and villages in the land through house to house preaching, friendship with traditional rulers and healing strategies;
- (ii) SIM/ECWA that started with only one mission station and one local church in 1912 had spread widely with five mission stations, three District Church Councils and over one hundred Local Church Boards all over Ìgbómìnà land;
- (iii) SIM/ECWA had tremendous impacts on Ìgbómìnà land in the areas of education, economy, social, medical, etc;
- (iv) Nigerian converts like Ìjèsà cloth traders (*Òṣómàáló*), and persons like Jamu Adeniyi, Abraham Buremoh, and many more had contributed greatly to the spread of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land by establishing SIM/ECWA Local Church Boards;
- (v) ECWA has not been able to sustain all the legacies passed on to her by SIM, specifically, in the of aspect medical services in the land; and
- (vi) SIM/ECWA was an agent of socio-economic transformation in Ìgbómìnà land as its Radio Eternal Love Winning All (ELWA) in Igbaja boosted the social status of the land and helped greatly to transform the people.

The study concluded that the growth of SIM/ECWA Mission in Ìgbómìnà land has not been static as its impacts have been felt all over Ìgbómìnà land. The study recommended that ECWA should work hard to sustain and improve upon SIM legacies in Ìgbómìnà land and that it should make efforts to resuscitate Radio ELWA for gospel broadcasting.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation, we see God showing keen interest in the salvation of mankind. Prophet Ezekiel declares that God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather, that they should turn from their wicked ways and live (Ezekiel 33:11). Jesus Christ's mission on earth was to reach out to non-Christians and to make disciples of all Nations. He did this within the environment where he lived during the three and a half years of his earthly ministry. Before his ascension, he gave the commission to his immediate disciples and by extension to all Christians, to go out and preach the gospel. Knowing fully well that this would be impossible without the help of the Holy Spirit, he promised them that he would send the Holy Spirit to help them in Acts 1:8.

We understand that Jesus was unable to preach in every part of the world during his earthly ministry, yet he gave his immediate disciples the task of covering the whole earth in preaching the gospel. It is also very clear that these disciples were unable to cover the whole earth as well in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, we agree with Baba who noted that Jesus was aware that he and his immediate disciples would not be able to cover the whole earth

with evangelism.¹ Therefore, he relied on every Christian to partake in spreading the gospel wherever they are and by so doing, the gospel will reach ‘the end of the earth’ as directed in the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20) and in Acts of the Apostles 1:8.

Like many other Christian mission agencies in Nigeria,² the Evangelical Church Winning All, formerly known as Evangelical Church of West Africa which is the product of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), clearly understood that the mandate to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ among those that were yet to hear about him was a task that must be done. This mission team (SIM) set out to Africa, precisely, to Nigeria in 1893 from Britain,³ and after some attempts, which will be discussed later in this research report, they opened up the interior, referred to as the Sudan with the gospel of Christ. Sudan, in this context does not refer to the country, Sudan in East Africa, but the land of the Black people from West to East Africa that were yet to receive the gospel of Christ.

Ìgbómìnà land in Kwara State, Nigeria (being part of the Sudan) was among many other places that SIM/ECWA reached with the gospel of Christ. This was in 1912 through the relentless missionary activities of Rev. Guy William Playfair, popularly called *Òyìnbó Òró* by Ìgbómìnà people.⁴ Indeed, the growth of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land of Kwara State was steady and her impacts could be felt all over the towns and villages in the land and beyond. SIM/ECWA’s first Theological Seminary is located in Ìgbómìnà land (ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà) in 1942, the first Radio station in Kwara State (Radio Eternal Love Winning Africa Ìgbàjà) was located in Ìgbómìnà land in 1952. These and many more have made Ìgbómìnà land very important and have brought popularity to the land in Nigeria and beyond. Indeed, the growth and impacts of Christian missionaries in Nigeria as a country can never be overemphasized.

The Great Commission of Jesus Christ has propelled many mission agencies to take the gospel of Christ beyond their immediate environments. Among many other mission agencies

that were formed in the 19th century was the Sudan Interior Mission. This mission was pioneered by Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent and Rowland W. Bingham. They came to Nigeria in December 1893.⁵ Their aim was not to stay in Badagry, where many European Missionaries were at that time, but to take the Gospel of Christ to the interior part of Nigeria, referred to as the Sudan, hence, the name Sudan Interior Mission.

The notion that the Gospel was incomplete until it got to the land of the blacks in the Northern Nigeria motivated Guy William Playfair to join the SIM in 1911.⁶ The mission sent him to Nigeria that same year. On arrival in Patigi (SIM first mission station), he was sent to Egbe and from Egbe, he was sent to open a new missionary post in Òrò-Àgó which became the cradle of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land in 1912.⁷ Today, SIM/ECWA is one of the largest groups of Churches in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State, Nigeria.⁸

The Ìgbómìnà (also colloquially called: *Igbonna* or *Ogbonna*) are a sub-ethnic group of Yòrùbá people occupying the northern portion of the Yòrùbá region of southwestern Nigeria.⁹ They speak a dialect also called *Ìgbómìnà* or *Igbonna*. The Ìgbómìnà people spread across what is now called northern Òsun State and Southern Kwara State. The Ìgbómìnà are renowned for their agricultural and hunting prowess. They are also known for their woodcarving, leather art, and the famous *Egúngún Eléwe* masquerades.

Today, Ìgbómìnà people of Kwara State are found in three Local Government Areas of the State, namely: Ìrèpòdún, Ìfèlódún and Ìsin Local Government Areas. In Òsun State, Ìgbómìnà people are found in Ìfèdayò and Ìlálá Local Government Area Councils. Some major Ìgbómìnà towns or cities in Òsun State are Òkè-Ìlálá, Òrà, Ìlálá Òràngún, etc; while those of Kwara State (which has most of the Ìgbómìnà land and population) include Òmù-Àrán, Ìgbàjà, Ìdòfiàn, Share, Èkùn-Mésàn án - Òró, Babańlá, Àjàsé-Ìpo, Eleju, Esiẹ, Òmùpo, Òkè-Ode, Roré, Òwù-Ìsin, Òrò-Àgó, Àrán-Òrin, Àrándùn, Òkè-Abá, Òkè-Onígbin, Iwó, Ìsánlú-Ìsin, etc.¹⁰

The cradle of Christianity in Ìgbómìnà land is Òrà-Ìgbómìnà, a town in the North-Eastern part of the present Òsun State. Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) now known as Anglican Church was the first denomination in Ìgbómìnà land. This Church came to Òrà-Ìgbómìnà in 1896 through one ex-slave boy called Samuel Adeyinka Laseinde, an indigene of the town.¹¹ Also, the CMS preached the gospel of Christ in Òmù-Àrán Ìrèpòdún Local Government Area Kwara State around 1897 and also in Esiẹ in 1912.¹² However, the cradle of SIM/ECWA mission in Kwara State, which is the focus of this research work, is Òrò-Àgó in December, 1912 through the pioneering efforts of a SIM missionary named Rev. Guy William Playfair, otherwise known as “*Òyìnbó Oro*” *Alábojútó*.¹³

Prior to the emergence of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land, Ìgbómìnà people were religious. The people were religious in the sense that they had mechanism through which they venerated their divinities. Apparently, this idea suggests that the Ìgbómìnà conceived the sacred out of their religious awareness independently before the coming of the missionaries. However, the people knew nothing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ until the CMS Missionaries and Guy Playfair and other SIM missionaries came to settle in the land. These missionaries left their countries to dwell among the people of different cultures, languages and customs. Although, they encountered many challenges, today ECWA as a denomination has come to stay in Ìgbómìnà land. The benefits of this Mission to Ìgbómìnà land and even to Nigeria at large are enormous,¹⁴ as will be explained in Chapter Four of this work.

However, the documentation of the growth and the impacts of SIM/ECWA on Ìgbómìnà land is very scanty; hence, the dearth of literature in the area. It is, therefore, the attempt of this research to close the gap by assessing the growth and the impacts of this mission under study on Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State, Nigeria over the period of one hundred years (1912-2012).

Thus, the aim of this work is to examine and document the historical foundation, the growth and the impacts of Sudan Interior Mission/Evangelical Church Winning All (SIM/ECWA) in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State, Nigeria from 1912 to 2012. The importance of 1912 in the history of this Mission in Ìgbómìnà land Kwara State, Nigeria has explanations in the fact that the year (1912) marked the beginning of the successful erection of the first SIM/ECWA station in Ìgbómìnà land, while 2012 marked the centenary anniversary of the establishment of the mission in Ìgbómìnà land.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The Sudan Interior Mission which was later renamed Evangelical Church Winning All is one of the early Christian missions in Ìgbómìnà land. The questions that should be asked are these: How did SIM/ECWA come in to Ìgbómìnà land? What is the level of development of the mission in the land in the past one hundred years of her existence (1912-2012)? Has the Mission made any significant impact on the existing religions (African Traditional Religion and Islam) in the land? What are the notable impacts of the mission on Ìgbómìnà land? What contribution have Ìgbómìnà converts made to the expansion of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land? Has ECWA been able to sustain the legacy passed to her by SIM since 1956? Is SIM/ECWA an agent of socio-economic transformation in the land? These are the research questions for this research work. However, just as the earliest history of Ìgbómìnà is very obscure for dearth of literature when compared with materials about other Yòrùbá people,¹⁵ so also is the history of SIM/ECWA Mission in Ìgbómìnà land. It becomes pertinent that the past is known to avoid any future error. Thus, this research work bridged the noted gap.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore the growth and the impacts of SIM/ECWA on Ìgbómìnà land over the period of one hundred years of her existence, 1912-2012. The objectives of this study were to:

- (i) appraise how SIM/ECWA came into Ìgbómìnà land;
- (ii) investigate the level of development of the Mission in Ìgbómìnà land over the period of one hundred years (1912-2012);
- (iii) evaluate the impacts of the Mission on the existing religions (ATR and Islam) in the land;
- (iv) document the various impacts of the Mission on Ìgbómìnà land;
- (v) examine the contributions of Nigerian converts to the spread of Christianity (SIM/ECWA) in Ìgbómìnà land;
- (vi) find out if ECWA is able to sustain the legacy passed to her by SIM; and
- (vii) assess the contributions of SIM/ECWA to the socio-economic transformation of Ìgbómìnà land.

1.4 Scope of the Study

It is clear that two missionary agencies: the CMS and SIM were independently responsible for the early introduction of Christianity in Ìgbómìnà land. However, the scope of this study covers only the advent of Christianity in Ìgbómìnà land Kwara State as facilitated by SIM/ECWA, between 1912-2012. This work is therefore, limited to the investigation of the growth and the impacts of SIM/ECWA mission on Ìgbómìnà land Kwara State. The work does not cover the whole of Ìgbómìnà land. It covers only the Ìgbómìnà land in Kwara State with the exclusion of its areas in Òsun State. This work does not cover all other lands where SIM opened her Mission Stations in Nigeria but only the stations in Ìgbómìnà land. Also, this work is only limited to SIM activities in Ìgbómìnà land and not those of other missionary agencies in the land. And it covers only the first one hundred years of the existence of the Mission in the land, i.e 1912 to 2012.

1.5 Research Methodology

One of the research methodologies used in this research work was historical method. Historical method was used so as to have objective enquiry of the past. This method enabled the researcher to have a systematic and objective enquiry into the past events under study. This in turn helped in generating better understanding of the present through the evaluation of the past events. The other methodology used was descriptive method. This methodology is relevant to this work because it enable the researcher to have better description of all his findings in this research work and also gave room for participant observation as a tool for data collection.

The research tools utilized in this work were primary and the secondary sources. The primary sources involved Oral interviews in order to collect first hand data from the field while the secondary sources involved eliciting information from relevant books, journals, biographies, archives, and other reference works found at the reference sections of the libraries of University of Ilorin, Ilorin; ECWA Theological Seminary, Ìgbàjà; UMCA Theological College, Ilorin; the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho; ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos; ECWA Theological College, Oyi-River Kogi State; Bingham University, Karu near Abuja; the Internet sources, etc. Bible commentaries, Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias were not left out as well.

1.6 Justification of the Study

SIM/ECWA was one of the first Christian missions in Ìgbómìnà land, and in Nigeria as a whole. Although, this Mission has grown rapidly during the years (1912-2012), not much has been written on her history and her activities in Ìgbómìnà land. In the light of this observation, the attempt of this research work is clearly justified since the work stands to expand the frontiers of knowledge of ECWA Church in Ìgbómìnà land. Some of the few works on the activities of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria include two of Turaki's: *An Introduction to the History of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria 1893-1993* and *Theory and Practice of Christian Mission in Africa, a Centenary of SIM/ECWA History and Legacy in Nigeria 1893-1993*. These two books do not

have in-depth discussion on the activities of the mission in each of the 117 SIM/ECWA mission stations in Nigeria, this include that of Igbomina land as well. This research work is therefore, justified in that it concentrated only on the growth and impacts of the mission on Igbomina land, an aspect not covered in Turaki's books.

Another work is that of Afolabi: *Igbomina land in the Context of Yòrùbá History*. This book has only half a page discussion on the activities of SIM/ECW in Igbomina land. No doubt, a detailed discussion is needed in this regard. This work, therefore, filled the gap. Other works include those written by different localities on the history of SIM/ECWA in their communities in Igbomina land. They include *The Ancient Paths, Christianity in Òrò-Àgó and Environs (1912-2012)*, *Itan Bi Ijo Olorun SIM/ECWA ti se Bere ni Òkè-Ode (1923-1999)*, *The Chronicles, History of ECWA Ganmu-Alheri*, etc. These historical records do not cover the whole Igbomina land as each one covers its own locality. Some are even written in Yòrùbá language. Our work is therefore, justified in that it covers the five SIM/ECWA mission stations in Igbomina land and document the mission's growth and impacts in English Language.

Furthermore, knowledge of the past often helps in understanding the present and prepares one for the future. When the efforts made here is seen in this light, the history of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State stands to help the continual growth of the Church today and enables her to adjust to the changing social trends. It is not only attractive to academia, but also the Church itself, for this would help to acknowledge past failures and successes.

More so, this study offers the reader an opportunity to know the history of the existence of SIM/ECWA mission in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State and the development of its own existence and the society at large. Thus, engaging in this form of study surely offers the academic world two major advantages; firstly, it helps to visualize ECWA in its totality in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State during the years under study, and secondly, the public stands to

know the historical source of the present successes of ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State and the impacts it has made in the area.

1.7 Literature Review

Many works have been written extensively by eminent scholars on Jesus' Great Commission, Yòrùbá land, SIM/ECWA and the contributions of Christian missions to the development of Nigeria. Some of these works are published while others are not. Reviewing some of them would go a long way in enriching the quality of this research work.

One of these works is that of Kane *Christian Mission in Biblical Perspectives*. He quoted Matthew 28:18-20 known as the Great Commission and indicated that it is the longest best known and the most quoted form of Jesus' assignment to all his apostles. This Commission begins with a declaration and continues with a commission. It concludes with a promise.¹⁶ Thus, it becomes very clear that the Christian mission is firmly rooted in the Holy Scriptures (II Tim 3:15). Therefore, the necessity of mission work, its message and activities are found in the Scriptures and for all people in all generations. This implies that the mission work is not reserved for the immediate recipients alone but to all nations and tribes living in the world. This includes Ìgbómìnà people of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Kane noted that Christians are Jesus' ambassadors (II Cor. 5:20). He has given them power (Acts 3: 12-16) and authorized them to act in His name (Acts 3:6, 4:10). Two words in the Great Commission need to be examined. These include to baptize them and to teach them. Which one should come first in the propagation of the gospel of Christ? Is it baptism as indicated in the commission or teaching? Those who practice infant or household baptism dwell much on the fact that baptism precedes teaching in the Great Commission.¹⁷ However; in our observation, we submit that teachings have to come first before baptism in Evangelism. It is the teaching or preaching that prepares the way for baptism. Many passages in the New

Testament support our claim. They include Acts 2:38 and Acts 8: 26-38. The SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land indeed taught the people through Bible studies classes and rich educational system before baptizing those that accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

In the Great Commission, Jesus calls every Christian to step out in faith and spread the Good News. Fleck in his book: *Bringing Christianity to Nigeria, the Origin and Work of Protestant Mission* regards this call as faith in action where people who obey this command change their spiritual lives forever.¹⁸ It could be spreading the Good News to a neighbour or moving to another country to reach out to the people who are yet to hear about the gospel of Christ. Indeed, the SIM Missionaries moved out of their apparently more comfortable territories to reach out to the people who were yet to hear the gospel. Thus, they stepped out from America and Europe to spread the good news of Christ in Africa.

In stressing the importance of this Great Commission, Chambers in his book: *So Send I You, A Series of Missionary Studies* added that the reason for the gospel is not the elevation of the people and their education or even their salvation but the command of Jesus Christ to spread the good news.¹⁹ Chambers may be right to note that the great reason for missionary enterprise is not first the elevation of the people, nor their education. But to say that the salvation of those who are yet to accept Christ is not the first reason for missionary enterprise would not be correct. What Chambers considered as the first and the most important reason for embarking on the spreading of the gospel was the directive to make disciples. We see no distinction between this and the salvation of the people, since it is the salvation of the “lost ones” that propelled Jesus to give such commission to his disciples. Thus, the vision that gave birth to SIM/ECWA was born out of the burden for those that needed salvation in the Sudan. Mrs. Margaret Gowans, a Scottish Canadian woman had great burden for the Sudan when she learnt that millions of the people lived therein without the knowledge of Christ with no evangelist in the interior.²⁰ Mrs. Gowans expression when Bingham returned to Canada on a

condolence visit after the death of her son Walter Gowans was that Mr. Bingham should not worry about him, that she would rather want Walter to go out to the Sudan and die there all alone than to have him at home with her disobeying God. She therefore, prayed that God will rise up a Christian missionary in Girku, where her son laid down his life for the good news of Christ.²¹

This expression shows that this woman's burden for the Sudan was without measure, a burden to save the 'dying souls' in the Sudan. Losing her beloved son was nothing to her as far as those without Christ in the Sudan hear the Gospel of Christ. Thus, Ìgbómìnà land constitutes an essential part of the Sudan where the other SIM missionaries, referred to in Mrs. Margaret Gowans' prayer, later came to work. God, indeed raised evangelists among Nigerian converts in this part of the land, who were instrumental to the proclamation of the gospel. Thus, the major work of the SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land was the spread of the Gospel of Christ which brought about the salvation of many Ìgbómìnà people.

However, Chambers' submission as quoted earlier helps us to understand that a missionary is the one sent by Jesus Christ, as he (Jesus) was sent by the Father. If it was not for the strong conviction in their hearts, many men and women who left loved ones at home, knowing that in all possibility, they may never see them again in this life, would not have been able to go forward to the Sudan, a land with the reputation of being 'the white man's graveyard.' It is on record that many SIM missionaries died in Ìgbómìnà land and were buried. Mrs. Miller was one of them, who died of snake bite in 1930 at Òrò-Àgò. Others died of malaria and tuberculosis in the land. Miss L. Moulding was one of such.

In the time past, some people were of the opinion that if God wanted to convert the non-Christians into the faith, He needed neither consultation nor involvement of any one. God could do it all alone as He met with Paul of Tarsus before he got to Damascus in Acts 9: 1-31. J.C. Ryland was one of those with this belief. He interrupted William Carey, a Baptist Pastor in

Nottingham district as he was mobilizing a congregation to go out to India to spread the gospel.²² It is true that God is Omnipotent and could bring anyone into the faith without the assistance of any evangelist, yet He is the one who gave the Great Commission. If He does not need man's involvement in evangelism, He would not give the Great Commission. Besides that, an opposite question is, apart from Paul of Tarsus, how many other persons did God convert directly without using a human medium? We, therefore, submit that evangelism is a must for the spread of the gospel. Hence, the reason for the coming of SIM into Ìgbómìnà land.

However, according to Omotoye in an article titled: *A Critical Examination of the Activities of Pentecostal Churches in National Development in Nigeria*, the first attempt to introduce Christianity to Nigeria was at the end of the fifteen century by the Portuguese traders and the Portuguese Catholic missionary enterprise in the geographical area of Benin and Warri in the present Edo and Delta States.²³ The effort has been described as a total failure because it did not bring lasting result. Baba among many other scholars has identified some of these reasons which included: slave trade, inter tribal wars, diseases especially malaria, language problem, insufficient personnel, financial problem, and the Traditional Religion.²⁴ Ryder in a related article added that the inability of the missionaries to train indigenous catechists to continue with the work after their departure was a major factor that contributed to the failure of the enterprise.²⁵ We observed that some of these factors highlighted here were some of the factors that brought about the 'failure' of the first and the second enterprise of SIM in Nigeria between 1893 and 1901. Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent died of malaria and dysentery in the first attempt to evangelize the Sudan. Bingham, the only survival of the enterprise, returned home without anything to show except the graves of his two beloved friends. Worse still, sickness brought abrupt end to the second attempt, as Bingham was struck with malaria in Lagos and was rushed back home. His companions followed him, thus, bringing an end to the second attempt as well.

Nonetheless, Omotoye in his Inaugural Lecture titled: *Christianity as a Catalyst for Socio-Economic and Political Change in Yòrùbá land, Nigeria* has argued consistently that the 15th century attempt to introduce Christianity into Nigeria must not be seen as a total failure. The reason he gave was that the missionaries that succeeded in the nineteenth century must have learnt some lessons from the pitfalls, challenges and mistakes of their predecessors. He quoted a popular Yòrùbá saying to support his claim: *Ẹni tí ó jìn sí kòtò k ó ará ìyókù lógbón*. The meaning of this is: He, who falls in to a ditch, would serve as a lesson to others.²⁶ The researcher agrees with Omotoye, especially if the 19th century missionaries that succeeded had any form of contacts whatsoever with those that failed in the fifteenth century. But if not, this claim may not be correct. In the same vain, we submit that the SIM first and second attempts to introduce the gospel of Christ into Nigeria must not be regarded as failure, because Bingham, indeed learnt from the pitfalls, challenges, and mistakes of the first two attempts. It was this that made him (Bingham) to set up a mission body Overseas that was responsible for recruiting missionaries who were sent to the Sudan, while he (Bingham) stayed back at home as the leader of the team to oversee the mission. This was what made the third attempt to succeed in 1902 as the new mission was opened in Patigi.

However, the activities of Nigerian converts in the spread of Christianity in Nigeria in the 19th century were remarkable. Among them were ex-slaves. Omotoye noted that some of these ex-slaves did not have European experience because their ships were intercepted on the highways and diverted to Sierra-Leone by British anti-slavery squad.²⁷ They, however, became Christians and got Western education in Sierra-Leone. Some of the ex-slaves could not trace their way back to their home countries, while some were able. Some returned to Lagos, Badagry and Abeokuta areas in Nigeria.

In the same vein, the history of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria cannot be complete without pointing out the activities of some Nigerian converts. In fact, Christianity had begun in some

towns and villages ever before the arrival of SIM missionaries in the localities. The introduction of Christianity into Yagba land in the present Kogi State, was a typical example. According to Sophie de la Haye, an ex-slave was the first to evangelize Yagba land. His name was Daniel Osanaiye. He was caught as a slave from his village, Ogga, 300 miles North of Lagos and sold off at the slave market in Abeokuta. He grew to manhood as a slave at Abeokuta and was able to redeem himself from slavery. Thereafter, he went to Lagos where he learnt painting as a profession. He equally gave his life to Christ at Lagos and bought a copy of Yòrùbá Bible after he became literate. In 1904, Daniel went back to Ogga against the wish of his wife and children, to evangelize his home village. As recorded by Sophie de la Haye:

In June 1905, Mr. E. P. Lang (SIM Missionary from Patigi) made a long trek into Yagba land. By using a Yorùbá-speaking Nupe carrier as interpreter, Mr. Lang shared the gospel from village to village. He was well received everywhere. One day, he entered Ogga to find the old man (Daniel Osanaiye) reading aloud to a group of young men from a Yòrùbá Bible. He could hardly believe his eyes.²⁸

Thus, a Nigeria convert was instrumental to the spread of the gospel of Christ in Yagba land even before SIM missionaries arrived in the land. The missionaries only built on the foundation that was already laid by Osanaiye. Not only that, it is observed that a Nigerian (Yorùbá-speaking Nupe carrier) was the missionary's carrier and interpreter. This affirms the claim that the activities of Nigerian converts were very important in the spread of the gospel by SIM/ECWA in Nigeria. This is true of Ìgbómìnà land as well. Some Ìgbómìnà converts became tools through which the Christian gospel spread in Ìgbómìnà land. The activities of some Ìjèshà cloth traders popularly known as *Òsómàáló* and some SIM converts in the spread of the gospel of Christ in Ìgbómìnà land can never be overemphasized. As it was with Ogga, so also was Ìgbàjà, Odó-Eku, Òkè-Ode, Okeya-po, Ganmu-Aliheri, Babańlá, etc in Ìgbómìnà land. Chapter three of this work contains the detail of this discussion.

Another important book to this research work that was reviewed was that of Johnson who wrote extensively on the Yòrùbá people. Reviewing this book is necessary because

Ìgbómìnà is a sub-ethnic group in Yòrùbá land. In his book titled: *The History of the Yorùbás*, Johnson stated that:

The Yòrùbá country lies to the immediate West of the River Niger (between the confluence) and south of the Quorra (i.e the Western branch of the same River above the confluence), having Dahomey on the West, and the Bight of Benin to the South. It is roughly speaking between latitude 6⁰ North, and longitude 2⁰, 3⁰ and 6⁰ East,²⁹

Johnson's description here, reveals the geographical location of Yòrùbá land and also its neighbouring countries. Johnson equally gave the ethnology of the Yòrùbá race. According to him, Yòrùbá country was probably first known to Europe from the North, through the explorers of Northern and Central Africa. He pointed out that:

In old records of Hausa and Fulani, names are used for the country and its capital, thus, we see in Websters' gazetteer 'Yarriba', West Africa, East of Dahomey, area 70,000 square miles, population two millions, capital Katunga. These are the Hausa terms for Yòrùbá and for Oyo.³⁰

Two things are revealed in Johnson's analysis here: The first is that the Europeans got into Yòrùbá land via the Northern part of Nigeria through the explorers of Northern and Central Africa and secondly, that Hausa and Fulani terminologies are used for the country (Yorùbá) and its capital (Oyo). In our reaction to this, Johnson's submission here could be taken seriously if he was very sure of his facts before presenting it.

Another area of Johnson's work which is relevant to this research work is in his discussion on the Religion of the Yòrùbá people. According to him, the Yoruba people believed in the Almighty God before the coming of the missionaries in to their land.³¹ Islam and Christianity are foreign religions. So, a popular song in Ìgbómìnà land cannot be correct: "*Aye la ba'fa, aye laba'mole, osan gangan ni 'gbagbo wole de*". Meaning: "we met *Ifa* (African Traditional Religion) in the world, we met *Imole* (Islam) in the world, *Igbagbo* (Christianity) came in the afternoon." Going by the wordings of the song, one may conclude that both African Traditional Religion and Islam were the indigenous Religions of Ìgbómìnà people while only Christianity was the foreign religion. Certainly, only African Traditional

Religion was the original religion of the people; both Islam and Christianity were foreign religions.

The coming of Christianity into Nigeria, especially to Yòrùbá land has been well documented by Modupe Oduyeye in his book: *The Planting of Christianity in Yorùbáland 1842 – 1888*. The agents that were instrumental to this were highlighted in the book. The reception of this new faith especially by communities which already had their own religion was discussed. The challenges and the successes were well documented.³² Oduyeye noted that the missionary in Nigeria came after the failure of the Niger expedition in 1841. It took a lot of fervent ‘come over unto Macedonia and help us’ by the receptive converts who had returned to Nigeria from Sierra Leone to get Christianity started in earnest in Nigeria. We observe that this ‘Macedonia call’ was the type made by the young converts at Ìgbàjà in Ìgbómìnà land between 1922 and 1938. As contained in a Report from *Evangelical Christian Magazine* written by SIM in 1934, the young Christians in Ìgbàjà sent to Agunjin, the second missionary station in Ìgbómìnà land, requesting that the SIM missionaries should come down to assist them.³³ How Christianity came to Ìgbàjà, the 3rd SIM mission station in Ìgbómìnà land has been explained by Lawal in a book: *The Biography of Prince J.S. Atolagbe*. According to him, Christianity had been introduced into Ìgbàjà before 1922 by an Ìjèshà cloth trader (Òsómàáló) named Shadrach Jegede.³⁴ He was a Christian who used to gather people together to teach them how to read and write every evening. This eventually resulted in the reading and studying of the Bible. The early Christians who numbered about 150 sent to Agunjin to invite the SIM missionaries (who had settled there) to help them. This, indeed was a ‘Macedonia call.’

Another important book reviewed was that of Turaki, titled: *An Introduction to the History of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria 1893–1993*. Many historical facts about SIM/ECWA are revealed in this book: They include: What the Mission was before it came to Nigeria, the Mission’s philosophy, the Mission stations and their various contributions to the development

of Nigeria, etc. Thus, we notice that one cannot do any meaningful research work on SIM/ECWA without reference to Turaki's work. This work was the first comprehensive and systematic documentation of the History of the SIM and ECWA in Nigeria.³⁵ This submission gained the support of the then ECWA President, Panyan Baba who wrote the foreword to this book in 1993.³⁶ However, we observed that in an attempt to cover all the activities of the Mission in Nigeria, Turaki was unable to offer detailed discussions on all the schools, medical services and the 117 mission stations of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria. The researcher noticed this, and resolved to concentrate only on the activities of SIM in Ìgbómìnà land. Thus, attention is given to the five SIM mission stations in Ìgbómìnà land in this work.

Turaki in another book: *Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa: A Century of SIM/ECWA History and Legacy in Nigeria 1893 – 1993*, gives us a clear definition of the word 'Sudan' as used in the name of Sudan Interior Mission.³⁷ The definition that he gave was in agreement with our definition in the introduction of this research work where we mentioned that Sudan in this context does not refer to the country, Sudan in East Africa, but the land of the blacks that was yet to receive the gospel of Christ in Northern Nigeria. However, Turaki's work uncovers another detail about the area known as Sudan. According to him:

The central portion of this vast territory is called the Central Sudan, usually referred to as Hausa land or Northern Nigeria. Politically, the Central Sudan was called the protectōrate of Northern Nigeria during British occupation in 1900... The Central Sudan covered parts of Niger Republic, Benin Republic, Chad and Cameroons.³⁸

Thus, Turaki's work made us to understand that the area referred to as Sudan covers beyond Northern Nigeria. He also pointed out that the said Northern Nigeria was divided into two broad regions consisting of two broad ethnic groups: the Northern part and the Southern part. The former was known as Hausa land and Bornu which was predominantly comprised of Muslims, while the later (Southern part) was known as the Middle Belt which was predominantly traditional (non-Muslim groups). Ìgbómìnà land is found in that latter part

(Southern part). Turaki's work established the fact that Ìgbómìnà land was really part of the Sudan.

The strength of Turaki's work lies in its massive archival research and its references to relevant primary sources, both at the Mission homes and the Mission fields. It focuses primarily on the mission itself and the activities of the white missionaries. However, the impact of the early African converts in the spread of the gospel is not given deserved attention in Turaki's work. This current study was therefore motivated by the need to fill it, particularly with reference to those in Ìgbómìnà Land. Chapter three of this work discusses this further.

Daniel Mary Taiye in her Ph.D. Thesis titled "A Study of Sin, Salvation and the Doctrine of Eternal Security in Evangelical Church Winning All," noted that 'the history of SIM and ECWA represents continuum but the history of ECWA cannot be discussed in isolation.' So, it becomes clear that SIM is the mother-body of ECWA.³⁹ This affirms the fact that one cannot discuss ECWA without due reference to SIM.

Among many other discussions in Daniel's work on SIM/ECWA was the issue of the mission stations in the selected areas. Among these areas was Jos city. From her discussion, it becomes clear why Jos was selected as ECWA Headquarters, although it was not the first SIM/ECWA station in Nigeria. Patigi, in Nupe land was the first station, but it was resistant to the Gospel of Christ being a predominantly Muslim area. Jos station was opened by Rev. & Mrs. Henshaw in 1921. This station eventually became SIM/ECWA Headquarters because of its favourable weather and climate for the white missionaries. The cool weather was favourable for these White men/women as against the harsh weather in the low lands.⁴⁰ It is understood from Daniel's work why none of the SIM stations in Ìgbómìnà land was chosen as SIM/ECWA Headquarters. Jos weather and climate were more conducive for the SIM missionaries than those of Ìgbómìnà land.

However, another important factor for making Jos the Headquarter of SIM/ECWA which Daniel did not mention in her work is the fact that the District Church Councils of ECWA in the Northern part of Nigeria greatly outnumbered those in the southern part. At a time, ECWA had only seventeen (17) DCCs in the latter, while in the former, it had eighty-three (83) DCCs. So, citing ECWA Headquarters in the Northern part of Nigeria is justified.

Furthermore, Daniel's work specified seven evangelistic methods of SIM in spreading the gospel in the Sudan. These methods include prayer evangelism, translation and literacy evangelism, person to person evangelism, mass crusade evangelism, medical evangelism, house to house evangelism and lastly business and administration evangelism.⁴¹ The researcher agrees with Daniel because these seven methods were also instrumental to the spread of the Gospel in Ìgbómìnà land. These are discussed in chapter three of this research work.

Another relevant book reviewed is a book titled: *The Ancient Paths: Christianity in Òrò-Àgò and Environs, 1912 -2012* which was written by the Centenary Committee to commemorate the one hundred years of the existence of SIM/ECWA in Òrò-Àgò and its environs. The book portrayed Rev. Guy William Playfair, as the man who came to liberate the people in 1912. It is observed that the word 'liberate' used here would not necessarily mean liberation from slavery but exposure to Western education and civilization. The book described Playfair's missionary activities in Òrò-Àgò and some other villages in Oro-land. The book described Playfair as an eloquent man who could speak Yòrùbá language (Oro dialect) very well.⁴² Playfair's ability to speak Ìgbómìnà dialect was a major factor that made him to succeed tremendously in his missionary activities in Ìgbómìnà land.

Furthermore, Afolabi in his book: *Ìgbómìnà Land in the Context of Yòrùbá History* has remarked that:

Few names of Ìgbómìnàs associated with the early evangelization efforts were Samuel Laseinde, a liberated slave who brought Christianity to Òrò Ìgbómìnà in 1894, Joshua Oyewole of Ejen's compound, Ìlá-Òràngún who had been exposed apprentice sawyer at Kudeti, Ibadan. He brought evangelism to Ìlá in 1904. Also Jonathan Opadina (Later

Rev. Canon) an Ìlá indigene who was posted to Ìlá as a catechist on the 18th of August 1911. He had earlier been the catechist of CMS Church, Omofe, Ilesa for nine years. Also, Bamigboye, a liberated slave, who hailed from Ipetu Ìgbómìnà, he initially settled at Ipetu before he moved to Òmù-Àrán around 1897.⁴³

These ‘great evangelists’ worked relentlessly as CMS evangelists in the course of spreading the gospel of Christ in their father land. Thus, as it was with the CMS, so also was with the SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land, but Afolabi gave no attention to this. All he had to say about the introduction of SIM/ECWA into Ìgbómìnà land was:

Furthermore, Christianity was introduced to Òrò-Àgó through the Sudan Interior Mission in June 1911. When Rev. Guy Playfair first visited there and returned to settle there in January, 1912 and began to preach in the surrounding towns and villages till he reached Agunjin when they established a Bible Training Institute.⁴⁴

No mention was made of any of the early converts who were the evangelists that were responsible for the spread of Christianity (SIM/ECWA) in towns and villages in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State. Thus, this research work attempts to fill this gap. Some of these converts were: Rev. Jamu Clyde Adeniyi from Òrò-Àgó,⁴⁵ Pastor Abraham Buremoh from Oke-Oyan,⁴⁶ Mr. Ajiteru in Iji-Ìsin,⁴⁷ Joseph Omomeji Awonibaba in Odo-Eku,⁴⁸ Simeon Komolafe in Òkè-Ode,⁴⁹ Jonathan Mamma Jiya in Ganmu-Aliheri,⁵⁰ and Olokoba bricklayer in Babańlá,⁵¹ etc. A fact that cannot be disputed is that the contributions of these converts to the establishment of Christianity (SIM/ECWA) in Ìgbómìnà land were significant. Thus, Omotoye, in his inaugural lecture titled: *Christianity as a Catalyst for Socio-Economic and Political Change in Yorùbáland, Nigeria*, among many Church historians, can be said to be correct by asserting that Nigerian converts contributed more to the spread of Christianity in Nigeria than the White missionaries.⁵²

Also, Afolabi in the earlier quotation stated that Playfair settled in Agunjin and was responsible for the establishment of the School of Prophets that he (Afolabi) referred to as Bible Training Institute. This cannot be correct. Playfair never settled in Agunjin but Òrò-Àgó. Rev. Norman Davis and Rev. Lloyed Donaldson were the first SIM missionaries to settle in

Agunjin in 1916 and established the School of Prophets. This School was brought from Egbe to Agunjin and was later transferred to Ìgbàjà in 1941. This is one of the values of this research work.

Another relevant work to our research is the one written by Ayandele, titled: *The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria 1842 – 1892*. In this work, Ayandele observed that Christian missionary activity in the Northern Nigeria was very feeble and could not match that of Southern Nigeria. The reason for this was what he (Ayandele) calls the absence of missionary factors.⁵³ According to him, many factors that facilitated the mass movement of the people of the South to Christianity were lacking in the North. He gave the example of what was in operation in Yòrùbá land and Ibo land. He noted that:

In Ijebu land and Ibo land, for instance, Christianity was understood by the people as a handmaid of the social and economic changes brought into being by British rule. Desire for a new form of wealth and status, stimulated by the demands of government and business houses for clerks, made the Ijebu and Ibo patronize mission schools with extraordinary zest. So great was the demand for schools that the initiative for their establishment slipped from the hands of the missionary societies.⁵⁴

Ayandele's submission here emphasizes the fact that education was a major instrument or strategy that the European missionaries used in evangelism in Nigeria. This was also a major strategy used by the SIM missionaries in evangelizing Ìgbómìnà land. Turaki in his book, *An Introduction to the History of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria 1893 – 1993* attests to this. According to him, education was the most powerful tool and means of evangelism and Church planting in all SIM mission fields. This is because Christianity is seen as a "literate" religion.⁵⁵ Many indeed got converted in the process of acquiring Western education in Ìgbómìnà land. One could now understand why Ayandele referred to Christianity as a handmaid of social and economic change. The impacts of missionary enterprise on Ìgbómìnà land and Nigerian society at large are enormous. The fact remains that the positive results of missionary enterprise in any given

society outweighs the negative results. This explains why SIM/ECWA established schools at all levels: adult literacy, primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions in Ìgbómìnà land.

Another book reviewed was also written by Ayandele with the title: *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842 – 1914*. Ayandele wrote extensively on the positive impacts of Christianity on Nigeria as against the negative impacts that may be noticed. According to him:

The greatest weakness of the cultural nationalists was that they emphasized only the negative results of missionary enterprise on Nigeria society. But the Christian missions were more than destroyers; they were builders as well and, to some extent, preservers. Upon the Christian missions dissolved the tasks of preserving the vernacular against the wishes of their converts and the indifference of the administrators who preferred the English language. By their efforts the main language of Nigeria have been preserved as a lasting legacy to the Ibo, Yorùbá, Efik, Nupe and Hausa. For the reduction of these languages into writing has resulted in a linguistic homogeneity that never existed in these tribes.⁵⁶

Ayandele's expression here reveals that besides teaching the converts how to read and write, the missionaries helped to develop and to preserve some African heritages. These include the languages of the people. This in turn resulted in what Ayandele refers to as 'linguistic homogeneity that never existed among the different tribes and dialects.' In Ìgbómìnà land, Jamu Adeniyi the first SIM convert in the land, in his book: *The Beginning of Christianity in Òrò-Àgó (annotated by Ayanda)* recounted that his father was a traditional herbalist who knew much about herbs that cure many diseases. Playfair encouraged Jamu (who could then read and write) to document some of these traditional medicines. Jamu did this and it became very useful as many were cured of deadly diseases like epilepsy and snake bite.⁵⁷ However, one would expect that some examples of those healed via these local medicine be mentioned in the book but none was mentioned. The researcher equally observed that ECWA Òrò-Àgó cannot claim to be in possession of this document today. That must be as a result of the poor preservation of culture of the people. Also, the book supports the assertion that health care delivery was cardinal in the programmes of the SIM mission in Ìgbómìnà land.

Ayandele explained in detail the contributions of Christian missions to the development of Nigeria. He discussed their efforts in the elevation of the moral and intellectual conditions of Nigerian people. He appreciated this greatly and pointed out that they preached morality in the churches and their schools. This in turn has helped greatly in the socio-economic development of Nigeria.⁵⁸ In Ìgbómìnà land which is also part of Nigeria, SIM/ECWA has been an agent of great change in the land. This is evident in the introduction of Western education, medical services, economic and social changes, etc. Chapter four of this research work contains the discussion on these impacts.

From the foregoing, it is evident that SIM/ECWA has played indelible roles in the development of modern Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State. Although, the missionaries could be criticized for their imperialism which Ayandele referred to as the ‘denationalizing result of missionary propaganda in this part of the continent,’⁵⁹ yet, the contributions of the missionary activities to the development of Ìgbómìnà land are apparent and overwhelming. Therefore, indeed Christianity (SIM/ECWA) is an agent of socio-economic and cultural transformation not only in Ìgbómìnà land, but also any where the religion is practiced.

To sum up, the literature review done in this research work enriched the quality of this work and revealed the gaps that were needed to be filled. One of such gaps was refuting the submission that the first and the second attempt of introducing SIM/ECWA in to Nigeria were failures. We argued that since Bingham, the only survival of the three pioneers, indeed learnt from the pitfalls, challenges and mistakes of the first two attempts, these attempts should no longer be referred to as failures but as part of the success story of the mission. Also, the few documents that contained the SIM/ECWA missionary activities in Igbomina land did not stress the roles played by Igbomina converts in the expansion of the mission in the land. We noticed this gap and filled it in this research work. It is equally noted that no one can carry out a meaningful research work on the activities of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria without making reference

to Turaki's work on the history of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria. However, in an attempt to cover the mission's activities in all mission stations, Turaki was unable to carry out in-depth study on each mission station. We noticed this gap and concentrated only on the mission's activities in Igbomina land which is just one out of the over eighty mission stations in Nigeria.

1.8 Full meaning of Abbreviations

CMS – Church Missionary Society (Anglican Church)

DCC – District Church Council

ECWA – Evangelical Church Winning All, formerly known as Evangelical Church of West Africa.

ELWA – Eternal Love Winning Africa (ECWA Radio Station)

GCC – General Church Council

LCC – Local Church Council

LCB – Local Church Board (Church)

SIM – Sudan Interior Mission, later known as Serving in Missions, Society of International Missions.

Notes and References

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CHAPTER TWO

ÌGBÓMÌNÀ LAND IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Ìgbómìnà land in Kwara State is the land area populated by a heterogonous sub-group of the Yòrùbá race that migrated to the present settlement from various locations and at different times between the 14th and the 17th centuries.¹ Ìgbómìnà land area is found in the South East of Kwara State Nigeria, within longitude 4⁰ and 6⁰ West.² The Yagba people of Kogi State are found in the North-East of Ìgbómìnà land, while the South-Eastern part is occupied by the Ekiti people of Kwara State. Her Northern boundary is shared with the Nupe of Patigi Local Government Area of Kwara State, while the southern part is shared with the Yòrùbá of Òsun State.³

Ìgbómìnà land in Kwara State, which is currently made up of Ìrèpòdún, Ìfélódún and Ìsin Local Government Areas, is situated in the Savannah belt, having, as it were, a hilly topography characterized by tall grasses and scattered trees. It is located in a strategic and favourable geographical zone, which is good for agricultural production and trading network with her neighbours. The area has an average rainfall of about 150m – 152cm annually, and the yearly average temperature between 21.1 and 23.9 degree centigrade .⁴

2.1 The History of Ìgbómìnà People

Ìgbómìnà people are Yòrùbá.⁵ The origin of the Ìgbómìnà people is still a subject of historical conjecture. However, some Ìgbómìnà people migrated from Ife, the cradle of human civilization according to the Yòrùbá mythology, while others are said to have migrated from other established Yòrùbá Kingdoms such as Oyo. In support of this claim, Dada in his book: *Indirect Rule and Educational Development in Ìgbómìnà land 1900-1996*, asserted that the Ìgbómìnà people migrated to the present settlement in different waves and at different periods. They include the Oyo group, Ife group, Ketu group, etc.⁶ It must be noted that authentic historical explanation for these waves of migration is not available. However, Johnson in his

book titled: *The History of Yorùbá*, holds that the prevailing chronic political upheavals and instability at a period in the old Oyo Empire were responsible for this .⁷

Migration, itself is an integral part of the history of mankind. Migration is a natural instinct rather than a skill or a knowledge, which has to be learned. In support of this claim, Ibitoye noted that all living creatures of the world especially those belonging to the animal and mammalian kingdom know how to move or migrate for the purpose of survival and reproduction.⁸ People migrate from one settlement to the other from time to time. For instance, Abraham migrated from his homeland Haran to the place God showed him in Genesis Chapter 12. He also migrated to Egypt from Canaan later in life in search of food (Gen 12: 10-20). In like manner, Jacob and his family in Genesis 46:1-27 also migrated to Egypt in search for food when Joseph became the Prime Minister of Egypt. After spending about 430 years in Egypt, Israel as a nation, migrated back to the land of Canaan (Exo 12:31-42). Nonetheless, prior to the evolution of the nation-state system, trans-continental migrations were the order of the day in all parts of the world. The Turks from Asia took the Romans by surprise in their great westward migration which saw the demise of the eastern Roman Empire in 1452 AD.⁹

Thus, several traditions of origin of most ethnic nationalities in Nigeria speak of migrations from the Middle East from where they were said to have come to settle in their present homeland. Indeed, migration has been part of Yòrùbá history. The classic version of the legends of the origin of the Yòrùbá is recorded by Johnson.¹⁰ According to him, Yòrùbá as a people is said to have sprung from Lamurudu, one of the kings of Mecca whose offspring was Oduduwa, the ancestor of the Yòrùbá race. It was as a result of migration of Oduduwa from Mecca to Ile-Ife that the seed of Yòrùbá kingdom was sown.¹¹

A very important aspect of the origin of the Ìgbómìnà people in the context of this thesis is that they generally see their history in terms of migrations. The most popular of the conflicting traditions of origin was that which trace Ìgbómìnà origin to Ìlálá-Òràngún,¹²

(conflicting in the sense that one traced Ìgbómìnà Origin to Ìlá-Òràngún and the other to separate migrations by each migrant prince or hunter from Ife, Oyo, Owu, Iwó, Ketu). The question of who first arrived remains a highly contentious historical issue among the Ìgbómìnà till date. Different towns and villages still claim seniority over others.¹³ This is one of the factors responsible for the specter of chronic disunity and political schisms such as chieftaincy tussle and dispute over lands among the Ìgbómìnà towns and villages till date.



Àdà Ogbo. The Pathfinder

Source: Picture taken by the researcher at Ìgbómìnà House, Ganmo, on 21/5/2016

However, the area now called Ìgbómìnà land was given to and founded by Òràngún of Ìlá as his own share of inheritance from his grandfather, Oduduwa, the purported progenitor of the Yòrùbá race.¹⁴ According to this tradition, Òràngún was the second son (and the fourth) of Okanbi, the only son of Oduduwa. He (Òràngún) founded Ìgbómìnà through the use of a

cutlass called *Ogbo*. It was this *Ogbo*¹⁵ that was supposed to know the way to the bank of River Niger, the ultimate destination of this itinerant way-farer. Hence, the name *Ogbomona* (i.e. *Ogbo* knows the way), literarily transformed to Ìgbómìnà with the passage of time.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Ibiloye has noted that there exists also a tradition in Òmù-Àrán which claims the possession of simìlár *Ogbo* as that in Òràngún's custody.¹⁷ It has been noted that the duplication of *Ogbo* is closely associated with leadership rivalry in Ìgbómìnà land. Since the possessor of the genuine *Ogbo* would have stronger claim to the leadership/headship of the entire Ìgbómìnà land.

Notwithstanding which *Ogbo* is genuine, the inadequacy of the whole tradition in explaining the origin of the people is glaring. It is crystal clear that not all people presently inhabiting the present day Ìgbómìnà land could lay claim to descent from Òràngún, the assumed original founder of Ìgbómìnà land, nor could Ìgbómìnà people be considered an homogenous group. Migrations of different waves from different directions and at different times and places, have given rise to the present settlements. For instance, while the Oro group claimed to have come from Ketu; Ìsánlú-Ìsin from Ìlá Òràngún, and Òmù-Àrán group claim Ife descent. Others such as Ijara, Ìgbàjà, Share, etc traced their own immigration to Oyo. Owu, the present headquarters of Ìsin Local Government, traced its own migration to Owu, in Abeokuta, while Iwó, its immediate neighbour claimed Iwó in Òsun State as its primordial home.¹⁸ Also, there are communities tracing their ancestry to Nupe descent. Of this group Roré and Opanda are typical examples.¹⁹ The patterns of migrations are wide and varied as the number of recognizable sub-groups in Ìgbómìnà.

Nevertheless, Ìgbómìnà people have a tradition that attempt to explain the origin of their common language-Yorùbá, culture and political institutions from a descent through a single ancestor, Oduduwa. These people were never united under a single political authority throughout history.²⁰ There is no evidence that any of these people or a section of them ever

evolved or formed part of, even a loosely integrated empire of any remarkable size.²¹ Instead, each of them splits into a large number of tiny political units. It is even most uncertain if the Ìgbómìnà ever regarded any ruler amongst the innumerable Oba as paramount at least prior to the imposition of the British Colonial administration. It is obvious that 'pan-Ìgbómìnà consciousness' is of 20th century origin.²²

Ìgbómìnà dialect distinguishes Ìgbómìnà people among all Yòrùbá people in Nigeria. They also share to a degree, common culture that can be classified into two distinct sub-groups based on dialectic variation.²³ This demonstrates the fact that there are no monolithic linguistic cultures in Ìgbómìnà land. The two dialectic groupings are the *Moo yee* and the *Mo san* groups. The *Mo Yee* speaking towns and villages among others include Òrò-Àgó, Babańlá, Idera, Oreke, Òra, Oko, Ola, Òkè-Ode, Agunjin, etc. The *Mo san* groups among others comprise Àjàsé-Ìpo, Ìgbàjà, Ìsin , Òmù-Àrán, Oro, Esiẹ, Òmùpo, Ìdòfiàn, Ìlá-Òràngún and mostly those areas that constitute the southern outpost of Ìgbómìnà land i.e Ìlá Òràngún and Oke Ìlá. Each group possesses a dialect slightly different from the other. Nevertheless, they are mutually intelligible.²⁴ The domination of Ìgbómìnà political life and imposition of foreign control was not homogenous but pluralistic. While the Northern section, mostly the *Moo Yee* fell under Lafiagi or Nupe control in the pre-colonial era, the southern districts, mostly the *Mo san*, except of course Ìlá-Òràngún came under Ilorin control before the dawn of colonial era.²⁵

However, Clarke, in disagreement with Johnson, did not recognize Ìgbómìnà people as Yòrùbá, although he acknowledged that they speak Yòrùbá language.²⁶ But Talbot in agreement with Johnson, sees Ìgbómìnà as true Yòrùbá under the sovereignty of the Alaafin, but under the direct leadership of the Òràngún of Ìlá.²⁷ The researcher agrees with Talbot that Ìgbómìnà people are Yòrùbá, because none of them has any other indigenous language than Yòrùbá language. Michie added that with cultural, historical, ethnic and geographical evidences, Ìgbómìnà people are Yòrùbá-speaking people.²⁸ Also, since majority of them claim

to have migrated from either Ife or Oyo, the two main nuclei of the Yorùbá, that means they are true Yòrùbá people. Also, as earlier mentioned, a prince of Oduduwa was the progenitor of the Ìgbómìnà people. He wore beaded crowns like the rest of the other children; this of course reveals that Ìgbómìnà people are truly Yorùbá.

If the dialectal difference in Ìgbómìnà land casts doubts on the genuineness of their Yòrùbá origin, they share this with other sections of the Yorùbá, like the Egba, Ijebu the Ìjèshà and the Oyo, all of whose tongues differ. All cultural qualities of the Ìgbómìnà people portray them as Yorùbá. Although under colonial circumstances they have been partitioned to the north and south, they still remained either on the Yòrùbá provinces of the south, or in the southern part of the Northern province – contiguous to the Yòrùbá province.²⁹

Today, Ìgbómìnà people in Kwara State occupy Ìrèpòdún, Ìfèlódún and Ìsin Local Government areas of the State, with headquarters at Òmù-Àrán, Share and Owu Ìsin respectively. Adeyemi has added that some Ìgbómìnà are in Jebba-south, although, like border towns, the population is now mixed. Towns like Iponrin, Lanwa, Aiyetoro-Ile and Agbeyangi that are now in Ilorin East Local Government Area are all Ìgbómìnà, although Ilorin influence has compromised their identity.³⁰

As earlier noted, the people of Ìgbómìnà claim to have migrated to their present homeland in waves. Adeyemi is of the opinion that the earliest arrivals were presumably those who came from Ife. These were said to have arrived between the 14th and the 17th centuries.³¹ This Ife group includes Òmù-Àrán and Ìsánlú. Others that later joined from Old Oyo include Ìgbàjà, Òra, Ijara and Òkè-Abá.³² By the middle of the 18th century, the Alaafin had established full control over both the Ile-Ife derived and the Oyo derived Ìgbómìnà. They all sent tributes to Oyo.

Oyo itself began to fall by the end of the 18th century and in the early part of the 19th century. It was sacked by the Fulani Jihadists. The Jihad was taken further south until Ilorin,

that was formerly part of the Oyo Empire, was conquered and brought under Fulani rule. Between 1831 and 1842, Abdulsalam, the Fulani Emir of Ilorin conquered many Ìgbómìnà towns and placed them under Ilorin rule.³³ The high-handedness of Ilorin rule made the Ìgbómìnà regard their Ilorin associated kin with disdain and Ilorin itself as anathema. The experience of the Ìgbómìnà people under Ilorin rule led to the vehement agitations for a transfer to the southern provinces. This gave rise to a popular slogan of the people at that time, i.e *A n lo west*, which translate to ‘we are going to Western Region.’ While this was not to be, the creation of Ìgbómìnà/Ekiti Division in 1968 was a big relief to the people. In fact, the people saw the event as the best thing that had ever happened to them!

In the past Àjàsẹ̀-Ìpo was taken to be the head of Ìgbómìnà. According to Adeyemi, this claim was on many occasions disputed but the position was accepted by the Ìgbómìnà people official circles for some time.³⁴ At that time Dupo (the king of Iponisi Ijesa) which is the official title of its Oba, was regarded as the head of Ìgbómìnà Oba. He was the chairman of Ìrẹ̀pòdún/Ìfẹ̀lódún traditional council of chiefs and in fact the secretariat of these chiefs was situated in Àjàsẹ̀-Ìpo. Subsequently, the old Ìrẹ̀pòdún/Ìfẹ̀lódún Traditional Council was balkanized, to the extent that today, each Local Government in Ìgbómìnà land constitutes separate Traditional Council. Hence, there are now Ìrẹ̀pòdún Traditional Council, with headquarters at Àjàsẹ̀-Ìpo; Ìfẹ̀lódún Traditional Council, with headquarters at Ìgbàjà; and Ìsin Traditional Council, with headquarters at Ìsánlú-Ìsin

2.2 Geographical Location of Ìgbómìnà Land

The Ìgbómìnà is recognized by herself and by others as a distinct dialectic sub-group of the Yòrùbá inhabiting the northern part of Yòrùbá country.³⁵ Ìgbómìnà land in Kwara State is located to the south of Ilorin, the Kwara State Capital, within longitude 4 and 6 degrees west.³⁶ In 1918, the boundary declaration between the Northern and Southern Nigeria partitioned Ìgbómìnà land into two regions with Ìlá-Òràngún and its Southern neighbours located in the

South, in the present Òsun State and the other in the North, in the present Kwara State.³⁷ It must be noted that even in the north, the Ìgbómìnà were again sub-divided between two administrative divisions of Ilorin and Patigi/Lafiagi, until May 1946 when they were all merged under Ilorin Native Authority. According to Adeyemi, the Ìgbómìnà were later granted local autonomy and the majority are now in Ìfèlódún, Ìrèpòdún and most recently, Ìsin Local Government Areas of Kwara State and Ìlálá-Òràngún Area of Òsun State.³⁸

Ìgbómìnà land in Kwara State is bordered on the West by Ilorin, on the North-East by Yagba land, on the south-East by Ekiti land and on the North by the Nupe land. On its South-West it is bounded by the Ibolos of Offa and Oyun Local Government Areas, while on the South, it is bounded by the Ìgbómìnà in Òsun State. The land is situated in the Savannah region with tall grasses and scattered trees. Ìgbómìnà land covers an area of about 1,500 square kilometres, in Kwara State and could be said to belong to the grass plain zone of southern Nigeria.³⁹ This area forms part of the southern border of what has come to be known as the Middle Belt of Nigeria.⁴⁰

It is much easier to be precise with Ìgbómìnà boundaries during the 20th century than during the 19th century. However, in the 19th century, Ìgbómìnà was equally divided into two prior to the establishment of colonial administration. Ìlálá-Òràngún was situated at the edge of the forest and the other Ìgbómìnà group occupied the Savannah, stretching below the bend of the River Niger between latitude 4 and 6 degrees East and longitude 8 and 9 degrees North.⁴¹ There were close to a dozen Ìgbómìnà sub-units (each unit having a major town and a cluster of small villages). These were the Share, Ìsin, Ìlálá, Òkè-Ode, Ile-Ire, Esisa, Irese, Ipo, Iyangba and Oro.⁴² Ìgbómìnà landscape is undulating studded with occasional inselberge and other rock out-crop but well watered by rivers which include Oro, Oyi, Oshin, Oyun, Awere, etc.⁴³ However, none of these rivers in Ìgbómìnà land is navigable being merely running deep streams in the rainy season while creating mostly dry valleys during the dry season. With

rainfall between March and November (a break in August), a large section of Ìgbómìnà land is within the Northern Guinea Zone with broad-leaved Savannah woodland where grass is dominant. The southern fringe, which is forested, belongs to the southern Guinea Zone.⁴⁴ However, Ìsánlú and Òmù-Àrán Districts to the east are more akin to the uplands of Afemai with shallow and stony soil.⁴⁵

Furthermore, in describing the geography of Ìgbómìnà land, DÒsun mu observes that:

The geographical position of Ìgbómìnà makes it a typical area of transition between the Southern forest belt and the arid Savanna in the North. The main river Akamo, Awere, Oyi etc flow seasonally. Evidence from colonial records reveals that early in the twentieth century, people were very isolated during the rainy seasons, as local streams usually cut off communication with the outside world for two to three months each year.⁴⁶

Crops like bananas and kolanuts survive in the forest of Edidi, Omu Aran Area, Àrándùn and Oko. Nonetheless, after about five decades of human pressure on the environment, these plants no longer yeald like before.

Ìgbómìnà land has a variety of weather conditions, vegetations and variety of crops. In fact, her raining season lasts longer than her dry season. There is maximum rainfall between May and September. The average annual rainfall in this region is 45 and 60cm.⁴⁷ Also, there is annual bush burning which is also part of the indigenous culture, as a means for clearing the land for agriculture and also hunting for wild life which provided important source of protein in the people's diet. Along the periphery of Southern belt of the region, the vegetation is a product of centuries of devastation caused by man's activities like bush burning and timber logging. There is thus, a continuous struggle, in fact, a necessity, to save what remains on the ground.

The environmental conditions, like most of the other middle-belt areas, precluded the cultivation of any of the tree crops that had brought wealth and progress to the forest areas further south. The same was equally true of the unsuitability of the soil for the growth of the cash crops further north. Ìgbómìnà land does not support cultivation of cash crops. For

instance, cotton refused to thrive and the only British Cotton Growing Association depot located at Agunjin was closed down in 1924 due to diminishing returns. In fact, as early as 1914, it became clear that cotton was not doing well. Farmers that attempted to grow groundnut for export also had to abandon it for the same reason.⁴⁸

Although, none of the export crops had been successfully cultivated in the land, food crops thrive. The popularity of yam, the staple food in Ìgbómìnà diet, has been supplanted by cassava, which until the 1930s had a derogatory epithet, just because it was initially planted purposely to feed pigs. However, there were enough resources to sustain the population of Ìgbómìnà. Kwara State has the highest population of Ìgbómìnà people. As reported by Ibiloye, by 1924, Oro, Ajase and Ìgbàjà District as well as Offa were the densest in Ilorin province with a population density of over 100 persons per square mile while many adjacent districts especially to the east, north and north-east have been put at between 50 and 100 persons per square mile.⁴⁹

There are many long-range hills especially in Ìsin and Ile-Ire Districts. Ìgbómìnà land is generally very fertile and suitable for the growth of many types of cereals and tuberous plants. Some cash crops like shear butter trees, cashew tree, palm trees and even cocoa are grown in some parts of the land. Up till now, farming remains the main occupation in Ìgbómìnà land. However, a good percentage of Ìgbómìnà farmers who travelled to Ondo State and some parts of Òsun State engage in cocoa plantation.⁵⁰

The hilly topography which dominates the physical feature of some parts of Ìgbómìnà land was not as pronounced as to serve any defensive purpose in the years of Nupe, Fulani and Ibadan invasions in the 18th and the 19th centuries. The hills are not high enough to constitute natural barriers against the intruders. It is therefore, no great surprise that, like most other inhabitants of middle belt region, these various adventurers pillaged Ìgbómìnà land in the 18th and 19th centuries searching for slaves and booty. The insecurity to lives and property that this

constituted could only create demographic dislocation, which was probably responsible for the early intra-Ìgbómìnà migrations. It is on record that most of the present settlements in Ìgbómìnà land were not the original initial places of settlements in the 18th and 19th centuries during periods of what could be categorized as primitive migration.⁵¹

In describing the environment and the settlement pattern of Ìgbómìnà land, Afolabi has noted that the archeologists and environmentalists are of the opinion that the environment of a people accounts for changes in the historical development of such groups.⁵² Thus, the physical environment of Ìgbómìnà area accounted for the isolation of the people in the past. Inter-tribal wars and slave raids made some parts of Ìgbómìnà people to live on hill tops, mountains and caves for defense, sustenance, and shelter. These factors hindered the speedy development of the area. The people were scattered all over the region. For instance, the Òrò-Àgó people had to be resettled on the plain ground as persuaded by Rev. Guy Playfair after they had lived on top of the hills for fear of slave raid by the Nupe and the Fulani warriors.⁵³

As earlier mentioned, Ìgbómìnà land is a fertile land that is conducive for plantation of many crops. Rainfall is low and there is a wider variety of vegetations. The eastern part of Ìgbómìnà is dominated by mountain ranges and groups of inselbergs. Ìgbómìnà region has a mixed vegetation of deciduous forests and savannah. The rain forest in the South helped the timber industry in the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently, the presence of the British and Christian missionaries made the demand for timber to increase because they needed woods to build their stations. This was the reason the S.I.M. established an industrial school at Agunjin where local people were taught carpentry, sawing and other trades when they founded a mission station there in 1915.⁵⁴ Today, sawmills are found in many towns and villages in the region. These places include: Òrò-Àgó, Babańlá, Ìgbàjà, Oreke, Ganmo, Amoyo, Oro, Esiẹ, among others.

The vegetation of Òrò-Àgó (the cradle of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land) and its environs is tropical rain forest and wooded savannah interspersed with scattered cultivated land around the main settlements and villages that constitute the region. The average maximum temperature is 34⁰c and minimum temperature is 25⁰c. There are two major seasons, namely: the cold\dry harmattan and the rainy seasons. The dry season is from October and lasts till March while the rainy season, begins in March and lasts till October or early November. The annual rainfall varies from 1,000mm to 1,500mm.³⁷ The climate is suitable for farming and the processing of agricultural products. This is the basic or primary occupation of the people of Òrò-Àgó. This makes food crops like yams, cassava, grains and legumes to thrive abundantly in the land. Cocoa is produced on a small scale just as palm tree products are got there as well.

Òrò-Àgó's natural vegetation consists of rain forest and wooded savannah. The landform consists of undulating hills, valleys and plain transversed by seasonal rivers and streams. The mixture of rain forest and wooded savannah provides wide range of trees. These are used for logs and timbers, consequently giving rise to a few sawmills in the area in recent years. Of course, local furniture and wood related businesses thrived in the land before the coming of the missionaries into the area.

Different types of fruits were/are found in Òrò-Àgó, although not much attention was/is given to their production. Such fruits include pawpaw, banana of several varieties, Òranges and lime. There are different species of vegetable as well in Oro-land. Among such are Agungun, (otherwise known as *Egúngún*), *Elegede*, *Oriri*, *Ishapa*, *Ishakoro* (these last two being from the same plant) and *Eeku*. Even short-term residents in the land know how *Ishapa* is associated with pounded yam. Hence, there was and is a popular saying: *ishapa toro mo 'yan, oko si 'yan je*, meaning the husband over fed himself as a result of presence of isapa in the soup. Various species of *ewedu* (draw soup) abound in the land.³⁸ Also, the calabash gourd seed and *egusi* thrive well in all the communities around Òrò-Àgó. Closely related to *egusi* is

elegede (pumpkin) and a smaller specie, *agbeje*, which looks like cucumber in form, except that it cannot be eaten raw like cucumber. The calabash gourd (*koto*) was used generally for fetching water before the introduction of modern containers like buckets and jerry cans. Water is fetched from the streams or locally dug wells. These were the only sources of water for domestic use beside rain water in the early days.

Other agricultural products planted in Òrò-Àgó and its environ include maize and guinea corn for local consumption and for some commercial purpose. These two are used to prepare *eko-eda* and *Alaagba*. *Eko-eda* to Ìgbómìnà people is like oat or other grain cereal to the white man. It is common to hear: *Alagba shigidi, bo'ko pe lode a dokuta* (*Alagba* is pretty hard to eat, if it is not taken immediately after being cooked or better put 'a well prepared maize corn meal (*alagba*) will turn to 'stone' if a husband returns home late). This saying is because after preparation, the colder it is, the more solid it becomes. Maize can also be used to prepare *elekute*, *abari*, and that which name is derived from Hausa *dodon kuwa*.³⁹

Root crops like cassava, yam, groundnut and sweet potatoes are also available at subsistence level in the region. Yam can be seasoned and prepared as *Ojojo* and *dundu*, but it is used mostly to prepare *Amala* and Pounded yam. The variety and quality of products that God had given the area made life conducive for the missionaries as far as finding food stuff for their survival was concerned. A little quantity of red palm oil is also made from the palm fruit. Shear butter is made from nuts of shear butter trees, beniseed and cotton are also available in the land. Before the arrival of the missionaries and for a while after their arrival, most women had weaving looms where they made *aso oke* and *aso-Kijipa* from cotton grown on a small scale. *Aso oke* was predominantly used for wedding, while *Kijipa* was used especially by children and adolescents as casual dresses. These cotton products were also made in form of *Ìgbàjà*, like muffler for supporting babies when they are carried at the back.

In describing the settlement or place of abode of the Oro people before the coming of the SIM missionaries into the land, the Centenary Committee noted that *Itajagun*, the initial location of the founder of Oro-land was on a hill. It was not just the progenitor of the people but all the ancient people lived in different caves and high grounds of Oreke, Aworoko and other hills. For instance, the *Okewa* people settled at *Okewa* Hill later known as Ago Hill, the Ijakare people at Odia Hill, the Okemure at Okemerelu Hill, the Aiyetoro at Agbada Hill, Oganyi Hill and the Oke-Ayin at Oke-Ayin Hill. Other notable abodes then were Okedaba, Okerunwon and Okeluworo.⁴⁰

A significant highland among all these is the Amusodi Hill. This is because the hill was where the Ose people first settled before they later dispersed to their present locations of Oyatedo and Ajose (Òrò-Àgó). As a mark of remembrance were six stones used to depict each ward during meetings. The stones are still kept till date.⁴¹ These hills provided strategic natural defense against enemies' attack. They also afforded the people the opportunity to see potential aggressors before they attack. Consequently, counter attack plan could be launched in advance. Rev. Guy Playfair was among the first set of people to build a house (hut) on the plain outside the hills in 1912 at his arrival in the land. His own hut was situated at the present location of Christian Commercial College (C.C.C), Òrò-Àgó.⁴² Subsequently, the indigenes gradually left the caves to settle on the plain ground.

Oro settlements are located beside streams and rivers. Water is said to be a basic necessity for life. There are three major non-navigable rivers in Òrò-Àgó. They are Arigun, Akamo and Oko. There are others like Obu and Adaka. The river Oko flows across the Irabon Oro Ago Road. These rivers and streams serve as the main source of water supply in the town until recently when they are replaced with wells and bore holes. Òrò-Àgó route also serves as the safest road to Owu-Falls in Owa-Kajola, one of the tourist attractions in Kwara State, Nigeria.



Map of Ìgbómìnà Land

Source: Bisi Ade & Company Production, 10/12/2016

2.3 Socio-Cultural Life of Ìgbómìnà People

The religion of a particular group of people determines their social life.⁵⁵ The way they dress, what they eat, their relationship with one another, their marriage and their social activities in general are determined by what they believe in. In the time past, traditional religion had great influence on the social life of Ìgbómìnà people. Generally speaking, in West Africa, festivals are observed by adherents of traditional religion.⁵⁶ They mark important social and religious events in the lives of the people which culminated in series of performances, entertainment, merry-making, rites and ceremonies. Thus, festivals are the most important social and religious events in Ìgbómìnà land.

One would not be able to discuss fully the socio-religious life of Ìgbómìnà people without looking into the various festivals in the land before the advent of Islam and Christianity. These festivals are being celebrated with pomp and pageantry in most parts of Ìgbómìnà land. The religious aspects of most festivals are eclipsed by the social activities, but the fact still remains that the traditional festivals in most societies are still celebrated to commemorate historical, cultural or religious events that are of great importance and significance to the community.

Beside the celebration that surrounds the worship of divinities, Ìgbómìnà people celebrated the passages of life with great festivity. These include birth, puberty, marriage and death. The belief that the life of a man starts with his birth, moves on to puberty, followed by marriage and terminated by death was prominent among Ìgbómìnà people.

Birth: Ìgbómìnà people, like other Yòrùbá people in West Africa attach great importance to child-bearing.⁵⁷ Unfruitful marriage is not only a misfortune but also a curse, since the barren people will not contribute to the continuity of the family, and that of the society.⁵⁸ Barrenness is a shame to human race and for this reason, a woman/man would seek help from anywhere to get a child. Ifa Òracle could be consulted, and such a man/woman would do all he/she is asked

to do to get the child. At times, no evil force is detected and the woman/man may need to take some medicine. By so doing, conception could take place.

As soon as it becomes apparent that the woman is pregnant, necessary steps are taken to ensure the safety of the baby and the mother during and after pregnancy. This Òracle is also consulted to find out what food should be eaten and what taboos should be observed. For instance, depending on a particular family the woman belongs to, she may be forbidden from taking salt until the child is born, it could be abstinence from sex to avoid wretchedness and difficult delivery. A pregnant woman must not walk in the hot sun or in the night, so as to prevent the spirit of *abiku* (born-to-die-children) from entering her womb. She may be required to offer sacrifices to her husband's ancestral spirits. She would be under a care of a medicine-man who would prepare concoction of herbs and medicated soap for her from time to time, in order to ward off evil spirits and the attack of the evil ones. However, it is deducible that these taboos cannot be correct. They were only put in place so as to caution pregnant women from engaging in certain activities which the elderly ones thought could be harmful to their health at that particular period.

On the day of delivery, she would be assisted by traditional birth attendants. When the child finally comes, there is great jubilation. The ancestor that reincarnated in the new baby is verified on the third day and the Òracle is consulted to confirm the destiny of the baby. The child remains indoors for nine days, if female seven days. The mother seldom goes out, except to ease herself and to massage her body with hot water. The child will not be brought out until the day he/she would be given a name. The ceremony is aptly called *Ikomojade*, i.e. ceremony of bringing out the child. Prior to this ceremony, the child is called *Alejo* i.e. a stranger or *Ikoko Jojolo* i.e. a complete new born baby. The reason for naming a boy on the ninth day and a girl on the seventh day is because man has nine ribs while a woman has seven. This was the belief of the Yoruba. Awolalu and Dopamu have, however, faulted this assertion by regarding it as

fallacy.⁵⁹ The researcher is of the same opinion as well. It would be a biological fallacy to postulate that assertion. Where it is a twin-birth (one male and one female) the names are given to the two on the eighth day, with the belief that one sex will not feel superior to the other.

The ceremony of bringing out the child and giving him a name takes place very early in the morning. Members of the family and friends of the parents gather in front of the house. The materials for naming are brought out. These materials vary from one family to another. But most important among them are *epo* (palm oil), *iyó* (salt), *obi* (kolanut), *orogbo* (bitter-kola), *eja* (fish), *ataare* (alligator pepper), *oyin* (honey), *omi* (water) *isu* (yam), and *ireke* (sugar-cane).

The mother of the child would dress in a very attractive dress and sit on a stool *Ipeku* in front of the house. An elderly woman then enters the house and ceremonially brings the child out from the room where he has been since birth, doing the actual presentation of the child *Ikomo-jade*, then gives the child to his mother where she is seated. A grand-parent or any elderly member of the family helps in doing this. He or she touches the child's mouth with the items and offer prayers one after the other.

After the naming, the items are passed round those present, and they take and eat parts of them. Some of those present may also give their names to the child. They may give money as gift to the child as they name him/her. Of course, such monies belong to the mother of the child. In some families, this could be followed with the tradition of throwing water on the roof directly at the entrance. The mother would carry the baby running in and out with him/her nine times, if it is a boy, and seven times if a girl. She makes sure the water drips on the child as she runs in and out. This is done to show the child that the earth is sweet and bitter, or to prepare him/her for the rainy and dry seasons. It could also symbolize the safety of the child any time he goes out in the rain.

However, the coming of Islam and Christianity to Ìgbómìnà land has eroded this tradition, as people now give names to their children based on the tradition of their new religion. Worst still, even those who do not belong to any of the two religions, hardly give names to their children using the traditional items described above.

Puberty: This is no longer celebrated as such among Ìgbómìnà people. In Ìgbómìnà land, circumcision is the only principal adolescent rite for boys. In the past, this rite took place when the boy was about twenty years of age or less. Today, it takes place some few days after the child's birth, although some families still prefer to delay the rite until the child is of age, certainly before his marriage. Female circumcision was also in vogue then. It was believed that the girl would be sexually promiscuous if her clitoris is not trimmed.⁶⁰ However, Awolalu and Dopamu noted that the rationale behind the female circumcision was that if the clitoris is not trimmed, it may touch a baby's head at birth, and this can cause the child to die, if such happened.⁶¹ Nonetheless, none of these is correct. The Ministry of Health in Nigeria is strongly opposed to female circumcision and listing so many attendant health and social hazards of the practice. These include infections, inability to enjoy sex as expected, difficulty in child delivery, etc.

As a sign of general maturity, some girls tattoo their bodies. In days gone by, a girl without such tattoos was considered ugly and unprepared for marriage. With tattoos, girls had their names inscribed on their arms or legs and they used to go about with pride for bearing such scars. Tattoos are yet to become things of the past today, not only in Ìgbómìnà land, but in most of our societies, especially among the young men and women.

Marriage: In Ìgbómìnà land, marriage is the affair of the entire family. It is not the affair of the would be couple alone. This is because it brings two families (husband's family and wife's family) together. So many preparations and arrangements would be made before the wedding day. These include getting enough information about the husband/wife and asking Ifa Òracle if

the two would be compatible. In some areas, the families would go ahead to negotiate a baby girl at birth for her parents to give her in marriage to their son who also was just a boy. The two would eventually get married when they become matured.

Today, things have changed. The practice of betrothing a daughter when she is still very young is no longer in practice. Nonetheless, many aspects and practices of marriage within the traditional setting still persist, e.g. payment of dowry, the engagement programme in the bride's compound, etc.

In the time past, there was the practice of getting *Alarina* (Intermediary or 'Go-between') who would be chosen by the boy's parent to mediate between the boy's parent and the girl's parent. This could be a man or a woman. She/He would help to find out all about the girl's family. This would be followed with *owo ibasoro*, i.e. 'money to initiate talk exchange between the boy and the girl.' This money would be paid by the boy and with this, he would be given the permission to start talking with the girl. Thus, the work of *Alarina* stops, except intervention whenever they have misunderstanding or disagreement. This is in agreement with a popular saying in Yòrùbá land: '*Bi oko ba mo oju aya tan, alarina a yeba*,' i.e. when the husband has become used to his wife, the intermediary must give way.

This would be followed by paying *owo ijehun* (confirmation money) by the groom or his parent to the family of the bride. Half of the money would go for rituals in the shrine of *Orunmílá (ífa)* or the shrine of the household divinity, while the remaining half would be for the parents of the bride. This confirms the approval of the two parents and that of the divinity concerning the marriage. Today parents generally no longer consult Òracles, (although, some still do) before their children's marriage but they collect *owo ijehun* to replace the money collected for *Iya gbo, Baba gbo* (the mother has heard, father has heard).

After this, *Idana* follows. *Idana* means the performance of the acts enjoined by custom on a prospective bridegroom towards the bride's family, such as the giving of kolanuts, bitter-

kola, aligator pepper, honey, gin and clothes, and the payment of bride price. Bride price varies in Ìgbómìnà land, depending on the locality and the bride's extended family. Some bride prices were low. For instance, the Balogun family in Baba-nla accepts two thousand Naira as bride price,⁶² why the Oguntola family in Ìgbàjà accepts five thousand Naira as bride price.⁶³ Other items mentioned here accompany the price. In most cases, a respected woman in the groom's family would take all these to the bride's family.

Then comes the marriage proper, *Igbeyawo*, 'carrying of the wife' which usually takes place in the night. It is of course, a joyous moment. The bride would receive prayers and blessings from her parents. They invoke the tutelary divinity and ancestors to bless, protect and guard the girl. *Ekun Iyawo* (bride crying) would be sung by the bride. Her friends and some women in her family would see her off as she goes to her husband's house that night in bridal apparel. It was a popular custom in Ìgbómìnà land that the bride must not meet the groom at home that night. So, he vacates the house before the arrival of the bride. The bride would be received by an elderly person (usually a woman) on behalf of the entire family. At the entrance to the house, the bride's feet are washed with water by the women of the house. This ablution (washing of legs) is to symbolically wash away any evil that might have accompanied the bride to the threshold of her new home. It is to clean her of all defilements so that she comes into her new home with a new life, unstained.⁶⁴

After this, an elderly man from the groom's family is given the mandate to carry the bride, not allowing those washed legs to touch the ground, straight to her husband's room. This could explain why the Ìgbómìnà as well as all Yòrùbá refer to marriage as *Igbeyawo* 'carrying the wife.' Lots of prayers would follow by the elderly men and women in the family. It must be mentioned that a young girl is always assigned to follow the bride to her new home to be her attendant, as she would not be free to send her husband's younger ones or the younger ones in

the husband's family on errand. This little girl is called *Aarun*. She would live with her for years. Some would even stay there until they get married too.

For some days, the bride would be indoor well taken care of by her new family. Friends (girls) would visit her and keep her company. When going to toilet or to bath outside the house, these friends would accompany her. She would wear only the clothes presented to her by the women in her new home. She wears them one after the other in quick succession. She may change the dress three or four times a day, depending on how wealthy the new family is. On the fifth day, the ceremony known as *Igbale Iyawo* (the sweeping of the ground by the bride) follows. The confined bride now comes out openly unveiled in company of the women of the house to sweep the compounds of the husband's extended family. This is done with the aim of introducing her to domestic responsibility. She greets everybody she comes across. They in return give her gifts materially or monetarily. From this point on, she begins all domestic work as a full house wife. Of course, her husband spares no time in having affairs with her the very night she enters his house, sex inclusive.

Death: Ìgbómìnà people, like all other Africans believe that life here on earth is not interminable because sooner or later, the inevitable phenomenon call death will come upon every man/woman. We all sojourn here on earth and will all 'go home' one day, one after the other. Death is believed by Ìgbómìnà people to be a transition – a passage from the world of men to the world of spirits.

Immediately the death of an old man is announced among the Ìgbómìnà people, gun shots are fired to alert the community. Children and relatives of the dead are sent for and they begin to come from different abodes to the village/town with *Aso isi/Aso Ìsin ku and Egbokanla* termed *owo Ijena/owo isi*. The corpse is dressed with some of these clothes while others are put around it in the room. After the preparation, the corpse is carried shoulder high round the whole compound *Agbo-ile* or at times a model of the dead was made with mat and

used for that purpose instead, particularly if the corpse is heavy. While this is going on, the women in the compound (*Obinrin-ile*) would be singing and dancing behind the corpse carriers. Fatai Afolabi in his book *Ìgbómìnà Land in the Context of Yòrùbá History* gave an example of such songs:

1. *Oni lolomo o jere Omo Re. Yoo sanwo ose. Oni lolomo o jere* (Today, the parent or guardian of a child will reap the fruit of his/her labour).
2. *Eni omo sin lobimo, Omo o layole, eni omo sin lo bi mo* (He who is buried by children is the one that has children. Having children is not reliable. He who is buried by children has children indeed).
3. *Boo dele oo, O ki iyin Eso, O ki iyin Awo, Boo deleoo* (When you get home pay homage to the Eso, pay homage to the priest, when you get home).⁶⁵

As these and many more songs are rendered, the children of the deceased would be ‘spraying’ money on the corpse while the people would be rushing to pick the coins up. This scenario is corroborated by the saying in *Ìgbómìnà* land: *Alagbara ni he’wo oku* (only the powerful picks funeral coins). The belief that life continues after death makes *Ìgbómìnà* people to bury some articles along with the corpse. Such items include: food, drinks, jewelry, clothes etc. Ceremonial feasts would be held by the children and relations of the dead till after the seventh day known as *Ireje Oku* and this is followed by a parade in which sympathizers would be appreciated for their concern.

An important point that must not be left out is that the burial ceremony is usually performed by the adherents of *Oro*, *Ogboni*, *Ogun*, *Oya*, *Orisa-oko*, as the case may be. Food would be served in the funeral ceremony. Before the burial, the deceased hair is shaved if he is a male. If female, her hair will be beautifully plaited. Another important point to mention is that the corpse will be thoroughly washed with warm clean water, new sponge and soap. It is believed that doing this would make the deceased to join his/her ancestors in purity.

Also, it must be mentioned that the grave of the deceased is always dug in one of the rooms or outside the house. This practice results from the belief that the deceased still forms part of the household, and should not be separated from his kith and kin. People send messages to their ancestors via the deceased. They believe that the spirit of the dead person is still hovering around, though invisible, but he can see and hear them. They pray to him/her not to forget his/her children.

However, it should be pointed out that the coming of Islam and Christianity to Ìgbómìnà land has eroded most of these traditions. Naming ceremony, marriage ceremony, burials, etc are now done in line with either the biblical or Islamic injunctions. However, some traditions are sustained till date in the land. These include: bride price, wedding engagement, etc.

2.4 Traditional Religion of Ìgbómìnà People

The Traditional Religion of Ìgbómìnà People cannot be treated in isolation from African Religion. It would be a very wrong submission to assert that Africans were not religious before the advent of Christianity on the continent. Ìgbómìnà people had their indigenous religion; this is the religion that has been handed down from generations to generations.⁶⁶ This religion has no written literature except in the people's myths and folktales, in their songs and dance, in their liturgies and shrines and in their proverbs and pithy sayings.⁶⁷

As mentioned above, the traditional religion of Ìgbómìnà people is a revealed religion without a founder unlike some other world religions. Thus, religion is revealed in the sense that it came into being as a result of human experience of the mystery of the universe.⁶⁸ According to Awolalu and Dopamu in their book *West African Traditional Religion*:

From the timeless prehistory, the forebears of the West African peoples saw the mystery of the universe, pondered over it, put questions before themselves as to the author of, and the brain behind this mystery, searched for answers to these questions and came to the conclusion that this mystery must be a supernatural power, a Living Being, who ordered, controlled and maintained the Universe...⁶⁹

They reflected on their experiences and responded rather intuitively to the situations that encompass their experiences and they began to worship this supernatural power via different divinities. These divinities vary from one locality to another in Ìgbómìnà land. They include the following:

Orisa-nla: *Orisa-nla* is the Yòrùbá arch-divinity. He is also known as *Obatala*. This divinity is worshiped in Ìgbómìnà land. As noted by Awolalu and Dopamu, this divinity was commissioned by the supreme Deity to create the solid earth, equip it, and mould the physical form of man. He is responsible for moulding human form either beautifully or otherwise. He is described as the deputy or vice-gerent or son of *Olodumare*. This divinity is also called *Obatala*, a name that points out the King's whiteness, or the lord of the 'white cloth.' In fact, everything associated with *Orisa-nla* is usually white: his temple is white-washed; his emblems are white chalk and white containers, with white ornaments. His sacrifice consists of bloodless snail and shea-butter, the water in his shrine must be changed every day to retain a degree of absolute cleanliness. Thus, Orisanla is regarded as the god of purity and holiness, and commands high sense of morality.

Orisa-nla is not only worshipped in Ìgbómìnà land but throughout Yòrùbá land. In Ìgbómìnà land, one can see his temple, priests and priestesses that were dedicated to him. Barren women usually take their petition to him for the fruit of the womb. Pregnant women are given the water from his shrine so that their children may be shapely molded. The sick ones are also given such water for their healings. Such water is usually drawn from his shrine as early as possible by a person who has never spoken to anyone that morning.

Orunmìlá: *Orunmìlá* or *Ifa* is the Òracle divinity of Yorùbáland, while Orisanla is the deputy of *Olodumare* with reference to the creation and ordering of the universe, *Orunmìlá* is his deputy in matters of wisdom, prognostication and fore-knowledge. He is called *Eleri-Ipin* 'the

witness or advocate of human destiny.’ It is believed that he came into the world together with Orisa-nla in order to protect man. He knows all things about man and can give useful advice on any matter, past or present and even future. He is consulted often before any action is taken.

The *Orunmìlá* priest makes use of the geometric form of divination known as *Ifa*. The word *Ifa* is sometime referred to as *Orunmìlá*, but frequently, it refers to the system of divination. Its shrine is usually situated in the house of the worshipper or priest. His emblems include palm-kernels, cowries, and some graven pieces of elephant’s tusk. These are held in a bowl or white plate with a lid. The priests offer sacrifices to him from time to time. Any person can be asked to offer a sacrifice such as pouring of palm-oil and breaking of kola-nut and bitter-kola, while an elaborate sacrifice may involve killing of fowl or a pig or a he-goat as the case may be. *Orunmìlá* is worshipped everywhere in Ìgbómìnà land and *Baba-alawo* are consulted from time to time. This practice is still common even today in Ìgbómìnà land.

Ogun ‘The god of Iron’: *Ogun* is worshipped in Ìgbómìnà Land. He is believed to be the god of iron, war and chase. He is preeminently the patron god of blacksmiths, hunters, warriors, and all who deal in iron and steel. Also, in as much as iron and steel belong to him, all surgical operations and all forms of bodily markings like circumcision and tattooing belong to him.

Awolalu and Dopamu have explained that *Ogun* himself was a hunter who used to come down from the heaven on a spider’s web for his hunting activities. And when all the divinities were coming into the world and they could not find the way, it was *Ogun* who cleared a way in the bush with his magical machete. In consequence of this, he was hailed by all. This is why he is aptly described today as *Osin-Imole*, meaning chief among the divinities.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, *Ogun* is seen as an instrument of God’s wrath and judgment, very ferocious and bellicose. Everyone fears him. Any covenant or oath sealed before this divinity as the presiding judge must be fulfilled. Even today, adherents of traditional religion take their oaths by kissing a piece of iron. This signifies that they have spoken the truth. People suspected

of evil intentions or deeds are made to swear before *Ogun*, and false swearing is believed to have calamitous consequences because *Ogun* demands justice, fair play and rectitude. In this connection, some intellectuals like Dopamu advocated that oath taking be done with iron, instead of Bible and Quran; that if this is done; oath takers would be more responsible in their subsequent act.

The hunters in Ìgbómìnà land worship *Ogun* and make sacrifices to him as the weapons they use in hunting are all instruments or fabrications of *Ogun*. They worship him for his benevolence. They believe that he protects them in their dangerous hunting expeditions. The first SIM missionary in Ìgbómìnà land, Rev Playfair met much of this when he arrived in Òrò-Àgó in 1912. He too was a hunter who used to go hunting with some indigenes, and through this, he was able to attract the *Ogun* worshippers with the gospel of Christ.

Ogun's shrine is found in front of houses. All metal instruments in the blacksmith's workshop are referred to as *Ogun* instruments and libations are poured on them often. The most important symbol of *Ogun* is iron. Other emblems of *Ogun* include a rock, the tusk or tail of an elephant, *peregun* tree and metal scraps. Dogs' blood is *Ogun's* special delicacy while palm-wine is his favourite drink. His other foods include fowl, tortoise, ram, kola-nut, bitter-kola, yam and palm-oil. Afolabi has added that *Ogun* could make barren women to become pregnant. Women in such category throng *Ogun's* Shrine, making pledges of what they would present to *Ogun* if they become pregnant and blessed with children before the next *Ogun* festival.⁷¹ Such children gotten through *Ogun* are given names like: Ogunwole, Ogunsola, Ogunbunmi, Ogundijo, Ogunseye, Oguntosin, etc.



Ogun's Shrine

Source: <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-benin-west-africa-bonhicon-offerings-to-ogun-god-altar-made-with-pedaliars-87669169.html>, accessed on 02/02/2017.

Esu: Dopamu in his book: *Esu, the Invisible Foe of Man* has noted that *Esu* is regarded by the Yòrùbá as a divinity of mischief who can make things difficult for mankind. At the same time, he is regarded as a beneficent divinity that is prepared to answer the call of his devotees who give him his due. *Esu* is believed to be one of the divinities who were the closest to *Olodunmare*, the supreme Deity, from the timeless beginning. As *Orisanla* came to deputize for God in matters of creation and government, so also *Esu* came as God's deputy in matters of ritual and human conduct. He is sometimes referred to as 'the Inspector General of rituals,' who is in charge of discerning the behaviours and conducts of both divinities and man and thereafter give a report to *Olodunmare*.⁷²

Esu is greatly feared among Ìgbómìnà people because whatever his recommendation to *Olodunmare* would be accepted with regards to accepting or rejecting man's rituals. *Esu* could be invoked to harm one's enemies and could be invoked also to offer protection against

mischievous and mishap. If he is well fed and respected, he could become protective and benevolent. Other divinities also fear him. Prayers and gifts are offered to him to secure his favour and to enable him confer benefits on them. His name appears in the names given to children in consequence of the faith reposed in him as a beneficent father. Thus, we have names such as Esubiyi, (*Esu* gives birth to this), Esumuyide (*Esu* had brought this fame), Esugbayi (*Esu* accepts or saves this) etc, in Ìgbómìnà land.

In Ìgbómìnà land, as well as in other Yòrùbá land, *Esu*'s shrine is usually made outside the town or village, and also in the compound or at crossroads. He is symbolized by a stone slab stuck into the ground slantingly. Sometimes, he is represented by an image made of mud or wood. He is worshipped and propitiated throughout Yòrùbá land. People offer him cowries, cocks, he-goats and dogs. The blood of such animals is usually sprinkled on the image or emblem of *Esu*. Annual festival is held in his honour, and people on such occasion ask for his protection against evil and for his blessing on their farm work.⁷³



Esu's Shrine at Esie, Ìrèpòdún L.G.A
Source: Picture taken by the researcher on 3/4/2016

Sango: *Sango* is the god of thunder and lightning among the Yorùbá. *Sango* is believed to have committed suicide by hanging himself on an *Ayun* tree when he could no longer withstand the shame of being deposed by one of his ministers. After his death he, however, became deified and took on the attributes of *Jakuta*: the original thunder divinity in Yòrùbá land. *Sango* represents the divine wrath upon the children of disobedience. He is more dreaded than any other divinity for its malevolence. Its presence is manifested in thunder bolts and lightening. He forbids and punishes lying, stealing, and poisoning. Thus, in the flashing of the lightening, and in the roaring of thunder, the Yòrùbá are constantly reminded the judgment of God.

Those killed by *Sango* do not receive normal burial as such but could only be buried by *Sango* priests after performing certain rituals on that fateful spot. One of such incidents occurred in the 1930s, precisely at Babańlá: A woman who was alleged to be a witch but denied was struck down by *Sango* thereafter. There was a light rain with heavy lightning and thunder that struck her hut and it caught fire. She died in the inferno but amazingly the hen that was inside the same hut did not die nor did her eggs get burnt.⁷⁴ Subsequently, the thunderbolt called *Edun Ara* (rounded granite stone) was dug up and removed from the spot.

Sango's worshippers wear necklaces of red and white beads. The priest of *Sango* called *Magba* does not usually cut his hair, but plaits it in the fashion of women. This priest can carry fire on his head unhurt when he is possessed. *Sango*'s worshippers offer him sacrifices of cowries, goats, sheep, oxen and fowls. They pray to this divinity for peace, long life, prosperity, protection and wealth.

Sanponna: Sonponna is another divinity worshipped in Ìgbómìnà land and Yorùbáland in general. It is believed that this divinity enforces the judgement of God. He inspires terror in all people. He is believed to be the god of the disease of small pox who punishes offenders with such disease. He is not usually called by his name *Sonponna* for fear of his terrorism. Rather, he is called *Olode*, *Obaluwaye*, and *Ero Baba*.⁷⁵

This divinity forbids evil acts such as lying, adultery, bad magic, etc. He kills any offender with smallpox and such victim must not be mourned. The priest would confiscate the victim's property and bury him in the 'evil' forest. *Sonponna* is thanked for the killing and that is why he is called *Alapadupe*.⁷⁶ People believe that he wears red apparel and wanders about when the sun is very hot. That is why people are warned to desist from wearing red apparel and wandering about in the sun lest they incur his displeasure. In Ìgbómìnà land and Yòrùbá land in general, *Sonponna*'s shrines are found outside the village. Some of the places where *Sonponna* is deified include: Oko, Ìsánlú-Ìsin, Baba-nla, Ìgbàjà, Òkè-Ode, etc.

Orisa-Okò: *Orisa-Okò* (the divinity of the farm) is worshipped in Ìgbómìnà land. He is believed to be the god of agriculture who determines success or failure in the farm. Annual festival is celebrated by the worshippers at the arrival of new-yam.

The worshippers eat no yam nor touch it each year until after the annual festival. The blacksmiths make new knives for them, with which they would peel the new yams and make pounded yam. The blacksmiths will be given their share of the special delicacy with egusi soup and chicken.⁷⁷ Neighbours would share in the celebration as well. Today, the adherents of *Orisa-Okò* are not many if at all they still exist in Igbomina land Kwara State. For instance, Mero Amusa (Iya Ramoni) of Ile-Nla in Babańlá affirms this claim. She is the only custodian of *Orisa-Okò* in Babańlá. According to her, no one worship this divinity again in Babańlá, not even herself.⁷⁸ She was just kind enough to keep the remains of this divinity in a small basket (*apere*) as could be seen in the picture bellow. Lack of worshipers of this divinity is traced to the influence of Islam and Christianity in the land.



Remains of Orisa Oko in Babańlá, Ifélódún L.G.A.
Source: Picture taken by the researcher on 27th May, 2014

Egúngún Eléwe: Egúngún Eléwe is very common in Igbomina land. It originated from Ìlá-Òràngún and is embraced by all Igbomina towns in Kwara State. Afolabi noted that it stands as a carrier of messages of prayer, wishes and thanks giving from the living to the ancestors. It is an authority that understands everything on ‘power force’ and how to harness it for the good of individuals and community at large. It entertains and educate the public. Above all, it stands as a yardstick for determining aesthetic standards of Igbomina.⁷⁹ It is considered as women’s masquerade (*Egúngún obinrin*). This is because women are usually seen accompanying the Egúngún Eléwe masquerades. Egúngún Eléwe’s festival is celebrated annually in the each towns and villages in the land. The masquerade wears combination of cloth, leather gaiters, braider tassels of assorted colours, and small conical bell. All these are worn to conceal all parts of the masquerader’s body with hand gloves in its hands and robber shoes on its legs. Small local fan is in its hand which it uses to fan itself from time to time. Bigger local fans are held by the custodians to help fan the masquerade from time to time as well.⁸⁰

Sacrifices are offer to ogun before the masquerade goes round the town/villages. Only specific families take part as Egúngún Eléwe dancers, although any interested person could follow and sing along as the masquerade sings and dance to entertain its audience. It usually come out in the evening after the day's work and retires at dusk. It usually comes out for about seven days, depending on the dictates of the custodians. Egúngún Eléwe is peculiar to Igbomina land

To sum it up, Ìgbómìnà people were extremely religious before the coming of Islam and Christianity into the area. They express this by worshipping gods through the divinities mentioned earlier and some others that are not mentioned here. These deities include *Ifa*, *Odufon*, *Olobooto*, *Epa*, *Aba*, *Layewu*, *Odia* and *Aluku*. *Seke-seke*, *Jamu-Jamu* and *Tadiogbo*, etc. The worship of these deities caught the attention of Guy Playfair and the subsequent missionaries who keenly observed the traditions to the point of participatory observation.⁸¹ The introduction of Islam was from Lafiagi and, the headquarters of the then Native Authority. However, the introduction of Christianity in 1912 was successful. Reasons for this success include the strategies used by the missionaries. These strategies are discussed in chapter three of this research work. So many people got converted from African Traditional Religion and Islam through the relentless missionary activities of Playfair and other SIM missionaries that came thereafter.

2.5. Islam in Ìgbómìnà land

Islam is one of the great religions of the world. Islam simply means an act of total submission to the will of Allah. The conservative tried to trace the origin of Islam to the time of Prophet Adam and his wife, Hawwa (Eve), the first recorded mankind on earth, while the modern theory claims that Islam started in 610 CE when prophet Muhammed was called to prophethood in Mecca to spread Islam.⁸²

There has been no precision on the date Islam penetrated Yorùbáland. However, Samuel Johnson opines that:

Oduduwa and his children had escaped with two idols to Ile-Ife. Sahilbu being sent with an army to destroy or reduce them to submission was defeated, and amongst the booty secured by the victors was a copy of the KÒran (Quran). This was afterwards preserved in a temple and was not only venerated by succeeding generation as a sacred relic, but is even worshipped to this day under the name of Idi (Kundi), signifying something tied up.⁸³

Thus, if it was true that Oduduwa actually came from Mecca, then one could conclude that Islam found its way into Yòrùbá land through Sahilbu (The Islamic Cleric captured by Oduduwa in Mecca), who followed Oduduwa to Ile-Ife with a copy of Holy Quran.

However, another tradition has it that Islam was first known in Yòrùbá land during the reign of Mansa Musa of Mali. This tradition argued that the Yòrùbá were introduced to Islam by Mali traders and Malian ambassadors who used to visit Oyo, hence the religion is known as *Imale*.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, early phase of Islam in Ìgbómìnà land was characterized by an era of peaceful and gradual penetration of the faith into the region by Muslim traders. This was the period before the Ilorin onslaughts that began from 1835 C.E. The main followers of Islam at this period were traders with a number of them also performing the role of Muslim Clerics. They were responsible for the introduction of Islam to Ìlá-Òràngún and its environs as from 1800 C.E. Many of these migrant settlers were Muslim Clerics from Northern Nigeria. They were responsible for the spread of Islam in Ìgbómìnà land. For instance, in 1820, both Àjàsè-Ìpo and Òmùpo had considerable members of Hausa Mallams. These Hausa Clerics who were equally involved in trade and commerce were believed to have practised Islam in these areas and introduced Islamic faith to the people. Also, notable was a Nupe Mallam popularly called Amodu Tapa who established a commercial class that dominated the trading activities of Ìdòfiàn up to the early 1830. Simìlár situations were recorded in Òrò-Àgó, Ìsánlú, Agunjin and other Ìgbómìnà towns and villages. Notable among these Muslim clerics was Hassan Lade, a Nupe man. He and others spread Islam and its civilization in the markets especially on Market

days. They engaged in intermarriage, economic and socio-cultural religious interactions with the people. This made the northern Muslim clerics (especially the Nupe) to be fused with the Ìgbómìnà people.

Raji had submitted that Islam and other Nupe cultural practices became preponderant in Ìgbómìnà settlements of Roré, Òra and Share, before the close of 18th century.⁸⁵ Also, it must be mentioned that the religious and commercial activities of these northern groups in the Yòrùbá country coupled with the activities of many Yòrùbá people (who had accepted) Islam from Ibadan, Badagry and Lagos further spread Islam in Ìgbómìnà land, Iboló, Ekiti and other non-metropolitan districts, especially after the establishment of Ilorin Emirate. With the option of either conversion or subjugation, many Islamic teachers travelled far and wide. In reality, missionaries of Ilorin-Fulani were responsible for the conversion of a substantial proportion of Ìgbómìnà people.

Thus, Islam came to Ìgbómìnà towns and villages at different periods and in different circumstances. For instance, Islam came to Oroland around 1860 during the reign of Oba Ayegusi of Oke-Ola Oro. It came to Òmù-Àrán around 1869 with the help of one Alfa Pupa Abdul-Rahim from Ilorin. It came to Òkè-Onígbin via the efforts of Mallam Sanni in 1900. It came to Òkè-Ode through the effort of Alfa Disu Showo (a prominent trader of Kolanuts, sheep and goats, who was assisted by Lawal Atanda and Shuaib) in 1904. It came to Esiẹ through the efforts of an indigenous business man, Mallam Yusuf Abolarinwa in 1909, and to Iludun Oro through the effort of Lawal Aribikofa (son of a fortune teller in Alape's compound) in 1913.⁸⁶ As time went on, especially with the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate, the status of Islam was consolidated in Northern Nigeria, and Islam became a State religion.

Adeniyi further discussed some other factors that aided the spread of Islam in Ìgbómìnà land. Some of these factors included:

1. The religion conferred certain privileges on its adherents, such as fraternal brotherhood, full citizenship, freedom and exemption from taxes and tributes. It was an abomination for Muslim soldiers to either raid or enslave fellow Muslims, irrespective of race, colour, language and cultural background.
2. Islam has close affinity with some traditional Ìgbómìnà culture. The religion neither condemns nor eradicates some social institutions in the society such as polygamy, family bonds etc. Rather, it encouraged and modified them where the situation called for modification and adjustments. With this, embracing Islam was seen as not parting entirely with age-long traditions. Hence, the people embraced it in large numbers. There is no doubt, for instance, that the practice of Islam was always mixed, in varying degrees, with customs and practices associated with traditional religions, in different areas of present day Nigeria.
3. Islam had special appeal and respect for the rulers of most of the West African cities. For this reason, these rulers in turn popularized Islam and made it a state religion in their domains. Example of this was Oba Ayegusi in Oke-Ola Oro, who embraced Islam and made the religion fashionable to his chiefs and subjects in the 18th century.
4. The proximity of some Ìgbómìnà towns and villages to Ilorin and Bida (Islamic cities) made Islam to spread in Ìgbómìnà land both in peace and war. The roles of some Ilorin scholars, Quranic teachers and interpreters across Ìgbómìnà land in these regards were enormous. They include: Alhaji Oloruntele (Àrándùn), Alfa Ali (Àjàsé-Ìpo), Alfa Pupa Abdul-Rahim (Òmù-Àrán) etc. For instance, Alhaji Oba Suleiman Durotoye Abegunde of Òmù-Àrán was converted by the 9th Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji Zulu-Kanaini Gambari Mohammed.⁸⁷
5. The principle of equality before Allah as taught in Islam equally attracted Ìgbómìnà people to Islam. The Muslim missionaries maintained cordial and good relationship

with their followers. They professed equality before Allah and demonstrated humility in their mode of dressing, diet, housing, etc.

6. Extra ordinary miracle was another factor that helped in the spread of Islam in Ìgbómìnà land. There were proselytizer of mystical orders, *Sufi* masters whose spiritual gifts and standing impressed the Ìgbómìnà people and encouraged many of them to accept their teachings, values and attitudes. This made Islam to become appealing to the people who wanted practical and immediate solutions to their problems. Instead of patronizing herbalists, Muslim converts were encouraged to use concrete materials such as concoction, amulets, *hantu*, wrapped Arabic written materials (*tira*) to meet their physical and spiritual needs. An example of this was when Alfa Kuranga and others were invited from Ilorin to Oro in a time of drought to offer prayer (*Salatul Istisqa*). He offered the prayer and rain fell.
7. The early Muslim leaders also provided various food items to the non-Muslims during the Muslim festival, and during *Ramadan* (Muslim annual fasting). This equally made Islam attractive to the people.⁸⁸

With the foregoing, it is clear that Islam spread throughout Ìgbómìnà land through the efforts of Islamic scholars from Northern Nigeria and from Ilorin. Also, it came via Muslim traders from Bida, Ibadan, Lagos, Abeokuta, among others. At first, it spread peacefully at trading centers (market squares) where non-indigenous traders built their mosques. This explains why central mosques are found in Markets square in most of Ìgbómìnà towns and villages. Since the traders were usually the guests of the kings, *Oja Oba* (King's markets) are common in Ìgbómìnà land and these markets always have central mosques. Exmples are found in Ìgbàjà, Esiẹ, Ìdòfiàn, Òkè-Onígín, Òmùpo, Àjàsé-Ìpo, Owu, Iwó, Babańlá, etc.

2.6 Christianity in Ìgbómìnà Land

The earliest attempt to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in Ìgbómìnà land as a whole was the visitation of an American Baptist missionary, W.H Clarke who was invited by the Òràngún of Ìlálá, His Royal Majesty Oba Olajojo Agboluaje in December 1857.⁸⁹ Oba Agboluaje did this so as to enhance peace in his domain as he had been made to understand that the missionaries preached peace in other parts of Yòrùbá land, since inter-tribal wars were common at that time. This white man preached for three days in Ìlálá-Òràngún before he left for Offa. Nonetheless, as earlier noted above, a prominent Ìgbómìnà indigene was associated with early evangelization of Ìgbómìnà land. His name was Samuel Lasehinde, an ex-slave, who was also an indigene of Òrálá-Ìgbómìnà. He preached in his home town (Òrálá Ìgbómìnà) in 1894.⁹⁰ Like Daniel Osanaiye in Yagba land,⁹¹ so also was Lasehinde in Ìgbómìnà land.

Another ex-slave associated with the spread of the gospel in Ìgbómìnà land in those early days was Bamigboye, an indigene of Ipetu-Ìgbómìnà. He preached in his home town before moving to Òmù-Àrán (the present headquarters of Ìrèpòdún Local Government Area of Kwara State) around 1897, Joshua Oyewole of Ejemu Compound Ìlálá-Òràngún was another man who took active part in the spread of Christianity in Igbmina land in 1904.⁹² Nonetheless, Joshua Oyewole was not an ex-slave. He became a Christian when he was an apprentice sawyer at Kudeti, Ibadan. Jonathan Opadina (later Rev Canon) was another prominent Ìlálá-Òràngún indigene in this regards. He was posted as a CMS Catechist to Ìlálá-Òràngún on the 18th of August 1911. He had earlier been the catechist of the CMS Church in Omofe, Ilesa for nine years.

In September 1912, the gospel of Christ got to Esię in the present Ìrèpòdún Local Government, Kwara State. This was through the activities of the CMS.⁹³ It was this same year, 1912, that the Gospel entered Òrò-Àgó in the present Ìfèlódún Local Government Area of Kwara State, through the missionary activities of the SIM, Rev. Guy Playfair, an SIM

missionary entered Òrò-Àgó through Egbe, precisely, in December, 1912.⁹⁴ Thus, Òrò-Àgó became the first SIM mission station in Ìgbómìnà Land, Kwara State.

One could wonder why the gospel of Jesus did not penetrate Ìgbómìnà land through Ilorin that eventually became the Kwara State capital. The reason for this has been given by Omotoye who noted that by the end of the 19th Century, Islam had been entrenched as a dominant religion in Ilorin. According to him, immediately after the death of Afonja, Islam was imposed on Ilorin by the Emirate system of government in 1823. The Emir tried to protect Islam jealously from the incursion of Christianity which was gradually coming from the Southern part of the country.⁹⁵ However, some European missionaries made occasional visits to Ilorin before 1900, but their request to spread the Christian faith was turned down by the Emirs. Some of these white missionaries include Rev: T. J Bowen of the Baptist Church based in Ogbomoso who visited Ilorin in 1855, Rev. Adolphus Mann of CMS, M. T. Lumbley, Lackett, C.C Smith, Dr. Green and Rev. Tugwell.⁹⁶ Their efforts were futile because they were politely turned back and rejected by the Emirs. Nonetheless, the imposition of colonial rule in 1900 assisted the Christian missionaries to get foothold at Ilorin with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, the propagation of Christianity in the pre-colonial era in Ilorin were the efforts of some itinerant Ijesa textile dealers (*Òsómàáló*) and some railway construction employees who were Christians from Southern parts of Nigeria. This was during the construction of railway from the south to the north. These people met regularly on Sundays to fellowship regardless of their denominational differences.⁹⁷ Thus, the activities of Nigerian Christians in the spread of Christianity in Nigeria (Ìgbómìnà Land inclusive), should not be discountenanced.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE EMERGENCE AND THE GROWTH OF SIM/ECWA MISSION IN ÌGBÓMÌNÀ LAND

3.1 The Coming of SIM/ECWA into Nigeria

The coming of SIM/ECWA into Ìgbómìnà land cannot be treated in isolation from the coming of SIM/ECWA into Nigeria. SIM took root from the Evangelical Mission Movement of the European and the North America Societies, especially, the Toronto area of Canada in the 18th and 19th centuries. Specifically, the vision that gave birth to SIM/ECWA was of a Scotch woman, Mrs. Margaret Gowans of St. James' Square Church in Canada in the late 1890s.¹ This woman was given to missions. She spent years praying for the neglected mission fields in the world, especially the Sudan in Africa. She eventually persuaded her son, Walter, to go as a missionary to the Sudan, allegedly with a population of six million people at that time. This same woman passed the burden of the Sudan to Mr. Rowland Victor Bingham and convincingly encouraged him to join his son who was ready to go to the Sudan.² Bingham caught the vision and was ready for the mission as he joined Walter Gowans to go to the Sudan. These young men were joined later by Thomas Kent, a friend of Walter Gowans.

What was evident was that Walter Gowan was the leader of these three pioneers, given his family background in mission, zeal, faith and his leading pioneering venture; yet Rowland V. Bingham is given the credit as the father of SIM, just because he lived longer than the other two pioneers and persisted even at the face of oppositions. This was why Falk called him 'the Founder of the Sudan Interior Mission.'³

3.1.1 The First Attempt 1893-1894

The first attempt of reaching out to Nigeria started when Walter left Canada for England in June 1893 but did not succeed in securing any support from the Church or any missionary society. However, in October, 1893, Bingham and Thomas Kent joined him. These

three persons did not form any mission team but went out as individuals with a common burden, seeking obedience to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18 to go into the whole world to preach the gospel of Christ. They left for West Africa via a ship in 1893 without any sponsorship. Olatayo in his book: *ECWA Root, Birth and Growth* remarked that they were prepared to loose their lives for the Sudan.⁴

Besides the fact that they had no home support before they embarked on such dreadful mission, they were confronted with disappointment stories of failures and death awaiting them in the Sudan. Stories such as that of the death of Mr. Graham Wilmot Brook and Mr. Robinson who had lived and died in the Sudan were related to them.⁵ In England also, they were told similar stories that the Central Sudan was a closed field, yet these frightening stories did not deter them..⁶ Thus, it becomes crystal clear that these pioneers were spiritually prepared to face any difficulty or danger that might come their way as they embarked on reaching the Sudan with the Gospel of Christ.

It was with this resolute spirit that they set out from England on the Steamer S.S Accra on November 4th, 1893 and landed in Lagos, West Africa after a month, precisely, on the 4th December, 1893.⁷ On board of the S.S. Accra was the officer commanding the Royal Niger Company's troops who treated them with disdain when he learned that these pioneers were missionaries. His name was Captain May. He was also of the opinion that going to the Sudan would be a futile exercise. So, he was determined to stop them by all means. He said to them:

I understand you propose to go up from Lagos Overland into the Niger Company's territory. If you do, I shall have the pleasure of arresting you, and marching you back across the border.⁸

As if this was not enough, these pioneers on their way to Lagos, at Sierra Leone met with the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Wesleyans, the United Brethren and the Missionary Alliance. From them, they learnt about the death of over 50 missionaries within 20 years.⁹ More so, the problem of discouragement was not over even when they landed in Lagos.

Precisely, a missionary colleague, superintendent of the Methodist Mission in West Africa who invited them for a breakfast, told them frankly that they can never see the Sudan.¹⁰ This statement was gloomy and discouraging, unexpected from the angle where encouragement was needed the most. Indeed these words together with those frightening stories that these pioneers earlier heard were enough to send them detouring and abandoning the Sudan, but they did not!

The problem of transportation was apparent for these pioneers. There were no good roads except the little native trails through the dense forests on the coast and through the long grass of the interior. The only means of transport was to have all goods carried on the head of the load carriers. More so, financial problem was there as these men had no sponsorship and had to sell their belongings to have some money to travel with. However, how to get their little currency changed to Nigerian currency as at that time was another big problem that these pioneers had to battle with. Cowry shells were used in the interior. Two hundred cowry shells were equivalent to one British penny as at that time. Beside the fact that to get the currency changed was a problem, these missionaries were only having thirty British pounds on them at their arrival in Lagos. As a result, they had to stay back in Lagos for a week praying for God's financial support. Their prayer was confirmed answered when Salman of Toronto, Canada sent five hundred dollars to them.¹¹ Besides, the missionaries' money was useless in the interior as only trade by barter was known to the villagers. So, they had to turn their cash into goods, such as cotton, cloth, knives, and other things to attract the indigenes in the interior.

Keeping well was also a very great problem, because the strange and hot climate was hostile to them. The native food caused great harm to these missionaries' body system and as a result, they constantly took ill with dysentery and malaria fever. Health problem was their greatest problem. Being in Lagos for only a little over three weeks, Mr. Bingham was stricken down by fever. These missionaries believed in healing without using drugs before they came to

Nigeria, but had to change this view when confronted with severe sicknesses that refuse to heal after series of prayers. Bingham was the first among the three to go to a clinic in Lagos.¹²

As a result of Mr. Bingham's ill health, he was asked to remain in Lagos to recuperate and also to keep up communications and receive supplies that may come for them, while Mr. Gowans and Mr. Kent went forward into the Sudan. However, Mr. Bingham was offered a job by the CMS in Lagos in view of their heavy loss of lives which led to their shortage of staff.

Mr. Gowans and Mr. Kent left Lagos in April 1894 for the Lake Chad, via Kano and got to Bida in June 1894. There were no real roads but foot paths, the heat was excessive and they had much trouble keeping their carriers together. At Bida, it was necessary for Kent to return to Lagos for provisions, while Mr. Gowans proceeded onward to Kano. Mr. Kent arrived back in Lagos by the end of July, 1894 and returned inward to Bida again in early September. He reached Bida on October 3rd, 1894.

Going beyond Bida was a big problem for Mr. Gowans. The problem was how to get reliable carriers of his luggage and, and also the problem of slave-raiding wars of the Muslim Emirs of Sokoto and KontagÒra. Thus, there was no way he could get to Kano. In spite of these and many more difficulties, Mr. Gowans pushed towards to Kano but got himself trapped and besieged by the Emir of KontagÒra in one little town. At the capture of this little town, Mr. Gowans had his provisions confiscated with a promise of cash in return, but later on, he was sent slaves by the Emir of KontagÒra which he refused to take.

As reported by Fleck, on reaching Zaria, Gowans took ill with dysentery. He met a party of semi-scientific-explorers: Mr. Robinson, Mr. Bonner and Dr. Tonkins on November 4, 1894.¹³ Dr. Tonkins advised Gowans to return home to Canada, telling him that if he did not, he would die. On his journey back to Lagos southward, just 40 miles from Zaria, Mr. Gowans died on the 17th November 1894 at Ghirku.¹⁴ He was buried by a faithful *Kru* boy who remained with him after all his (Gowans) carrier had left him. This same boy was the one who

took the bad news to Bingham who had come to Ogbomosho from Lagos on evangelistic mission. This boy came along with Gowans property as well.

Worse still, Mr. Kent started his return trip to Kano in early September and reached Bida on the 3rd of October 1894. Due to transportation problems and local wars, he was compelled to stay back in Bida. From Bida, Kent wrote on November, 30th 1894, stating his expectation of starting his trek the following day, but took ill and died in Bida on the 8th of December 1894.¹⁵ He died in the presence of two other young missionaries who were making another attempt from England to get into the Sudan. They were Mr. J. Holt and Mr. Joseph Lomax. These were the men who helped to send the bad news to Bingham via Rev. E.O. Smith of Southern Baptist Church Ogbomosho. Mr. Bingham got the sad news of Mr. Kent's death on the 24th January 1895.

On this sad note Mr. Bingham had no option but to return back to England. While still at Ogbomosho with the Southern Baptist Church, Mr. Bingham and his friend Mr. Lloyd reasoned together thus:

We had been convinced some months before this, of the necessity of a definite plan if we really want to get a foothold in the Sudan. We saw the necessity of a chain of stations, rather than the making of a great leap beyond all possible working communications. But we had no one at home to send in men, not even resources. It is better to return home, so that one might voice the need and issue the call for the Sudan. I (Bingham) had no one to consult with or take advice from. Our expedition was generally written down as a failure.¹⁶

Few months later, precisely in May 1895, Bingham and Lloyd returned to England. Later, he, (Bingham) got to Canada to visit Mrs. Gowans. Bingham described such moment of meeting her as a pathetic one. She shook his hand and would not let go for some moment with her eyes filled with tears. Then she broke the silence by signifying that she preferred that her son died in serving God than disobeying him.¹⁷ These were words of a woman of faith who was willing to sacrifice her son for the Sudan. Her only prayer was that God should send another messenger of the Gospel to the village where her son died.

This dramatic account of the experience of the SIM pioneers on the West Coast of Africa, though heart breaking; one cannot help but hold one's breath at the triumph of martyrdom and the sacrifice for a cause. In spite of all hazards, nothing deterred them. These pioneers were only feeble human against the formidable and impregnable natural barriers. These young, unmarried men left North America and England for the Sudan without any name, except for the heart that burned for the Sudan. Their souls were knitted together by a common burden ventured into pioneering missions in the Sudan. It was when they were at Lagos that they decided to call their burden the name: THE SUDAN INTERIOR MISSION.

All that happened in the first attempt to open up the Sudan with the gospel of Christ made Bingham to have a reflection and took some decision before he ventured into going back to the Sudan. Firstly, he revised his earlier view on "faith healing" or "bodily healing." He did this not only to enable him gain access to medical facilities but also to help millions of people dying without medical attention in the Sudan. With this decision, he (Bingham) joined hospital service in Cleveland USA to have some medical experience. In 1895, he enrolled at Dr. Simpson's Missionary Training College in New York where his two companions, Gowans and Kent, graduated in 1893.¹⁸ Upon his graduation, he accepted a pastoral position in a Baptist Church in Newburgh, New York in 1896. Even with this new pastoral responsibility, his heart was still with the Sudan and mission. It was on this note that he got a leave of absence to promote mission for the Sudan. All attempts to load on the Baptist Church the burden of the Sudan failed because the Baptist body had its hand full with existing responsibilities to China and other mission fields.

As a result of this, coupled with the fact that a Presbyterian lady gave him (Bingham) a hundred dollars to support his mission to the Sudan, Bingham concluded that God intended that this new foreign missionary work should be nondenominational. Also, in reflecting over the background of his dead colleagues; Mr. Gowans a Presbyterian, Mr. Kent a Congregationalist

while he Bingham a Baptist, Bingham was fully convinced after much prayer that the new mission was interdenominational.

On this thought, Bingham founded the first interdenominational Mission Council. This took place on the 27th of May, 1898, just three days after his wedding to the former Miss Helen E. Blair of Aberfogle.¹⁹ Of the eight men who, thus joined hands at the first council, two were Anglicans, one Methodist, two were Congregationalists or Independents, one Presbyterian, and one Mennonite. Bingham was then appointed the secretary of the Mission and Toronto became the headquarters of the Mission. Eventually, Bingham resigned his position as a pastor with the Baptist Church to run this new mission council, not depending on the funds already contributed to the mission, but on God who had placed the burden of the Sudan on him.²⁰

Given this background, it can be observed that Bingham gradually formulated goals and objectives of the Mission through difficult circumstances and personal experiences. It was with this rich background that Bingham felt it was time again to launch out into the Sudan. The new Mission Council formulated goals and objectives of such a mission under the name - Africa Industrial Mission (A. I.M).

3.12 The Second Attempt (1899-1900)

The Africa Industrial Mission decided to resume missionary work in the Sudan, but with a difference from the first attempt in 1893. Between February and March of 1899, the Mission decided to send out two missionaries, first to British East Africa and then to Tripoli, North Africa, and finally to the Sudan. These two missionaries were: Mr. Herbert Lawrence (a Canadian and a graduate of Toronto Bible Institute) and Mr. A.J. Moline, (a Swedish American). They were sent out to study the methods of the Industrial Missions in British East Africa with the Zambezi Industrial Mission (ZIM) with the view to utilizing some phases of the industrial work in the Sudan. The main reason for sending these two missionaries to the Zambezi Industrial Mission was because their story was a success.²¹

After their training in British East Africa, they (Moline and Lawrence) were sent to Tripoli North Africa, to study Hausa language in preparation for the Sudan. A colony of Hausa traders were residing in Tripoli during that time. Upon the completion of these assignments, these two young men were ready to be sent to the Sudan to open up the second attempt, but there was a long rift between them which could not be reconciled like the one that broke out between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark in Acts of the Apostles (15:36-41). On this account, the Council decided to send Bingham to form and lead this second expedition to the Sudan, hoping that the two feuding pioneers would be reconciled.

On the 13th of January 1899, Bingham left New York for England. He left his wife, Helen and his first daughter who was just two weeks old. He embarked on this journey along with Mr. Albert, Taylor.²² On his arrival in England, Bingham was unable to reconcile the differences between the two workers, and so it was necessary, therefore, that one retire. Mr. Herbert Lawrence was dropped and he returned to Canada. However, these three missionaries (Rowland Bingham, Albert Taylor and A.J. Moline) arrived in Lagos on Tuesday, March 13th 1900.

In Lagos, they met with an old missionary friend of Bingham who arranged a place for them to stay. However, the old missionary discouraged Bingham's companions against making any attempt to reach the Sudan. Worse still, Bingham, the leader of the team was stricken down again with fever. This made Bingham to reaffirm his belief that although God can heal in a divine way, medical assistance was not wrong. As a result of his sickness, Bingham was advised by a Doctor to return home. He left Lagos on board via SS Edward Bohlen sea vessel that he came with.²³ He left behind his colleagues at Lagos to continue their journey to the Sudan. Bingham was disappointed and full of sorrow about himself, counting it as a failure and a waste of money altogether. However, he hoped that the journey had not been in vain, hoping that his colleagues would carry on with the work.

Bingham remarked that that period was the darkest time of his life. He expressed that it would have been easier for him to die in Africa than that homeward journey. Everything seemed to have failed altogether.²⁴ It looked as though his missionary career had ended. Bingham was still in this dark moment of his life when he learnt that his two companions, Moline and Taylor who promised to carry on, had arrived England via the next ship. Of course, they had listened to the discouragement comments from older missionaries and on short notice sold out all equipments and followed Bingham home. As a result of this failure, the Council met and encouraged Mr. Bingham to take steps to continue the work in Central Sudan by prayerfully looking for the right men for the mission.

However, like John Mark in the Book of Acts of the Apostles (16:36-41), one of the returned missionaries Mr. Albert Taylor was willing to return to the Sudan again. Moreover, the Council got a good news that permission for traveling up the Niger had been gained. On account of this, the Council was preparing to send another batch of missionaries by September, 1900. However, this was not possible until 1901.

3.1.3 The Third Attempt 1901-1902

In November 1900, Bingham presented to the Council four men who were willing to try a third attempt to propagate the Gospel of Christ in the Central Sudan. These four men were Mr. Albert Taylor (one of the two men that ran back in the second attempt), Mr. Charles Robinson of Newburg New York, Rev. E. Anthony from Michigan and Mr. Alex W. Banfield. Before then, two of them had been sent to Tripoli (North Africa) to learn Hausa language. Those sent were Taylor and Robinson.²⁵ After serious prayer, these four men sailed from Liverpool to Nigeria, on the 30th October 1901. They sailed with Sir Frederick Lugard, the governor of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. They reached Forcados at the mouth of the Niger River on the 18th November 1901 and later sailed up the Niger to Lokoja.

As recorded by Mason, in his book titled: *Literature Outreach in Nigeria, History of SIM Literature Work 1901-1980*, these missionaries rented temporary quarters in Lokoja where they lived for about four months while prospecting for a mission site. While here, they made one seemingly extensive tour westward to Kabba. They left Lokoja on March 15th 1902 and travelled by boat up the Niger to Edoji and then to Patigi, 3 miles inland. They set up temporary quarters in Edoji while arrangements were made for property and building at Patigi. They succeeded in erecting four huts at Patigi, with the permission of the chief. Thus, Patigi became the first preaching station for this mission in the Central Sudan in 1902.²⁶

Bida was the second mission station in 1903. It was opened by Mr. and Mrs. Homuth, Mr. Charls Waddell, Mr. Albert Taylor and Mr. W. Spinks. The third mission station was opened at Wushishi in 1904 by Dr. Andrew P. Stirret and Rev. E. F Rice. It must be mentioned that these three mission stations (Patigi, Bida, and Wushishi) were in Nupeland. However, Turaki noted that the experience of the mission at these stations being predominantly Muslim and also being unresponsive to the Gospel of Christ, made the mission to change its mind about the primary goal of reaching the Muslims with the Gospel of Christ.²⁷ This change led the mission to emphasize evangelizing the African Traditional Religion (ATR) adherents. Thus, the mission launched out to Yagbaland, in the present Kogi State. Egbe Station was opened in 1908 by Rev. Tommie Titcombe. The reception of the Gospel of Christ was overwhelming at Egbe because the area was predominantly occupied by African Traditional Religion adherents, and also, because Christianity had been introduced into Ogga, a village not too far from Egbe before the coming of the SIM missionaries to the land. As earlier noted, one Daniel Orisanaiye, a freed slave who had returned home from Abeokuta and Lagos started gathering his people and teaching them the words of God from his Yòrùbá Bible.²⁸ The missionaries were indeed surprised to see this. This emphasizes the fact that the roles of Africans in evangelizing Africa

should not be down played. It was from Egbe (Yagbaland) that the gospel entered Ìgbómìnà land in 1912.



Walter Gowans

Thomas Kent

Rowland Victor Bingham

SIM/ECWA Pioneer Missionaries

Source: <https://www.ecwausa.org/history-of-ecwa-church> 21/05/2015

3.2 The First SIM/ECWA Mission Station in Ìgbómìnà Land

The credit of bringing SIM/ECWA mission to Ìgbómìnà land was that of Rev. Guy William Playfair, otherwise known, as Òyìnbó Oro or Alábojútó. SIM/ECWA actually came into Ìgbómìnà land in December 1912. However, in 1911, Guy Playfair was accompanied by Rev. Tommie Titcombe to survey the land of Òrò-Àgó (the first town to receive the pioneer SIM/ECWA missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land) with a view to evangelizing the people. The arrival of this pioneer missionary (Guy Playfair) yielded good result as the seed of Christian evangelism was planted and it started to germinate.

The emergence of SIM/ECWA mission in Ìgbómìnà land covers between 2nd and 7th decades (1911-1950), of the arrival of the Mission in Nigeria, as grouped by Turaki.²⁹ The opening of SIM missions in Sudan generally covered eighth decades (1893-1976). One

hundred and seventeen (117) mission stations were opened between the 1st and the 8th decades. Out of them, only five were opened in Ìgbómìnà land. These five stations were opened in Òrò-Àgó in 1912, Agunjin in 1916, Ìgbàjà in 1933, Òmù-Àrán in 1943, and lastly in Òkè-Ode in 1947. Details of the SIM missionary activities in these areas will be discussed shortly in this chapter.

As at 1912, Òrò-Àgó was first of all placed under the Muslim rulers of Lafiagi, Nupeland by the colonial administration. The area was predominantly traditional and was quite responsive to the gospel as introduced by Rev. Guy Playfair. Òrò-Àgó station became a successful and great centre for missionary activities throughout Ìgbómìnà land. Agunjin station was the 17th station opened by the SIM in Nigeria.³⁰ As at that time, Agunjin was under Ilorin province. It was opened by Norman Davis and Rev. Lloyd Donaldson. This area was predominantly occupied by African Traditional Religion adherents and was opened to the gospel but with increasing Muslim influence from the Nupe of Lafiagi. SIM School of the Prophets was opened in this station but the station was closed down and later moved to Ìgbàjà.

Ìgbàjà station was the next Ìgbómìnà land that was open to SIM mission. This was in the 4th decade (1931-1940). It was opened in 1933 by Rev. and Mrs. A. Hunt and Rev. and Mrs. W.C. McIvor.³¹ This area was predominantly traditional too but with increasing Muslim influence. Ìgbàjà later grew to become a great educational centre of the Mission with the first theological college of SIM opened in 1941. Another town in Ìgbómìnà land where SIM station was opened was Òmù-Àrán in the 6th decade (1941-1950). Precisely, Òmù-Àrán station was opened in 1943 by Dr. and Mrs. R.V. Herbold. Òmù-Àrán had a large number of A.T.R adherents and quite opened to the gospel. A leprosarium centre was eventually built in this area by the Mission in 1943.

Òkè-Ode was another town in Ìgbómìnà land where SIM mission station was opened. This was in the sixth decade as well, precisely in 1947 by Rev. and Mrs. W.C. McIVor. Like

Agunjin and Ìgbàjà, this area was predominantly traditional but with an increasing Muslim influence.

Thus, it becomes very clear that these five towns (Òrò-Àgó, Agunjin, Ìgbàjà, Òmù-Àrán and Òkè-Ode) were the first set of towns where SIM/ECWA stations were opened in Ìgbómìnà land. It was from these towns that the gospel of Christ through SIM/ECWA spread to other towns and villages in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara state. Today, many towns and villages have ECWA churches. Thus, from her humble beginning, SIM/ECWA has grown to a remarkable level in Ìgbómìnà land.

3.3 Òrò-Àgó: The Cradle of SIM/ECWA Mission Station in Ìgbómìnà Land

Oro was the name of this settlement before *Ago* was added to it to become Òrò-Àgó, so as to differentiate it from *Oro*, a town in Ìrèpòdún Local Government, Kwara State. It is 142.4km from Ilorin, the Kwara State Capital.³² According to Afolabi, Ajagun and Obobo were the co-founders of this town. Ajagun came from Ketu now a place in Benin Republic when it was under old Oyo Empire.³³ He came to settle in Ita-Ajagun near the present site about the middle of the 15th century so as to avoid being ruled by his brother who became the Alaketu of Ketu Kingdom (then part of Oyo empire). Òrò-Àgó is a settlement located in the South east part of Ilorin. As earlier mentioned, this area was administratively put under Lafiagi Division in 1909 before the arrival of Rev. Guy Playfair in 1912.³⁴ Òrò-Àgó area as at that time included Oreke to the North, Omugo to the South, Owa-Kajola to the East, and Ahun to the West. Omugo and Ahun are bounded respectively by Olla and Okoloke. However, for clarity on the missionary journey, Òrò-Àgó and its environs comprise of Ahun, Oyatedo, Ago, Oreke-Oke, Oreke-Isale, Ago-Olomo, Kajola, Irabon, Ajegunle, Okeowa, Okedaba and Omugo, etc.³⁵

The ancient people of Òrò-Àgó lived in different caves and high ground, such as Ore, Aworoko and other hilltops. As reported by the Centenary Committee, a British officer called F. Mandale visited Òrò-Àgó in the early twentieth century, precisely in 1909 and established

the infrastructure for the running of a local government.³⁶ He built a Rest House and a prison yard at Òrò-Àgó. Going by this record, Mr. F. Mandale was the first white man to visit Òrò-Àgó before the coming of Rev. Guy Playfair into the town two years later. However, Mr. F. Mandale's mission was not evangelism but politics. The next District Officer that took over from him removed these infrastructures back to Lafiagi. By 1912, TAG Buggeon (also known as Dongo) became the District Officer in Lafiagi. This was the very year (1912) the first SIM missionary came to settle among the people. The people of Òrò-Àgó speak the Ìgbómìnà dialect. They are part of the *Mo yee* group. Other *Mo yee* group that are not too far from Òrò-Àgó include: Idera, Afin, Ikosin, Owode-Ofaro, Alabe, Oreke, Òra, Babańlá, Òkè-Ode, Agunjin, etc.

3.4 The Pioneer SIM Missionary in Ìgbómìnà land

According to Adeniyi, annotated by Ayanda, in a book: *The Beginning of Christianity in Òrò-Àgó*, the first visit of the SIM missionaries to Òrò-Àgó was in September 1911 from Egbe.⁴⁵ These missionaries were Rev. Tommie Titcombe, Rev. Guy Playfair and others. They toured Aiyetoro, Okedaba, Odo, Omugo, Oke-Ayin before they returned to Egbe. This visit could be called missionary surveillance of the new areas to be reached with the gospel of Christ. The second visit or survey was when Mr. Rutherford came alone. Rutherford was an SIM missionary too. He chose a place at Okedaba where he would settle on his return. He went back to Egbe and got information that his food had arrived from America and so he had to set out to Patigi. Unfortunately, on arrival at Patigi, he became sick and had to return to America. He, however, did not survive this sickness; he died thereafter.⁴⁶

William Guy Playfair, the man that brought Christianity to Òrò-Àgó and its environs was born in the New Prairie town of Baldur in the Manitoba province of Canada on the 12th September 1882.⁴⁷ Guy was one out of the six children of his godly parents. When he was

about 10 years old, he read the story of David Livingstone and thereafter conceived the idea that he would someday become a missionary in Africa. At the age of thirteen, he was converted at an old fashioned Methodist camp meeting, but shortly afterwards, he became discouraged, thinking he had committed unpardonable sin. He lived under this guilty feeling for several years. Despite reading his Bible faithfully, he was still afraid to attend church services.

According to Turaki, Guy William Playfair joined the SIM mission in the year 1911.⁴⁸ Before he made up his mind to become a missionary, Bingham, Playfair was a great athlete who won the championship in the millrace and then carried off the honours in cycling all in the province of Manitoba.⁴⁹ Playfair's ambition was not only to be a leading athlete in his own province, but to win world honours, and he might have won them, but his conviction to become a missionary in Africa would not permit that. In the little country place where he (Playfair) made his home, God saved him and at once awakened in him the desire to win other souls. With the same care he showed in his preparations to run the race for championship, Guy Playfair began to prepare for soul winning. He went to the Moody Bible Institute for Bible training in preparation for the mission. It was while in this school that he heard the call to the Sudan and applied to SIM to be sent out as a missionary.⁵⁰

Guy Playfair joined the SIM, and that same year (1911), he joined the missionaries on the field at Patigi and later proceeded to Egbe to join Rev. Tommie Titcombe where he learned Yòrùbá language so as to be able to communicate with the indigenes.⁵¹ As earlier noted, on the 7th July, 1911, Playfair came to Òrò-Àgó for a brief missionary surveillance. During this time, he and his entourage toured Aiyetoro, Okedaba Odo, Oke Ayin and Omugo before they went back to Egbe. Oba Buraimoh Ariyunkeye was the traditional ruler on the throne at Òrò-Àgó at that time (1900-1925).⁵² In this first visit, Playfair and his entourage slept in the house of Ooju of Aiyetoro, (this was the title given to the traditional head of Aiyetoro ward as at that time). Playfair and Ooju of Aiyetoro later (after Playfair's permanent settlement in Òrò-Àgó) became

friends as the white man was always visiting his (Ooju) hut regularly while he was gradually settling down at the bank of River Arigun. Not long after that, Rev. Tommie Titcombe, popularly called *Òyìnbó Egbe* or *Alábojútó Egbe* and Rev Guy Playfair came to Òrò-Àgó to commission the commencement of SIM missionary activities in Òrò-Àgó and Ìgbómìnà land in general. They prayed and carried out reconnoitering of the area and thereafter went back to Egbe to consolidate on their findings.

On the 7th December, the following year 1912, Playfair came back fully to commence his missionary work. He approached Oba Ariyunkeye for a parcel of land to open his mission station and commence his work. His request was turned down. The traditional council refused to oblige the white man until the District Officer in Lafiagi, Mr. TAG Budgeon (aka: *Dongo*) directed the Oloro to grant him his request.⁵³ The reason why Playfair's request was turned down was because the indigenes felt that the activities of these white men would deny parents the services of their children on their farms and their participation in Egúngún festival. Playfair settled beside River Arigun but he always trekked particularly to Aiyetoro for visitation and for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As time went by, he became the best friend to Ooju of Aiyetoro as noted earlier. He was so friendly to him that one day he killed a big bush animal (*oge*) and sent a big portion of it to Ooju of Aiyetoro. This amazed the family of Ooju who deeply appreciated the gift.⁵⁴

Thereafter, Playfair was fully welcomed and accepted into the people's midst. Despite this, he was allotted a portion of land where there were plenty of snakes, because the indigenes wanted to see what would become of him. But, with the help of some indigenes, he built a wooden hut for himself. He later transformed the hut into a mud building on the site of the present Christian Commercial College, Òrò-Àgó. He then began to preach with all enthusiasm from house to house, telling the people that Jesus was the only saviour that could deliver them from any punishment after their death.

He emphasized in his teaching that idols and black powers were abominations to God, the creator of heaven and earth. His preaching was very easy for him because he had learnt the people's language to some extent and could communicate with it fluently, although he could not pronounce some words correctly. For instance, his constant reference to *Olubala*, *Olubala* (adulterated *Olugbala*) meaning 'Saviour' made the people to refer to him as *Eyibo Olugbala*, meaning the white man who was saviour. Of course, he constantly explained to the people that he was not the saviour but that he was only preaching about the saviour who is in heaven, pleading for all those who believe in him and preparing comfortable places of life everlasting for them after death. Another popular name given to Playfair by the people was *Eyibo Alábojútó*, meaning the white man who goes about seeing things for himself. This was because he visited house to house while preaching the gospel.

At this period of history, a greater number of the indigenes were living on the hills and caves for fear of slave raiders, inter-tribal wars and perpetrators of other harmful inhuman activities of the olden days. For a long time, Oba Ariyunkeye, the monarch of the land who the missionaries met on the throne and his kinsmen were still living on Oke-Ofa hills. There were just some dispersed and scattered houses on the plain called Ago today. Despite the distance between these people's dwelling places, this white missionary used to trek to all the different settlements in the area preaching the gospel. Playfair gradually helped and encouraged the inhabitants from their various hills of abode to move down to the present site of Òrò-Àgó town.

In discussing Rev. Playfair's hobbies and pleasure time, the book: *Ancient Paths; Christianity in Òrò-Àgó and Environ*, written by the Centenary Committee, noted that he had flair and interest for speaking local Nigerian languages although not fluently. He could speak and understand Yorùbá, Hausa, Fulani, Gwari, Nupe and few other Nigerian languages.⁵⁵ This additional quality greatly influenced his missionary activities positively. He was a stout, strong man. He was an athlete and a hunter. He had a rifle with which he used to kill bush animals,

big and small. He, at different times, killed such animals like antelopes, monkeys, huge snakes and even buffaloes. He used to give out the greater part of the meat of such animals to the people.

Playfair, on numerous occasions also presented gifts of different dresses sent to him from Canada, as well as cards with beautiful pictures to the children for Sunday School Class. This attribute made him so close to the people of Òrò-Àgó and the environs among whom he lived and served. This white man enjoyed eating local dishes such as yam (*Isu*), mixed yam flour (*Oka*), pounded yam (*Iyan*), white bean bread (*Ekuru*), and was equally good at sipping the improperly-grinded corn made in form of oat cereal (*Eko Eda*),⁵⁶ a type of food which many Nigerians do not easily adjust to.



Rev. Guy William Playfair (1882-1963)

Source: The Ancient Path; Christianity in Òrò-Àgó and Environs. 30/08/2014

After three years of active service in Ìgbómìnà land, precisely in 1915, Playfair decided to go back to Canada on vacation. Thus, at the age of 33, he decided to get married before returning back to Africa. (Missionaries in Africa were not allowed then, to marry any lady except such a lady had lived in Africa for at least one year). At home, he met a lady with

whom he attended the Bible school in America together. Her name was Joyce Nethercot who had lived in Cameroon and was also on vacation. The two of them agreed to get married before they returned back to Africa. Their plan was actualized. They got married and were very happy they did. On arrival in Òrò-Àgó, the people were surprised to see a white woman accompanying Playfair as he returned from vacation. She was Mrs. Joyce Playfair. Their marriage was blessed with two children, a boy and a girl: Clyde and Ruth.⁵⁷ Joyce was indeed a great blessing to Òrò-Àgó and the environs in the mission work.



1ST ECWA Òrò-Àgó (built with stones)

Source: Picture taken by the researcher at Oro-Ago on 17/12/2013

3.5 The Strategies Employed for Evangelism in Ìgbómìnà Land

The SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà Land were dedicated evangelists. They knew that evangelism is the heart desire (Heart Beat) of God and so they dedicated their lives for it. Indeed, some of them died and were buried in Ìgbómìnà land. Among them was Miss Miller who died of snake bite and was buried in Òrò-Àgó in the 1920s.⁵⁸ These missionaries knew that effective strategies were needed in order to meet up with the demands in the mission field. Their strategies were many, more like Jesus and Paul who used various strategies in their evangelism.⁵⁹ Indeed, strategies are needed for any meaningful evangelism. This was the

submission of Omotoye in one of his articles.⁶⁰ Some of the strategies used by these missionaries were as follows:

Intercession Strategy: Majorly, prayer was an instrument used to ‘break the fallow ground’ in Ìgbómìnà land. The missionaries interceded for the Ìgbómìnà people before God. Like Jesus and Paul (Eph. 6:18, I Thess. 5:17), these missionaries prayed through and got answers to their prayers. SIM was said to be By Prayer: this was the slogan and all SIM missionaries knew this well and never joked with prayers. In support of this claim, Duewel in his book: *Touch the World Through Prayer* has noted that:

The task of world evangelism is primarily dependent on witness and prayer. Prayer must prepare the way of evangelization. Prayer must saturate and cover the work of evangelization. Prayer must follow-up and conserve the fruit of evangelization, only as the church pray will there be sufficient harvesters giving themselves to world evangelization and world harvest.⁶¹

Like Paul the Apostle, these missionaries prayed regularly for the salvation of the non-Christians, new converts and the church. They depended on God for the grace to achieve His goal of evangelism. Prayer was paramount in their activities. With this strategy, they prepared the way for soul winning. They knew very well that prayer must precede all other strategies. Besides praying individually, the SIM missionaries met regularly to pray. On many occasions, the missionaries were requested to offer prayer for rain, especially during drought. Heavy rain was always the result of such prayer. On some other occasion, prayers were used to quench the attacks via charms and enchantments from the people, particularly, from the enchanters (example of such is given in chapter three of this research work). Records reveal that without prayers of intercession, SIM would have no records of successes in Ìgbómìnà land.⁶²

Lifestyle Strategy: According to Fernando in his book: *Leadership Lifestyle*; a good life style is a good weapon of evangelism.⁶³ Paul admonished the Corinthian and the Thessalonian Christians to follow his steps (I Cor. 11:1, II Thess. 3:9). The SIM missionaries were conscious of the fact that their ways of lives preached the gospel of Christ more than their words. For this

reason, they carefully lived their lives after the pattern of Christ to the point that none of them was reported to be wayward. They lived lives that many indigenes easily emulated and gave their lives to Jesus Christ. The care, the love and compassion they showed to the indigenes made them to have access to them easily. Even their dressings: wearing of shirts, shorts, trousers, face cap, etc. indeed attracted the indigenes that had no such clothes other than *Agidi*, *Sayan* and *Kijipa* as at that time.

One-on-one Witnessing: This was another strategy used by the SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land. We read of Jesus using this method on many occasions for evangelism. He used it in his encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26), Zacheus (Luke 19:1-10), etc. One-to-one strategy, of course brings about intimation and identification. It made the missionaries to have personal contact with the indigenes one after the other. This was the strategy that Guy Playfair used when he personally spoke with Paa Adeniyi to please release one of his sons Jamu, to live with him.⁶⁴

This strategy was very popular with the SIM missionaries. They went from house to house, door to door preaching and teaching about Jesus Christ to whoever they came across. They must have learnt this strategy from Jesus and Paul also. Paul preached to a proconsul, Sergius Paulus via this means (Acts 13:7-12), and also the Philippian Jailer and his household (Acts 16:25-34). Playfair led Jamu Clyde to Christ via this strategy, and he, in turn became an evangelist/pastor in his home town.⁶⁵

Friendship Strategy: With the great disparity of culture and civilization, it was not easy for the white missionaries to mix with the indigenes, even to the point of making some of them close friends, yet they did, and brought many to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ via this strategy. They (SIM Missionaries) were fully aware that the people worshipped ‘other gods’, yet they moved very close to them to prove to them why they must worship the Supreme God. This strategy is in accordance with the submission of Smith:

True sharing is the best of communion. It is people moving together into widening areas of common joys, problems, and answers. This true sharing ripens into communion, about persons, about God and together with God.⁶⁶

A fact that cannot be disputed is that friendship involves sharing, and that in turn influences the action/decision of each party on most of the occasions. Guy Playfair made intimate friendship with Paa Adeniyi, Jamu Clyde's father because he knew that that would go a long way to help him pass across the gospel to him and his household. As earlier noted, this friendship was so intimate that Rev. Playfair on one occasion killed a big bush animal (*Oge*) and sent one of the thighs to him as his own share of the meat. In a similar way, the missionaries at the Leprosarium in Òmù-Àrán related very closely with the lepers and many of them eventually, gave their lives to Christ.

This friendship strategy was very common in Paul's missionary endeavour. He made himself weak to the weak, strong to the strong, Jew to the Jews and Gentile to the Gentiles. These missionaries mixed with the people: they ate with them in the same bowl; they celebrated with them, wept with them, laughed with them, and even went hunting with them and participated in some of their festivities, especially those that did not go against the teaching of the Bible.⁶⁷

House-to-House Strategy: This strategy was common to Paul the Apostle and he used it to minister to many non-Christians:

But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest against them.... He left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus Justus, a worshipper of God. Crispus the synagogues ruler and his entire household believed in the Lord, and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized (Acts 18:6-8).

According to Jackman, the Jews worshipped in the synagogues, so Paul went to them to preach but they would not listen to him. As a result, Paul planned to reach out to those that were not members of the synagogues because that was the only way by which he could introduce Christ to them. The result was overwhelming as many accepted Christ in Corinth.⁶⁸

For Playfair in Ìgbómìnà land, there was no single church when he got to Òrò-Àgó and environ. So, house-to-house evangelism was an appropriate strategy for him. History has it that many of the SIM missionaries learnt Yòrùbá language and went about from one house to the other witnessing Christ. *The Ancient Path* booklet referred to this as ‘direct evangelism.’⁶⁹ In his book: *The Beginning of Christianity in Òrò-Àgó*, Adeniyi as annotated by Ayanda reported that:

Playfair did a lot of trekking, not only from house to house, villages to villages but from towns to towns such as Egbe to Oro, Ilorin to Oro, Ìsánlú Makutu via Patigi and sometimes on the River Benue and River Niger in the local boats.⁷⁰

Thus, when Playfair got to Òrò-Àgó, the village was relatively small, very privative group of villages hidden among hills. The people were predominantly farmers. Playfair was reported to be going to them on foot, village to village, house to house, farm land to farm land. The outcome of this was the huge success that he recorded in leading many Oro people to the Lord.

Healing with Herbs: Another strategy was through healing the sick with herbs. Beside praying and laying hand on the sick to receive their healings, these missionaries, especially Playfair through Clyde (Klaidu) Adeniyi used herbal medication to draw the people to Christianity. Playfair was reported to have reminded Clyde (Klaidu), the boy that was staying with him to document his father’s herbs. Klaidu did before his father’s death and the herbs became very useful to the extent that many people were cured of their various deadly diseases, like epilepsy and snake bite. The joy of it was that majority of such people that were cured became Christians.⁷¹

Literacy Strategy: Literacy Strategy was another means of reaching the people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Ìgbómìnà land. The little Jamu Adeniyi was the first to be given western education by the SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land.⁷² As recounted by Jamu himself, Guy Playfair came with a text book, a piece of paper and pencil to follow up his request from

his father to allow him (Playfair) to teach him (Jamu) how to read and write.⁷³ With the help of one John Ajayi from Egbe, Jamu became educated. It was in the process of teaching him that he (Jamu) became a Christian. Olayinka also noted that after the settlement of the missionaries in Agunjin, adult literacy class was introduced where people came to learn how to read and write. Consequently, many came to accept Christ via this medium.⁷⁴ As time went on, many people from surrounding villages had to trek to Agunjin for this purpose. As at that time, no clear cut distinction was made between Western education and Christianity, hence, the indigenes called Christians: *Awon Oniwe*,⁷⁵ Many who had children old enough to go to school willingly surrendered their children to go, and many of such children became Christians. Among them were Oyedele in Òrò-Àgó, Afolabi in Agunjin, Prince Atolagbe in Ìgbàjà, etc.

Later, primary schools were introduced for the cause of education and evangelism. The first was in 1937 with 14 pupils in Òrò-Àgó. It was started by Jamu Adeniyi with the full support and permission of Guy Playfair who got the permission too from the Federal Government of Nigeria.⁷⁶ Many of these pupils gave their lives to Christ while in school. Girls' school was started in Òrò-Àgó with the aim of getting girls/spinsters for the men/boys who gave their lives to Christ but were prohibited from getting wives among the community girls. There grew good numbers of ECWA primary schools in some towns and villages in Ìgbómìnà land as time went on.

The Motherless Homes: A Motherless Home was established by SIM in Òrò-Àgó to nurture the children whose mothers died at birth or shortly after birth. The centre was very popular in those days. Motherless babies of both male and female sexes were brought from far and near and were readily received and taken care of by the missionaries regardless of their religion status. And there is no record of any of the motherless children who did not give his/her life to Christ eventually. Many of them became great and influential men/women in Nigeria and beyond. Among them was Mrs. Janet Olufunmìláyó Ibitoye an indigene of Òrò-Àgó and Late

Pa David Ibitoye an indigene of Isapa, Ekiti Local Government. These two were orphans in the Orphanage home at Òrò-Àgó, They became husband and wife. Pa David died in his early eighties in 2012.⁷⁷

Clinics and Maternities: The establishment of Clinics and Maternities by the SIM missionaries really helped in propagating the gospel of Christ among Ìgbómìnà people. This was the case every where the SIM missionaries settled. Sophie de la Haye reported the experience of Mrs. Ethel Titcombe (wife of Rev Tommie Titcombe) in caring for the sick people in Egbe:

We have quite a few sick children brought in daily. We can reach more women through the sick children than in any other way. This gives us an opportunity to invite them to the church and most responded. Some stay on the compound awhile, so we have a better chance to reach them.⁷⁸

A sick man/woman needs help. He or she needs attention and care. These, the missionaries supplied a great deal. Their affections and care won many into the faith. Sophiede la Hay also reported that the government medical doctor that was sent from Ilorin to Egbe to inspect the new Maternity Hospital was amazed with what he saw while inspecting the hospital.⁷⁹ In his response to this, Titcombe said:

Doctor, we can explain that. This little place is built on love for God and humani. The gospel is preached and many mothers become Christians through my wife's (Ethel Titcombe) ministry. In all our work we have but one purpose to tell these people about God's love for them in Jesus Christ.⁸⁰

Back in Ilorin, the doctor gave a very brilliant report about what he had seen and recommended to the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services for the whole country to support the SIM Medical services:

We have so far failed to do any work of any consequence among the women and children of the country (Nigeria) as they will not come to our hospitals and dispensaries. It seems to me that the next best is to assist those who succeed where we have failed, and I trust that my report may result in some assistance from government. I think very highly of this work that is being done and I am greatly impressed with the help it must be towards bringing people to the feet of Jesus, which is surely the primary object of all mission effort.⁸¹

What was in operation at Egbe was equally in operation in Òrò-Àgó and other Ìgbómìnà towns and villages. The missionaries started visiting the sick and attending to them in their huts before they later built dispensaries and maternities where the sick could be attended to closely. In her book: *From Pagan Child to Christian Mother*, Bulifant wrote:

We had no nurse at Oro (Òrò-Àgó) but Miss Moulding has a gift, a rear and precious gift, in knowing what to do for little suffering bodies. Many times she has won a mother's heart through ministering to her little one...⁸²

From this quotation, the indication that medical care was an instrument/strategy in reaching out to the people of Igbomian land was glaring. In fact, it was in 1937 that Miss Margaret Long, a fully qualified nurse, came from Egbe where she had served so faithfully, to start a maternity clinic in Òrò-Àgó.⁸³ With this, mortality got reduced drastically, not only in Òrò-Àgó but in Òmù-Àrán, Offa, Ilofa, Oko, Ìdòfiàn, etc, because people came from far and near to Òrò-Àgó for medical care. That implies that the gospel message spread rapidly not only in Òrò-Àgó but other towns and villages via medical care, since the missionaries would not give medical care without preaching Christ.

Giving, as a Strategy: Another important strategy for evangelism in Ìgbómìnà land was the idea of giving out some of the used clothes and other useful materials to the indigenes free of charge by the SIM missionaries. Olayinka noted that this served as a stimulus to the conversion of many indigenes in Agunjin.⁸⁴ As noted by Elder Elisha Onilu in an interview, the missionaries went as far as paying for the taxes and debts incurred by some indigenes in their attempt to win them for Christ. According to him, Pa Onilu (now Elder Onilu Elisha) allowed his son to become a Christian as a result of this. He explained that his father could not pay for the cloth he bought from an Ijesa man at the appointed day (Òsómàáló). The situation was getting out of hand when the missionaries learnt of the trouble. They invited him and settled his

debt. As a result of this love showed to him, he allowed his son to go with the missionaries to become a Christian.⁸⁵

This same strategy (giving out items) was equally used in Babańlá to bring many to the saving knowledge of Christ. There was no record of any SIM missionary settlement in Babańlá because the SIM missionaries were rejected being a Muslim dominated town. However, SIM/ECWA Church was founded through some indigenes who became Christians outside the town. Rev. A.A. Adeniyi who pastored the small SIM church in the town in the late 1960s was said to have his farm close to the peoples' farms and would invite them for lunch on his own farm free of charge. These non Christians would freely come to his farm from their farms and dine with him. While dining, he would share the gospel of Christ with them. As a result, many became Christians. Among them was late Elder Matthew Abolarinwa (the father of this researcher), Late Paul Alade, Mr. Joshua Oyelowo, Mr. Amos Ooju etc.⁸⁶

Film Show: Film show, being new at that time, was another strategy that was effectively used by the SIM missionaries in their pursuit of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in Ìgbómìnà land. The missionaries often showed the indigenes films projected on white cloth to drive home their messages at the marketplace. Shuch film titles include 'Jesus is the only Saviour' Then immediately after the film show, they would round off by preaching and making alter calls. Film shows usually attracted both young and old. As a result, many people accepted the Christian faith.

Radio Broadcasting Station: Another strategy used in evangelism in Ìgbómìnà land was Radio broadcasting via Eternal Love Winning Africa popularly called Radio ELWA, stationed at Ìgbàjà. This Radio station was established in 1954 as an alternative option of reaching many more souls and many more places, using a more cost-effective method to preach the gospel of Christ.⁸⁷ Detail of this is discussed in chapter four of this research work. However, it must be noted that reaching the people via radio ELWA could be said to be one of the most effective

means of evangelism, even beyond Ìgbómìnà land. With this method, the gospel spread even to non-Christians, as long as they had radio sets. The broadcast was via Monrovia in Liberia. Radio ELWA was broadcasting in forty nine different languages, including Yòrùbá language.⁸⁸ Also, as at that time, radio stations were not common, so radio ELWA really served as a very strong means by which gospel songs and messages went into the air not only in Ìgbómìnà land but throughout Nigeria and many other African Countries. So many people gave their lives to Christ via this strategy.

3.6 The First Ìgbómìnà SIM Convert and Pastor

The first fruit of the relentless missionary activities of SIM in Ìgbómìnà land was Jamu Adeniyi (1900-1968). The actual date of his birth was not known because there was no proper recording of his birth and others in Oro-land at the time. According to him (Adeniyi) in his book: *The beginning of Christianity in Òrò-Àgó*, he was born when ‘darkness pervaded in the land’ i.e. when no one was a Christian in the whole Oro-land.⁸⁹ This man was very important in the history of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land because he was the first convert and the first indigene to be trained as a pastor by the SIM Missionaries. He was later ordained as a reverend by ECWA.

Not much was known about his early age, except that he followed his father Oju of Aiyetoro (Bale of Aiyetoro) to the farm on daily basis along with his brothers. He was very industrious. As at the time that the SIM missionaries came into Ìgbómìnà land, specifically Òrò-Àgó, Jamu was a teenager. Rev. Playfair would go from house to house for evangelism. It was on such a tour, that he visited Oju of Aiyetoro’s house, the house that he (Playfair and his two companions resided the very first time they came into Òrò-Àgó to survey the land). At that time, (Playfair’s first visit) possibly in early 1912, Jamu and his brothers were instructed by their father to vacate their room to allow the white men to pass the night because there was no

vacant room in the house. This connotes hospitality and was well appreciated by the missionaries.

Playfair forwarded his request to the Oju of Aiyetoro to release one of his children to him, so that he would be teaching him how to read and write. After his departure, Jamu's father called him and informed him about the request of the white man and his (Jamu's father) intention to release him to the white man to learn under him. The young Jamu was very afraid and could not believe that his father was ready to release him to a strange man. (At that time the slave trade story was still very fresh in Jamu's memory).

Two weeks later, the missionary came with *A, B, D* (Yòrùbá Alphabets) and a small chalk board (black in colour), a pencil and a piece of paper, to follow up his request from Oju Aiyetoro. Upon his arrival, Oju called him (Jamu) and handed him over to learn under the white man. Playfair wrote letter 'A' many times on the paper, and used his hand to write it as well. He instructed him to write it (letter A) as many times as he could. That was his assignment. Jamu was, however timid and as a result did not do his assignment as the white man expected. On his return the following day to check the assignment that he gave to his 'student,' Playfair was shocked to see the poor work done by Jamu. He asked him if he was afraid. Jamu properly answered him 'yes'. He however encouraged him not to be afraid and took him through again that day. With this, the young Jamu was encouraged and was willing to learn.

After that day, Playfair started sending his house-help Mr. John Ajayi, a young convert from Egbe, to teach Jamu on daily basis every 3: 0 clock in the afternoon, except on Sundays, and sometimes Playfair did so by himself. With this development, Jamu was learning fast and became so used to Playfair and Ajayi to the point that he would pay them visit with token of his appreciation (yam tubers). However, a man (not an indigene) came to Aiyetoro and dissuaded Jamu. He told him that Western education was evil. He told him disgusting

testimony about educated people that he saw in Lagos: that educated people must not eat food offered to idols and that when they died, their corpses would be buried in the bush (cemetery). This made Jamu to be discouraged because he would not want to miss food offered to idols.

When his teacher (Mr. Ajayi) came the following day, Jamu asked him, if it was true that Western educated people would not be permitted to eat food offered to idols. Mr. Ajayi was very surprised and asked him where he got that from. Jamu told him but he asked him to discard the claim from his mind. Things were not smooth for Jamu being the only one at that time that was learning how to read and write in the whole Oro-land.

On a particular occasion, Jamu and his friend came to greet the white man (Rev. Playfair) as they were returning from an exchange of farm work (*Owe*). The white man was very happy to receive them in his house and offered them seat. Few minutes later, he called Jamu to his backyard and asked if he would come and stay with him in his house. Jamu responded that only his father could decide that. Playfair, thereafter, went to tender the request before Oju of Aiyetoro around January 1913. The reason he gave was to fasten his Western education. Upon this request, Oju asked Jamu if he would like to be living with the white man. Jamu consented and was prepared to go.

Three days later, just before he (Jamu) began to stay with the white man, his father called him and incised six incisions (*Gbere*) on his chest in preparation for his departure to the White man's house by River Arigun. He put a herb which was hot as pepper on those little cuts. It was a very painful exercise that brought out tears profusely from Jamu's eyes. Jamu asked his father the purpose of the hot herb put on him. He told him that it was to prevent evil people from having power over him.

On the day of his departure to the white man's house, a man was appointed to take him there. His father sounded several fatherly warnings instructing Jamu not to fight anyone and to be very careful. Jamu started crying. His mother could not help crying as well. She pampered

him and assured him that they had not sold him into slavery, and assured him that she would be coming to visit him from time to time. On February 11th, 1913 Jamu was brought to the Whiteman's yard.⁹⁰ Tears rolled down his eyes as the man handed him over to Playfair who sent back words of appreciation to Jamu's father. The following morning, Jamu was given some groundnuts to shell, as his mother came to visit him from Aiyetoro. She inquired from him if the Whiteman ever punished him since he came to stay with him. The answer she got was 'No.' This gave the caring mother a deep relief. The first two challenges this young boy faced while living with Playfair was that of how to cook and loneliness as he was the only indigene staying in the house with the foreign man. Nonetheless, with time, he overcame these challenges.

However, little Jamu gave his life to Christ as he lived with the White man. He would join in the evening devotion after dinner and would follow him (Playfair) to interpret his Yòrùbá sermon in Oro dialect whenever he preached to the people because most of them did not understand or speak the standard Yòrùbá language. Gradually, Jamu became matured in the words of God to the point that he hated worshipping idols, knowing fully well that those that do so would be condemned in hell fire, in accordance with John 3:18. This text turned his life around. As he received Jesus into his life, he felt peace in his life. He, therefore, committed his life to Jesus' service.

Young Jamu dedicated his life not only to serve Christ but also to serve the White man. He would cook for him, wash dishes and clothes, sweep the rooms and the surroundings. Playfair did not allow him to do all these free of charge, he paid him one penny per day, making six penny per week and two shillings per month. Cloths were scarce in those days. Jamu only had a pair of trousers and a shirt without a cap and a covering cloth. He would wash it every Saturday night and spread it in the veranda to dry over the night for Sunday programmes. He would only buy another one when the one he was using got old. In case he

was drenched by rain, during the week, and there was no sun to dry them, he would result to drying them beside the burning fire in the house.

Jamu followed the white man for evangelism in surrounding villages like Odo, Oganyin, Irabon, Oke-Ayin and Oke-Mure. Films of Jesus crucifixion were frequently shown and preaching would follow. Jamu's spiritual growth was becoming apparent as he was sure he would not go to hell because his sins had been forgiven him by Christ. One night after his dinner, he sneaked away to a small medicine store to pray alone. As he was doing that, he heard Playfair's footsteps coming to take something in the store. As he entered the dark room, his (Playfair's) leg touched his and he enquired who was there. Jamu responded that he was the one praying in the closet. Playfair went his way without any comment.⁹¹ Without doubt; Playfair would be more than happy to see the young man doing this without being forced to do so. That was a sign that the young man had given his life to Christ genuinely.

Jamu followed Playfair to witness at the first SIM conference ever held at Egbe in January 1914.⁹² SIM officers from Canada were in attendance. Many people from Egbe, Eri and its suburbs were baptized in the conference. When Jamu saw this, he asked Playfair when his own baptism would be. The answer he got was that, it would be in Òrò-Àgò. Later, when they got home such baptism was organized for him along with other indigenes who had given their lives to Christ. The name Clyde was therefore, given to him by Playfair. Before his baptism, Playfair gave him a bicycle which he rode wherever he was going on evangelism or to dress people's sores or visit the sick. He would go to Okedaba and other villages around, preaching the gospel and teaching young ones how to read and write. The parents of these young ones were antagonistic to his teachings; nevertheless he persisted and got some converts.

However, the coming of some cloth sellers (*Òsómàáló*) from Ijesa to settle at Okedaba stirred up the interest of the young boys to want to learn how to read and write.⁹³ This was because they saw how those traders were reading fluently. As a result of this, Jamu began to

pass the night at Okedaba so as to be with the young boys and to teach them how to read when they were back from the farm in the evening. The meeting place was the residence of one Mr. Lawani, a farmer and a drummer. These ‘pupils’ all gave their lives to Christ and grew up to become soul winners as well. They were Mr. Lawani Abraham, Mr. Peter Banji, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Wodo, Mr. Adeoti, Mr. Demola Ajigi and Mr. John Oniyide.⁹⁴

In 1923, when the Bible training school (School of the Prophets) in Agunjin (about 25 miles to Òrò-Àgó) was established, Jamu was among the first batch of students to be trained.⁹⁵ Playfair encouraged him to do so and upon his graduation, he was posted to work at Òrò-Àgó and environs. Pastor Clyde Jamu Adeniyi’s Christian activities were boosted via home visitations and the Sunday school programmes. As a result of this, many people accepted Christ. At a point in time, he was a teacher in Okedaba, and helped in propagating the gospel in the company of the white missionaries in Oke-Oyan and Ile-Ire in 1920. In 1954, Pastor Adeniyi was ordained into a full gospel ministry.⁹⁶

Before his ordination, Jamu obtained the permission from Playfair to establish the Òrò-Àgó Primary School. This was after the annual conference of SIM at Egbe in 1937. The permission was granted and the school was opened with 14 pupils namely: Paul Omodara, Dada, Aremu, Alabi, David Adeyemi, Ayo Adeniyi, Adeniran Olu (Ogun), Abiodun Peter Olowookere, Jimoh Stephen (Akangbe), Joshua Buremoh and David Olaosebikan.⁹⁷ This man of God travelled far and near in propagating the gospel in Ìgbómìnà land and beyond. He touched most of the towns and villages in Ìgbómìnà land Kwara state, with the gospel. He equally travelled (on foot) with the missionaries to Baptist Hospital Ogbomosho for medical care. He accompanied them to Wushishi, Minna (Niger State), Miango. etc. Some times, he rode bicycle across narrow bridges in Minna area.

Rev. Jamu Adeniyi got married to one of his converts; Sarah, who became a co-worker with him. Also, Pastor Abraham Buremoh became a co-worker with him as well. These people

took the gospel to many places in Ìgbómìnà land. Such places include Oke-Oyan, Alabe, Òkè-Ode, Oreke, Ikosin, Afín, Babańlá, etc. Rev. Jamu Clyde Adeniyi remained in the pastÒral service until he died on 5th July, 1968 and was buried in Òrò-Àgó at the age of 68.⁹⁸



Rev. Jamu Clyde (Klaidu) Adeniyi (1900-1968)
(The first SIM/ECWA Convert and Pastor in Ìgbómìnà land)
Source: The Beginning of Christianity in Òrò-Àgó, 22/08/2013

3.7 The Spread of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land

Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara state has many towns and villages, the detail of which is captured in the last chapter. Earlier in this chapter, the coming of SIM/ECWA into Òrò-Àgó, the cradle of SIM/ECWA missionary activities in Ìgbómìnà land had been successfully traced. The history of this mission in Agunjin and Ìgbàjà are discussed in this chapter, because of their importance to the spread of the mission in Ìgbómìnà land and beyond. Also, the history of this mission in Omuaran, being the first ECWA District Church Council in Ìgbómìnà Land is examined. Thus, the chapter covers the three ECWA District Church Councils (DCC) in Ìgbómìnà land, the names of all Local Church Councils (LCC), the names of virtually all Local

Church Boards (LCB) i.e. all churches, the preaching stations, the years they were established and the number of worshippers in each congregation.

In this connection, a very important personality that can not be left out in the discussion of how SIM/ECWA spread in Ìgbómìnà land was Pastor Abraham Buremoh.⁹⁹ His father was an indigene of Oke-Oyan in Ile-Ire District of the then Ilorin Province. He was a blacksmith, fabricating with iron, tin and brass. He migrated to Oke-Ayin near the present day Òrò-Àgó in pursuit of his blacksmith trade. He got married to a woman from Oke Ayin and gave birth to Buremoh Ogunsola who later became Pastor Abraham Buremoh. Buremoh Ogunsola grew up to become a blacksmith who travelled as far as to Ijebu in Western Nigeria in pursuit of his trade. During such trips, he met with Christians but did not give his life to Jesus Christ.

On his return to Oke-Oyan, Playfair met with him at his blacksmith workshop and preached to him. This was similar to what he had heard at Ijebu and so he gave his life to Christ. As a blacksmith, Psalm 115:1-8 particularly touched his heart.¹⁰⁰ He got convinced that idols made by men (blacksmiths) cannot be the real God. At his baptism, he was named Abraham. He was, thereafter taught how to read and write. He was eventually able to read the Bible and was sent to the Bible Training school at Agunjin for two years. He was there along with Clyde Adeniyi and others. He was older than all of his colleagues and so was made the class coordinator in the school.

More importantly, during the school holidays, Buremoh normally went to his hometown, Oke-Oyan where he witnessed to his people. Many got converted as a result. He disciplined them and started SIM church at Oke-Oyan. By the time he finished his training at Agunjin, the Christians had already built a house for him near the church. He then pastored the church for some years. From Oke-Oyan, Pastor Abraham Buremoh with others took the Gospel of Christ to other communities in Ìgbómìnà land. Among these communities were Oreke, Budo-Idowu, Alabe, Elesin Meta, Ikosin, Afin, Offaro, Obin, Idoba, Owa, Babanlá, Òkè-Ode

(before the arrival of McCaiver in Òkè-Ode Area), Agbeku, etc.¹⁰¹ However, in 1948, Pastor Abraham Buremoh, along with the Christian community of Oke-Oyan migrated to the present Idera still in Ile-Ire District in Ìgbómìnà land.¹⁰² With this, Christianity (SIM/ECWA) grew at Idera. This man died as a great evangelist on 14th May, 1955 at the age of 85.



Rev. Abraham Buremoh (1870-1955)
(A great SIM Evangelist in Ìgbómìnà Land)

Source: Picture gotten from Mrs. Arinola Buremoh at Àjàsé-Ìpo. She is grand Child of the Great Evangelist 20/07/2017

3.8 The Second SIM/ECWA Mission Station In Ìgbómìnà Land (Agunjin) 1916

Agunjin is an ancient community in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State.¹⁰³ The history of Agunjin as a community in Ìgbómìnà land is very obscure for dearth of literature because not much has been written about the history of the town.¹⁰⁴ All that was known about the origin of Agunjin is that it was co-founded by two warriors Olaniyonu and Akanbi Ola. The former was an indigene of Oke-Esa in Òmù-Àrán. He migrated to a place close to the present site of Agunjin as a result of chieftaincy dispute. Akanbi also, migrated from Oyo because of chieftaincy dispute. Akanbi had first of all settled at Ìsánlú-Ìsin and Òkè-Abá before he finally settled under *Aira* Tree where he later heard the sound of pounding at *Igbo Igbele* where

Olaniyonu and his family had settled. He located him and the two later agreed to move and live together in the present site of Agunjin. Thus, the two of them co-founded Agunjin.¹⁰⁵

In searching for the meaning of Agunjin, Afolabi has this to say:

There was no mortar or grinder at the former site of Olaniyonu. Therefore, they were using one big rock that they met there as their grinder and also for pounding. After several years, there was a big hollow created as a result of pounding and grinding inside this Rock: *Olo yii wa jin nitori gigan ti won fi n gun nnkan*. From here, Agunjin was coined which became the name of the town.¹⁰⁶

From this expression, the meaning of Agunjin becomes very clear. In fact, there exists an image of a woman pounding in a mortar in the heart of the village today, in consonance with the historical reality of pounding and grinding in the name, Agunjin. Although, the two founders both agreed to live together, the leadership of the town was based on age. Therefore, Olaniyonu, who was more elderly, assumed the position of an *Oba*. After his death, Akanbi succeeded him and these two families have become the two ruling families in the village till date. The Obas have been reigning in succession from the two royal families since then till date.

Agunjin was the second SIM Station in Ìgbómìnà land. The choice of Agunjin as a place of settlement among many other towns and villages was deliberate. This was because the route from Egbe to Ilorin at that time was through Eruku-Òrò-Àgò-Oke-oyan, Agunjin and to Ilorin. Agunjin was a District Headquarters under the Nupe Native Authority and also the closest place to Ilorin where the missionaries used to rest when travelling to Ilorin from Egbe. For this reason, they decided to pitch a mission station in the town.¹⁰⁷ Not only that, as a District Headquarters under the then Nupe Native Authority, Agunjin had many villages under her. These villages include Patako, Abayan, Olayinka, Agbeku, etc.

When the SIM missionaries came into Agunjin, the village was predominantly inhabited by traditional worshippers and Muslims.¹⁰⁸ Ariyowonye was the *Baale* (head of the village) at that time. In an interview with Abass Ajadi Balogun, (80 years old) of Balogun

compound Agunjin, Ariyowonye was not ready to allow the Christian missionaries to settle in the town because he was loyal to the Nupe Native Authority headed by Emir of Lafiagi. The Nupe Native Authority did not want the missionaries in their territory because they saw them (the missionaries) as threats, knowing fully well that the indigenes would get Western education and demand for liberation from their (Nupe Native Authority) rule if the missionaries settled in the land.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the Nupe Native Authority did not only impose her rule over Agunjin, but also introduced Islam to the people. Anybody who would not embrace Islam at that time was regarded as an enemy of the Emir and such a person was subjected to serious persecution. Shaaba who was the representative of the Emir was a terror to the people. He used to come to Agunjin through Òkè-Ode. He was so authoritative that everybody was living in constant fear of him. Therefore, to get permission to site a Mission Station in Agunjin was not easy for the SIM missionaries. However, after much pleading with the Baale and giving him many examples of places like Ilorin, Patigi (the seats of the Emirs), Egbe, Òrò-Àgó where Christian Missions had been sited, he reluctantly gave them the forbidden forest in the outskirts of the community to site their Mission Station. His thought was that these white men would be killed by the evil spirits in the forest, but this was not so.

The activity of the Sudan Interior Mission in Agunjin was not successful as those of Egbe and Òrò-Àgó. This failure was glaring because only two indigenes gave their lives to Christ regardless of the relentless efforts of the missionaries in spreading the Christian faith in the land for more than fifteen years. They were Salimonu and Yahaya. According to Oba Yahaya Salawu, the Alagunjin of Agunjin, these two converts were seriously persecuted by their neighbours to the extent that they were forced to live in the mission station.¹¹⁰ In another separate interview with Pa Adekeye Moliki of *Ile Oba Ana* in Agunjin, the missionaries did not enjoy their stay in Agunjin. Shaaba was hostile to them and was constantly instigating the indigenes against them.¹¹¹ Shaaba was like Elymas the sorcerer (Barjesus) in Acts of the

Apostles who withstood Paul and Barnabas at Paphos in their first missionary journey (Acts 13:6-12). As Elymas dissuaded the deputy governor of the country, Sergius Paulus in Paphos, from accepting Christ, so also Shaaba discouraged the indigenes of Agunjin from accepting the message of the missionaries. Shaaba was a great stumbling block to Christianity in Agunjin. He was always found doing what these white men disliked. For instance, his entourage would beat drum and sound trumpets all around the community for days any time he (Shaaba) was in Agunjin, knowing fully well that these white men hated noise.

Furthermore, as indicated in an interview with Malam Usman Yusuf Malomo, Oloye Alapini of Agunjin, Shaaba began to attack the missionaries diabolically (although this could not be proved scientifically) and that caused the missionaries to be dying one after the other.¹¹² The missionaries' health was at stake in Agunjin. To further buttress this claim, it was reported in the *Evangelical Christian Magazine* of September 1934 that health problem was the major factor for the relocation of the mission to Ìgbàjà. According to the report:

For health reason, it was found desirable to move the premises (SIM Mission Station in Agunjin) to Ìgbàjà, twelve kilometers from Agunjin, but the character and aim of the work remain unchanged, and we (SIM Missonaries) seek to maintain the standards set by the Agunjin school.¹¹³

In this same report, it was noted that some of the missionaries who lived in Agunjin as at that time had tuberculosis. They lost some of their children to this terrible ailment in Agunjin. The health problem that led to the loss of their children and some elderly ones necessitated the relocation of the Mission Station, especially when they heared the 'Macedonia call' to come to Ìgbàjà. Mrs. C.P. Jensen who eventually died at Egbe was reported to have contracted a protracted ailment that killed her from Agunjin where she had lived for many years before going to Egbe.¹¹⁴ In one of her reports, C.P Jensen one of the SIM missionaries who resided in Agunjin as at that time, wrote that:

Because of health reasons, it was decided to move the station from Agunjin to Ìgbàjà in Ilorin Emirate (Native Authority). This was made in 1933. Mr. and Mrs. Hunt and Mr. and Mrs. Mc Ivory were the missionaries that first stationed there. The Bible school

from Agunjin was continued at Ìgbàjà and was the foundation for the present seminary (ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà), for the training of African Pastors.¹¹⁵

The poor health condition of the missionaries coupled with inadequate medical care that the missionaries could provide as at that time, forced the missionaries to relocate their station to Ìgbàjà, especially when they got the ‘Macedonia call’ to Ìgbàjà. Thus, according to the minutes of the SIM Field Council meeting held in 1933, it was finally decided to move the mission station from Agunjin to Ìgbàjà because Agunjin was not found favourable for the health of the missionaries. The Mission Station completely moved to Ìgbàjà in 1938.¹¹⁶

From the foregoing, the fruitless efforts of the SIM in Agunjin, coupled with the poor health condition of the missionaries and the ‘Macedonia call’ were the reasons why they (the missionaries) decided to relocate to Ìgbàjà. J.B Lawal, the immediate past provost of ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà, who is also an indigene of Ìgbàjà equally submitted that:

In 1933, the SIM Missionaries decided to move from Agunjin to Ìgbàjà as a result of lack of fruits in terms of conversion of the people to Christianity and poor hygienic and poor health condition that resulted in many missionaries getting sick.¹¹⁷

From the above report, fruitless mission was a factor identified. In the current researcher’s view, the poor health status of the missionaries could of course, bring about poor evangelism, for what achievement would sick evangelists make? Olakunle, however noted that the other converts that the missionaries got in Agunjin besides the only two earlier noted were from the neighbouring villages around Agunjin.¹¹⁸ These included villages like Patako, Olayinka, Agbeku, Òra etc. Up till 2012, the population of the Christians in Agunjin was on 10%.¹¹⁹



ECWA Agunjin (The only Church in Agunjin)
Source: Picture taken by the Researcher on 12/04/2016

3.9 SIM/ECWA Third Mission Station in Ìgbómìnà Land (Ìgbàjà) 1933

Ìgbàjà is also an ancient town in Ìgbómìnà Land. It is about sixty kilometres from Ilorin, the Kwara State Capital. It is situated along Àjàsé-Ìpo – Òkè-Ode Road. It consists of the first wave of Yòrùbá from the North West, refugees from Old Oyo, and Fulani immigrants.¹²⁰ The territory of the Elese under the Oyo rule was bounded on the West by River Osin, and stretched as far South as below Àjàsé-Ìpo. Presently, it shares boundaries with Okeya to the South and to the West, Osin River after Idi-Apa village.

In tracing the history of Ìgbàjà, an octogenarian, pa Oguntola, an indigene of Ìgbàjà attests that a hunter, Odeyemi, came from Old Oyo to Igbosoko near Aperun in Idi-Apa village and settled there.¹²¹ He had a son, Ogunyemi, whose son, Ogunniyi, was given the title of Elese by the Alafin so that he might close the door against war.¹²² However, the modern Ìgbàjà was built by Abidolu, the Elese who was the father of Elese Bello.¹²³ Thus, the towns and villages that constitute Ireseland are Adanla, Ofarese and Obin. Ìgbàjà is noted for pot making and calabash carving (*Igba Finfin*). Today, there exists an Image of a woman making pot at the heart of Ìgbàjà, right in front of the first ECWA Church and also a man carving calabash at the entrance of Elese's Palace in Ìgbàjà. A popular saying in Ìgbàjà that was written at the lower

part of the sculpture of the man carving calabash reads thus: “*Baba Afingba, bi Onirese o fingba mo, eyi to ti fin sile ko ma parun.*” Meaning, if Onirese (founder of Ìgbàjà) stops carving calabash, the ones that he had carved would not perish. Thus, Ìgbàjà was known as the home of pot making and calabash carving.



Statue of a Woman making Pot at the Centre of Ìgbàjà and a Man Carving Calabash in front of the Elese of Ìgbàjà’s Palace.

Source: Picture taken by the researcher at Igbaja on 10/02/2015

The third SIM Mission station in Ìgbómìnà Land was sited in Ìgbàjà. The question that might likely come to mind here, is: why the choice of Ìgbàjà since it was not the only community around Agunjin? Why not Òkè-Ode, Yaru, Ajase, etc? The answer is that Òkè-Ode was the seat of Shaaba (Representative of Emir of Lafiaji), Yaru and some other villages did not show any interest in Christianity, but Ìgbàjà did.

Ìgbàjà was chosen as the next station because of the fact that Christianity had been introduced into Ìgbàjà before 1922 by an Ìjèshà Cloth Trader (*Òsómàáló*), named Shadrach Jegede.¹²⁴ He was a Christian, who used to gather people together to teach them how to read

and write every evening. This eventually resulted in the reading and studying of the Bible. The Christian faith was introduced and many 'students' became Christians. Mr. Odewumi was the first indigene to know how to read and write and also the first indigene to become a Christian in Ìgbàjà.¹²⁵

When this group got to know about the white missionaries in Agunjin, they, like the people of Macedonia (Acts 16:9) invited them to come down to Ìgbàjà to help them. This was also like the invitation made by some of the ex-slaves in Badagry around 1842 inviting Christian missionaries from Sierra-Leone to preach to them in their communities.¹²⁶ The missionaries in Agunjin were surprised to receive such invitation and they gladly went to discover a fairly large congregation of Christians meeting at Mr. Odewale's house, the father of Odewumi, the first convert. They were about 150 worshippers.¹²⁷ The SIM missionaries that came to Ìgbàjà that day were Rev. L.C. Donaldson and Rev. Norman W.D. Davis. These missionaries eventually were coming on visit to Ìgbàjà from Agunjin for evangelism regularly before they decided to transfer the station to Ìgbàjà in 1933, since Ìgbàjà was more promising than Agunjin. SIM missionaries were eventually given a place to pitch their mission station in the town. This is the present site of ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà.

The success of the SIM mission in Ìgbàjà has been quite substantial and profound. Ìgbàjà is one of the main towns where the Sudan Interior Mission had a successful ministry in Nigeria. As noted earlier on, the SIM got a call to come to Ìgbàjà by the converts who were indigenes of Ìgbàjà through the activities of Mr. Jegede. This man helped to introduce the missionaries to the Elese of Ìgbàjà who reluctantly accepted them and gave them a forbidden forest, *Igbo Oro* in Ìgbàjà to stay and erect their mission station. His expectation was that these white men would die one after the other when bitten by dangerous snakes and animals in the forest.

In 1938, Rev William George Crouch laid the foundation of the School of the Prophets that eventually became the first higher institution in Ìgbómìnà land. There was however, a setback for the school for lack of enrolment, but in February 1941, there came a good response as ten students enrolled but only eight of them graduated. These were foundation students of the present day ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà (ETSI). These students were Fred Adeyanju, Samuel Olaosebikan, L.J Asonibare, D.I Olatayo, Samuel Omokore, P.B Olatunde, R.B Buremoh, and Moses Sanni.¹²⁸ This Seminary is one of the biggest ECWA Theological institutions in Nigeria today.¹²⁹ During the past seven decades, the Seminary had been radically and positively transformed in structural formation, nomenclature, numerical expansion and management, so as to cope with emerging and prevailing needs, challenges and realities of evangelism and development locally, nationally and internationally.

Besides the Bible College, the SIM later established a Teacher Training College known as Igba-ojule, close to the Bible School in Ìgbàjà. The school was later referred to as Sudan Interior Mission H.T.T.C Ìgbàjà. The Teachers' College was converted to a Secondary School in 1971 and renamed ECWA Secondary School Ìgbàjà.¹³⁰ This was as a result of Government take-over of the secondary schools in Nigeria. SIM/ECWA now has two primary schools (ECWA Demonstration Primary School established in 1942) and one Junior Secondary School in Ìgbàjà (established in 2010). The other primary school belongs to the Seminary authority (Seminary Staff School, established in 1995). Plan was on the way as at 2012 to start ECWA College of Education in Ìgbàjà. The school formally took off in 2014.

Another area of success of the Mission in Ìgbàjà was in the area of medical service. These missionaries did not delay to build a Dispensary and Maternity in Ìgbàjà where both the Christians and non-Christians got medical care. However, it must be noted that these medical services were used as tool for the propagation of the Gospel in the land. People were taught hygiene and how to give first aid treatment. This reduced death rate among Ìgbàjà people and

the surrounding villages. Health Education was given from time to time and free medical services were administered along with immunization. Also, the coming of SIM into Ìgbàjà helped the Christian body that was already in the town to become stronger than ever. The missionaries intervened in their affairs and that helped to reduce persecution against them.

The Mission also succeeded in the socio-economic transformation of the town. Christianity and economic advancement have long been in partnership not only in Ìgbàjà but also any where the religion is practised.¹³¹ Ìgbàjà people released their children to attend SIM School and by so doing, the expected Western civilization came into the town. The Seminary admits students from all over Africa. The staff members of the school are also from all over Nigeria and beyond. The establishment of Radio ELWA in 1954 at Ìgbàjà has contributed to the popularity of the town all over Africa. Besides the influx of people into the town, there were job opportunities for the people of Ìgbàjà.

Indeed, the coming of SIM into Ìgbàjà has left indelible marks on Ìgbàjà and which will remain for a long time. Five ECWA Churches are now in Ìgbàjà town: 1st ECWA Ìgbàjà, ECWA Igba-Ojule, ECWA Gaa-Ayede, ECWA Chapel Igba-ojule, and Seminary Chapel of Truth. The seat of Ìgbàjà District Church Council is now in Ìgbàjà town. Police Divisional Headquarters is located in the town thereby enhancing the security of the area. The steady increase in population of Ìgbàjà enhances the socio-economic advancement of the region.



ECWA Church Ìgbàjà (The first SIM/ECWA in Ìgbàjà)
Source: Picture taken by the Researcher at Igbaja on 15/03/2014

3.10 SIM/ECWA Fourth Mission Station in Ìgbómìnà Land (Òmù-Àrán) 1942

Òmù-Àrán is one of the legendary towns in Ìgbómìnà land. It is about seventy kilometers South-East of Ilorin the Kwara State capital. Like many of the towns in Yorùbáland, Òmù-Àrán originated from Ile-Ife. Its founder was Olomu Aperan who was called Olomu-Akeran by the people of Ife and Ijesa.¹³² This is the reason why the praise name (*Oriki*) of all indigenes of Òmù-Àrán is *Omo Olomu-Aperan* (the son of Olomu Aperan) till date. Òmù-Àrán was the headquarters of Ìgbómìnà/Ekiti Division in Kwara State in 1968 and when Ìgbómìnà-Ekiti was splitted into Ìrèpòdún and Ìfèlódún Local Government Areas under the 1976 Local Government reform, Òmù-Àrán was retained as the headquarters of one of them, Ìrèpòdún Local Government Area to date.

The people of Òmù-Àrán were predominantly farmers producing crops like yams, maize, guinea corn, cassava, beans, and vegetables for consumption, while kolanuts, palm produce, cocoa and coffee were produced in small quantity as economic crops. This town was

famous in handcraft, such as: basket making, blacksmithing, wood carving, cloth weaving, dyeing, pot making, etc. Today, most of these have given way for white collar jobs.

The introduction of Christianity in Òmù-Àrán was 1897. This was through an ex-slave named Bamigboye who hailed from Ipetu Ìgbómìnà where he first preached the gospel of Christ before he moved to Òmù-Àrán. This man was a member of CMS, and this made Anglican Church to be the first Church in Òmù-Àrán in 1897.¹³³ SIM/ECWA was introduced to the town in 1942 by a couple, who were SIM missionaries from Florida U.S.A, Dr. and Mrs. R.V Herbold. Dr. Herbold was a medical doctor while his wife was a staff nurse. However, we must note here that there were no written documents with regards to the coming of SIM/ECWA to Òmù-Àrán. So, we have to rely on Òral evidence as our source of information. According to Alayande, Dr. and Mrs Herbold first settled in Ilofa, a town very close to Òmù-Àrán. They left Ilofa because the water was putting their health at risk.¹³⁴ As medical practitioners, this couple used medical services to preach the gospel of Christ in Òmù-Àrán and environ. They opened a dispensary and maternity in Agamo Area now known as Herbold Hospital in Òmù-Àrán and later a Leprosarium at Oke-Igbala Area, Òmù-Àrán. With these, they began to spread the gospel of Christ and established the first SIM/ECWA Church in Òmù-Àrán that same year, 1942.

In 1943 they employed a student pastor from the Bible College in Ìgbàjà as their first pastor: Pastor Luke Ashonibare, an indigene of Òrò-Àgó, who later became their full time pastor upon his graduation from the Seminary. Dr. Herbold and his wife were fully responsible for the payment of the pastor's salary. This pastor in company of Herbold, took the gospel of Christ to neighbouring towns and village such as Ilofa, Oko-Irese, Àrán-Òrin, Roré, etc.¹³⁵ Other SIM missionaries that worked in Òmù-Àrán included: Mr and Mrs. Wooden, Rev. and Mrs. Porter (before they moved to Shao), Rev. and Mrs Carson, Rev. and Mrs. Poole, Miss Goldie,

Miss Blakeney, Mr. and Mrs. Blake, Mrs Mathew etc. Mr. Joseph Adewumi was Dr. and Mrs. Herbold's cook.

In 1944, Dr. Herbold started a primary School at Agamo. The land where he built the School, the Hospital, the Clinic and Maternity and the Church were given to him by the Olomu. The missionaries used to go from house to house pleading with parents to release their wards to attend the mission school. Within a short time, the school grew in size. Elder Peter Jolayemi and his wife (who was interviewed) taught in this School at its inception.¹³⁶ Dr. Herbold was the proprietor of the school while Miss. Nekan was the first Headmistress. Other teachers were Mrs. Victoria Awotoye (from Òra-Ìgbómìnà), Miss. Anfolajuwon, Mr. Obadiah Aremu, and Mr. Samuel Oladele.¹³⁷

SIM/ECWA has grown tremendously in Òmù-Àrán. ECWA Yòrùbá DCC headquarters was in Òmù-Àrán before it was moved to Ilorin when Ilorin became the State Capital of Kwara State in 1967. However, there are four ECWA Churches in Òmù-Àrán, and the Headquarters of ECWA Òmù-Àrán DCC is located in Òmù-Àrán. This DCC Secretariat building is located adjacent ECWA Girls Secondary School, Woko-Womu. ECWA as a denomination is a church to reckon with in Òmù-Àrán today.



1st ECWA Òmù-Àrán
Source: Picture taken by the Researcher at Omu-Aran on 22/05/2015

3.11 SIM/ECWA Fifth Mission Station in Ìgbómìnà land (Òkè-Ode) 1947

Òkè-Ode is one of the ancient towns in Ìgbómìnà land. The founder of Òkè-Ode was a hunter named Maku who was a son of Oge in Ile-Ife. Other sons of Oge were Ajagbe, Agbara, Olayoofe, Adegun and Abeji who all have the same appellations which include: *Omo Erin Jogun Ola*, *Omo Erin Lalo* (Son of the Elephant, who inherited the authority; Son of the great Elephant).¹³⁸ They all left Ile-Ife and sojourned together in the wilderness until Maku finally settled in Òkè-Ode.

The name Òkè-Ode meaning ‘The Hill of Hunters’ which the town bears was derived from the occupation of its founder and its location. The topography of the settlement on top of an almost impregnable hill offers the dual advantage of protection from enemy attack and repelling of external aggression. It is for this reason that no historical account, Òral or written, has recorded any form of assault on Òkè-Ode people. In 1909, Òkè-Ode was brought under Lafiagi Native Authority. It was however, transferred to Ilorin Native Administration on 15th June 1956.¹³⁹ Nonetheless, in 1982, Òkè-Ode was made the District Headquarters of Kajola Local Government Area before it was cancelled by the Buhari-Idiagbon military administration in December 1983. Presently, Òkè-Ode is in Ìfèlódún Local Government Area of Kwara State.

The coming of Christianity (SIM/ECWA) to Òkè-Ode has no written document beside the scanty one contained in a pamphlet written in Yòrùbá language by a committee organized by First ECWA Òkè-Ode in 1994: *Itan bi Ijo Olorun SIM/ECWA se bere ni Òkè-Ode ni Odun 1923-1990*.¹⁴⁰ We, therefore, rely on the Òral evidence that we got through the interview. Christianity entered Òkè-Ode between 1918 and 1920. This was the period when Òkè-Ode moved down from the mountain-top to the present location of the town in 1918.¹⁴¹ They moved down the mountain so as to build houses on plain ground in the absence of war and slave trade.

However, the activities of Simeon Komolafe, an Ijesa cloth seller (*Òsómàáló*) in the spread of the gospel of Christ in Òkè-Ode can never be overemphasized. Like Jegede in Ìgbàjà,

Jacob Seweje in Owu, was Komolafe in Òkè-Ode. Komolafe was used to teaching some people A, B, D (Yòrùbá Alphabets) after the days' farm work, especially in the evening. Through this means, he introduced them to Christianity and the reading of the Yòrùbá Bible. This was around 1923. These pioneer Christians were James Olorunfemi, Jimoh Adeniran, Joseph Oke, Elisha Romanus, James Gege, Ayoku Ile Naru, Jacob Malomo, Thomas Malomo, Jimoh Onifade, Adebola Soganmo, J. N Luke and Yusuf Oguntunde.¹⁴² The visiting missionaries were the leaders of the nascent church until 1929 when Pastor David Babalola, an indigene of Eruku was sent to become the Pastor of the Church. Subsequently, Pastor Moses Jimoh Sanni an indigene of Òmù-Àrán, Rev. Samuel Olaosebikan from Oke-Oyan, Rev. Luke Asonibare from Òrò-Àgò, and many others were posted to the Church. Thus, the Church began to grow from strength to strength, despite great oppositions from traditional worshipers and Muslims under Nupe administrative authority.

However, the history of SIM in Òkè-Ode would not be complete without the missionary activities of Rev and Mrs. W.C McIvor from Canada. He and his wife were responsible for the opening of SIM Mission Station in Òkè-Ode in 1947. McIvor was an ex-soldier and his wife was a trained nurse. This couple started SIM Clinic and Maternity in Òkè-Ode. This Clinic became so popular than the Native Authority Clinic that was already in existence in Òkè-Ode. People trusted the treatment administered by the white woman than the one in the Native Authority Clinic. Indeed the type of medical care in the mission clinic was better than the Native Authority's Clinic.¹⁴³ In an interview with Rev. (Prince) A. A Adeniyi, a set of triplet was delivered in this Clinic. The mother called Iya Nda Yisa, a Nupe woman was from Alawon, close to Budo-Idowu. Mrs. McIvor gave them names: John, Martha, and Maria.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the SIM Clinic and Maternity were of course used as a channel of evangelism in and around Òkè-Ode. Many converts were made through this means.

Also, McIvor started a primary school in Òkè-Ode (both Junior Primary and Senior Primary schools).¹⁴⁵ These schools also became more popular than the Native Authority Primary School which was already in existence before the SIM School in Òkè-Ode. In an interview with one of the first set of pupils of the School, A. A Adeniyi, pupils came from all around Òkè-Ode to attend the mission school. Such places include Agbeku, Òra, Oke-Ayo, as well as communities of Ile-Ire District, etc.¹⁴⁶

The SIM missionaries used to come from Agunjin to visit these young converts and to encourage them. They provided them with a kerosene lamp (the first of its type in Òkè-Ode) to replace the local way of lighting with corn stalk (*popoo oka*). They provided them with writing materials as well. This was also the first of such in Òkè-Ode and it attracted more people to accept the gospel of Christ.



1st ECWA Òkè-Ode
Source: Picture taken by the Researcher at Oke-Ode on 22/09/2017

3.12 ECWA District Church Councils (DCC) in Ìgbómìnà Land:

3.12.1 Òmù-Àrán District Church Council (ODCC) of ECWA

Òmù-Àrán mission station was opened in 1943 by Dr. & Mrs. R.V. Herbold. Following the indigenization policy of SIM in 1956, six District Councils were created, one of which was Yòrùbá DCC, with Òmù-Àrán as the headquarters. Eventually, Yòrùbá DCC was split into three District Church Councils: Lagos District Church Council, Headquarters in Lagos (Mushin). Ilorin District Church Council – Headquarters in Ilorin and lastly, United District Church Council – Headquarters in Egbe.¹⁴⁷ Rev. L.J. Ashonibare and Rev. S.B. Ogunmola were the first Chairman and the Secretary, respectively of Ilorin DCC.

Thus in line with the administrative re-arrangement, Òmù-Àrán remained under Ilorin District Church Council until 1992 when her autonomy as a District Church Council was approved by Jos Headquarter of ECWA. Rev. Dr. S. N. Alayande was the Ilorin DCC Chairman at that time. Consequently, an inauguration committee was set up for the successful take off of the new District Church Council. This list included: Prince J. O.K. Abolarin as the Chairman and Elder D.O. Adesina as the Secretary. Other members of the committee were: Elder J.A. Babatunde, Elder I.A. Ogundele, Elder J.O. Giwa, Mr. Dele Lawal (late), Elder R.M. Ifabiyi, Chief (Mrs.) E.A. Ayanda, Dr. (Mrs.) Ojeleye F.M. Mrs. Bisi Molemodile, Mrs. Florence Alege, Rev. J.O. Kolawole and Rev. R.A. Afolayan Salami.

After the completion of the committee's assignment, the first election to the executive office was conducted on 13th November, 1992. This election brought in the first set of the DCC's Executives. They were Rev. D.A. Onijala (DCC Chairman), Rev. R.B. Inawole (Vice DCC Chairman) Rev. R.A. Afolayan Salami (Secretary), Rev. D.J. S. Ibitoye (Assistant Secretary), Elder I.A. Ogundele (Delegate), and Elder S.O. Aboyeji (Treasurer). With the above named leaders of the DCC, the DCC took off and was inaugurated in 20th March, 1993 by the then ECWA president: Rev. Panyan Baba represented by the then ECWA General

Secretary, Rev. Dr. Yusuf Turaki. Rev. Prof. C.A. Olowola (Late) the then Provost of ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà, preached at the inauguration ceremony.¹⁴⁸

Eleven Local Church Councils (LCC) were named during the inauguration ceremony. They were Òmù-Àrán LCC, Òrò-Àgó LCC, Oko LCC, Olla LCC, Eruku LCC, Àrán-Òrin LCC, Oro LCC, Ile-Ire LCC, Oke-Oro LCC, Owu LCC and Iwó LCC. However in year 2001, Òrò-Àgó DCC was carved out of the Òmù-Àrán DCC to become a separate DCC. Therefore, Kajola LCC, Oke-Oro LCC, Òrò-Àgó LCC, and Alabe LCC went to Òrò-Àgó DCC.

Thereafter, Òmù-Àrán DCC was re-structured into fourteen LCCs. They were: Àrán-Òrin LCC, Epe-Ekiti LCCs, Eruku LCC, Idera LCC, Idofin LCC, Iwó LCC, Obbo-Ayegunle LCC, Odo-Owa LCC, Oko LCC, Olla LCC, Òmù-Àrán LCC, Oro LCC, Owode LCC and Owu LCC.



ECWA Òmù-Àrán DCC Secretariat

Source: Picture taken by the Researcher at Woko-Womu, Omu-Aran on 22/01/2014

3.12.2 Ìgbàjà District Church Council of ECWA

Ìgbàjà District Church Council of ECWA is one of the seven DCCs that sprang up from the former Yòrùbá DCC. As at the time when Ìgbàjà DCC was created, it was under Ilorin DCC. Specifically, the need and request for Ìgbàjà DCC came from ECWA Ilorin DCC. As recorded in the Inaugural speech of ECWA President on the occasion of the inauguration of this new DCC, the Ilorin DCC Executive wrote a letter to ECWA Headquarters dated 27/2/1997, requesting for the creation of another District Church Council.¹⁴⁹ As a result, the

General Church Council at her 44th meeting at ECWA Headquarters, Jos between 14th and 18th of April, 1997 directed that a committee be set up to ascertain the genuineness and feasibility of the request. To this effect, this committee was set up and it commenced work immediately. The members of the committee were Rev. Z.O. Barinkin (Chairman), Rev. Tambaya Yahaya (Member), Rev. Zakka Luke Ture (Member) and lastly, Rev. Saidu Washiri as the Secretary. This committee came to Ilorin (from where Ìgbàjà DCC was to be carved out) in November 1997. The committee went through the length and breadth of Ilorin DCC to assess the necessity for the creation of Ìgbàjà DCC. The committee presented its report to the General Church Council (GCC) in the 45th ECWA General Church Council meeting held between 20th and 24th April, 1998 at ECWA Headquarter in Jos.

The approval of the creation of this new DCC was based on the recommendations of this committee. The committee submitted that:

- i. The DCC had the required number of and even more than seven LCCs, It has 4,002 church attendance, 1665 church members, 51 local churches (LCBs) and 13 prayer houses.
- ii. The DCC has evidence of man power; i.e. it has 27 active ministers; 12 unlicensed ministers, 6 licensed and 9 ordained ministers.
- iii. The DCC has strong “evidence” of financial ability to sustain its goal and activities. For example, the total income of the area in 1996 was #3,287,030.00
- iv. The request for the creation of the DCC was not motivated by a rift but principally based on distance and growth.¹⁵⁰

Therefore, it became apparent that the creation of ECWA Ìgbàjà DCC was in accordance with ECWA constitution and bye-laws. ECWA GCC approved the creation of IGDCC in good faith, with the hope that the DCC is in total agreement with the Goals,

Objectives and Articles of Faith and practice of ECWA. It was obvious that ECWA Ìgbàjà DCC would engage in physical, social and spiritual ministry.

Thus, Rev. Victor Musa, the then ECWA President, inaugurated ECWA Ìgbàjà DCC on the 17th January, 1999. Rev. Dr. J.O. Folaranmi was the first Chairman, Rev. Zacchaeus Apata was his Secretary. It became the 44th DCC in ECWA. Ever since, Ìgbàjà DCC has been growing. Her secretariat is very close to ECWA Igba-Ojule Ìgbàjà.



ECWA Ìgbàjà DCC Secretariat (under construction)
Source: Picture taken by the Researcher at Igbaja on 28/06/2016

3.12.3 Òrò-Àgó District Church Council of ECWA

Òrò-Àgó District Church Council of ECWA was carved out of Òmù-Àrán District Church Council of ECWA. The approval for this creation was granted by the ECWA General Church Council (GCC) in its Annual General Meeting of April, 2000 in Jos.¹⁵¹ The creation of Òrò-Àgó DCC was an evidence of success and progress of God's work in Òrò-Àgó and its environs. The creation, among many other benefits, brought new challenges and opened new gates for Christ's Kingdom in Ile-Ire and Òrò-Àgó Districts of Ìfèlódún Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Thus, the new OADCC is made up of the Local Church Councils of ECWA in Òrò-Àgó and part of Ile-Ire District. The official inauguration was conducted by the leadership of ECWA from Jos Headquarters on December 15, 2000 in Òrò-Àgó.¹⁵² Representatives from all the Local Church Councils from Ile-Ire and Òrò-Àgó Districts attended the inaugural service. The seven LCCs that make up Òrò-Àgó DCC in line with ECWA's guideline of having a new DCC are:

1. Òrò-Àgó LCC, comprising of 1st ECWA, 5th ECWA and 6th ECWA all in Òrò-Àgó township.
2. Kajola LCC, comprising of 1st and 2nd ECWA Owa-Kajola and ECWA Oke Oyan.
3. Oyatedo LCC, comprising of 1st and 2nd ECWA of Oyatedo and Ahun.
4. Araromi LCC, comprising of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th ECWA of Òrò-Àgó.
5. Irabon LCC, comprising of 1st and 2nd ECWA of Irabon and ECWA Ajegunle/Owa.
6. Okedaba LCC comprising of 1st and 2nd ECWA of Okedaba and ECWA Omugo.
7. Alabe LCC, comprising of ECWA Alabe, ECWA Okegbo and ECWA Oreke-Oke.

The inauguration of the New DCC did not suffer any delay for its approval by the GCC. This was so because Òrò-Àgó is very important in the history of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria and because two former ECWA Presidents, (Late Rev. Dr. D. I. Olatayo and late Rev. Dr. S. J. Akangbe) were indigenes of Òrò-Àgó. Today Òrò-Àgó DCC has come to stay, although it has serious financial challenges which puts her in a critical condition, as grouped by ECWA Headquarters.

However, a glowing tribute must be given to Guy Playfair, Miss Margaret Lang, Miss Moulding, Miss Dick and Miss Lillian McIntosh for their unbeatable feat for the establishment of the first mission station in Ìgbómìnà land. These white women and others faced untimely death, hunger, harsh weather, persecutions, etc, yet they did not give up. Ìgbómìnà people that must be given tribute along with these white SIM missionaries include: Rev. Clyde Jamu

Adeniyi, Abraham Buremoh from Idera, Ogunshola from Oke–Ayin, Baba Egbe from Okedaba, Andrew Adeoye from Okeluworo, Daniel Ajibola from Omugo, Jacob Alayande from Irabon, Luke Bello from Ahun, Benjamin Olatayo from Okeluworo, Joseph Kaje from Oganyin, Thomas Olowo-okere from Okemure, Samuel Abolarin and Jacob Oyedele from Owa-Kajola, James Abogunrin and John Edungbola from Alabe, Isaiah, Joseph and Mark from Oreke, and a host of others who watered the seeds planted by the missionaries, which of course, brought forth fruits in thousands.¹⁵³



ECWA Òrò-Àgó DCC Secretariat

Source: Picture taken by the Researcher at Oro-Ago on 12/08/2016

3.13 ECWA Local Church Councils (LCC) and Local Church Boards (LCB) in

Ìgbómìnà land

As earlier indicated, ECWA has three District Church Councils in Ìgbómìnà land: Omu Ara

DCC, Ìgbàjà DCC and Òrò-Àgó DCC. Òmù-Àrán DCC has 15 Local Church Councils, 44

Local Church Boards (Churches), and 32 Mission Stations (Smaller churches). Ìgbàjà DCC

has 10 LCCs, 31 LCCs, and 6 Mission Stations while Òrò-Àgò DCC has 7 LCCs, 18 LCBs without any mission stations. This reveals the level of the development of SIM/ECWA Mission in Ìgbómìnà land Kwara State over the past hundred years (1912-2012). The chart bellow reveals the names of these DCCs, LCCs, LCBs, EMS Stations, the years they were founded, and the average number of worshippers in each Church at inceptions and as at 2012.

Òmù-Àrán DCC (Founded in 1993 with 15 LCCs)

Name of DCC	Name of LCC	Name of LCB	Name of EMS station	Year founded	Average No. of worshippers as at the commencement of the Church	Average No. of worshippers as at 2012
Òmù-Àrán DCC	Aranorin LCC (founded in 1987)	ECWA Aranorin		1949	6	200
		ECWA Roré		1971	4	54
		ECWA Àrándùn		1985	9	70
			Olomi Oja	1995	3	27
			Olowonijere	1994	6	21
		Òra-Ìgbómìnà (Outside Ìgbómìnà land Kwara state)		1986	4	40
	Eruku LCC Founded in 1987 (outside Ìgbómìnà Land Kw/st.)	1 st ECWA Eruku		1910	10	180
		2 nd ECWA Eruku		1993	18	95
		3 rd ECWA Eruku		1993	13	58
		ECWA Obo-Ile		1954	8	61
			ECWA Isapa	1953	4	70
	Epe-Ekiti LCC Location Epe-Ekiti Ekiti State	Epe Ekiti, Ekiti state		1953	10	400
			ECWA Aye-Oja	1999	5	21
			1 st ECWA Baba Orioke	1947	7	40
			2 nd ECWA	1993	8	40

			Baba Orioke			
			ECWA Ido Ekiti	1980	4	60
			ECWA Ifaki Ekiti	2003	8	26
			ECWA Igbole-Ekiti	2006	6	18
			ECWA Ipoti-Ekiti	1991	9	35
			ECWA Igogo-Ekiti	2005	7	30
			ECWA Ofale	1950	3	28
			ECWA Osi-Ekiti	2006	5	22
	Idera LCC established in 1993	ECWA Afin Ile-Ire		1931	14	60
			ECWA Ikosin	1950	12	40
		ECWA Idera		1948	22	50
	Idofin LCC established in 2002	ECWA Idofin Ayekale		1944	10	202
		ECWA Idofin Ehin-Afo		1955	19	260
		ECWA Idofin Igbana		1958	27	280
			ECWA Odo-Aga	1993	4	15
	Ilupeju Ijan LCC (Ekiti State, outside Ìgbómìnà Land)	ECWA Ilupeju-Ijan		1957	17	84
			ECWA Igbemo Ekiti	2002	12	70
			ECWA Temidire Ise-Ekiti	1967	10	66
	IWÓ LCC Established 1991	1 st ECWA Iwó		1924	17	161
		2 nd ECWA Iwó		1991	20	99
		ECWA Owa-Onire		1945	15	96
		ECWA Sabaja		1924	5	28
	Obo Ayegunle LCC Established 2001 (outside Ìgbómìnà Land)	ECWA Obo-Ayegunle		1963	11	100
		ECWA Osi		1981	12	70
			ECWA Ajuba	1990	3	25
			ECWA Eda-Oniyo	2000	4	34

			ECWA Etan	1981	14	60
			ECWA Iludun Ekiti	2000	5	26
			ECWA Ikun Ekiti	1963	9	55
			ECWA Oke-opin	1996	7	35
	Odo Owa LCC Established 2001 (outside Ìgbómìnà Land)	ECWA Odo Owa		1957	31	240
			ECWA Ayedun	1998	15	22
			ECWA Ìlálẹ	2007	4	30
	Oko LCC Established in 1991	1 st ECWA Oko Irese		1945	18	180
		2 nd ECWA Oko Irese		1991	22	120
		3 rd ECWA Oko Irese		1991	17	120
		ECWA Inisan		1981	11	65
	Olla LCC Established 1987	1 st ECWA Olla		1926	19	198
		2 nd ECWA Olla		1996	24	150
		3 rd ECWA Olla		2001	16	80
	Òmù-Àrán LCC Established 1993	1 st ECWA Omu – Aran		1947	16	631
		2 nd ECWA Omu – Aran		1988	33	280
		3 rd ECWA Omu – Aran		1994	29	254
		ECWA Chapel Òmù-Àrán		1995	10	98
		ECWA Ilofffa		1953	8	85
		4 th ECWA Omu – Aran		2004	23	100
			ECWA Ipetu – Ìgbómìnà	2006	4	29
			ECWA Ìsánlú Ìsin	1974	6	32
	Oro LCC Established 1993	ECWA Edidi		1987	7	55
		ECWA Oke Ola Oro		1974	34	530
		ECWA Esiẹ		1994	5	92

		ECWA Chapel Oro		2001	20	89
			ECWA Agbamu	1989	13	33
	Owode LCC	ECWA Obinn Ayetoro		1918	6	52
		ECWA Owode- Ofaro		1924	8	80
			ECWA Idoba Araromi	1924	5	30
	Owu LCC	ECWA Odo Eku		1924	9	200
		ECWA Òkè-Onígbín		1959	11	200
		ECWA Owu		1917	15	200
			1 st ECWA Ijara Ìsin	1989	14	76
			2 nd ECWA Ijara Ìsin	1995	12	52
			ECWA Òkè-Abá	1925	10	83

ÌGBÀJÀ DCC (Founded in 1999 with 10 LCCs)

Name of LCC	Name of LCB	Name of EMS station	Year founded	Average No. of worshipers as at the commencement of the Church	Average No. of worshiper as at 2012
Agbee LCC, established in 1999	ECWA Agbee		1945	8	46
Babańlá LCC, established in 1993	ECWA Babańlá		1935	4	110
	ECWA Ganmu		1940	9	50
	ECWA Budo-Idowu		1930	4	29
Ìdòfiàn LCC, established in 1999	1 st ECWA Ìdòfiàn		1970	11	110
	2 nd ECWA Ìdòfiàn		1999	13	100
	ECWA Igbo-Owu		1970	7	55
	ECWA Òmùpo			6	187
		ECWA Amodu Asungbolu		3	30
		ECWA Okanle	1980	2	35
		ECWA Oko-Ode	1991	13	13
	ECWA Adanla		1922	6	32
	ECWA Igbaojule, Ìgbàjà		1989	20	200

Ìgbàjà LCC, established in 1952	ECWA Offarese		1965	5	25
	ECWA Chapel Ìgbàjà		1997	10	58
	ECWA Ìgbàjà		1942	150	300
	ECWA Gaa- Ayede,Ìgbàjà		2001	18	150
Offa LCC, established in 1989	1 st ECWA Àjàsé- Ìpo		1974	13	142
	2 nd ECWA Àjàsé- Ìpo		1999	16	39
	ECWA Offa		1990	7	150
	ECWA Okuku (in Òsun State)		1997	8	50
Òkè-Ode LCC	ECWA Sogbodile		1986	2	40
	1 st ECWA Òkè- Ode		1923	15	220
	2 nd ECWA Oke Ode		1992	10	54
	ECWA Sagbe			4	25
Okeya-po LCC, established in1991	ECWA Arola		1983	2	8
	ECWA Okeya		1922	8	65
	ECWA Apata- Kajola		1923	5	19
Olayinka LCC, established in 1991	ECWA Agbeku		1921	5	46
	ECWA Olayinka		1930	7	70
	ECWA Yaaru		1924	4	58
Òra LCC, established in 1956	ECWA Òra		1930	6	46
	ECWA Wande		1965	3	12
	ECWA Deseni		1968	4	24
	ECWA Oke-Ayo		1930	6	45
Patako LCC, established in 1999 ECWA	ECWA Patako		1925	8	45
	ECWA Agunjin		1916	2	30
					Total= 2657

1. .

Òrò-Àgó DCC, Established in 2000 with 7 LCCs

Name of LCC	Name of LCB	Name of EMS Station	Year Founded	Average No. of worshipers as at the commencement of the Church	Total Average of Worshipers
Araromi, Òrò-Àgó LCC established in year 2000	2 nd ECWA Òrò-Àgó		1992	16	115
	3 rd ECWA Òrò-Àgó		1992	17	100
	4 th ECWA Òrò-Àgó		1995	22	110
IRABON LCC established in	1 st ECWA Irabon		1921	5	100
	2 nd ECWA Irabon		2001	6	95

year 2000	ECWA Ajegunle Owa		1913	4	120
Oke Oro LCC, established in 2000	ECWA Okedaba		1913	5	100
	ECWA Omugo		1914	5	150
ÒRÒ-ÀGÓ LCC established in 2000	1 st ECWA Òrò-Àgó		1912	6	320
	5th ECWA Òrò-Àgó		2000	18	150
	ECWA Chapel Òrò-Àgó		2001	12	60
Owa-Kajola LCC established in 2001	ECWA Oke-Oyan		1946	5	64
	ECWA Owa-Kajola		1940	8	112
Oyatedo LCC 2001	ECWA Ahun		1916	6	100
	ECWA Oyatedo		1921	6	150
Alabe LCC	ECWA Alabe		1925	7	50
	ECWA Oreke-Okegbo		1930	5	56
	ECWA Oreke		1930	6	30

This chart reveals the average numerical strength of ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land. Òmù-Àrán DCC has the average members of 7748, Ìgbàjà DCC has 2672, while Òrò-Àgó DCC has the average of 1982 members. The average total of worshippers as at 2012 was 12402. With this it becomes very clear that Òmù-Àrán DCC has the highest numerical strength of ECWA members in Ìgbómìnà land. Urbanization migration has been a very strong reason for this discrepancy. Many members have left the villages to the urban areas in search for greener pasture. This also account for the diminishing numbers of members in the LCBs especially in the villages.

ECWA DISPENSARIES AND MATERNITIES IN ÌGBÓMÌNÀ LAND

EC WA Dispensaries and Maternities in Omu–Aran DCC

SIM/ECWA had five dispensaries and maternities in and around Omu Aran, but only one out of them is sustained by ECWA. The reason for this had been poor management on the part of ECWA. Thus, ECWA did not sustain this legacy from SIM. The following are their names and their years of establishment:

- 1) ECWA Dispensary Idera, established in 1948 (still surviving but under the control of Ìfélódún Local Government)
- 2) ECWA Dispensary Owu, established in 1917 (no longer existing)
- 3) ECWA Dispensary Oko, established in 1945 (no longer existing)
- 4) ECWA Dispensary Olla, established in 1926 (no longer existing)
- 5) ECWA Hospital Oke-Igbala Òmù-Àrán, established in 1941 (still surviving but under the control of Kwara State Government)
- 7) ECWA Hospital Òmù-Àrán, established in 1947 (still surviving)

ECWA Dispensaries in Ìgbàjà DCC

SIM/ECWA established only four Dispensaries in and around Ìgbàjà. Unfortunately, only one (the one at Ìgbàjà) is existing till date. Poor management had been the reason for their non existence.

1. ECWA Dispensary Òkè-Ode established in 1945 (no longer existing)
2. ECWA Dispensary Ìgbàjà, established in 1942 (still existing)
3. ECWA Dispensary Babańlá established in 1979 (no longer existing)
4. ECWA Dispensary and Maternity Òra, established in 1930 (no longer existing)

ECWA Dispensaries and Maternities in Òrò-Àgó DCC

The only ECWA Health Care Center in Òrò-Àgó DCC is ECWA Dispensary Òrò-Àgó, established in 1912. This dispensary still exists.

3.14 The Challenges of Evangelism in Ìgbómìnà Land

Jesus' warning in the Gospel, especially when he was sending his disciples out for evangelism, made it very clear that they would run into problems and have diverse challenges when carrying out the Great Commission, (Matt. 10:16). That means such task could involve

loosing one's life. Also, the scriptures make it clear that those who would live godly lives will face various kinds of problems or challenges including persecution and even death. These were the experiences of the SIM missionaries and those who gave their lives to Christ in Ìgbómìnà land through their activities.

The experience of the SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land differs a little from those in the core Northern Nigeria, like Sokoto, Kano, Borno, etc. In the North, the Colonial Administration developed regulatory policies against Christian missions, especially the prohibition of Christian missions from entering the Muslim Emirates.¹⁵⁴ Such policy was not in Ìgbómìnà land; although the missionaries faced some challenges in the land, the Colonial Government gave them free hands to carry out their evangelistic work in the land. For instance, the Native Authority in Lafiagi gave Playfair letter of permission to erect his house in Òrò-Àgó in 1912.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, there were numerous challenges that the missionaries faced in Ìgbómìnà land. These include racial segregation, challenges of transportation, communication, feeding, logistic, health, financial, etc. These will be examined one after the other:

Racial Segregation: This was the first challenge that these missionaries faced as they arrived Ìgbómìnà land. The people were scared of white men and would not want to associate with them. They took them to be *ebÒra* (ghosts) because of the colour of their skin.¹⁵⁶ The people were afraid to move closer to them. Some even thought that they were lepers. They saw them as mysterious human beings and did not want to have anything to do with them. This, of course, would not allow them to admire the gospel that the whites brought to them. Precisely, Jamu's initial fear of Playfair was due to this reason. However, this fear gradually disappeared as time went on, to the point that some indigenes later became close friends of these white men and women.

Mobility: Beside the fact that there were no good accessible roads for the missionaries in Nigeria as at that time, there were no means of transportation. There were no cars, motorcycles

and bicycles in Ìgbómìnà land as at that time (except the bicycle that was later brought by Playfair in 1916). Transportation problem was a serious problem for these white men. It has already been noted in chapter three of this research work that the missionaries arrived Nigeria via water (sea) and also arrived in Patigi from Lagos using boat on the River Niger. They had to trek from one place to another regardless of the distance. On several occasions, Playfair trekked from Egbe to Òrò-Àgó and to Ilorin, Òrò-Àgó to Ìsánlú Makutu via Patigi, and sometimes on the River Benue and River Niger in the local boat. In testifying to this, Adeniyi recorded that:

The transportation system during that time was another major challenge. Whenever there was any information for the missionaries from Ilorin/Patigi or messages about the arrival of new set of missionaries, we trekked with them and their luggage carriers from Ilorin to Òrò-Àgó/Patigi and back to Òrò-Àgó because there was no transport (vehicle) to convey us.¹⁵⁷

Beside this, the missionaries made several trips to most villages and towns around Ìgbómìnà land to preach the gospel of Jesus on foot. Some of these trips were on hill paths and on the plains. They went from house to house to preach or visit the elderly men and women. This was definitely tiresome, especially for someone who was not used to such hard life. Journeys to Owa-Kajola, Alabe, Ofaro, Bapaílá, Òra, Ìgbàjà, Iwó-Ìsin , Òmù-Àrán, Òkè-Ode, etc were all on foot.

When Playfair eventually got a bicycle, he rode to so many places to visit the people with the gospel. Along side, he administered medical treatment to the sick as he preached the message of Christ. The coming of the bicycle was important to him. Where to get it repaired was another problem for him. Nonetheless, Playfair shared the bicycle with his companions in the work. Adeniyi testified on how this whiteman would ride the bicycle ahead for a distance, and then leave it at the side of the foot path for him to pick and so ride to catch up. This signifies that Playfair counted even what was supposed to be precious to him as nothing to be grasped. Like the Lord Jesus Christ who did not consider his equality with God as something to

be grasped, (Philippians 2:5-11), so also were these missionaries in their relationship with the indigenes in Ìgbómìnà land. Commenting on Playfair's zeal and hard work, which involved trekking long distances in reaching the 'unreached,' Titicombe acknowledged that:

Playfair's faith and zeal for the Lord's work caused him ever to prayerfully plan for and press on to unevangelized areas and countries. No journey was too difficult for him. He walked hundreds of miles over African trails preaching to crowd in market place and to individuals on the road side.¹⁵⁸

In those early days, because of lack of vehicles, a system was derived for transporting European staff in the Nigeria administration, especially in rural places. A team of four people would carry officers in a hammock from place to place. This had to be used for Playfair only in very difficult and very rare situations. During the raining seasons and whenever the rivers overflowed their banks, Rev. Playfair was always helped across by the people on gourd-ferry.¹⁵⁹ This of course was risky and dangerous. Ìgbómìnà towns and villages were/are located apart. Taking the gospel to them was a laborious task that involved trekking long distances on foot path through forest and thick bushes.

Language Barrier: The indigenes could not speak nor understand English language (the whiteman's Language) and so to communicate with them was a big problem at their arrival in Ìgbómìnà Land. Therefore, the missionaries were compelled to learn Yòrùbá language (Ìgbómìnà dialect). Ìgbómìnà dialect is different from Yagba dialect, and even there are lots of variations within Ìgbómìnà dialect, yet these white missionaries struggled to learn them. Before then, the missionaries used to resort to showing pictures and films to drive home their points whenever they were communicating with the people. Sometimes they used interpreters when available. Playfair did this on so many occasions in his evangelism in and around Òrò-Àgò.

Not only that, there were no mobile phones in Ìgbómìnà land as at that time. No land phones not to talk of mobile phoning system. So, to send information from overseas countries

to Ìgbómìnà land was not easy, and even to send information within the country was very difficult. This was exactly what happened when Gowans and Kent died in Ghirku and Bida respectively; it took some months before Bingham got the information in Lagos.¹⁶⁰

Feeding: The Whiteman's food was quite different from the indigenes'. How to cope with the local food was not a small problem to the missionaries. Although, they came with some of their choice food, but immediately that got finished, they ran into problems. They ate what they were not used to and some died as a result.¹⁶¹ Mostly, they depended on traditional food and fruits for survival. They had to eat *amala* (yam flower), *eba* (cassava flour) *eko eda* (local oat), *iyán* and *ewuyan* (pounded yam and its remake), *oka adagbona* (remake cassava/yam flower), etc. Food like rice, semovita, tea and bread were uncommon then in Ìgbómìnà land.

Logistic Support: It was the assistance from the Christians and various denominations in America and Canada that were used for the financial and material support of the various SIM missionaries. The gifts to the converts in the mission fields equally depended on such support. However, such aids were inadequate to meet the numerous needs of the ever increasing converts who the missionaries supported in cash and kind. At the beginning, the means of cash payment was through the use of cowries as well as trade by barter. Sometimes, Rev. Playfair would have to kill some animals to give workers in exchange for money that was not available.¹⁶²

Health and Climatic Challenges: Like any other European missionaries in a foreign land, the problem caused by the changes of weather and climate could not be overemphasized.¹⁶³ The SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land were not left out. The weather was too hot for them. Malaria was a deadly disease that sent so many of them into their early graves. Olayinka quoted Mr. C.P. Jensen, SIM missionary in Agunjin in 1933 saying: because of health reasons, it was decided to move the station from Agunjin to Ìgbàjà in the Ilorin Emirate.¹⁶⁴ Playfair took ill on so many occasions, without proper medication, he managed to survive through faith

healing. Miss Miller, the missionary who started motherless home in Òrò-Àgó died of snake bite and was buried in Òrò-Àgó (Her grave is still in Òrò-Àgó till date). Miss L. Moulding who came after Miss Miller's death to resume work at the motherless home equally took ill after some years. She was taken to Miango in the Northern Nigeria where she died.¹⁶⁵

At Agunjin, it was reported that all the missionaries who lived there at that time had tuberculosis. One Mallam Muhammed Seriki Barake in Olayinka confirmed that one of the children of the missionaries in Agunjin died.¹⁶⁶ Mrs. C.P. Jenson had a protracted illness while in Agunjin and eventually died at Egbe. This health problem was majorly the reason why the SIM missionaries embarked on opening of clinics and maternities in all the towns and villages where they settled. This did not only help them to overcome their own health challenges, but also helped the indigenes both Christians and the non-Christians to enjoy close access to basic needs.

Diabolic Attack: Beside the health challenges faced by the missionaries, they encountered spiritual attacks via charms and enchantments from the indigenes who were in opposition to the gospel of Christ. This was, however expected because Jesus had predicted it in Matthew 12:29. Nonetheless, the God of the missionaries always proved far more powerful than the gods of their enemies.

Many instances of such attacks were recorded in those early years. Among them was what happened on the 17th June 1957. This was during Playfair's return to Òrò-Àgó after he had left for some years. It was about 7:30pm and Playfair was charging the congregation on the power of prayer and how prayers could be used to combat satanic attacks. Suddenly there was a powerful lightening followed by thunder against the church building. It was a gathering of about 600 worshipers excluding children. The thunder shook the whole ground. Consequently, many people fainted while two of the church windows got shattered. However, no life was lost.

After about 30 minutes, the lives of those that fainted were revived and the service continued..¹⁶⁷ It was indeed a great demonstration of God's power over the evil forces!

Persecution: The SIM missionaries and their converts were greatly persecuted in Ìgbómìnà land. Becoming a Christian meant that one would be deprived of so many things. One of the deprivations was marriage: Parents would usually not give out their female children to the converts in marriage. Some Christians were isolated and had nobody to associate with. When any adult got converted, the persecution was even more and such person was attacked through the use of witchcraft against him or her, so as to draw him or her back from the new faith.

As revealed by the centenary committee in the book *The Ancient Paths: Christianity in Òrò-Àgò and Environs*, Pa Eniosowu was the first brave convert from Ilu-Ose and was instrumental to bringing many other indigenes to the Lord Jesus Christ. This man suffered serious persecution out of the fear that he would draw many more away from the traditional religion. He was cursed and charmed by the parents of those children that gave their lives to Christ. Life was made unbearable for him. He fell terribly sick. Rev. Clyde Adeniyi and Pa Abraham Keye, his co-workers, visited him to pray with him and encourage him. He indicated that he would rather die as a Christian.¹⁶⁸ One night, as Rev. Clyde and Pa Abraham paid him another visit, they saw a big devilish cat jumping down from the local ceiling and bit him severely. Pa Eniosowu died as a result.¹⁶⁹ He died a martyr. He was one of the indigenes who died in Ìgbómìnà land as a result of his love for Christ and in the cause of the gospel. Some other converts faced other forms of persecutions: hatred and torture.

More so, the non-Christians often deprived Christian women and children from going to Sunday schools and Sunday services by bringing out Egúngún masquerades concurrently as the church bell rang (traditions forbade women and children from seeing some of these masquerades). For this reason, many women and children found it very difficult to attend church activities). The missionaries, however, warned the Christians not to fight back or

retaliate. As time went on, the non-Christians noticed that the Christians were not distracted regardless of their various persecutions, so they relented and stopped preventing their Christian children (daughters) from getting married to the young Christian (males). Thus, with patience, prayer, persistence, and faith, they were able to overcome, and today Christianity is no longer a strange religion in Ìgbómìnà land at large.

Persecution has been described as being part of the Church from her inception.¹⁷⁰ The persecution suffered by Prince James Salami Atolagbe, a son to Elese of Ìgbàjà in the 1940s was a serious one. As described by Lawal in his (Atolagbe's) biography, the persecution was alarming to the point that he was later denied to rule Irese land, just because he was a Christian.¹⁷¹ From the outset, Atolagbe's conversion did not go down well with the ruling family in Ìgbàjà who saw him as departing from the religion of his Islamic parents.

Pa Eyitayo, one of the early converts in Ìgbàjà, while narrating the kind of suffering and persecution they went through during the early period of Christianity in Ìgbàjà, mentioned that around 1935, the Elese of Ìgbàjà, (Elese Saheed Alfa) hated Christianity so much that he would send an emissary to Pa Odewumi asking him to stop the meeting of the new converts in his house. He would send his security men to harass and threaten these converts. He always vowed to take them to Ilorin in handcuffs.¹⁷² Nevertheless, the meeting did not only continue, but also grew stronger, that Christianity had come to stay in the whole of Ìgbómìnà land.

Hostile Community: Since the new converts suffered persecution to that extent as explained earlier, one would expect that the white missionaries suffered more. There was no community that these SIM missionaries got to without facing hostility from some indigenes. The missionaries' look, language, religion and culture differ greatly. Many of the communities visited initially offered stiff resistance to the missionaries. In most cases, like in Òrò-Àgó, Agunjin, and Ìgbàjà, these missionaries were given "forbidden forests," where deadly animals like poisonous snakes were found, to pitch their tent. Places dedicated to the evil spirits were

released to them to build their dwellings. At times, missionaries had no choice than to take such places because no other location were given to them.¹⁷³

In 1912 when Playfair arrived Òrò-Àgó to commence his missionary activities, he was given some plots beside River Arigun to build his house. The elders of the community thought that he would be attacked by the evil spirit in the river and would be killed. But to their amazement, it turned out to be blessings to him and other missionaries who lived in Oro land. Although, many of these missionaries were bitten by poisonous snakes but only few died and the gospel spread far and near. The same thing happened at Ìgbàjà, '*Igbo Oro*' the "forbidden forests" along Adanla road was given to the missionaries to settle with the expectation that they would not survive there.¹⁷⁴ However, the missionaries did not only survive there, they built the very first SIM/ECWA Theological Seminary there in 1941.

Hostility was worse in the case of Playfair at Òrò-Àgó. The people feared that he would deny them the services of their children on the farm and thus, they even appealed to the Etsu of Lafiagi, King Benu, to talk to Dongo, the first Resident Officer at Lafiagi, that they did not want the White missionarry. On receiving the message, Dongo did otherwise; he encouraged the people not to be afraid because Rev. Playfair was out to help them.

Religious Conflict: Both Islam and African Traditional Religion threatened the implantation of Christianity in Ìgbómìnà land. Islam posed the greatest problem to Christianity, being the religion of the rulers in most Ìgbómìnà towns and villages. Some accepted Islam out of fear, while others accepted it in order to associate with these ruling powers. Also, Islam had some common belief and practices that are in agreement with Africans' way of life. For instance, Islam permits polygamy which was bluntly condemned by the SIM missionaries who were not used to such life style.¹⁷⁵

On the part of the African traditionalists, some of them were ready to allow their young ones to accept the Christian faith while others were ready to accept the gospel

themselves. Nonetheless, there was persecution of the missionaries and their young converts. On two occasions, they caused thunder to strike the mission house at Agunjin (although this cannot be proved scientifically). The first attempt landed on a nearby tree, while the second landed on one of the mango trees along the road. When the second attempt failed, Mr. Davis warned the Bale of Agunjin at that time that he and his people should stop fighting against God.¹⁷⁶

When Christianity was first introduced to the people of Ìgbàjà around 1918, even before the coming of the SIM missionaries as earlier mentioned, Oba Sanni Areja was the ruling Elese. Olayinka recorded that this Elese did not welcome the missionaries in the land.¹⁷⁷ The situation was not conducive at all for the Christians. This situation lasted for almost a year. The Elese (who was a Muslim) made a vow that Christianity would not be welcomed during his reign and possibly after his reign. However, it was not long after which he committed an offence which led him to the prison at Ilorin.¹⁷⁸

This particular incident led to a serious persecution of the Christians because it was believed that the Christians were responsible for the Elese's arrest and imprisonment. The hostility and open attack began during an evening prayer meeting. Horse men were sent to disperse Christian worshippers. On the first day of the attack, many of the Christians slept in the bush for fear of being killed. To avoid a repeat of the attack, the time of evening prayer meeting was changed from seven in the evening to 5:00pm. Consequently, the first SIM church building was demolished by the Muslims in Ìgbàjà in 1927.¹⁷⁹ This demolition brought a major setback to the Christians in Ìgbàjà. The church which was under construction was pulled down at night but no arrest was made. To avoid a repeat of such evil step, people were assigned to keep vigil in the church premises until the building was reconstructed. The site of this first church is the former Christian Cemetery which is located on the right hand at the entrance of the town from Okeya.¹⁸⁰ The site of the church was later transferred to the present place near

the Seminary in 1946 (where 1st ECWA Ìgbàjà is located now). In fact, the decision to change the site of the church to the present location was influenced by the arrival of the SIM missionaries from Agunjin.

Gradually, there was a change of heart on the part of the ruling class of Ìgbàjà, especially when they began to see some positive changes in the town. For instance, modern buildings began to spring up in the town. Coupled with this was the fame of the town which began to spread like wild fire, especially with the establishment of the only SIM Seminary in 1941, and the location of Radio ELWA in the town in 1952. Indeed, the new Elese that emerged (Oba Ajiboye) was more liberal than his predecessors. He was not hostile to the Christians although he refused to become a Christian. Thus, the gospel of Christ spread in Ìgbàjà and its environs.

Conclusively, it becomes clear that SIM/ECWA had spread to most part of Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State. From her humble beginning in 1912, the mission grew to the point of having three DCCs in the Land: Òmù-Àrán DCC, Ìgbàjà DCC and Òrò-Àgó DCC. However, most unfortunately, ECWA has been unable to sustain the health sector that she inherited from SIM. ECWA is able to sustain church planting but failed in the sustainability of the health sector. Poor administration has been identified as the major reason for her inability to sustain the health sector. The poor management was from the local level to the general level in Jos, headquarters. The fraudulent acts of most of the staff members caused the failure of this sector. Therefore, the three DCCs of ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land are encouraged to work hard to resuscitate this crucial legacy that is almost dead. ECWA Headquarters should set up a Committee to see to this revival of this legacy.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMPACTS OF SIM/ECWA ON ÌGBÓMÌNÀ LAND

Like in other African societies, Ìgbómìnà people of Kwara State were not exposed to Western civilization before the coming of SIM and CMS missionaries into the land beginning, from 1912. Thus, for a better and objective evaluation of these impacts of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land, it will be necessary to examine the educational, socio-cultural, economic and medical impacts of this mission on the land under study:

4.1 Educational Impact

The introduction of Western Education into Ìgbómìnà land cannot be treated in isolation from the introduction of Christianity as a religion into the land. SIM/ECWA and CMS were the agents of Western Education in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State. It has been noted by some scholars that the Christian missions in Nigeria (SIM inclusive) have not hidden their intention that establishment of schools was meant for evangelism. Such scholars include Omotoye who asserted that the primary aim of the early Christian missionaries was to convert the non-Christians into Christian faith via education. He noted 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.”¹

As far as the 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. Early in mission work, Western education had been rightly identified as the most powerful tool and means of evangelization and church planting in the mission field. The reason was simple, Christianity was a “literate” religion, at least in the way it was brought and presented to Africans including Ìgbómìnà people. The deep truth, values, and principles of the word of God in the Holy Scriptures had to be read, learned,

and taught. Literacy was a potent vehicle for achieving that. To buttress this fact, Turaki noted that:

the records available in the SIM archives reveal that early missionary educational philosophy, policies, programmes and activities were, in the main, a vehicle for Christian propagation and the spreading of the Gospel of Christ. Education was primarily auxiliary to, and a hand-maid of evangelism and church planting. The goal was not education in itself, but the attainment of the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ.²

With this background, it becomes very clear why the development of SIM Mission educational philosophy, policy, activities and programmes in Ìgbómìnà land like in all other mission fields was guided by the underlying goal of propagating the Gospel of Christ and strengthening Christianity in the land. The necessity of the early Ìgbómìnà converts to know and be well grounded in the Christian faith, and education made that possible. Also, these missionaries needed Western education to pass on this ‘new – found faith’ (Christianity) to their converts’ kith and kin. Indeed, Western education was a veritable vehicle for communicating the Gospel of Christ.

Before the coming of Guy Playfair into Ìgbómìnà land, the indigenes were not exposed to Western type of education, except for the few who had got the opportunities to travel to other parts of Yorùbáland, such as Abeokuta and Lagos and Badagry. These few individuals had learnt that Western education brought with it Western civilization. As a result, Playfair’s effort to introduce Western education was welcomed at least by those who were aware of it. Indeed, Ayandele had pointed out that Western education was looked upon as the only agency that could bring about the social revolution that Nigeria envisaged as a nation.³ So, it is not surprising that mission schools were eagerly welcomed in many parts of Ìgbómìnà land.

Dosunmu noted that early development of education in Ìgbómìnà land owed much of its success to the emergence of mission communities in 1918, established by SIM/ECWA at Òrò-Àgò, the Catholic Mission in late 1930s at Oro and the United Missionary Society (now

UMCA) at Share in early 1940.⁴ Although, other missionary agents established schools and colleges in Ìgbómìnà land, those mentioned here took lead in this regard. Western education has revolutionary influences in Ìgbómìnà land and by extension, Nigeria as a whole. Like in all other parts of Africa, such as Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, etc, education was a product of missionary work.⁵ Until the approach of Nigeria's independence in 1960, the Christian missions in Ìgbómìnà land were the first and the only organizations willing to provide Western education to the people. Western education could be said to have been introduced into Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State in 1912 since this was the year that the Christian missionaries arrived the land. As earlier indicated, these white men used western education as tool for the propagation of the gospel of Christ which they came to introduce. Thus, Western education and the Church are siamese twins.

Jamiu Adeniyi was the first to be educated and to become a Christian through the missionary activities of Guy Playfair in Òrò-Àgò. The missionaries in their approach used the early Sunday school as the nursery of the infant schools. Thus, Western education succeeded in transforming the lives of the youths in the society. The missionaries, however, believed that they were carrying out their primary objective. That was to have a civilizing mission and making changes for a better society.

Early mission educational buildings were mud-walled night schools. The curriculum consisted of the four Rs: "Readin" (Reading), "ritin" (writing), "rithmetic" (Arithmetic), and religion, while the Bible was used as the main text book.⁶ With this curriculum, many indigenous teachers were trained. Such a teacher was a multipurpose individual who acted as the pastor, teacher and village doctor (the dispenser of quinine, aspirin and Epsom salts). Gradually, with financial subvention from overseas missions, the schools grew into fairly extensive system with some primary educational objectives. Dosumu highlighted these objectives as follows:

- a) To bring the youth under the influence of Christianity or to act as an evangelizing agency, since education was primarily for evangelistic purpose;
- b) To develop a Christian community through the enlightenment and training of its members (that Christian education with the knowledge of the Bible will dispel superstition and evil customs);
- c) To reinforce missionary culture in everyday activities at school, to encourage students to abandon their indigenous culture and to become westernized; and
- d) To promote the general welfare of the destitute and the homeless. This was exemplified in the educational programme at the leper colony at Òmù-Àrán and the Orphanage Home at Òrò-Àgó.⁷

In totality, mission education in Ìgbómìnà land was mirrored with the belief that those who hold the school hold the country, hold its religion and its future. It is not surprising, therefore, to see the missionaries without wasting time, using their schools as inducements to lure the indigenes into the missionary orbit. Ironically, some Ìgbómìnà people sent their children to school primarily for the purpose of achieving well defined political, social or economic advancement as experienced by other southerners in Nigeria, but refused to practice Christianity as a religion after their graduation.

The differences in role perceptions of the schools by the missionaries and their African friends inevitably led to a big conflict. The missionaries continued to place religious instruction at the forefront of the school curriculum. Although, Bible teaching was the backbone of all mission efforts, the Africans on the other hand requested that more utilitarian subjects be introduced, especially, those subjects which would enable them to move into the Western economy. Many indigenes that sent their children to school were convinced that Western education would remove them from poverty and ignorance.

The period between 1930 and 1950 were very significant in the development of primary education in Ìgbómìnà land. This was a period of transition from church – oriented education to a full fledged primary education long demanded by the people.⁸ By the middle of 1950, many villages already got mission–based primary schools.⁹ Significantly, it was during this period that the colonial government recognized the need for educational development in this region to hearken to the long cry of the people for government’s aid to education. As a result, the colonial administration opened a school at Òmù-Àrán, Ìgbàjà and Òkè-Ode called Native Authority School (generally regarded as a British experiment in Africa education).¹⁰ These three schools were the only educational institutions indirectly provided by the colonial government through the Native Authority prior to Nigeria’s independence in 1960. Nonetheless, the contribution of SIM/ECWA to the development of primary, adult, secondary and girls’ education in Ìgbómìnà land can never be overemphasized.

4.1.1 Primary Education

The SIM mission’s policy on literacy, Sunday School, Classes for Religious Instructions (CRI) and Theological training programmes left the mission with very little interest in developing an effective primary or elementary educational programme. At the early stages of the mission work, any education beyond literacy and religious instruction was not a priority. Thus, primary or elementary education did not feature prominently in the pioneering stages of the SIM.

In the beginning, the concern of SIM missionaries was just to teach the adult converts (mainly men) the art of reading and writing in Òrò-Àgó, the cradle of SIM missionary activities in Ìgbómìnà Land. Rev. Guy Playfair discovered that many of these adults were able to learn as quickly as expected. He then realized that it would be necessary to establish a school for the young ones whom he believed would certainly be able to learn even faster than the older men who were already his “lieutenants” in the ministry. Some children were, however curious and

showed interest. This was a motivation for Playfair to establish a primary school in Òrò-Àgó without any delay.

In early 1930s, there was an annual SIM conference at Egbe. It was in this meeting that Rev. Jamu Klaidu Adeniyi (the first SIM convert and Pastor in Ìgbómìnà land) tabled the request for the establishment of a primary school in Òrò-Àgó.¹¹ He expressed the difficulties faced by many Òrò-Àgó converts who had to travel to school in Egbe. Immediately, Rev. Playfair, who was then, in a higher position in SIM Headquarters Jos, directed that the primary school start in Òrò-Àgó. He had earlier obtained permission from the government of Nigeria to establish schools whenever and wherever he wanted in Nigeria.

Thus, in 1935, education at the primary school level known as central primary school commenced in Òrò-Àgó with seven pupils under the tutelage of Rev. J. K. Adeniyi. This school had no senior standard class section. Consequently, pupils had to be transferred to the SIM School Egbe for standards five and six before they could be awarded certificates. Among the beneficiaries of this were: Paul Omodara (Dada), David Olaosebikan, Aremu Elijah, Adeniran Olu, Balogun Fashikun, David Malomo Babajamu, Mike Dada, and Sola Joseph. However, Stephen Akangbe and Joshua Buremoh became graduates of the Native Authority School (NA), Òmù-Àrán.¹²

With the coming of Miss Sarah Jane Buller as principal and Miss Alice Ostrander as a teacher, the school was upgraded to senior primary status and was approved for the issuing of First School Leaving Certificate. Daniel A. Onijala who later became an ordained minister of the gospel of Christ was the Headmaster. The first graduates of the school include David Abodunde and D. A. Buremoh. The latter eventually became a church minister and thereafter, proceeded to become the Provost at ECWA Theological Seminary, Ìgbàjà between 1982 and 1993. Others were His Royal Highness Late Oba Peter Kadiri the Onidera of Idera, Mary Adediyun (now Chief Mrs. M. A. Dada), Ruth Olabisi now Mrs. R. O. Jolayemi, Late Mr.

William Wodo Alashi, Late Mr. Paul Tunde Dalumo, James Malomo Arowolo, Late Jimoh Balogun, Late Chief Samuel Kolade, Elder Obadiah A. Lawal, Mr. Abraham Dada (from Egbe) and Deacon (Chief) Dr. Stephen S. Ayanda.¹³

In those early days, there was dire need of teachers. For that reason, all, except Mary Adediyun Moses (Chief Mrs. Dada) were placed as teachers in various mission schools around. These schools were those in Okedaba, Oke-Oyan, Alabe and Òrò-Àgó. They all served as medium of educating the young ones and for evangelism. Another set of pupils trained in the Oro- Ago school include Sola Adeniyi from Omugo, the Late Oba Hon. Justice Daniel Adeniyi from Òrò-Àgó, Folayan Elemonsho also from Òrò-Àgó (now Elder David Afolayan Ifarinde), etc.

According to Turaki, the first schools to be developed by the SIM were the mission station schools. They were of the following categories: Day Schools and Boarding Schools (for Boys and Girls). Categories one and two were vernacular schools. Advanced training with some English was given to those individuals who were qualified to become pupil teachers and such ones were taught by the missionaries themselves.¹⁴ By 1960, SIM had got a significant mission station schools in Ìgbómìnà land.

The mission stations' schools were followed by the vernacular primary schools which were developed out of the mission stations' schools, especially during the 1930s and the 1940s. These schools gave instructions beyond literacy and Classes for Religious Instruction (C.R.I). Pupils were introduced to various subjects, such as elements of Arithmetic, History, Geography, Hygiene, etc. The mission could not establish many full vernacular primary schools due to lack of enough trained teachers. The vernacular primary schools were followed by what the S.I.M named "Remove Class." This was a bridge between education in the vernacular and education in English Language. This level was not fully developed by the mission due to its lack of interest in any form of education beyond the vernacular.

Education reforms in Northern Nigeria in the 1950s brought about a standardization of primary level education and phased out “Remove Classes” and Middle Schools. This was known as “Senior Primary Schools.” Primary schools were restructured into a four-year junior primary and a three year senior primary. English language was to be introduced during the later years of junior primary, while this language (English Language) was to be used purely in the senior primary.

Thus, the mission took a more radical and progressive policy of establishing many primary schools during the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Primary education became the most potent and effective tool for propagating the Christian Faith; thus bringing about rapid social transformation of African societies particularly in Ìgbómìnà land.¹⁵ Ìgbàjà came after Òrò-Àgó and Agunjin to become the dominant educational centres of Western education in Ìgbómìnà land.

The list below shows the names of the Primary Schools of SIM Mission in Ìgbómìnà Land with their years of establishment. They are arranged alphabetically according to the names of the towns/villages involved:

- i) Junior Primary School, Agbeku - 1959
- ii) Junior Primary School, Alabe -1945
- iii) Junior Primary School, Atiran -1958
- iv) Junior Primary School, Eggi-Oyopo -1963
- v) Junior Primary School, Elesin-Meta -1946
- vi) Junior Primary School, Oke-Oyan/Idera -1944
- vii) Senior Primary School, Idera -1958
- viii) Junior Primary School, Ìgbàjà - 1939
- ix) Senior Primary School, Ìgbàjà- 1949
- x) Junior Primary School, Ìdòfiàn- 1950

- xi) Senior Primary School, Ìdòfiàn -1962
- xii) Junior Primary School, Igbowu -1958
- xiii) Senior Primary School, Igbowu -1961
- xiv) Junior Primary School, Iwó/Owu -1945
- xv) Senior Primary School, Iwó/Owu - 1957
- xvi) Junior Primary School, Kajola -1960
- xvii) Junior Primary School, Odo-Eku - 1944
- xviii) Senior Primary School, Odo-Eku - 1959
- xix) Junior Primary School, Olayinka - 1947
- xx) Senior Primary School, Olayinka - 1963
- xxi) Junior Primary School, Okedaba - 1944
- xxii) Senior Secondary School, Okedaba - 1961
- xxiii) Junior Primary School Oke-Igbala- 1947
- xxiv) Junior Primary School, Òkè-Ode- 1942
- xxv) Senior Primary School, Òkè-Ode - 1950
- xxvi) Junior Primary School, Òmù-Àrán- 1947
- xxviii) Junior Primary School, Òra- 1945
- xxix) Senior Primary School, Òra- 1961
- xxx) Junior Primary School, Òrò-Àgó - 1938
- xxxi) Senior Primary School, Òrò-Àgó - 1949
- xxxii) Junior Primary School, Owode - 1958
- xxxiii) Senior Primary School, Owode - 1963
- xxxiv) Junior Primary School, Oyatedo - 1961
- xxxv) Junior Primary School, Okeya-po - 1954
- xxxvi) Senior Primary School, Okeya-po - 1959

xxxvii) Junior Primary School, Oko-Irese Ìgbómìnà - 1949

xxxviii) Senior Primary School, Oko-Irese Ìgbómìnà -1959

xxxix) Junior Primary School, Olla - 1950

xl) Senior Primary School, Olla - 1959

xli) Junior Primary School, Patako - 1959

Today, it must be mentioned that these schools have been taken over by the government of Nigeria. The affairs of these schools are now in the hands of the Primary Education Board of Kwara State. However, these primary schools faced lots of challenges at their inceptions before the said takeover by the government. The major challenge was how to get pupils that would enrol in the schools because some of the indigenes were unwilling to release their children to the missionaries. They considered these whites to be foreigners with foreign religion. Another reason was that of Islamic antagonism against Christianity. Also the fear of reducing the hands of the boys that would work on their parents' farms if released to the missionaries, gripped the hearts of the parents. Hence, they reluctantly released children who were considered not strong enough to be useful on the farm to go to school. As a result of this, the missionaries requested members of the small S.I.M churches to look for children who will be attending the schools.

Among those to look for children to populate the school in Ìgbàjà was Pa. Joshua Olorunishola who happened to be an uncle of Late Prince J. S. Atolagbe (a man who was denied the kingship of Ìgbàjà just because he was a Christian). As reported by Lawal in the biography of this man, it was in search for those to enrol in the SIM primary school in Ìgbàjà in 1938 that Pa. Joshua Olorunishola got permission from Atolagbe's parents to enrol him in the SIM primary school.¹⁶ However, regardless of such problems and many more, the Sudan Interior Mission did well by introducing Western education in to Ìgbómìnà land.

4.1.2 Adult Education

The need to get the adult converts educated was seen earlier enough in the activities of SIM in Ìgbómìnà land. The primary goal was to introduce these converts to the elements of reading and writing. Furthermore, it was also necessary to ground them in the knowledge and teachings of the Bible and basic Christian doctrines. This literacy programme was the first step of developing missionary education. Until the 1930s, the bulk of missionary education was primarily and mainly of literacy education: reading, writing and notation.¹⁷

The adult education programme always take place after the day's farm work, especially in the evening, when all had returned from the farm. Men and women were seen gathered round a teacher in their compound with their local lamp learning how to read and write. This programme contributed immensely to the early growth of Christianity not only in Ìgbómìnà land, but also in SIM mission stations in Nigeria. Thus, early indigenous converts grew in faith because they had access to the Bible in their own language.

4.1.3 Secondary Education

Secondary education was the least developed by the SIM. The mission was very apprehensive of training its products and training them over to higher government schools. Its policy as stated in a field letter in SIM Archives states that:

There appears to be some misapprehension regarding the sending of boys to government schools. No Christian boy who is attending a mission school can be forced to attend a government school.¹⁸

The mission was afraid of secondary education for fear that its products might turn out worldly. Since secondary education emphasized the acquisition of “secular” knowledge, the mission was not ready to embark upon this type of education. Dr. Andrew Stirrett, the field secretary remarked thus:

Care must be exercised not to introduce subjects on the curriculum other than reading of the Bible and writing, because if subjects such as English, Mathematics, Commercial, Arithmetic, Book keeping and other ‘worldly’ arts and sciences are

taught, they become a source of temptation to the pupil to enter Government service, receive lucrative positions and often to spend his substance in riotous living.¹⁹

It was this philosophy of the mission that hindered its early development of secondary education in the land. At that time, the mission did not see it as an opportunity of influencing future leadership of the nation but saw it as dangerous to the gospel. However, that posture changed in the early 1960s when Dr. Dowdell, the then Education Secretary of SIM noted that God had led the mission into extensive education programme and warned that the Church may lose her opportunity if she refused to get involved in secondary education for her members.²⁰ He argued further that secondary education would influence the spiritual future of the mission. The church would lose her opportunity at that critical time if she refused to start secondary education programme.

Therefore, as a result of combined pressure put upon the mission by the indigenous church leaders, government and sister Christian missions, the mission opened her first secondary school at Egbe in 1951 (Titcombe College, Egbe) and the second at Kagoro in 1959 and a few others in the 1960s. The Middle Schools (4 years) after Junior Primary were phased out in the early 1960s and secondary education was structured into a 5-year programme after primary VII. Successful candidates in the external examinations obtained a Cambridge certificate and later in the 1960s, West African School Certificate (WASC). At the successful completion of secondary school, candidates for higher education were admitted into the Nigerian College of Arts and Science as preparatory to university education. This two-year programme was decentralized in the early 1960s and Higher School Certificate (HSC) courses were established in a few good secondary schools. SIM introduced the HSC programmes at the Titcombe College, Egbe in the late 1950s.²¹

At that time, there was no mission secondary school in Ìgbómìnà Land. The only equivalent one was the Sudan Interior Mission's Teacher Training College located at Ìgbàjà in 1944. In 1951, students of this college moved to the new and permanent site popularly called

Igba-ojule because of the many doors that featured in its many rooms. Mrs. Poole was made the principal in 1953 until June of the same year when Miss Laity took over from her. Mr. Albert Wyllie became the principal in 1954 until 1957 when he went home on vacation.²²

This teachers' college (SIM Ìgbàjà Teacher Training College) was meant to train a total teacher who could handle both the classroom and the pulpit where there were no pastors. In the grade two curriculum, there were subjects that were deemed required. Some of these required subjects were Bible doctrine, Bible survey, Synthesis, Gospel and Music. Owing to the similarities that existed between the Bible school's curriculum and that of the grade two, students in the teacher's college received lectures alongside the seminary students. They had the same teachers except in few areas like Arithmetic, Social sciences, etc. that were predominantly meant for students in the teacher's college. Classes were held on the seminary campus before the teacher's college moved to its permanent site at *Igba-Ojule*. Today the school is known as ECWA Secondary School, Ìgbàjà.

Another school equivalent to secondary school found in Ìgbómìnà land in those early years was The Women Teachers' College, Òrò-Àgó, founded in 1948. This was the first mission women training college in the whole of Northern Nigeria as at that time.²³ Miss Sarah Jane Buller was the first principal of the college. Some of the students were Mary Adediyun Moses (Mrs. P.O.A Dada). Ruth Olabisi Ezekiel (now Mrs. Jolayemi). The first two sets finished at Òrò-Àgó before the college was moved to Òmù-Àrán, Woko-womu in 1951.

At Wokowomu, many women teachers were produced by the college. Today, the college can boast of many principals of schools, professors in universities and workers in other various careers and callings. Some of the past principals of the college include Miss Sarah Jane Buller, Miss Dorothy Clark, Miss Blakency, Chief William A. Balogun, Mr. Samuel Adeyemi, Mrs. Janet M. Olatayo and Mrs. Mariam Abiola Adefílá.²⁴

Since the change in educational policy of the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1994, Teachers Training Colleges have been abolished. This school (Women Teachers College Wokowomu) has been changed to ECWA Girls Secondary School, Òmù-Àrán.

4.1.4 Girls' Bible School (Christian Commercial College)

The initial attempt made by missionaries in Nigeria to establish a Girls' Bible School was with nostalgia and fear. They had found out that it would be a difficult task to demystify the institution of African womanhood. The tradition was considered to be deep rooted in sin, superstition, ignorance and degradation with minds that had been dulled and hearts that were hardened. The olden day's elders also believed that the feminine mind was not capable of "book learning" consequently, there were few women and girls who were converts when compared to a large number of men.

Thus, in March 1930, Miss Josephine C. Bulifant joined Miss Guyer in the task of starting a girl's Bible school at Òrò-Àgò, so that at the close of 1930, the school commenced with a total strength of twelve girls. By the second year, the number increased to eighteen. Thereafter, Miss Moulding returned to Òrò-Àgò from furlough and relieved Miss Guyer of her duties in the school. That was when Miss Guyer had to go back home.²⁵ The numerical strength of the school later increased to thirty-five in April 1932 in its third year. In 1933, Miss Bulifant left Òrò-Àgò for furlough while Miss Kathryn Dick was sent to take charge of the school. She had worked with girls in America and loved that type of work.

The aim of setting up the school was of three folds: First to win the girls for the Lord Jesus Christ in fully consecrated lives; secondly, to give them a thorough working knowledge of the Bible, and thirdly to give them simple training for happy home making as suitable wives and mothers in real Christian homes. All teachings were done in Yòrùbá language for easy comprehension by the girls. The subjects taught were:

- 1) Bible

- a) Old and New Testament Stories;
 - b) Character Study;
 - c) Fundamental Doctrines of the Bible;
 - d) Personal Evangelism and Training in Bible Teachings with Practical Work;
 - e) Bible Memory;
 - f) Personal Problems;
- 2) Reading, Writing and simple Arithmetic;
 - 3) Hygiene, Midwifery and Baby Welfare; and
 - 4) Industrial Work and Native Home Craft.

Very important to mention was that this Girls' Bible School provided a Christian mini settlement from where young male Christians could find "ready made" spouses. It was a haven for young girls willing to become Christians, and very importantly, for girls whose non-Christian parents attempted to force into early marriage. As soon as such girls secretly entered the mission vicinity, parents usually had great fear of going into the compound to retrieve them for fear of the white missionaries. The first set of pupils of the school included Miss Ayi Ruth (Mrs. Alere), Miss Mellei Ebun (Mrs. Ajibola), Miss Mary Ben (Mrs. Ogunshola), Miss Ayo Ben (Mrs. Asonibare) and Miss Mary Alege (Mrs. Mary Oni). These women were from different towns and villages such as Kajola, Okedaba, Ìgbàjà etc. Many graduates of the school became noble examples of Christian mothers all over Ìgbómìnà Land and beyond.²⁶

In 1962, the school was upgraded to the status of Christian Training Institute (CTI). Thus, the curriculum was enlarged to include elementary commercial subjects and Miss Edith Milloy became the first principal. The graduands were then posted to primary schools to become Bible teachers, or clerks or typists in mission offices. The school was later converted into a full commercial co-educational college on the 16th October, 1981 with 29 students. The

first principal was Mr. D. O. Adeniyi. The name of the school was changed to Christian Commercial College (CCC) Òrò-Àgó.

4.1.5 The Establishment of a Theological Seminary in Ìgbómìnà land

In the early days of SIM/ECWA, each station manager ran the churches in his/her jurisdiction more or less according to his/her church's policies overseas. Those SIM churches had very little, if any at all, in common. The real revolution among these missionaries and their mission at large came as a result of the establishment of ECWA Theological Seminary with its location at Ìgbàjà in Ìgbómìnà land. Missionaries like Rev. W. G. Crouch, McDougal Sn, Mr. Hay Jr, Dr. Davis, Dr. Helser, Dr. Dowdell and others worked tirelessly in the establishment of this institution.

Prior to the mission's revolution and the establishment of this Seminary, some preliminary and significant efforts had been made to provide the converts of the mission with some Western education. According to Olatayo, in his book: *ECWA Root and Birth*, Rev. Norman Davis founded the first Yagba Bible School at Egbe for the purpose of training the converts to become pastors, teachers and evangelists. This was known as the School of the Prophets.²⁷ Bulifant, in her book: *From Pagan Child to Christian Mother*, added that Mr. Wogd Donaldson later joined Davis in this essential teaching ministry at this School of the Prophets.²⁸

According to Olatayo, in the year 1923, Rev. Davis moved his students, for reasons best known to him to Agunjin in Ìgbómìnà land. Here, several other persons joined as students to form the Agunjin Bible Training School of Prophets between 1923 and 1925. These students were: Messrs David A. Kayode from Mopa, Samuel Omokore Afolabi from Mopa, Paul Asala Ajaiyeoba from Odo-Ere, Andrew Ayodele from Ejiba, Sílás Ekundayo, Abraham Buremoh from Oke-Oyan, Clyde Jamu Adeniyi from Òrò-Àgó, Paul Ogundele from Okeya, Malachi Adegboye from Iyamerin, Moses Kolawole and Robert Oni Awe from Egbe.²⁹ In this school,

some of the students who were seen and noted to be capable were taught in English. Among them was Benjamin DÒsun mu Olatayo, while others were taught in Yòrùbá language.

However, Mr. Donaldson still continued to train some individuals in Egbe. In 1925 the population of 'these students' rose to 27 (all men). Eighteen others soon joined as time went on. Mr. Donaldson later moved all these students to Agunjin Bible Training School. By 1928, Rev. Davis became invalid at home, and died of tuberculosis. Mr. Donaldson also left in broken health in 1929, afflicted by the same disease. Consequently, the school was temporarily closed.³⁰

Agunjin proved a very unhealthy place for the missionaries and their activities. Many of them became terribly sick and eventually died. So discouraged by these obvious peril dictating circumstance of the station, coupled with the unresponsiveness of the indigenes of the village to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the school was finally closed down along with all other mission works in the area. The school was moved to Ìgbàjà where it re-opened in 1930 under the leadership of Rev. Andrew Dev. Hunt. Olatayo gave a list of some of the students that were moved along with the school to Ìgbàjà: Messrs John F. Oniyide from Oke-daba, James Aremu Adeniyi Olopa from Òrò-Àgó, John Gbenle Ekunrin from Òkè-Ode, etc. Unfortunately, Rev. Hunt took ill and was rushed back to Canada in 1931. Thus, the school was again closed down.³¹

According to Olatayo, the school was re-opened in 1941 by Rev. W. G. Crouch. Then, only two people in persons of Messer John from Ilota and Jacob Ife from Oke-Egbe turned up for the Yòrùbá Bible course (School of the Prophets), while fourteen (14) students applied for the English course. The fact that the School of the Prophets could not operate with only two students made it to be phased out, leaving the Seminary to operate in English Language.³²

ECWA Theological Seminary, Ìgbàjà started as a Bible College in 1941 with eighteen students as an institution of the Sudan Interior Mission for biblical and pastÒral training. This

was the first SIM Bible College where English language was used as a medium of communication by the SIM in Nigeria. The students of the school were drawn from various professional backgrounds. However, only seven (7) out of fourteen graduated. They were: Pastor Samuel Omokore Afolabi (the oldest and a former graduate of the Yòrùbá Bible School at Agunjin, who had been pastoring for some years), David Ishola Olatayo (a master motor mechanic), Samuel Olaosebikan (a master Lumber Jack, Sawyer in local parlance), Moses A. Sanni (a primary school headmaster); David Oyelere (a trader); Fred Adeyanju (a primary school leaver who had served as a teacher/pastor at SIM Church Alabe) and lastly Luke J. Ashonibare (a primary school pupil).³³

ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà has gone a long way in training evangelists, teachers, and pastors. This school has been headed by several principals/provosts starting from Rev. William Crouch (1941-1957), A. J Classen (1957-1960), H. Budd (1960-1963), Rev. Norman Lohrenz (1963-1964), and Rev. Dr. Larry Fehi (1964-1978). All these were white men. The first Nigerian to become the provost of the School was in 1978. His name was Rev. Dr. N Olutimayin (1978-1982). He was followed by an Ìgbómìnà indigen Rev D. A Buremoh (1982-1993), Rev. Dr. C. Olowola (1993-1996), Dr. J. B Lawal an indigene of Ìgbàjà (1997-2002), Rev. Dr. S.O Ashonibare an Ìgbómìnà indigene (2003-2006), Dr. J. B Lawal returned as the provost again from 2007-2014, currently Rev. Dr. S. O. Y Baba also an indigene of Ìgbómìnà land, is the provost (2014-date). Many programmes are offered in the school, viz: Certificate, Diploma, Degree, Master and Doctor of Divinities. The population of the school that started with only 14 students was over 500 as at 2012.³⁴ Programmes offered in the school include affiliated programmes of the University of Ibadan. In fact, students that enrol for affiliated programmes are required to write Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMB) before they could be admitted into the school. Such students go for one year service to the Nation (NYSC) on the successful completion of their programme. In the

past few years, the Seminary has gone through many facets of development. All these developments came as a result of trying to meet the emerging and prevailing needs of the society. Thus, the Seminary had repeatedly redefined its curriculum and its methodologies since 1972 and beyond. This is done to achieve its objectives.

This Seminary is over seventy years old. To commemorate her 70th anniversary in 2011, a maiden publication was compiled. It was pointed out in it that during the past seven decades, the Seminary had been radically and positively transformed in structural formation, nomenclature, numerical expansion, management, vision and mission. This took place in order to cope with both the emerging and prevailing needs, challenges and realities of evangelism and development, locally, nationally, and internationally.

ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà offers theological courses including Hebrew and Greek languages. Courses that address issues such as HIV/AIDS, Church Administration and Leadership training, Legal studies, etc. are offered as well. This Seminary could be said to be “interdenominational,” considering the courses offered in the school and the students admitted regardless of their denominations throughout Nigeria and other African countries. ECWA Theological Seminary Ìgbàjà produces pastors that minister in local Churches. The school has seven extension centres in Lagos, Osogbo, Ibadan, Akure, Abuja, etc. where more than 300 students/pastors are trained in church ministry every year.³⁵ The Seminary also has many practical field ministries, these include a prison ministry.³⁶



ECWA Theological Seminary, Ìgbàjà

Source: Picture taken by the Researcher at the Seminary premises on 01/05/2016

4.2. The Establishment of Radio Station

The use of radio is arguably the most popular medium of mass evangelism because of its very unique attributes. These attributes include: cheap to acquire and maintain, simple to operate, accessibility to remote areas, its coverage transcends linguistic and literacy barriers, etc.³⁷ The SIM missionaries adopted this medium in evangelizing Ìgbómìnà land. She transmitted via a broadcasting station in Ethiopia for a short time before it was found to be impracticable. According to Adebiyi in his book; *The History of Radio ELWA*, at the period when SIM was seeking a means to use radio as a means of evangelism, three young men from Wheaton College in America prayed that God would help them preach the gospel via radio in West Africa. These three young men obtained permission from the Liberian Government in Africa. Their association was known to be West African Broadcasting Association (WABA). They started the work of broadcasting near Monrovia, Liberia's capital city. These three men came in contact with SIM, and in the year 1952 Radio Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA) was established.³⁸

However, SIM started Radio ELWA in earnest on 18th January, 1954. Rev. Dr. W.G Crouch who started the Bible College in Ìgbàjà equally started this ELWA recording studio in

Ìgbàjà, Ìgbómìnà land. The first recording was done by Crouch who invited Moses Ekundayo Ariye (the pastor of the only ECWA Church in Ìgbàjà at the time) and some of the youths of the church to sing and preach for 30 minutes. After the recording, he played the tape. It was amazing for them to hear “a box singing” for the first time in their lives. They ran out to invite all others to see the “miracle.” The place was packed full within some minutes. Adebisi, being a participant on that day, remarked that it was a day he would never forget in his life.³⁹ Some of the members of the group that sang were: Julius Olayemi, late Benjamin Aiyedun, late Joel Bamigbade, late Timothy Afolayan. Subsequently, Crouch called Moses Ariye to organize a permanent choir for the ELWA. The choir members included some Seminarians and members from ECWA Church Ìgbàjà.

At the commencement of her transmission, there were lots of confusion with regards to the transmitting station’s location. Many thought that the transmission was done in Ìgbàjà as against the Nigerian Government Order banning any religious body to own a Radio station in Nigeria.⁴⁰ Eventually; it became very clear that only the recordings were done in Ìgbàjà while the transmission was from Monrovia, Liberia. All recorded tapes were sent to Monrovia from where the broadcast were made. ELWA crew had to work very hard to produce up to thirteen weeks episode (programmes) to be sent at once to Monrovia.

In those days, Radio ELWA was reckoned with in Africa, being one of the very few radio stations in the whole of Africa. It had thirteen gigantic transmitters. The recording machine that was used then was called ‘Nagra Tape Recorder.’ It was a very special recording machine that was very effective in those days. Adebisi, being an employed staff of ELWA travelled far and wide via the airplane of SIM for the purpose of recording songs and messages: from Ìgbàjà to Jos, to Egbe, Kaduna, Ilorin, Lagos, Kano, Òmù-Àrán etc.⁴¹ An open field was cleared where the airplane used as its airport (air strip) in Ìgbàjà, close to Igbaojule. This was

the first airport in Kwara State. The indigenes were always excited not only for seeing an aircraft for the first time, but seeing people in the air.

The financial burden of this Radio station was taken over by SIM as a body, and not the Radio Station itself. However, all SIM Churches equally gathered their token for the support of the radio programme. Songs and messages always go together on Radio ELWA. Many personnel have served ELWA in the time past till date. Miss Joyce Flint took over as the Manager from Rev. W. G. Crouch. It was in her time that ELWA began to produce programmes in other languages other than Yorùbá. Those languages include: English, Hausa, Nupe and Igbo. She worked very hard and trained many indigenes in broadcasting. Rev. Enoch Adebiyi, the writer of the book *The History of Radio ELWA*, was the first African to be fully employed as a staff, and later as Director of Radio ELWA Ìgbàjà, and the first to play guitar in the studio.⁴² He is an indigene of Ìgbàjà, and a trained Pastor from the Seminary. He eventually had training in Radio Programming both in Africa and Overseas.

Other important personnel in the establishment of ELWA include Jacob Adesina an indigene of Shao, Moro L.G.A, Kwara State. He was a cigarette seller before he was led to Christ by Enoch Adebiyi and Joyce Flint. He became the studio typist and later enrolled in the Bible College. Today, he is a church founder with its headquarters at Ibadan and branches in Shao and Ilorin. The Church was Grace Independent Baptist Church. Lives were touched not only spiritually but physically, socially and economically. Being the only radio station around, many people, including non-Christians throughout Africa always love to listen to it.

After Enoch Adebiyi, came Rev. Dr. Olatayo as the studio manager in 1969. He is an indigene of Òrò-Àgó. Rev. Samson Adetoyan took over after Rev. Olatayo in 1977. Rev. Peter Salawu, an indigene of Ìgbàjà, took over from him in 1985. After him came Rev. Amos Ola Agboola (from Oke-Ayo close to Òra) in 2001. After him came Rev. J. O. Irohinmikaye (from Kogi State) in the year 2005.

The impact of this radio station in Ìgbómìnà land and Africa at large can never be overemphasized. In the spiritual aspect, only God knows the number of people this radio station had led to Christ. As recorded by Adebisi, many letters and testimonies were received from people who gave their lives to Christ via listening to radio ELWA's programmes. Many had their faith built up through the inspired songs and many broken homes had received "healings." Mails were received on daily basis from far and near testifying to how ELWA had met their needs. Many requested for the tapes of the songs and messages.⁴³ Through the years, many Hausa, Yorùbá, Igbo, Kanuri/Shuwa, Arabs and Nupe listeners had heard the gospel of Jesus Christ over Radio ELWA.⁴⁴ A good number had responded to the Lord's call even in their privacy. Among them were James Dada from Ilesì Abeokuta and Mr. Daniel Arogundade from Oko-Ife. The latter testified that through Radio ELWA's ministration he became more devoted to Christ in giving. One Moses from the Northern Nigeria equally testified that he never missed ELWA's programmes. ECWA Church Otan Aiyegbaju in Òsun State started as a result of a man who after listening to Radio ELWA programme left his church looking for ELWA church, but eventually was told that ELWA Ìgbàjà was not a Church but was owned by ECWA. He became an ECWA member and established "ECWA Church" in Otan Aiyegbaju, his own town.⁴⁵

Through Radio ELWA the Gospel of Christ penetrated into the areas where the gospel was disallowed. For instance, the women in Purdah could hardly get anyone to preach to them, but through Radio ELWA's broadcasting, the gospel got to them and even the Fulani's who follow after their flocks all day long hear the gospel on air.

In the area of tourism, many people from far and near had visited Ìgbómìnà land, precisely Ìgbàjà to see for themselves Radio ELWA Recording Studio and the primer SIM/ECWA Seminary. Ìgbàjà became a popular town not only in Kwara State but in Nigeria as a whole. Different calibers of people have visited Ìgbàjà. Ìgbàjà eventually became a

“small Jerusalem.”⁴⁶ Economically, there is no doubt that the existence of Radio ELWA and even the Seminary in Ìgbómìnà land has economic impact on the land. It created employment opportunity for the people. This in turn boosted the market patronage at Ìgbàjà. Not only that, Radio ELWA stimulated people to purchase radios to enable them listen to the radio programmes, especially in those days when not many radio stations were in operation. This indeed was an agent of socialization.

However, the Liberia war that broke out in the 1990s had negative effect on Radio ELWA. The Transmitting station was completely burnt down and as a result, an end came to ELWA broadcasting. A radio station that was broadcasting in 49 different languages, with 25 recording centers and 14 transmitters was brought to a halt as a result of the war! Nonetheless, with the financial assistance of some external bodies like Festival of Gospel Songs (FESTIGOS) in Ilorin and other places, Radio ELWA Ìgbàjà is still managing to survive. Her programmes are aired via local radio stations such as Harmony F.M Radio Station in Ìdòfiàn and Midland F.M Radio Station in Ilorin Kwara State and Radio Oyo in Oyo State. Her programmes are also aired on Trans-World Radio in South Africa.

Thus, it is observed that Radio ELWA is no longer a radio station as it used to be but a mere recording studio as a result of the tragedy of civil war in Liberia. One would expect that ECWA would not only rebuild this radio station, but also own a Television Station. This would improve evangelism not only in Ìgbómìnà land but also in many more areas across Nigeria and beyond. Considering the contemporary usage of these means of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ in Kwara State, Omotoye has rightly noted that:

The use of radio and television method of communication is a common phenomenon today. Some of the Pentecostal pastors have regular and appointed time to preach the gospel on radio and television at the Federal, State and Private Stations. Programme on radio include devotional service which involves only morning and evening prayers mostly on government stations, Sunday worship services, jingles and announcement of revival meetings and church programmes, full length preaching/teaching programmes and occasional interviews granted to church ministers.⁴⁷

Without doubt, the most successful medium of reaching large number of people with the gospel of Christ is through radio media. Today, unlike before, Nigeria has so many radio and television stations across the nation where the gospel of Christ is preached on daily basis.⁴⁸ One would have expected that ECWA would have made effort to revive Radio ELWA. Although, some moves are being made such as airing her programmes via local stations: Radio Kwara FM Station, Harmony FM Station Ìdòfiàn, etc,⁴⁹ these attempts are inadequate when compared with what the station was in the time past. Also, other Church denominations are making adequate use of the advanced technology today like the internet radio and TV to propagate the Gospel of Christ in great measure.⁵⁰ It is gratifying to note that ECWA has established a television station in Jos, due to begin operation in a couple of months' time.



Radio ELWA, Ìgbàjà.

Source: Picture taken by the Resaercher at the Seminary Premises on 19/08/2017

4.3 Socio-Cultural Impact

The strong tie between religion and culture is evident as religion can hardly be separated from culture. The introduction of Christianity into Ìgbómìnà land has great effect on the people's socio-cultural life which encompasses socio-cultural heritage of a society, including norms, mores, beliefs, attitude, taboo, superstitions, religion, festivals, etc. Afolabi in his book: *Ìgbómìnà land in the Context of Yòrùbá History* noted that quite a lot of these and the like have been bequeathed to descendants of Ìgbómìnà people over years by words of mouth (verbally) and by imitations.⁵¹ So, it was obvious that Ìgbómìnà as a group of Yòrùbá people have their indigenous beliefs and culture before the commencement of the activities of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land.

However, Baba has observed that so many simìlárities exist between Africa's way of life and Jewish way of life as indicated in the Bible. Such simìlárities, according to him could be as a result of the vital roles that Africa played in God's unfolding plan of salvation and redemption from the time of Abraham (Gen. 12: 10- 20) to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Lk. 23:26) and also to the Pentecost event (Acts. 2: 1- 13). He equally added that this could be as a result of Africa's geographical proximity to Palestine.⁵² Such practices include: extended family ties, polygamy, and acceptance of a kinsman redeemer which is described in the book of Ruth, Chapter Two through Chapter Four. This practice requires a widow to marry a relative of her late husband. Another one relates to harvest of agricultural products on the farm (Ruth 2: 2- 17). Gleaning was part of Ìgbómìnà custom especially during harvest of agricultural products. The point we are emphasizing here is that, if the SIM missionaries had noticed these simìlárities, they would have capitalized on these bases as starting point for reaching out the Gospel to the people. It would have been easier for them to teach them and attract them, instead of condemning almost all of the culture components of the people.

The passage of life (naming, puberty, marriage and death ceremonies) of Ìgbómìnà people has been greatly influenced by the activities of SIM/ECWA in the land. The ceremonies attached to all these differ from what they had been before the coming of the Western civilization that was introduced by the missionaries. English wears are now worn by Ìgbómìnà people, people now live in ‘modern’ houses. This was not so before Guy Playfair stepped into Ìgbómìnà land.⁵³ Indeed, the establishment of Orphanage homes in Ìgbómìnà land by the SIM missionaries was an outstanding influence and contribution of the mission to the development and welfare of Ìgbómìnà people. Among the babies brought up in the motherless home was S.K.S. Olubadewo, a wealthy man who was the first person to own an aircraft (General Aviation Service Airline ‘GAS Airline’) in Ìgbómìnà land, and Janet Funmíláyo Ibitoye, a former principal of ECWA Nursing School, Egbe.⁵⁴

The ability of the people to know how to read and write brought great enlightenment to them. Playfair was the first to have a bicycle in Ìgbómìnà land Kwara State.⁵⁵ 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 leprosarium was opened in Òmù-Àrán by the SIM missionaries.⁵⁶ Thus, rehabilitating lepers, which is today a government policy is altogether a heritage taken from the Christian mission.

Linguistic development of African indigenous languages was another heritage from the Christian mission. While the European Missionaries can be well criticized 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 and other SIM missionaries that came after him helped in this capacity, especially in the area of teaching the people how to read and write and in documenting some of the Òral traditions and customs of the people.⁵⁷

4.4. The Establishment of Orphanage Home

The establishment of orphanage home in Ìgbómìnà land was an outstanding impact of SIM/ECWA on the development and the welfare of not only Ìgbómìnà people but also of all others that benefited from this ministry. The white women (SIM missionaries) joined hands together to establish this orphanage home in Òrò-Àgó in 1932.⁵⁸ They did this in an attempt to follow the good example that Playfair had already laid. This centre was a Christian phìlànthropic institution or ministry established for the purpose of caring for motherless children.

According to Adeniyi, Miss Malar, a young missionary started this orphanage home the very day she rescued a new born baby whose mother died immediately after his delivery.⁵⁹ Miss Malar rescued the baby boy and employed a Nupe woman at Ariyunkeye's house in Òrò-Àgó to look after the boy for her. The passion she had for the boy was so great to the point that Adeniyi who was with her on such visitation asked if she had been taking care of such motherless baby before that time. Her response was "yes." She had a simìlár experience, being the last born of her parents. She was number ten in the family. She lost her mother three months after her birth and her elderly siblings took care of her during her infancy.

As the motherless child named Tedy grew up, there was an outbreak of chicken pox epidemic in Òrò-Àgó. This affected him so terribly and he died. Miss Malar too was bitten by a snake later on and she also died. She was buried in Òrò-Àgó that same day.⁶⁰

Miss L. Moulding came after the death of Miss Malar to resume work at the motherless home with two children named: Aremu and Abiola. These two motherless babies had grown up to about six years old when Miss L. Moulding took ill and travelled to Miango (Plateau State) where she died. Before she left she committed the care of these two motherless babies to Rev. J. K. Adeniyi. Adeniyi took good care of these children. Aremu grew to become a

bricklayer. Likewise Abiola grew to adulthood too.⁶¹ Although, these women missionaries died, their impacts lived on.

Some years later, precisely, in July 1942, Miss Sauer Wura was transferred to Òrò-Àgó. She started the motherless home in earnest. The news about the coming of this white missionary spread over every nook and cranny of Oro, Ilorin, Offa, Ekiti, Yagba and throughout Ìgbómìnà land. Many motherless babies were brought to Òrò-Àgó and it became apparent that this young missionary could not take care of all of them. Therefore, more hands were needed along with more provisions. The churches in America got the news and sent in more aids such as drugs, clothing, money, napkins, etc. This woman learnt how to give medical treatment especially, injection so as to take good care of these orphans. Some of them even slept on her bed for better care.

Caring for these children was not an easy task and it was only missionaries with high sense of duty that were usually assigned to supervise the centre subsequently. As stated by Bulifant, the growth of the orphanage home was very rapid as many babies were taken there in no time after it was opened.⁶² The establishment of the home was just at the right time to save the lives of some of those that would most likely have died like many others. Bulifant further explains that:

In six years we have had more than thirty motherless babies brought to us, but there are only fifteen living. One was rescued when the relatives were preparing to bury her alive with her dead mother and another one spent a whole night in the open, strapped to her dead mother's back. It must be remembered also that the babies are often nearly starved to death and sometimes suffering from some terrible illness, perhaps contracted from the mother. For this reason we thank God for the fifteen whose lives have been spared. All would have died had we not taken them in.⁶³

As time went on, many more hands were needed so as to meet the increasing needs of the orphanage home. As a result, Christian indigenes were employed to meet up with these challenges. One industrious indigenous woman was Mrs. Neilli Dadabeke Ayanda (aka Mama

Joshua) from Oyatedo. She was the leader of the staff for the centre for several years. She died at a good old age, on the 20th October, 1996.⁶⁴ Other members of staff that displayed good conduct during their tenure were Mrs. Serah Agbe Malomo from Oyatedo, Madam Wuraola Ajiboye from Malete, Mrs. Sarah Dada Akangbe from Okerunwon, Madam Nana Gbedako Koshile from Aiyetoro and a few others.

The centre was very popular in those days. Motherless babies, males and females alike, were brought from far and near and were properly received and well taken care of by the missionaries irrespective of the religious beliefs of their parents. Many of the inmates of the centre have become great men and women in Nigeria and abroad today. Among them are Dav Toye and Funmíláyo Ibitoye, who eventually became husband and wife.

These motherless children had the opportunity to attend SIM Primary School *Ile okuta* in Òrò-Àgó for infants I and II and then back to the mission for standards I and II before returning to SIM primary School *Ile Okuta* for standard III to IV to complete their primary school education. Some went further to Ìgbàjà Teachers' College or Ìgbàjà Seminary. Some had the opportunity to go to Titcombe College Egbe for secondary education where they had opportunity to undergo science education. Among them are Prof. Jones Adeniyi, Late Pharmacist David Ibitoye (a renowned pharmacist in Ilorin) and Late Daniel Bamigboye. Some went to nursing school in Egbe. Among them was Mrs. Janet Olufunmíláyo Ibitoye.⁶⁵

However, regardless of the laudable contributions of this motherless home to the development of Ìgbómìnà land and Nigeria at large, the centre has ceased to function since 1970s. The reason for this was the departure of the white missionaries back to their countries and the nonchalant attitude of ECWA as a body to carry on with the work. This was why Mrs. Janet Ibitoye (one of the beneficiaries of this home) passionately called on surviving orphans of the defunct Òrò-Àgó motherless home and other well-meaning Nigerians including ECWA

Headquarters to join hands with Oro Ladies Club of Òrò-Àgó to bring the Orphanage Home back to life.⁶⁶

4.5 Medical Services

Medical services are among the key Christian missions' humanitarian works in Africa. It is clear that most of the Christian missions in Africa recognized medical works as a means of expressing Christian love in action. To that end, some of the best known missionaries have been medical doctors. In fact, as at 1965, about one-third of SIM missionaries in Nigeria were engaged in medical work.⁶⁶ The mission hospitals, dispensaries and leprosy settlements have been of great benefit to the people.

From the outset, it is equally clear that beside the humanitarian service rendered by the missionaries via medical services, the missionaries propagated the gospel of Christ via medical services to the people. It was in their practices to first preach the gospel of Christ to those who came for treatment before administering medical care. It is on record that so many gave their lives to Christ via this medium.⁶⁸ In a nutshell, the benefits that the medical services provided by the Christian missionaries brought to Africans are of great value. Mbiti has summarized these benefits as follows:

Missionaries came with European medicine and knowledge of hygiene, this however, had a slow influence at the beginning. In addition to the physical impact, the new medicine prepared people psychologically to become more receptive to western culture and education. Even the new form of medical care and knowledge began to reduce infant mortality and put under control diseases like small pox, malaria and stomach ailments, which had always been the main killer of African people.⁶⁹

In Ìgbómìnà land Kwara State, SIM/ECWA was the first agent to introduce modern medicine into the land. This mission body built dispensaries, maternity homes and a leprosarium centre in the land. The superiority of this modern medical care to the traditional medicine was apparent in the land. Turaki has noted that the SIM was the largest contributor in Northern Nigeria towards fighting diseases and ailments.⁷⁰ These 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 Òyìnbó*) and medical practices were accepted by the people with great suspicion and contempt, but as time went on, the people grew to accept them. Thus, we observe that the medical work of the SIM was as wide as the spread of the stations in Ìgbómìnà 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 got up to one hundred and ten (110) dispensaries and treatment centres in the Mission Field. Four (4) out of these were in Ìgbómìnà land between 1912 – 1947. The one in Òrò-Àgò was established in 1912, that of Ìgbàjà was in 1933, Òmù-Àrán's was opened in 1945, while Òkè-Ode's dispensary was established in 1947.⁷¹ Many more dispensaries were opened in Ìgbómìnà land beyond 1947; those at Agunjin, Òra, Babańlá, to mention but a few. Prominent among the pioneering nurses were Miss Moulding, Miss Margaret Lang, Mrs. Playfair, Miss. Purdy (affectionately called Adunola by the people of Ìgbàjà), etc. Later, indigenes were trained as nurses and posted to different dispensaries in and outside Ìgbómìnà land. The people were taught hygiene and how to give first aid treatment. This, coupled with the treatment administered in the dispensaries and maternities reduced the death rate among the people drastically in the land. Health education and immunization were given from time to time as part of the free medical services.

However, regardless of the impact of medical services of the SIM in Ìgbómìnà land, it is noted with sadness that only few of these dispensaries and maternities survived till date. They are the ones at Òrò-Àgò, Ìgbàjà and that of Òmù-Àrán (renamed Herbold Hospital). Reason for this was poor management. For this reason, the government clinics and hospitals got more patronage than the missions. Thus, ECWA could not sustain this legacy from SIM. This thesis thus strongly suggests that ECWA Headquarters should look into this matter for

sustenance of this important legacy. This is one of the ways ECWA could prove that it is a true and worthy offspring of SIM!

4.5.1 Establishment of Leprosarium Centre at Òmù-Àrán

Leprosy care was the most difficult/hazardous and the most expensive missionary activity embarked on by the SIM, not only in Ìgbómìnà land but also in all other SIM provinces such as Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Bauchi, Borno, Zaria, Plateau, Benue, Niger, etc. Ìgbómìnà land Centre fell in Ilorin and Kabba provinces. Leprosy work in the Northern Nigeria started when the colonial government was advised to do something about the ever-increasing epidemic of leprosy disease. A policy was developed which advised the Emirs and Chiefs to set aside land for leper farms and also to grant subsistence and drug for lepers. This scheme took off in 1930.⁷²

Thus, the colonial administration invited the British Empire Leper Relief Association (BELRA) to assist her in setting up the programme in Northern Nigeria. However, due to the difficulty and the hardships encountered by the staff of BELRA, Christian missions, SIM inclusive, were asked to take over the work. In 1936, a deal was struck between BELRA, Colonial and Native administration, on the one hand, and Christian missions on the other hand. Terms of agreement were drawn. The duties of the Colonial Administration and the Native authorities were spelt out in it. The duties of the Christian mission were equally spelt out. The site would be provided by the indigenes. The colonial administration would provide some amount of money needed, build and equip the dispensary and houses for lepers. The mission would supply the doctors, nurses and other personnel who would work on the site. The upkeep of the settlements would equally be the duty of the mission.⁹⁴

The bone of contention between Christian missions and the native/colonial administrations was however, the issue of 'Religion in Leper Settlements.' Strict rules and

regulations were given to the missionaries on how to carry out their evangelization in Leper settlements. To this, the mission would not comply. It became a very serious issue but in the long run, the matter died a silent death when it was observed that missions would not change nor compromise their position. The missions came out clearly: “No evangelism, no leprosy work.” Since the indigenes and the colonial government needed leprosy work at all cost, they gave up and left the missions to carry out their evangelism without restriction in the lepers’ settlements. As a result, leper settlements became mission stations, with lepers accepting the gospel of Christ with their families. The ‘forbidden Muslim Emirate’ was penetrated with the gospel of Christ as a result.

According to Turaki, Dr. Albert D. Helser could be regarded as ‘the bull-dozer’ of the Leprosy work of the SIM.⁷³ He did this with the assistance of an American group named, *The American Mission to Lepers*. This group encouraged him by giving resources and support for the SIM leprosy mission. The circumstances that brought about the SIM getting involved in leprosy work in the Northern Nigeria was the same with that of Ìgbómìnà land (Ilorin – Kabba provinces). In 1936, a government official spoke to the S.I.M about the care of lepers in Ilorin province. SIM consented to help, provided that no other mission in the area had interest. The response was that no other mission had agreed to take up the challenge and that native administration of Ilorin was not in a position to maintain a leper camp. In 1940, SIM took the initiative of asking the government in both Ilorin and Kabba provinces whether they would work together to build leper home in Òmù-Àrán District (Ìgbómìnà land). This proposal was approved in 1941. SIM started a leper home at Egbe in 1941, using the facilities of the maternity hospital at Egbe. Later, a new site was started at Ejiba in 1945. That of Òmù-Àrán started in 1943 at the outskirts of the town on the way to Ilorin, named Oke-Igbala.

Nonetheless, the impact of SIM, especially with the establishment of a leprosarium in Ìgbómìnà land is enormous. Beside the fact that many lives were won to Christian faith, the

lives of the lepers were touched. They found purpose for living. They became great farmers. They learnt various professions. Their children became learned. Instead of becoming nuisance to the society, they became productive citizens that did not have to beg before they could eat.⁷⁴ *Oke-Igbala*, as the Leprosarium centre in Òmù-Àrán is called, is a big settlement on her own. However, as with the SIM Dispensaries and Maternities in Ìgbómìnà land, so also is with this Leprosarium. ECWA could no longer manage it and the government of Kwara State had taken over the affair of the centre since late 1970s, with the consequence that the centre had since become a shadow of the past.

4.6 Economic Impact

As earlier noted in this research work, before SIM finally settled to adopt the name Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), it was named Africa Industrial Mission between 1898 – 1905.⁷⁵ This mission indeed had economic development of the Sudan in mind even as she propagated the gospel of Christ. SIM/ECWA has not only preached against indolence but also condemned it and encouraged her members to be industrious.

In the area of Agriculture, which is the major source of economic development in Ìgbómìnà Land, SIM/ECWA has done a lot to its improvement. Ìgbómìnà people are predominantly farmers. After the arrival of Playfair in the land precisely in 1912, he introduced new crops like tomatoes, mangoes, vegetables, American maize and cross breed cotton into Òrò-Àgó community and Ìgbómìnà land, by extension. The non-converts also got involved in the planting these newly introduced species.⁷⁶ Elaborate trainings were given by the SIM missionaries in the land in new farming techniques along with Western education. All these put together improved food productivity in the land, especially with the later establishment of ECWA Rural Development (ERD).

As it was in Ìgbómìnà land, so also was it in other parts of Africa in the area of Agriculture. Missionary societies and Government of many African countries became more

interested in promoting agriculture in Africa. Thus, they became instrumental to the introduction of new crops such as cocoa, cotton, coffee and citrus fruits. Many traders formed the nucleus of the congregation of the missionary churches. Christian converts were the first to take initiative in the cultivation of cash crops such as cocoa, cotton and rubber in Yòrùbá land. This was the submission of Ayandele who indicated that:

In Ondo district, large numbers of people became Christians partly because missionaries were associated with the restoration of peace and national rehabilitation of Ondo. Christianity was also associated in this area with the wealth brought to the people by timber concessions and the growth of cocoa. As in many parts of the Yòrùbá country, it was becoming fashionable to be described as a Christian.⁷⁷

We understand from Ayandele's work that commerce actually helped the propagation of Christian gospel in many parts of Yorùbáland, including Ìgbómìnà land. Some traders became agents of proselytization. This was the case of the introduction of Christianity into many towns and villages in Ìgbómìnà land. Among such was Ìgbàjà, around 1918 even before the arrival of SIM missionaries in the town. As earlier noted, Mr. Shadrach Jegede, an Ijesa cloth trader (*Òsómàáló*) who was in Ìgbàjà to trade was the first to preach the gospel of Christ in Ìgbàjà and its environ. He had got up to one hundred and fifty converts before the coming of the SIM missionaries from Agunjin to Ìgbàjà.

Another area of great importance that must be identified here was the improvement of hunting techniques by the SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land. It is on record that Guy Playfair was the first to use rifle for hunting games in Ìgbómìnà land.⁷⁸ With this, the local system of hunting was improved upon. Playfair and McIvor in Òkè-Ode always led indigenous hunters in game hunting. Seeing that their rifles were better than the local weapons in the land, so many hunters got closer to them, not only to learn how to operate the rifle but to get one for themselves. Most of the games that Playfair and McIvor got were always gifts to the indigenes. This, of course, was a strategy for evangelism as well. This system of evangelism

was also used many years later (1965), in Babańlá by Rev. Prince A. A. Adeniyi who was the second full time Pastor of the ECWA Church in the town.

Apart from the agricultural development in the land, SIM/ECWA also worked relentlessly to train Ìgbómìnà people in becoming modern tailors, carpenters, bricklayers, etc. Tailoring was introduced into the land by Mrs. H. E. Moulding, Miss K. M. Dick and Miss S. J. Buller in the 1930s. Carpentry was introduced in 1936.⁷⁹ Trade was greatly improved upon. Elder Paul Omo-Oni was the first bricklayer apprentice trained by the SIM in Ìgbómìnà Land. Upon his freedom as a qualified bricklayer, he trained many others. Many people from within and outside Ìgbómìnà Land came to Òrò-Àgó to learn carpentry, bricklaying, tailoring, etc. Those trained became Christians and returned to their home towns upon their graduation. They eventually became evangelists and took the gospel along with them. The coming of Christianity to Babańlá, and some other areas in Ìgbómìnà land were through this means. In an interview with Job Abolarin, one Olokoba an indigene of Babańlá became a Christian when he was an apprentice in Òrò-Àgó, and upon his return to Babańlá, he introduced Christianity into the town, where the SIM missionaries had been rejected earlier on.⁸⁰ Many artisans were raised by the ISM missionaries in the land. A veritable example was late Elder (Chief) Robert Buremoh (a son of late Pa Abraham Buremoh, a great evangelist in Igbomin land). Through the assistance of the missionaries, he established a very successful civil engineering company (R. B Buremoh and Sons) at Ìgbàjà. At a time, this company was the major building contractor for SIM at her various mission stations and institutions in Nigeria.

As at 2012 and even before then, SIM/ECWA was involved in programmes that brought more economic development to Ìgbómìnà land and Nigeria at large. One of them was called People Oriented Development of ECWA (P.O.D). Its Headquarter was in Jos, with staff in all ECWA District Church Councils throughout Nigeria. Wells were being dug for different communities, modern toilets were erected for the villagers, and even houses were being built in

some localities. Also, Church and Community Mobilization Process (C.C.M.P) is an arm of P.O.D that has made lives meaningful for so many people and communities. Mrs. Abifarin, a widow and an indigene of Iwó (Ìgbómìnà land) was empowered in 2013 via this programme.⁸¹

ECWA has many Nigerians that are gainfully employed under her. The current Finance Director of ECWA in ECWA Headquarters, Jos is Mr. Oluwaseun Kolawole. He is an indigene of Adanla, close to Ìgbàjà.⁸² Besides, the number of Pastors and other staff members who work in the three DCCs of ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land are over 300. ECWA Theological Seminary, Ìgbàjà has more than seventy staff members and 1,000 students for summer and regular programmes.⁸³ This school and Radio ELWA Ìgbàjà have brought much improvement to the social and economic status of Ìgbómìnà land.

4.7 Prospects of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land

Without doubt, SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land can be likened to Jesus' parable of the mustard seed in the Gospel of Matthew:

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and pitch their nests in its branches. (Matt. 13:31-32).

The “seed” that was planted about one hundred years ago through Rev. Guy Playfair had grown tremendously. From that humble beginning in 1912, this missionary enterprise had grown and has the potential to grow more. It is a fact that her different activities had contributed significantly to the religious and socio-economic development of Igbomin land.

The three District Church Councils of ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land were formerly under Ilorin District Church Council of ECWA. The first to be created out of Ilorin DCC was Òmù-Àrán DCC, then Ìgbàjà DCC and later Òrò-Àgó DCC.⁸⁴ The various projects embarked upon by these DCCs are enormous. Each of them now has her secretariat on their permanent sites although those of Ìgbàjà and Òrò-Àgó are still under construction. Òmù-Àrán has a prayer ground close to the secretariat where various people meet to pray.

Annually, each DCC organizes conferences, seminars, retreats, etc. The attendance is always encouraging. The three DCCs organize Joint DCC conference biannually. This joint DCC conference gives room for the three DCCs to come together with Ilorin DCC. This strengthens the unity within these DCCs the more. More so, more churches are founded in the villages and towns where there were no ECWA before. Ìgbàjà town now has four ECWA churches namely: 1st ECWA, ECWA Igba-Ojule, ECWA Chapel and ECWA Gaa – Aiyede. Òkè-Ode town has two ECWA too: 1st ECWA and 2nd ECWA. Òrò-Àgó township has five ECWA churches namely 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th ECWA. Many settlements especially those of Fulani/Hausa in Ìgbómìnà land now have ECWA Churches. These include the one at Baba-Sango, Gidan Dogo and Eeka not too far from Babanlálá.⁸⁵ The Christians (ECWA members) in Ìgbómìnà land today are definitely more in number than what it was in the days of the SIM.

Nonetheless, rural – urban migration has affected the population of ECWA members in Ìgbómìnà land. Many members have relocated for greener pastures to the cities such as Ilorin, Lagos, Northern Nigeria, and even outside the country. However, these members in the ‘DiaspÒra’ now converge in different towns and cities where they reside to support home churches financially, materially and spiritually. Some even converge and travel back to their home town\vilages to attend Sunday services once in two months and more especially during Christian festivities.⁸⁶

More so, ECWA has not let go totally the administration of their schools that have been taken over by the Kwara State Government. The posts of the principals\Head masters\Head mistress in these schools are still reserved for ECWA members. Besides this, private nursery and primary schools are being established and controlled by ECWA churches in Ìgbómìnà land today. These include: The Seminary Staff School located on the Seminary campus, ECWA Nursery and Primary School, Oke-Ola Oro, ECWA Nursery and Primary School, Baba-Orioke in Òmù-Àrán DCC, etc. These schools have trained and graduated many pupils. Thus, year

2012 marked the centenary celebration of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land. A church that has survived for one hundred years has the potentials to grow the more both numerically and strategically.

4.8 Weakness of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land

In the course of carrying out this research, it was observed that although the SIM missionaries succeeded in penetrating Ìgbómìnà land with the gospel of Jesus Christ, they introduced Christianity laced with nuances of the Western concepts. Instead of formulating theologies that were spiced with Ìgbómìnà culture, worldview, philosophies and personalities, they condemned some of these heritages. Of course, this was not peculiar to Ìgbómìnà land alone. It was in agreement with this that Strayer noted that:

The missionaries saw nothing good and preferable in the religions of the people they were converting and in their struggle to wipe out other religions every where they went throughout the country. In their preaching campaigns, the Christians used provocative and obnoxious languages. They ridiculed the adherents of other religions, called them names and practically demonstrated the nothingness of their religious objects.⁸⁷

In support of this claim, Adewale also noted that due to the idealism of Christian missionaries, they saw no wisdom in compromising with indigenous customs and institutions.⁸⁸

It is observed that Ìgbómìnà people have some cultures and practices that are similar to the Jewish culture in the Bible as highlighted in chapter two of this study. Many of these cultural practices are similar to what Islam recommended as well. This would have been good starting point for the SIM missionaries to launch their gospel message just like what Apostle Paul did in the city of Athens (Acts 17:16-34). Islam is widely accepted in Ìgbómìnà land because the religion has some similarities with African Traditional Religion. Unlike Paul:

the worldview of many of these missionaries (including some of the SIM missionaries in Ìgbómìnà land), did not allow them to see anything of value in the culture of the people. They believed that the total culture and society had to be liberated and redeemed. They believed that every aspect of African culture (including Ìgbómìnà culture) needed to be replaced with the gospel of Christ.⁸⁹

This worldview has affected the type of Christianity being practised by some Ìgbómìnà people who accepted the Christian faith and even some that eventually became Pastors. Nihinlola has noted that many Pastors graduated from African Bible Colleges/Seminaries (including ECWA Theological Seminary, Ìgbàjà) without being adequately prepared to tackle some peculiar African theological problems when confronted with such. Some African Christians have become ‘spiritual amphibians’ as a result, being comfortable in the Church when all goes well but shuttling between Christianity and other religions during life problems.⁹⁰ A popular saying in Ìgbómìnà land corroborates this observation: *Keferi la fi n wa omo, Igbagbo la fi n wo*, meaning: We seek for fruits of the womb from the traditional gods, and train them in the way of the Lord Jesus. Many go to churches but patronize herbalists and participate in all kinds of rituals just to be free from life challenges.

Another weakness is ECWA’s inability to sustain the SIM heritage passed unto her in Ìgbómìnà land. The SIM missionaries changed the name of the mission to ECWA before the independence of Nigeria in 1960, in an attempt to indigenize the mission. As a result of this, the white missionaries left for their countries leaving the indigenes to continue with the mission work. But, ECWA is unable to sustain some legacies of SIM in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State. The medical services are fading away. Only two dispensaries and maternity homes survived out of about twenty handed over to ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land. The Motherless Homes are no more, and the government has taken over the SIM mission schools in the land as well. In short, only church planting and theological schools survive till date out of all the heritages from SIM.

Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that the SIM/ECWA succeeded in planting more churches in Ìgbómìnà land. To an extent she succeeded in the propagation of the gospel of Christ as commanded in Matthew 28:19-20. Despite all odds which include persecutions, it could be said that the SIM missionaries as well as ECWA as a church have succeeded in penetrating Ìgbómìnà land with the gospel of Christ.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This study examined the advent and impacts of SIM/ECWA Mission in Ìgbómìnà land. The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) was indeed one of the Missionary enterprises that came into Nigeria in 1893 to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. The SIM originated from the evangelical mission movements of the European and North American Societies, especially in Canada in the 18th and 19th Centuries. After the great revival in Europe and North America in the 18th and 19th centuries, many evangelical mission movements, which formed the roots of the SIM and many other mission societies, were established.¹

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 was the mandate that compelled SIM to bring the gospel of Christ to the Sudan (Northern part of Nigeria). Two of the three pioneers of SIM: Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent died in the Sudan in the first attempt to spread the gospel of Christ in the Sudan. Only Rowland Victor Bingham was left to continue with the work. Not giving up on Sudan, the mission opened her first station in Patigi (in present Kwara State) in 1902. The mission opened her second mission station at Shonga in 1905. The third mission station was opened at Egbe in the present Kogi State in 1908 through the relentless effort of Tommie Titcombe ‘*Òyìnbó Egbe*.’ It was from Egbe that SIM penetrated Ìgbómìnà Land, Kwara State in 1912 through Guy William Playfair who became the first SIM missionary in Ìgbómìnà land.

As the activities of the SIM Missionaries were appreciated in the spread of the Christian faith in Ìgbómìnà land, so also were the activities of Nigerians who became Christians in the 19th Century. These indigenes helped greatly in the planting of many SIM/ECWA Churches in Ìgbómìnà land. Among them were Jamu Clyde Adeniyi of Òrò-Àgó, Abraham Buremoh of Idera, Shadrach Jegede (an *Ìjèshà Òsómàáló*) in Ìgbàjà, Ajeteru in Iwó-Ìsin, Simeon Komolafe (an *Ìjèshà Òsómàáló*) Òkè-Ode, etc.

It was through Òrò-Àgó that SIM/ECWA spread to other parts of Ìgbómìnà Land, Kwara State. The mission was a huge success in Òrò-Àgó - the first mission station, in Ìgbàjà - the third mission station, in Òmù-Àrán - the fourth mission station and in Òkè-Ode - the fifth mission station. However, the mission was not successful in Agunjin - the second mission station. Many factors have been identified to be the cause of such failure. These factors include the poor attitude of the people of Agunjin to the acceptance of Christianity, the poor health conditions of the missionaries in the place that led to the death of many of them. Then came the 'Macedonia call' from Ìgbàjà. The mission station was therefore, relocated to Ìgbàjà in 1933 along with the School of the Prophets, that eventually became the first ECWA Theological Seminary in Nigeria.

However, it must be pointed out that Christianity was introduced to Ìgbómìnà land amidst adherents of traditional religion worshippers and Muslims. Afolabi has equally pointed out that prior to the advent of the missionary enterprise in Ìgbómìnà land, there were pockets of Christians in the land who had been converted in other parts of Yòrùbá land, such as Abeokuta, Lagos, Ogbomoso, Ibadan, Oko in Oyo State, etc.² These individuals helped greatly in the establishment of SIM/ECWA and Christian faith at large in Ìgbómìnà land.

SIM missionaries encountered many difficulties and problems as they went about spreading the gospel of Christ in Ìgbómìnà Land. In some places, these 'white men' were not welcomed because they were taken to be British administrators and anti-Islam. Other difficulties faced were in the following areas: finance, mobility, feeding, communication, health, spiritual, persecution, etc.

Regardless of all odds, SIM/ECWA has come to stay in Ìgbómìnà land. Its growth is outstanding. SIM/ECWA has three District Church Councils in Ìgbómìnà Land. They are Òmù-Àrán DCC, Ìgbàjà DCC and Òrò-Àgó DCC. Òmù-Àrán DCC has fifteen Local Church Councils and ninety-eight (98) Local Church Board/Churches with sixty (60) E.M.S Stations.

Ìgbàjà DCC has eleven (11) Local Church Councils with thirty-one (31) Local Church Boards/Churches and about ten (10) E.M.S Stations. Oro–Ago has seven (7) Local Church Councils and eighteen (18) Local Church Boards/Churches. Despite her humble beginning in 1912 with only one LCB/Church, SIM/ECWA has grown up to 217 LCBs/Churches as at 2012.

The Impact of SIM/ECWA on Ìgbómìnà land is enormous. This impact could be felt in all areas of life of Ìgbómìnà people. The development of Western education in Ìgbómìnà land cannot be treated in isolation from the traditional forms of education in the land. From all indications, it became clear that Ìgbómìnà people were not exposed to Western education and Western civilization before the coming of Christian missionaries into Nigeria. SIM and later CMS became the agents of Western education in Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State. Although, their aim was to convert the indigenes to the Christian faith via education, these white men/women have greatly touched the lives of the people by introducing the adult, primary, secondary, and theological education into the land. Also, SIM/ECWA had made great impact on Ìgbómìnà land by successfully introducing the Christian faith into the land. Many indigenes have become Christians, so many have become clergymen. Many churches were built and many villages and towns were evangelized. Not only that, the socio-cultural lives of Ìgbómìnà people had been greatly influenced by the activities of SIM/ECWA in the land. These include ceremonies associated with the passage of life (e.g. naming, puberty, marriage, and death).

Another important area that must be mentioned is in the area of the introduction of modern medicines ‘*Ogun Òyìnbó*’ to replace some of the traditional medicine and practices. It was found out that the medical work of the SIM was as wide as the spread of mission station in Ìgbómìnà land in the early years of its introduction. People were taught hygiene and how to give first aid treatment. This had gone a long way to reduce death rate among the people. Health education was given from time to time; free medical services and immunization were given as well. In the area of economic development, SIM/ECWA has done a lot in the land.

The introduction of ECWA Rural Development Programme and Church and Community Mobilization Process (CCMP) have all helped to improve the standard of living of Ìgbómìnà people. SIM/ECWA missionaries have equally helped in training Ìgbómìnà people in modern tailoring, carpentry, bricklaying, etc. The introduction of Radio ELWA and Seminary of international repute in Ìgbómìnà land has equally added to the economic value of the land.

5.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This work contributed to knowledge as it enable researchers in Christian studies to be able to identify the level of the growth and impacts of SIM/ECWA to the development of Igbomina land and the possibility of carrying out related research on the contributions of other denominations to the development of the land under study.

Also, the history of the introduction of SIM/ECWA to some localities in Igbomina land are not in written document, and some that were written were done in Yòrùbá language. Examples of these are that of Babańlá and Òkè-Ode respectively. This work had succeeded in such documentations. Therefore, it serves as valuable material for researchers in related studies.

Furthermore, this work enables the stackholders in Christendom especially ECWA to know how far she has gone in the work of the Great Commission in Igbomina land and her contributions to the development of the society under study. It equally uncovered the areas for improvement.

Finally, this work has also contributed to knowledge as it has added to the available few materials/documentations of the history of SIM/ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land, and the history of Christianity as a whole in Ìgbómìnà land.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research work, the following recommendations are put forward:

- 1) ECWA as a denomination should not relent in her efforts to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in other villages, such as Oloruntele, Ìsánlú-Ìsin etc, that are yet to be properly evangelized in Ìgbómìnà land;
- 2) Evangelism in modern times is capital intensive, the Church (ECWA as a whole) should be ready to institute funding mechanisms in this regard to promote the spread of the gospel of Christ which will, in turn, bring about socio-economic development in the land;
- 3) Out of the eighty four District Church Councils of ECWA, only three are found in Ìgbómìnà land. Considering the importance of Ìgbómìnà land in the history of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria, it is recommended that more DCCs are established in Ìgbómìnà land. This will enhance more spread of the gospel of Christ in the land and bring about more socio-economic transformation in the land;
- 4) ECWA should train her members through various educational programmes in order to meet with the challenges which the propagation of the gospel requires from time to time;
- 5) ECWA as a whole should resuscitate Radio Eternal Love Winning All (ELWA), so that it will regain its former position in gospel broadcasting. A fresh arrangement should be made with the Libarian Government to restart the broadcasting from Moronvia since Nigeria Government disallow religious organization from owning radio station;
- 6) ECWA Ìgbàjà DCC should work relentlessly to re-evangelize Agunjin. Considering the historical record that Agunjin was the second SIM station in

Ìgbómìnà land, but has nothing to show for it like Ìgbàjà and Òrò-Àgó, etc. Ìgbàjà DCC of ECWA should not abandon Agunjin evangelism project;

- 7) Today, there is relative peace and religious tolerance in Ìgbómìnà land unlike in the early days of the introduction of Christianity into the land. Such peace and religious tolerance should be maintained;
- 8) Other Church denominations (through Christian Association of Nigeria) in Ìgbómìnà land should join hands with ECWA to move the land by embarking on socio-economic development projects;
- 9) Considering the impacts of SIM/ECWA on Ìgbómìnà land, other non governmental agencies should come to the aid of the church by financing programmes that will aid morality, healthcare delivery, socio-economic development and peace in the land;
- 10) The three ECWA DCCs in Ìgbómìnà land should work towards having Archives where records and documents of SIM/ECWA are kept and made available to Church historians and other scholars for investigation and documentation;
- 11) Many SIM/ECWA historical Church documents kept in foreign archives, especially those in Canada, should be retrieved to Nigeria for easy accessibility to Church historians not only in Ìgbómìnà Land but Nigeria as a whole; and

5. 4 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Other Christian Documentations in Igbomina land could carry out similar research on the development and contributions of their Churches towards the development of Igbomina land.
2. Research work on the growth and impacts of SIM/ECWA in other parts of Nigeria could be carried out. These other parts include: Nupe land, Gbagyi land, Jaba land, Iregwe land, Rukaba land, Tangale land, Zamfara land, Kataf land, Gobir land, Tera land, Kaje land, Gure land, Hausa land, etc.

3. The growth and the impacts of Christianity on Igbomina land (in Òsun and Kwara State) could be investigated. This would include other denominations along with ECWA in the land.
4. The contributions of Igbomina converts to the spread of Christianity in Igbomina land is another suitable research topic. This covers all denominations in Igbomina land.
5. The relevance of the three main religions to the development of Igbomina land is another suitable research topic that is suggested.

5.5 Conclusion

SIM that started with only one church in Òrò-Àgó has spread all over Ìgbómìnà Land and even beyond. It is like the Mustard seed and the Yeast in Jesus' parable in the Book of Matthew (13:31-33). Other denominations have joined in the spread of the gospel in Ìgbómìnà Land. From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that SIM/ECWA is an agent of socio-economic and cultural transformation not only in Ìgbómìnà land but also in any society where it is practised. SIM/ECWA has positively affected the lives and living conditions of the people. It is interesting to note that the establishment of schools by SIM/ECWA has not stopped in Ìgbómìnà Land. Some LCBs/Churches now establish private primary schools after the takeover of mission schools by the Kwara State Government, These include: ECWA Theological Seminary Staff School, ECWA Nursery and Primary School Òmù-Àrán, ECWA Nursery and Primary School Agbeola Oro, ECWA Secondary School, Ganmo, etc.

SIM/ECWA being a well established organization has provided job opportunities for Ìgbómìnà people as well as other Nigerians. The staff members (academic and non-academic) of ECWA Theological Seminary, Ìgbàjà are up to eighty. All the pastors in the three District Church Councils of ECWA in Ìgbómìnà land are full-time staff of the Church. They are more than two hundred in number. More Churches are still being founded till date. The implication is that more Ìgbómìnà indigenes would be gainfully employed as more churches and schools are being established. Besides, the mÒral life of the people has been greatly touched via the

activities of the SIM/ECWA in the land. We, therefore, conclude that the coming of SIM/ECWA into Ìgbómìnà land, Kwara State has brought progress to the land in spite of the fact that it has modified the culture and tradition of the people.

It is a known fact that SIM/ECWA (Christianity) has brought about Western education in Ìgbómìnà land which the Muslims and Kwara State Government later complemented in the establishment of schools from primary to secondary level. SIM/ECWA was a pacesetter in the establishment of hospitals and provision of health care facilities in Ìgbómìnà land. SIM/ECWA has helped greatly in the area of agriculture and the introduction of crops which served as economic boost in the land. Indeed, SIM/ECWA has assisted tremendously in improving the lives of Ìgbómìnà people in Kwara State.

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APPENDICES
Òral Interviews

S/N	NAME	AGE	DATE	PLACE	TITLE	LOCATION
1	Abolarin .S.	70	12/9/013	Òrò-Àgó	Elder	Oro Ago
2	Abolarin Job	60	1/6/014	Ile-Oluawo	Elder	Babańlá
3	Abolarinwa .A.M	53		Babańlá	Elder	Ile Deji-Babańlá
4	Adebiyi Enoch	70	20/4/015	Ìgbàjà	Rev.	Ìgbàjà
5	Adekeyi Moloki	90	14/11/015	Ile Oba Ariwajoye	Pa	Agunjin
6	Adeniyi .S.A	77	4/7/014	Òmù-Àrán	Elder	Òmù-Àrán
7	Adeniyi A.A.	80	1/6/016	Oke-Ayo	Rev.	Oke-Ayo
8	Adeniyi D.I	63	3/5/2015	Òrò-Àgó	Oba Justice	Palace
10	Alashi .J.	74	20/4/016	Òrò-Àgó	Elder	Òrò-Àgó
11	Alayande .S.N	80	9/5/016	Oko	Rev. Professor	Oko-Irese
12	Aliu, Owa	73	26/6/015	Babańlá	Pa	Ile Deji-Babańlá
13	Ashonibare	68	7/6/015	Seminary Comp	Professor	Ìgbàjà
14	Babade J,O	56	21/4/016	Iwó	Rev.	Iwó
15	Babalola .F.F.	67	25/5/016	Oreke-Oke	Mrs.	Oreke-Oke
16	Babalola .M.A.	72	25/5/016	Òkè-Ode	Rev.	Òkè-Ode
17	Balogun A.A	75	25/11/015	Agunjin	Chief	Agunjin
18	Dairo .A.D	87	11/11/015	Seminary, Rd	Pa	Ìgbàjà
19	Ibitoye .F.	76	17/3/015	Isapa	Mrs.	Isapa

20	Ibitoye .J	82	1/8/014	Òrò-Àgó	Phamasist	Òrò-Àgó
21	Inawole .M.I	69	9/5/016	Eyin-Igbo	Mrs.	Òmù-Àrán
22	Jolayemi .R.O	77	7/5/016	Òmù-Àrán	Mrs	Òmù-Àrán
23	Lawal .J.B.	65	16/4/016	Alhkima University	Professor	Ìgbàjà
24	Malomo .U.Y	71	17/11/015	Alapini	Chief	Agunjin
25	Ogunshola	77	10/11/015	Igba-Ojule	Pa	Ìgbàjà
26	Olushola .R.	57	29/2/016	Oyatedo	Chief	Oyatedo
27	Onilu Elisha	75	23/8/012	Agunjin	Elder	Agunjin
28	Oyedele .J.F.	65	5/10/013	Owa-Kajola	Elder	Owa- Kajola
29	Oyedepo, K.O.	77	4/7/2014	Obagunke- Ehingo	Professor	Òmù-Àrán
30	Oyinloye .R.	65	5/6/016	Oreke-Okegbo	Elder	Oreke-Okegbo
31	Salawu .Y,	80	16/1/015	Palace	Oba	Agunjin
32	Samuel Kayode	79	23/11/015	Ologbon-Ori Metal Works	Elder	Ìgbàjà