TOWARDS A CONTEXTUALIZATION OF WORSHIP: A CHALLENGE TO THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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ABSTRACT

The worship service of the Yoruba Baptist Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention reflects the Western ways of life. The Nigerian Baptist pastors are oriented from the seminary where suits and ties are the official dress for ministration, the teaching of theology is Western oriented, many of the worship services are conducted in English language, most brides and bridegrooms often put on Western clothes during their wedding ceremonies, and Western music and musical instruments are used to the detriment of the indigenous ones. Most of the African ways of life are not encouraged. Consequently, the worshippers are alienated, confused, disoriented and dissatisfied. This alienation is the result of what I describe in this research as 'psychological slavery'.

In this research, I argue that the Yoruba Baptist Christians of Nigeria, like other tribes in the world, have their cultural heritage which ought to be used in the place of the foreign elements/materials of worshipping the Lord. Some of the elements/materials I emphasize in this research include *akara* (local cake) and *sobo drink* (juice extracted from *Hibiscus sabdariffa)* in the place of bread and wine for Eucharist, indigenous clothes for the pastors and couples in the place of Western clothes during ministration and the wedding service respectively, indigenous music and musical instruments, *oriki Olodumare* (God's praise-names) and the use of the Yoruba command-language in prayer. The aim of this thesis is to propose a contextual form of worship whereby the Yoruba Baptist Christians have a holistic worship fulfilled within their socio-religio-cultural context.

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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to:-

the Glory of God for His guidance and leadership,

my lovely wife –

Titi,

my children-

Oluwafunmilayo, Oluwaseyi and Oluwasegun,

and

the entire members of

First Baptist Church Alapere, Lagos, Nigeria.

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ABBREVIATIONS

NBC- Nigerian Baptist Convention

SBC- Southern Baptist Convention

USA- United States of America

ATR- African Traditional Religion

CMS- Church Mission Society

NBTS- Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria

SBTS- Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, USA

CHAPTER ONE
THE INTRODUCTION

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The concept of contextualizing worship has continually received attention throughout the history of the Church. From the nineteenth century onwards, there have been complaints within Christendom that the gospel needed to be propagated in the culture and language of the recipients. Rufus Anderson (1796-1880)[1] canvassed for a mission strategy in which the target indigenous peoples' needs would be met without prejudice to their cultural backgrounds.[2] In the same vein, Henry Venn (1796-1873),[3] argued that the autonomy of a Church was contingent on the degree of its three 'selfs'; namely: self-government, self-propagation and self-supporting.[4] In other words, he was of the opinion that an autonomous Church must be organized and operated within the political, social and economic contexts of the worshippers. In spite of the above assertion of Anderson, Venn and others, the concept of a Euro-American form of worship still persists among the Churches in the Nigerian Baptist Convention. Hence this study, which is an attempt to examine the possibilities for creating contextualized worship in the churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

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1 Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) was born in a Congregationalist parsonage in United States of America. After his graduation from his theological training, he applied for the post of missionary work in India from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). The ABCFM decided that Anderson could make a greater contribution to missions in the home office and he was consequently nominated as the assistant secretary. He was later appointed as the general secretary in 1832–1866. For more information about Rufus Anderson, see C. Peter Williams (1990) *The Ideal of the Self-Government Church: A Study in Victorian Mission Strategy* (The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, Leiden) and Warren B. Newberry (2005), 'Contextualizing Indigenous Church Principles: An African Mode' *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 8(1), pp.95-115

2 Newberry (2005), p.97

3 Henry Venn (1796-1873), born at Clapham, on the outskirts of London, was an Anglican clergyman who was known for the campaign of indigenization of missions. As one of the founders of CMS, a mission organization of the Anglican Communion, Venn became the honorary secretary of the CMS in 1841-1873. For more information about Henry Venn, see Wilbert R. Shenk (1977), 'Henry Venn's Legacy' *Occasional Bulletin of Mission Research*, 2(1), pp.16-19

4 A F. Walls (1978), 'Venn Henry' in J. D. Douglas (ed), *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (rev.ed.), (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), p.1015

Christian teaching understands worship as the life-blood of the Church. Worship embraces the whole life of the human being because it is humankind's response to the Omniscient and the Omnipotent God. That is probably one of the reasons why the Church has been making frantic efforts to reform worship from time to time in order to make it meaningful and spiritual for each generation's worshippers. Garrett affirmed that 'the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has the study of worship and trends towards its revision as one of its chief concerns'.[5] Today, Christians - particularly ministers and laypersons who want to know how the worship of their congregation can be improved - always yearn for the ways to do so. Consequently, I decided to undertake this research in an attempt to provide contextual worship within the Yoruba congregation of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. I focused on the Yoruba because there are diverse ethnicities such as Ibo, Edo, Fulani, Hausa, Yoruba and others that make up the Convention. It is also as a result of my cultural identity and the fact that the denomination started in the midst of the tribe.[6] The convention was initially named 'The Yoruba Baptist Association'.[7] This name, however, changed later to Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) in order to accommodate other ethnicities in the country.

The general introduction to the study and the literature review are the focus of Chapter One. Under this general introduction, statement of problems, objectives, thesis of research, definition of key terms, limitation and methodological issues, are the sub-headings. In an attempt to present a balance of thought on this subject of

5 T.S. Garrett (1963), *Christian Worship: An Introductory Outline (2ed.),* (London: Oxford University Press), p.1.

6 Travis Collins (1993), *The Baptist Mission of Nigeria 1850-1993: A History of the Southern Baptist Convention Mission Work in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Y-Books), p.28.

7 Collins (1993), p.28.

studies, the available African literatures on this research topic are also examined. Chapter Two focuses on the Primal Religion. Here, I looked into the Yoruba Traditional Religions' idea of worship and their influence on the Christian worship among the people. In Chapter Three, the history of Christianity in Nigeria generally is presented before the history of the NBC surfaces. Chapter Four engages in analysis of the Western influences on Yoruba Christian worship, music and musical instruments, marriage-clothes and posture in worship. In Chapter Five, a summary of the questionnaire and reflections on the themes emerging in the results of the questionnaire are presented. Chapter Six discusses the challenges facing the contextualization of Christian worship among the Yoruba. In Chapter Seven, the resources for an indigenous Baptist Church worship are presented; while Chapter Eight deals with the conclusion and recommendations.

1.1. MOTIVATION

The desire to research worship began as a result of my exposure to Baptist denominational ways of life right from my infancy. Growing up in the Yoruba culture and Christian environment, particularly the Nigerian Baptist, was a memorable time for me. Worship was taught and encouraged right away from primary school run by Christian missions. Since the church owned the primary school, our Headmaster was also the choirmaster of the Church. There was always roll call at every assembly. Consequently, worship was a matter of compulsion. This attitude was maintained throughout my secondary school. Immediately after secondary education, I went to a seminary for theological training in August, 1985.

My academic interest into research of worship, however, arose from my experience as a Yoruba Baptist pastor working i339n the midst of Yoruba people for over two decades. Based on my positions as Moderator[8] and Chairman of Pastors' Fellowship in my area, I have observed that some Yoruba people often feel like strangers in some of our Baptist Churches due to the pattern of the services and language used during the services. For instance, up till now, most of the hymns in the *Yoruba Baptist Hymn Book* were translated from European and American versions[9] and were sung with foreign tunes with little or no rhythm.[10] Due to this situation, Christian religion could not penetrate sufficiently deep enough into the religiosity of Africans generally, and the Yoruba in particular. Africans are very religious. Their religiosity also carries its emotion along. The Church initially seems to be 'locked up on six days a week, meeting only for two hours on Sundays and perhaps once during the week… The rest of the week is empty'.[11] The Yoruba generally want a lively atmosphere where praise songs, dancing or twisting of the body during worship, local drumming, clapping and other African religious expressions which are also Biblical, are incorporated into the worship. Although there seem to be few Yoruba Baptist Churches whose mode of worship may reflect the aforementioned African emotional expressions in the contemporary Baptist churches, such churches are often seen as deviating from the

8 Moderator is the title given to Nigerian Baptist Pastors supervising the Baptist Churches under a local region. As a Moderator, one is the spiritual leader of churches and represents their interest at Conference (State) and Convention (National) levels. He is like a Bishop of a Diocese.

9 *Baptist Hymnal* (1991) (USA: The Southern Baptist Convention Press). See also *Iwe Orin Ijo Onitebomi Pelu Awon Orin Idaraya ati Majemu Ijo Wa* (2000) (Ibadan: The Nigerian Baptist Convention) for comparison. Although, in this latest edition, a few local songs have been added as addenda and *Orin Idaraya* (Entertainment Songs, pp.313-329), I believe singing local songs in Church worship services is more than entertainment. The fact the few indigenous songs in the addenda are titled '*Awon Orin Idaraya*' (Entertainment Choruses) calls for reaction of the Yoruba Christians. Further analysis will be given later on Yoruba indigenous songs.

10 G.C. Oosthuizen (1968), *Post-Christianity in African: A Theological and Anthropological Study* (London: C. Hurst and co.), pp.240-241

11 John Mbiti (1969), *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann Education Books Ltd), p.233-234

norms of the NBC and tagged as 'unBaptistic practices'.[12] The aforementioned observation motivated me to investigate how the Yoruba Baptist Church can be lively and accommodate some of the traits of indigenous Yoruba worshippers.

In addition, my personal counselling sessions for the past twenty-five years reveal many members (men and women) who complained about the mode of worship that looked like European Churches. Perhaps a brief look at the past will give us a clear idea of the present position. When the Nigerian churches were polarized and divided by civil war (1967-1970), they attempted to heal the wounds of the war by vociferously supporting the rehabilitation agenda of the government. The Charismatic Renewal, which had already taken its root in the educational institutions since the 1950s, spread to churches and was tagged onto the Students' Christian Movement.[13] Some of the leaders of these students took up employment in the nation's establishments after graduation. Consequently, the substantial religious awakening from the educational institutions spread to the local churches. Hence, by the middle of the 1970s, the awakening had penetrated the larger society, though some churches resisted the movement and tagged it as 'un-Baptistic practices'[14]. According to Ojo,

> By the late 1970s, most of the mainline Protestant Churches - Anglican, Baptist, Methodist (and) Presbyterian - had causes to react to the growing influence of the Charismatic Renewal that was seeping into their congregations, causing apprehension among the leadership of these denominations. The Nigerian Baptist was not left out in this development…[15]

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12 Matthew. A. Ojo (2006), 'The Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Pentecostal Resurgence, 1970-2000: Critical Issues for Ecclesiastical Dynamics' in Ademola Ishola and Deji Ayegboyin (eds.), *Ecclesiastes: the Preacher, the Church, and the Contemporary Society: Papers in Honour of Rev. Dr. S.T. Ola Akande @ 80* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd.), pp.347-348.

13 For more information, see M.A. Ojo (1987), 'The Growth of Campus Christianity and Charismatic Movement in Western Nigeria', (Ph.D. Thesis, London: University of London).

14 'Unbaptistic Practices' is the term given to traits of the Charismatic Renewal among the Nigerian Baptist Churches during the Pentecostal Resurgence (1980-2000) by the leadership of the convention.

15 Ojo (2006), p.328.

Because of this awakening, both men and women, old and young today are yearning for a lively congregational service where African ways of life manifest. They feel allergic to the kind of service which seems both boring and artificial. As Obaje claimed, since:

> the church consists of men and women who are constantly experiencing changes in their lives and environment… The church can never stay static, in so far as it exists here and operates vitally with the socio-political historico-economic and religio-cultural conditions of the world.[16]

Reflection on how to meet the spiritual needs of these people effectively is, therefore, another motivation for this study. In other words, some of the elements of worship in the Nigerian Baptist denomination need to be examined in the light of the scripture based on contextual theology.

Furthermore, as a minister of the gospel who has undergone theological training for a number of years, I began to ask myself some questions about the claims of the Western missionaries who have despised our culture in the past.[17] Some of the questions that disturbed my mind now included: To what extent were the claims of the Western missionaries about the universality of the Gospel true when they came to Yorubaland for evangelism? How can the Yoruba worship God genuinely within the context of their own culturally valued systems? Why is it that we cannot use our native dresses such as '*agbada', 'esiki', 'dandogo', 'oyala', 'iro ati buba'* during the ordination of priests? Why must our brides put on European wedding dresses before such services could be conducted in the Churches established and located among the indigenous Yoruba? Why did Western clergy reject and, still, some African clergy

16 Y.A. Obaje (1982), 'The Church as a Theocentric Community with Special Reference to Certain Aspect of Traditional African Ideas of God and Man' (Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University), p.6.

17 Oosthuizen (1968), p.8.

continue to reject, the use of indigenous musical instruments like '*bata, akuba'* and '*omele*'? In other words, my concern in this research is how I, as a Yoruba pastor in the midst of the Yoruba people, will minister effectively without prejudice to the culture of the people and without compromising the word of God.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of my research is to investigate how Yoruba traditional ways of life which include their indigenous materials such as *'akara'* (cake made from beans) and *sobo drink* (drink extracted from *Hibiscus Sabdariffa*), local musical instruments, indigenous clothes and their emotional expression can be incorporated into the worship service. The aim of this research is to look into how Yoruba people can truly remain Yoruba and at the same time worship God and be loyal to their cultural norms and values.

History reveals that when the Western Missionaries brought the Gospel to Nigeria, they exported denominationalism as well and marginalized the culture of the people.[18] This history will be presented in Chapter Three as reflected in the works of both Western and African Christian scholars. Meanwhile, it is revealed that Christianity was westernized at the inception. As Oosthuizen wondered, 'how can the Church belong to African society while it was so evidently given the impression that it is part of the Western ways of life?'[19] For instance, 'a lack of understanding on the part of the missionaries and the pastors they trained concerning'[20] the native ingredients of cultural manifestation in worship such as singing, dancing, drumming of local drums

18 Oosthuizen (1968), p.8.
19 Oothuizen (1968), p.4.
20 Deji Ayegboyin and S. Ademola Ishola (1999), *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective.,* (Lagos: Greater Heights Publication), p.16.

like *gangan, bata*, etc., put many obstacles in the way of African converts.[21] It was also part of their stance that, unless the ministers dressed like Europeans, they could not participate in worship. Hence, pastors were forbidden to put on their native attire when officiating. Reflection on the aforementioned irrelevant 'decrees' on worship in the past is also a motivational factor in researching on the worship that will be free from foreign forms of worship.

Again, one of the major problems of Africa lies within the field of communication. Oosthuizen says Christianity suffers a set-back in communicating Christ's message to both the indigenous African society and those living in cities. As Nida asserts, 'no two people mean exactly the same thing by the same word, (and) no two words in any two languages ever have exactly the same meaning'.[22] Christianity, therefore, needs to be freed from its ghetto mentality. The implication of this is that Africa today generally needs people who are thoroughly versed in the scripture, contemporary theology, world trends and social conditions, and in the African world and its thinking. In contrast to some early missionaries whose motto was 'You must become like us',[23] I therefore, propose to develop the indigenous Christian worship where the Bible will be explained in the cultural context.

1.3. THESIS OF THE RESEARCH

The thesis of this research is that a contextualized form of worship makes Christian worship meaningful, enjoyable and attractive to the Yoruba in Nigeria. The main argument of this research is that when worship is contextualized, it penetrates into the

21 Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999), p.161.

22 Eugene A. Nida (1960), *Message and Mission* (USA: Harper & Brow), p.88.

23 Oosthuizen (1968), p.235

religious consciousness of the people. Hence, an artificial form of worship will give way to the natural; while 'foreign rituals' will give way to indigenous forms of worship.

1.4. DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

A. Contextualization

'Contextualization' is a broad and relative word. It indicates communicating the Gospel in the understandable terms appropriate to the audience. It is a way of communicating the Gospel in the original language of the audience. Contextualization 'is essential in order to appropriate strategies to preach the Gospel, and to understand the interests, needs and worldview of those we are trying to communicate with'.[24] For example,

> Sites for Muslims should use Muslim/Arabic words e.g. *Isa Masih* for Jesus Christ, Injil for Gospel, Miriam for Mary, and prophets' names. In the same way, sites for Jews should refer to Yeshua instead of Jesus, G-d instead of God, and avoid other words which have Christian 'baggage'.[25]

In other words, contextualization is the inculturation of Christian faith where some 'aspects of Christian life and ministry such as life-style, theological formulations, worship patterns, music, ethics, leadership structures'[26] and other related aspects of worship have to wear the cultural features of the recipients. This could be one of the reasons why Ademola Ishola defines contextualization as 'A hermeneutical process of making the biblical text and its context meaningful and applicable to the thought patterns and social, economic, political and religious situation of a given people'.[27] In

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24 'Contextualization: Making the Message Relate'. www.http//guide.gospelcom.net/resources/context.php Retrieved on 25 July 2007.

25 'Contextualization: Making the Message Relate'.

26 C. Peter Wagner (1983), *On the Crest of the Wave* (Ventura: Regal Books), p.147.

27 S. Ademola Ishola (1992), 'Towards a Contextualized Missiological Approach to the Yoruba Religio-Cultural Milieu' (Ph.D. Dissertation, Fort Worth: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary), p.16.

this research, the above definition shall be applied because the definition stressed the importance of making biblical facts penetrate into the existential context of a given people. The definition also depicts the goal of this research. The given people will not only understand and practise Christianity in their own local context, but also utilize the faith to meet their total needs.

B. Christian Worship

Before Christian worship can be explained meaningfully, one needs to consider 'worship' itself because it is not an easy expression to be defined. It is exasperatingly difficult because it involves the totality of humans' daily experiences and expressions. Moreover, Yoruba culture, like any other society in Africa and Western world, is full of various forms of worship styles.

According to Donald Gray, the word 'worship' (*latreia* in Greek) 'has its origin in servitude and expressed what a hired servant or slave owed to the master'.[28] From this usage, it became the service of God or divine worship. This is also demonstrated in the common use of the word 'service' to emphasize the act of worship. The English word appears to derive from Anglo-Saxon *weorthcipe,* that is honour. Hence, worship literally means 'prayer, especially public prayer, the honour expressed through praise, thanksgiving and acknowledgement given to God, (a god or goddess) by believing communities in words, symbols and actions'.[29] From this definition, Gray mentioned three components, namely God, humanity and ritual offered. It is uncertain who Gray

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28 Donald Gray (2000), 'Worship'in Adrian Hastings, Alistair Manson and Hugh Pyper (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.762.

29 Gray (2000), p.762.

refers to as God in this definition. Certainly God is the Divine Being to whom humanity offers rituals.

Christian worship, however, is defined by Paul W. Hoon as 'God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ and man's response' to the revelation.[30] Hoon's definition shall be applied in this study because it reveals twofold actions; namely: that of God to the human soul in Jesus Christ and the human's responsive action through Jesus Christ. In other words, through Jesus Christ, God communicates and reveals himself to humanity which in return grasps the revelation and responds through worship. In this definition, the key words are 'Revelation' and 'Response'.[31] Hence, it is a reciprocal relationship. Again, at the centre of both principal actors is Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, the Mediator between humankind and God.

From this definition, one needs to note that God is the One who initiates worship. He takes the initiative in addressing humanity through Jesus Christ. Humankind also responds to the initiation through a variety of emotion, words and actions. These responses definitely may differ from one person to another based on individual psychological, cultural, environmental, sociological and socio-political factors. Hence it can be argued that it is heretical for Christians in the Western world to expect the African Christians to respond to God's revelation in the same way they do, or vice versa.

30 Paul W. Hoon (1971), T*he Integrity of Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press), p.77.
31 Hoon (1971), p.77.

C. The Nigerian Baptist Convention

It is better to describe the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) rather than to define it. The NBC is one of the Christian denominations operating in the Federal Republic of Nigeria with over four million baptized members in over eight thousand churches with twenty-three Conferences (regions or dioceses) within the thirty-six states in the country.[32] According to history, the NBC started in 1850 as a foreign missionary project of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States of America. The convention (NBC) was officially formed in 1912. Currently, the convention is completely self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting. It has also started other international conventions in West Africa such as The Baptist Convention of Ghana and The Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone. Other African countries where the convention has established missions include Cote d' Ivoire, Mali, Mozambique, Chad, Niger and Burkina Faso.[33]

D. The Yoruba

The Yoruba generally are the people occupying the core of the old Western Region of Nigeria, in West Africa. The area today comprises Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Lagos, Kwara and part of Kongi States. [34] A few Yoruba can also be found in Edo and other states within and outside Nigeria. According to Jeremy S. Eades, the tribe is one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria with approximately fifteen million people.[35] Before the advent of Western education which made some Yoruba people leave the above geographical locations for urban areas such as Lagos, Abuja, and overseas countries for white collar jobs, the majority of them were farmers. Others

32 S. Ademola Ishola, 'The Nigerian Baptist Convention' http://www.nigerianbaptist.org Retrieved on 25 July 2007.
33 Ishola, 'The Nigerian Baptist Convention'.
34 *Nigeria Year Book* (1989), (Lagos:Time Press Limited), p.87.
35 Jeremy Seymour Eades (1980), *The Yoruba Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University), p.2.

engaged in 'leather work, smelting of ore and manufacture of steel tools and other arts'.[36] Samuel Johnson argued the traditional narrative that the Yoruba are the descendants of Oduduwa (the Yoruba progenitor), who is believed to have settled first in Ile-Ife.[37] In Yoruba mythology, the old city of Ile-Ife is also known as the cradle of creation, where every race, white and black, was created, and from where people dispersed all over the earth[38].

Ethnically, there are various sub-groups among the Yoruba. These include: the Oyo, Ibadan, Ife, Ijesa, Owo, Egba, Ikale, Ondo, Ijebu, Ekiti, and Ilaje to mention a few.[39] These aforementioned ethnic groups are all Yoruba by common descent, by common customs and by a common language, though each ethnic group has its own distinctive dialect.[40]

1.5. LIMITATION

In order to do justice to this thesis, the range of action of the work needs to be pinned down. This research's focus is on the members of the Nigerian Baptist Churches among the contemporary Yoruba residing in ten Baptist Conferences in the western part of Nigeria. The conferences are Ekiti, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogbomoso, Ogun, Oke-Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo West. The churches in the above named Baptist Conferences are spread all over the eight States, namely: Ekiti, Kongi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. In as much as the geographical locations of the states are very wide in a research like this, one requires limitation. The first five churches that

36 Olumide Lucas (1948), *The Religion of the Yorubas* (Lagos: CMS Bookshop), p.8.

37 Samuel Johnson (1921), *The History of the Yorubas* (London: George Routledge & Son Ltd), pp.1-10.

38 Johnson (1921), p.15.

39 Johnson (1921), pp.15-25.

40 Johnson (1921), p.12.

appears in the odd numbers from the alphabetical order in each conference register as compiled in the NBC Financial Report were selected for this study.[41] Further information shall be provided under Methodology.

1.6. STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

This study is carried out within the field of Christian Theology with a focus on African Christian Indigenous Worship. Primary data was obtained through questionnaire responses[42] and investigational visits.[43] The findings of the questionnaire responses and investigative visits will also be examined through a number of lenses such as liturgical theology and ecclesiology.

The theoretical framework of this work is developed through library research. Relevant materials were used from the Sociology of Religion and Theology of Missions available in the Liverpool Hope University, the Liverpool City Library, the Sidney Jones Library and the University of Manchester Library. For materials on African Christianity, I consulted the University of Birmingham Library. I also visited Nigeria during the course of study and carried out research in the Nigeria Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso's Library and the Libraries of the University of Ibadan and Lagos where there is a lot of literature on the sociology of religion especially those dealing with African worship. In all the libraries, published works of missionaries, theologians, historians and redactors were consulted. For the Yoruba cultural aspect, I included oral sources such as myths, legends, proverbs, praise chants and cognomen in the research.

41 See *Nigerian Baptist Convention Financial Report* (2008) for detail of the names of the churches under each Conference co-operating with the Convention, pp.132-412.
42 See below pp.155-192.
43 See below pp.153-155.

A. Ethical Issues

Ethical issues in research methodology have been a major concern of contemporary scholars. It is a concern because there have been unethical approaches in the past which exposed the confidentiality of respondents without their permission. Some others were biased in their judgements and interpretations of the data collected. Still some others used deception of, and exploited, their respondents during the course of their research. Due to the aforementioned unethical research methodologies, this researcher attempted to utilize the following ethical principles.

One of the major ethical problems in social research is value neutrality. [44] Neutrality is to what extent the researcher allows his/her respondents to speak for themselves without any influence. For instance, in the course of participant-observation as a research methodology, the researcher may develop an intimate relationship with the people under investigation. Consequently, the judgement of such researcher about the people he/she studied may be either undermined or exaggerated because of the affection for the people studied.

Although I have an agenda, the agenda is to take the people studied in this journey of contextual theology which leads to an authentic cultural identity. I believe the fact that many of my respondents knew me may have influenced the respondents in one way or another. Though this 'insider' may have influenced my respondents, it is a part of contextual theological research. There have been arguments on the neutrality of researchers on the field. For instance, Hammersley and Atkinson claimed that

44 Matthew David and Carole D. Sutton (2004), *Social Research: The Basics (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications),* p.19.

research (ethnographers) need to strenuously avoid feeling 'at home'.[45] They, however, maintained that when the sense of being a stranger is lost, one may have allowed the escape of one's critical and analytical perspective.[46] While one may not deny the fact that the state of being a stranger is capable of making one to be free and fair in his/her judgement about the people studied, my socio-religious affinity about the people I studied gave me a better chance. Africans generally are reserved in talking about their religion outside their membership. Hammersley and Atkinson claimed that 'complete participation may occur where the…researcher is already a member of the group or organization that he or she decide to study'[47] This idea is also in line with the thought of Berry who claimed that 'it is only complete immersion or initiation into the tradition, which can give genuine understanding'[48] to the researcher on religious belief or value system. Berry in her own research was both participant and practitioner.[49]

I chose the topic of my research in order to explore something relevant to both my cultural and religious contexts as a contextual theologian. I conducted the research among the people where I am well known. Far from being detrimental to me and my respondents, I believe this research has given me a basis of shared knowledge which I would not have had if I had attempted the study from a European, American or Asian religio-cultural context. The study has allowed me to have empathy for my people. Based on this empathy, trust and deeper sharing of information about one's beliefs and

45 M. Hammersley and P. Atkinson (1995), *Ethnographer: Principles in Practice (2nd ed.)* (London: Routledge), p.239.
46 Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), p 239.
47 Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), p.104.
48 Jan Berry (2006), 'Transforming Rites: the Practice of Women's Ritual Making' Thesis Submitted in Accordance with the Requirement of the University of Glasgow for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy, p.44.
49 Berry (2006), p.44.

personal conviction on contextualization of Christian religion in Yorubaland were established. If I had maintained a professional approach or kept a critical distance, I might not have been able to obtain as much information as I did.

Another important ethical issue is the recognition and respect of the privacy of the respondents. David and Sutton were of the opinion that a researcher needs to obtain the consent of the respondent before one 'invades into their privacy'.[50] They claimed that the researcher also needs to 'protect that privacy in the storage and the use of any data collected'.[51] The protection can be by anonymity or confidentiality. According to David and Sutton,

> Anonymity refers to the situation whereby you do not know or do not record the personal detail (that is, name, address and so on) of those researched. Confidentiality refers to the situation where the information is known and recorded by the researcher, but is not revealed.[52]

In the case of anonymity or confidentiality, most of the personal details of my respondents were not taken. Where they were known, they were not revealed. Where references were made for the sake of clarity, permission was taken before such information was used.

Furthermore, a researcher also needs to be aware of the sensitivity of the topic one is researching. It must also be noted that what is understood to be sensitive by respondents may differ from the researcher. Sensitive topics are defined by Sieber and Stanley as 'Studies in which there are potential consequences or implications, either directly for the participants I research or for the class of individuals represented

50 David and Sutton (2004), p.19.
51 David and Sutton (2004), p.19.
52 David and Sutton (2004), p.19.

by the research'.[53]Although Sieber and Stanley did not specify the scope and nature of the kind of consequences they had in mind, their definition, however, encompassed research which is consequential in any way. Farberow says sensitive topics are those areas of social life surrounded by taboo.[54] To him, taboo topics are those areas which are laden with emotion or which inspire a feeling of awe or dread. Sex and death are two examples he used. Lee, however, sees sensitive research as the 'research which potentially poses a substantial threat to those who are or have been involved in it'.[55] I pitch my tent with this definition because it is very simple and appears to summarise the rest of the above definitions. All researches, whether on religious or social lives, have their cost implications. The cost of sensitive topics, however, goes beyond the incidental.[56]

At any rate, the right to withdraw from participating in any topic that seems sensitive to the respondents needs to be respected. I explained this point in all the centres where data was gathered before questionnaires were distributed. This ethical issue also underscores the reason why I introduced my topic and purpose of the research at the beginning of the questionnaire so that the participants could decide whether to withdraw from or participate in the programme.

I was also that aware there were ethical codes of conduct that have been established by different professional bodies. Notable among them are British Sociological Association and American Sociological Association. In Nigeria too, where this

53 Joan Sieber and Barbara Stanley (1988), 'Ethical and Professional Dimensions of Social Sensitive Research' *American Psychology*, 43, p.49.

54 Norman L. Farberow (1963), 'Introduction' in Norman L. Farberow (ed.), *Taboo Topics* (New York: Atherton Press), p.9.

55 Raymod M. Lee (1993), Doing *Research on Sensitive Topics,* (London, Newbury Park and New Delhi: SAGE Publications), p.4.

56 Lee (1993), p.4.

research was conducted, there are similar bodies that regulate social research. I was also aware that I needed to contact such organizations before I undertook the research. Since my research was within my church denomination, and the intention of the study was to develop the denomination, I considered it unnecessary to take the above step, especially as the study was based in the United Kingdom. My topic was not in any way related to either health or education. It was purely a theological issue.

In addition, the use of photographs has been widely accepted as a way of eliciting richer and more detailed responses from the research samples.[57] In as much as there is no research method without its problems, the use of photographs has among others, the problems of 'authenticity, availability, sampling, interpretation of the picture taken and presentation'.[58] Since integrity is essential and relies solely on the steadfastness of the researcher in following the principles and procedures, I engaged the use of photographs only where I judged them necessary and appropriate. My intention in using the photographs was to use their visual advantages in substantiating the points emphasized where the photographs featured. In as much as I am aware of confidentiality, permission was obtained from those concerned before their pictures were taken and used.

B. Roles of Researcher

The issue of reflexivity which is one of the major concerns in ethnographic participant-observation is also applicable to my research methodology. Reflexivity is the awareness of 'the fact that social researchers are part of the social world they

57 Martin Bulmer (1991, 1994), *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual* (London & New York: Unwin Hymn Ltd & Routledge), p.119.
58 Bulmer (1994), p.140.

study'.[59] In my research, some of the churches where I administered questionnaires and conducted investigative visits were well known to me. As a pastor who has been in pastoral ministry for over two and half decades, I have in one way or the other ministered either in some of the churches or to some of the members. The culture of the people investigated has been my cultural background from birth. Due to the aforementioned familiarity with the people I studied, consciously or unconsciously, my interpretation of data could not but reflect my acquaintance with the people under study.

Max Weber, a German sociologist, argued that researches are influenced to a certain extent by the researchers' value system.[60] This could be true because it is through the value system that researchers often identify certain problems to be studied in a particular system. Hence, the conclusion and inference drawn from such studies might to a certain extent be based on the value system of the researchers. David and Sutton, however, warned that researchers 'must seek to conduct research in such a way that it will not be rejected by the others as simply the projection of the presumptions that preceded the research'.[61] Adogame and Chitando in their work on the participant-observer also maintained that the researcher needs to avoid becoming a 'precipitant-observer'[62] for the sake of credibility of the study. According to the duo, the participant-observer does not attempt to guide activities; while the precipitant-observer does.[63]

59 Kelth Punch (1998), *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications), p.171.
60 Max Weber (1949) *The Methodology of the Social Science* (New York: The Free Press), p.9-11.
61 David and Sutton (2004), *Social Research: The Basics*, p.17.
62 Afe Adogame and Ezra Chitando (2005) 'Moving Among those Moved by Spirit: Conducting Field work with the New African Religious Diaspora' *Fieldwork in Religion* 1(3), p.259.
63 Adogame and Chitando (2005), p.259.

Being conscious of my role as researcher among the people I have acquaintance with, I strove to be a participant-observer and maintained my integrity. I also observed that the perception of my respondents about me changed from pastor/preacher to a student researcher. This change of perception about me was evidently shown in the way I was introduced by the respective pastors of each church I visited. For example, when he was introducing me to the respondents in his church, a pastor said '…we are having one of the student researchers from England in our midst today in person of Rev. C. Olu Oyemomilara…' The change of perception was also shown in the way some of the respondents greeted and talked to me. This change of status took off certain rights and privileges that I had been enjoying prior to my study in England. Ministerial courtesy was one of them. It therefore dawned on me that I needed to adjust and humble myself before any meaningful study could be done among the people.

Consequently, this study was carried out among ten Baptist Conferences situated in the eight States where Yoruba people originated in Nigeria. The conferences are Ekiti, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogbomoso, Ogun, Oke-Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo West. The conferences are from Ekiti, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States of Nigeria. Each conference consists of at least five Associations; while each Association consists of at least five viable organized Baptist Churches.

In each Baptist Conference considered in this research, I picked the odd numbers from the first ten organized Churches based on their arrangement in the alphabetical order in each conference.[64] This is to say that five Churches were listed from each Conference. I used this number of Churches in each Conference because this is the

64 See *Nigerian Baptist Convention Financial Report* (2008) for detail of the names of the Churches under each Conference co-operating with the Convention, pp.132-412.

minimum number required for the organization of each Association that forms each Conference.[65] I also used organized Baptist Churches because it is a well known policy of the NBC that preaching stations do not exhibit fully-fledged Baptist Church status until they are organized. Consequently, preaching stations have little or nothing to say behind their Mother-Church. I selected fifty Baptist Churches across all the ten Conferences. I administered twenty questionnaires in each local Baptist Church selected for this study as highlighted above. I also administered twenty questionnaires in each local Church because this is the minimum numbers of baptized believers required for the organization of a local Baptist Church. Since the members of these selected churches are many, I employed the method of random sampling here too. The first ten male and ten female Church members of 'full age'[66] to attend a service in each sampling Church were used. They were all aged eighteen years and above. This is the age when accountability begins in Nigeria.

For the sake of confidentiality, the names of the Churches and the respondents have not been identified, except where it was absolutely necessary, and permission was granted. I have, however, used pseudonyms for subjects where references needed to be made for clarity. The populations used in this study were men and women of different economic and academic backgrounds. Some of the respondents could not read or write in the English language. Hence there was the need for the production of the questionnaire in the Yoruba language. The populaces used were contacted on different occasions, during either Sunday worship services or mid-week programmes in their respective Churches.

65 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (1994), *The Constitution and Bye-Laws* (Ibadan: Baptist Press Nig. Ltd.), p.50.

66 'Full age' mean the age of eighteen years and above. See the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (1999), section 29 (4) for more details.

The population under investigation could not be easily contacted in their respective homes because they were mingled among the other members of the community. In Nigeria, people live together regardless of the denomination and/or the religious faith to which they belong. Roseneil also identified the similar problems of sampling when researching at Greenham Common.[67] Like Greenham Common, the Yoruba Baptist Church members also have a loose structure in their respective abodes. In addition to weekly programmes conducted within Church environment, there were quarterly associational meetings and annual conference meetings. Except on such occasions, one may find it difficult to have quite a number of them together in one place. I, like Roseneil, in order to acquire information from these people, had to visit some of the Churches where they could be found. Because of time constraints, I also engaged some pastors after giving them proper instructions about the administration of the questionnaire.

In the course of the administration of the questionnaire, I observed that the use of a questionnaire rather than telephone communication was the most successful way of reaching and collecting information from the respondents in Yorubaland of Nigeria. This was in contrast to the experience of Roseneil at Greenham Common.[68] Based on my interaction with some of my respondents, the questionnaire was convenient for these people probably because of the time factor, that is, each of them could fill in the questionnaire in his/her free time. It could also be due to the fact that anonymity could be better maintained in the completion of the questionnaire than in a telephone

67 Sasha Roseneil (1993), 'Chapter 7: Greenham Revisited: Researching Myself and My Sister' in Dick Hobbs and Tim May (eds.), *Interpreting the Field Accounts of Ethnography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.182. Retrieved from http://hypercontent.hull.ac.uk/short_loan.../Roseneil_36074_1520.pdf on 25 June 2007.

68 Roseneil, (1993), pp.179-181.

interview. The questionnaire administration also gave me ample chance for investigative visits to the worship of most of the selected sampled Churches. These investigative visits enabled me to compare and contrast information given through the questionnaire with the real worship service.

C. The Questionnaire

One of the major research methods used in this project is the questionnaire. A questionnaire is 'a widely and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to administer without the presence of the researcher, and often be comparatively straightforward to analyze'.[69] In the words of Oppenheim, a questionnaire is 'an important instrument of research, a tool for data collection'.[70] To me, a questionnaire is indeed a tool for data collection because it allows respondents to express their minds candidly, possibly in anonymous ways.

As Cohen, Manion and Morrisson observed, the questionnaire administration intrudes into the privacy of respondents.[71] This intrusion could be 'in terms of time taken to complete the instrument, the level of threat or sensitivity of the questionnaire or the possible invasion of privacy'.[72] Notwithstanding, no matter how strongly the respondent is encouraged to participate during the introduction of the questionnaire, the decision whether or not to respond surely rests with each respondent. It is equally important to note that there are some factors responsible for respondents' involvement

69 Louise Cohen, Lawrence Manion, Keith R.B. Morrison (2007), *Research Method in Education* (U.K.: Routledge), p.317.
70 J.N. Oppenheim (2001), *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement* (London and New York: Continuum), p.100.
71 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.317.
72 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.317.

in a questionnaire. Some of the factors recorded by Cohen, Manion and Morrisson include:

*Their informed consent
*Their right to withdraw at any stage or not to complete a particular item in the questionnaire
*The potential of the research to improve their situation
*The guarantees that the research will not harm them
*The degree of the threat or sensitivity of the question, which may lead to respondent's over-reporting or under-reporting
*Factors in the questionnaire itself, (e.g., its coverage of issues…) etc.[73]

In the process of gathering this data, specific measures were taken to protect the respondents' identities. Firstly, the respondents were not required to sign their names or addresses on the questionnaire response. Secondly, they were also not required to submit their responses to the researcher in person, although some of them did. The pastor of each selected Church served as the collection centre. Hence, the identity of most of the respondents is not known to the researcher. Consequently, their privacy and integrity were protected. I also tried to reframe the questions in such a way that they were not abusive, irritating and misleading. The questions were drawn in ways that were clear and self-explanatory. Since the primary objective of this researcher was to contextualize Christian worship among the contemporary Yoruba Christians of the NBC, and the fact that the questionnaire was administered among the Yoruba Baptist Church members, the questions did not in any way pose danger to any of the respondents.

i. Types of Questionnaire Items

Cohen and his colleagues affirmed that there are several kinds of question and response models in questionnaires.[74] Some of them include dichotomous questions,

73 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.318.
74 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.321.

multiple choice questions, rating scales, constant sum questions, ratio data and open-ended questions.[75] According to Oppenheim, closed questions limit the range of the responses from the respondents.[76] These closed questions are the questions that attract 'yes/no' answers. On the other hand, open questions are akin to an open invitation for one to express his/her view on the subject under investigation. Oppenheim further claimed these closed questions are useful in that they can generate frequencies of response amenable to statistical analysis.[77] In addition, closed questions are direct, to the point and more focused than open-ended questions.

In contrast, Cohen and his colleague suggested qualitative, less-structured word based and open-ended questionnaire for a site-specific study. They believe that these questionnaires will be suitable because they are probably appropriate to capture the specific situation. According to Cohen and his colleagues,

> Where measurement is sought then a quantitative approach might be more suitable. Open-ended questions are useful if the possible answers are unknown or the questionnaire is exploratory, or if there are so many possible categories of response that a closed question would contain an extremely long list of options.[78]

In my questionnaire, I chose open-ended questions because the area of my research is exploratory. In addition, this questionnaire will allow my respondents to answer the questions as much as they wish or could. It can be argued that closed questions, dichotomous, multiple choice, constant sum and rating scales are easy to complete and straightforward to code for computer analysis. However, the respondents are

75 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.321.
76 Oppenheim (2001), pp.114-115.
77 Oppenheim (2001), p.115.
78 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.321.

limited in answering such a questionnaire because they are not allowed to express themselves based on their real life experiences on the research subject area.

ii. Pilot Work

Pilot work is the period of 'designing and trying out questions and procedures'.[79] According to Oppenheim, before questionnaires can be standardized for academic research, 'they have to be created or adopted, fashioned and developed to maturity after many abortive test flights'.[80] He further states that for any data collection to successfully achieve its purposes, it must go through a number of stages, 'from the initial formulation of basic ideas to the specification of the research design followed by the fieldwork, then the data processing and statistical analysis and so on to the writing of the final report'.[81] The purpose of pilot work is more than re-wording the questionnaire. I believe that before a questionnaire can achieve its aim and objective, it must be tested and retested in order to validate the questions.

This pilot work was undertaken in December 2008. I used five Baptist Churches from Gideon I and Ogbomoso South Baptist Associations of Lagos and Ogbomoso Baptist Conferences respectively for this pilot work. I used three Churches in Lagos because of the cosmopolitan nature of Lagos State. It can be argued that almost all the Yoruba tribes are represented in that city. Hence, using the Churches in the city for pilot work of this nature can be said to truly represent the opinion of the Yoruba Baptist Christians. In the case of two Churches from Ogbomoso, the city has been one of the major cities where the early foreign-missionaries settled and had great influence on

79 Oppenheim (2001), p.47.
80 Oppenheim (2001), p.47.
81 Oppenheim (2001), p.47.

the life of the residents. Up till now, the land marks of the early missionaries are still conspicuously seen in Ogbomoso. The first degree awarding institution in Nigeria is the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, established in 1898.[82] Likewise, the Baptist Medical Hospital, which is the headquarters of all Baptist Medical Institutions in Nigeria is located in Ogbomoso.[83] Consequently, it can be argued that this city has been subjected to early missionaries' influence due to their close range relationship. Hence, piloting work of this nature among the adherents of Baptist members can be argued to have been free, fair and representative of the true view of the Yoruba Baptists.

Several aspects of the questions were considered during the pilot work. For instance, I tried to find out whether the questions were awkward, easily understood and correctly emphasised. I also discovered whether my respondents would misinterpret the questions and whether the questions focused on the topic of the study. This exercise helped in rewording some of the questions that seemed awkward and loaded to my respondents.

iii. Administering the Questionnaire

Cohen and his colleagues affirmed that questionnaires can be administered by self, post, face-to-face interview, telephone and internet. Self-administered questionnaires can be completed in the presence or absence of the researcher. 'The presence of the researcher is helpful in that it enables any queries or uncertainties to be addressed

82 J. Kofi Agbeti (1991), *West African Church History II: Christian Missions and Theological Training 1842–1970* (New York: E. J. Brill), p.74.

83 Nigerian Baptist Convention (2007) *94th Annual Convention Session Book of Reports* (Ibadan: Baptist Building), pp.213-218.

immediately with the questionnaire designer'.[84] The response rate of this questionnaire is usually high because the presence of the researcher may automatically motivate the respondent. On the other hand, the presence of the researcher at the administration of the questionnaire may 'exert a sense of compulsion, where respondents may feel uncomfortable about completing the questionnaire, and may not want to complete it or even start it'.[85] Pressure can also be placed on a researcher as a result of his/her attendance at an agreed time and place of administering the questionnaire. This can be time-consuming and expensive since the researcher may travel a lot to cover the research field. On the other hand, the absence of the researcher may be helpful in that the respondent will be free from the pressure of the presence of the researcher.

Having considered all the pros and cons of the administration of questionnaires, I used self-administered questionnaires because I had only a short time for the administration and collection of the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire was to be administered among the Yoruba Baptist Church members in the South/West of Nigeria, I travelled from the United Kingdom to Nigeria for the administration and the collection of the data between April and June 2009. I also combined self-administered questionnaires in my presence and absence together in the administration of the questionnaire. I applied these systems because of the urgency of the questionnaire. In order to allow respondents to have enough time to answer the questionnaire, some were allowed to take them home and return them to their pastors who then handed them over to me.

84 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.344.
85 Cohen, Manion and Morrisson (2007), p.344.

At each centre where the questionnaire was administered, I explained the motive behind the research to the respondents before distribution. Since it was impossible for me to reach all fifty Churches selected for this research due to the time factor, I engaged the service of the pastors of the sampled Churches. Some of the Pastors I engaged in the administration of the questionnaires were Ph.D. research students of either the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary or one of the Nigerian Universities. There were a few pastors among the ones I engaged that have taken their Ph.D. in different disciplines related to Church work. Consequently, the pastors engaged were qualified for the job. Notwithstanding, I explained the procedures to these pastors before I engaged them in the task. The instruction was given on 19th April 2009 during the Annual Convention-in-Session of the NBC held at Benin City. I also asked them to strictly follow the procedures given to them. This was to ensure that all the respondents understood the nature and direction of the research.

One thousand questionnaires were administered in ten Baptist Conferences of the Yoruba regions in Nigeria, while five selected Baptist Churches were used within each Conference. This is to say that twenty questionnaires were administered in each local Church. In all, seven hundred and thirty five respondents returned their answered questionnaires. Out of the returned answered questionnaires, nine were not completed; while six were not readable. These fifteen uncompleted/unreadable questionnaires were therefore discarded. The detail of the analysis of the questionnaires will be given later.

iv. Enhancing Disclosure

Most of the studies on religious subjects such as Christian worship face the challenge of how to convince people to respond to certain aspects of their personal belief. Aldridge and Levine claimed that the levels to which the respondent opens up depends on study-design issues, such as whether questionnaires are clearly worded and easy to understand.[86] A respondent's comfort level may be affected by many other factors such as the length of the questionnaire, the feeling of threat that readers might suspect the respondents, and whether the respondent is genuinely interested in the research topic.

Koss confirmed that over-reporting, or the formulation of events that have not really occurred, is generally felt to be encountered infrequently in research.[87] Hamby et al in collaborating with Koss also cautioned against over-reporting.[88] Smith, however, pointed out that under-reporting is widely considered to be a much more common threat to research validity.[89] In as much as I was aware of all aforementioned intricacies, I designed the questionnaire in such a way that the respondents were free to express themselves without having any sense of threat.

v. Acknowledgement of Limitation

African culture seems to be different from the European culture, particularly in the area of openness about social and religious lives. As Lee quoting MacIntyre affirmed,

86 Alan Aldridge and Ken Levine (2001), *Surveying the Social World: Principles and Practice in Survey Research*. (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press), p.114.

87 Mary P Koss (1993), 'Detecting the Scope of Rape: A Review of Prevalence Research Methods' *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 8(2), p.199.

88 Sherry L. Hamby, Valerie C. Poindexter and Bernadette Gray-Little (1991), 'Four Measures of Partner Violence: Construct similarity and Classification Differences.' *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 58 (Feb.), p.135.

89 Michael D. Smith (1994), 'Enhancing the Quality of Survey Data on Violence Against Women: A Feminist Approach' Gender and Society 8(1), p.109.

the European 'culture has one idiosyncratic feature that distinguishes it from most and perhaps all other cultures. It is a culture in which there is a general desire to make social life translucent, to remove opacity, to reveal the hidden, to unmask…a secret…'[90] The situation appears to be the opposite in African culture. People tend to make their social and religious lives private, which they would not want anybody to toy with.

Africans' protection of their privacy leads me to acknowledge the fact that there could be some respondents who may not have genuinely responded to the questionnaire administered among the Baptist Churches in Yorubaland. More importantly, I need to recognize the fact that the respondents might have either known me in person or through my role as a pastor within the NBC. This familiarity could have enforced a sense of compulsion on my respondents. It could even distract their attention from participating in the exercise. Based on the steps that I have taken as demonstrated in the ethics of research, however, I believe my respondents were honest and sincere in their responses and the questionnaires were not simply answered in ways that they thought would impress me.

1.7. SURVEY OF LITERATURE RELATED TO THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF WORSHIP

In this section, this researcher explores the literature review from an African perspective. I am aware of S. Ademola Ishola's Ph.D. thesis in 1992 entitled 'Towards a Contextualized Missiological Approach to the Yoruba Religio-Cultural Milieu'. Although the aforementioned scholar researched from the Nigerian context, his study

90 Lee (1993), p.18.

did not involve worship *per se*. Deji Ayebgoyin and S. Ademola Ishola have also carried out research on the historical perspective of the African Indigenous Church.

It must be admitted at the beginning that it may not be possible for this researcher to present all literature on African worship, particularly the Yoruba in Western Nigeria. Firstly, not very much has been written from an African perspective. Secondly, it may not be physically possible to gather the little literature on Christian worship in Africa since most of the few published works are not available to this researcher either through electronic means or as books. Thirdly, most of the books on African worship were written by American and European authors who may not even understand African ways of life. A Yoruba proverb says *'a ki mo Iya Osho ju Osho lo'* (you cannot know Osho's mother more than Osho - her son). Consequently, I will present the few materials from indigenous African researchers here on the subject matter.

John Mbiti has been described as 'the father of contemporary African theology'.[91] The well-known Kenyan theologian found it convenient to bridge academic/theoretical theology with pastoral/practical theology. Although Mbiti's initial academic interest was New Testament studies, he eventually taught 'African Religions among other courses in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Makerere University',[92] Kampala, Uganda. Mbiti's significant contribution started in the twentieth century when he argued for more attention to the relationship between the Gospel and local culture of the recipients.[93] This request regarding the bridging of the gap between Western theology and the reality in African society is one of the reasons I

91 J.J. Van Wyk (2003), 'Mbiti, John Samuel b.1931: Anglican Church of Kenya and Reformed Church of Bern Kenya and Switzerland', *Dictionary of African Church Biography*. Downloaded from http://www.dacb.org/stories/kenya/mbiti_john.html on 26 June 2011.

92 Van Wyk (2003).

93 John Mbiti (1971), *The Crisis of Mission in Africa* (Mukono: Uganda Church Press), p.3.

engaged this project. I have expressed this view from the introduction till the conclusion of my thesis.

Mbiti has published over four hundred items which include books, articles, essays, poems and book reviews in the areas of African Christianity, African theology, biblical studies, ecumenism, literatures and African religion.[94] One of Mbiti's significant contributions to knowledge is his book *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (1986). In this work, Mbiti placed biblical studies and cultural heritage in the midst of the theological process while maintaining that the Bible is the guide and indispensable tool of theological reflection and articulation. Also, in this book, he leads his readers on a journey of examination of new African Christianity. [95] The author digs into the history of Apostolic Christianity with the reality of African life in the present. He establishes from the Bible the legitimacy of practising Christianity within an African worldview.[96] In his academic struggle, he developed empathy for the person of Jesus Christ in an African traditional setting because he believes African Christians enjoy the Gospel of Jesus being told in terms of their own socio-cultural worldview.[97]

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94 Among the works of Mbiti are: *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1969); *Concept of God in Africa* (London: SPCK, 1970); *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background: A Study of the Encounter Between New Testament Theology and African Traditional Concepts* (London: SPCK, 1971); *The Crisis of Mission in Africa* (Mukono-Kampala: Church of Uganda Press, 1971), *The Prayers of African Religion* (London: SPCK, 1975); *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986); 'African Concept of Sin.' *Frontier*, Vol. VII (Autumn, 1964), pp.182-184; 'African Concept of Human Relations.' *Ministry: Theological Review*, No.9 (October, 1969), pp.158-162; 'African Names of God.'*Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* Vol.VI (1), (June, 1972), pp.3-14.; 'An African View Views American Black Theology.' *Worldview*, Vol.XVII, No.8, (August, 1974), pp.41-44.

95 John Mbiti (1986), *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press) p.x.

96 M biti (1986), pp.26-30.

97 Mbiti (1986), p.26.

Charles Nyamiti, a vibrant pioneer of inculturated African theology was born in Tanzania.[98] As a professor of Systematic/Dogmatic Theology, he is one of the 'proud founding scholars of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa'[99] of which he remains Professor Emeritus.

Nyamiti, like any other reputable scholar, has contributed to knowledge especially in the area of African theology. His contribution lies in his theology of inculturation of Christianity in Africa. According to him, inculturation 'implies the effort to incarnate the Christian message in African cultures'.[100] He articulates his idea of inculturation in his response to Jesus' perennial question in Matthew 16:13, 'Who do people say the son of man is?'.[101]Nyamiti answers this question by saying Christ is the Ancestor *par excellence*. His idea of Christ as the Ancestor *par excellence* further explains the worldview of the Yoruba about God. As I have explained in Chapter Two of my work, the Yoruba Christian generally believes that Jesus is God and that there are various names of God based on people's thoughts, observations and experiences about the Supreme Being. In his work, he presents Christ as a perfect model and the finality of Ancestors. From this book, Nyamiti develops a theology of ancestral incarnation and published his findings in five different volumes of African Christian Studies (journal). Nyamiti, a prolific writer, has written many books and journals in contribution to African Christian scholarship.[102]

98 Patrick N. Wachege (2006), Charles Nyamiti: Vibrant Pioneer of Inculturated African Theologies' in BenezetBujo and Juvenal IlungaMuya (eds.), *African Theology in the 21st Century: the Contribution of the Pioneers, Volume 2* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa), p.149.

99 Wachege (2006), p.150.

100 Charles Nyamiti (1989), 'A Critical Assessment on Some Issues on Today's African Theology' *African Christian Studies* 5 (1), p.10.

101 Charles Nyamiti (1984), *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology From African Perspective* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press).

Kwame Bediako, the (recently late) rector and co-founder of the Akrofi-Christaller Institute for Theology, Mission and Culture, Akropong, Ghana, was a distinguished African theologian. Although the erudite African scholar has joined his ancestors in the celestial world, his African Christian theology, African identities, and his scholastic discourses keep on speaking to and influencing contemporary Christendom. I will point out some of these theological ideas in Chapters Four and Six. Notable among them is the use of African language in writing African Christian theology. Bediako claimed that the Westerner's possessiveness needs to be checked in order for the Gospel to be meaningful and relevant to the Africans.[103]

Bediako, an evangelical academic, was concerned about how African distinctiveness, which the Western Christian theologies ignored, could be addressed from the African worldview. He believed that many African Christians were confronted with issues related to family relationships, kinship and spiritual warfare.[104] He held that Western theologies created gaps which mitigated the relevance of theology to the African Christian's realities. He affirmed that 'great areas of life were thus left untouched by Christ, often leaving sincere Christians with deep uncertainties'.[105] These uncertainties created anxieties which must be addressed by African Christian theologians. These views of Bediako are also the

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102 Other works of Nyamiti include: 'The Inculturation Viewed from the African Understanding of Person', *African Christian Studies*, (1990), Vol.6, No.1, pp.3-27.; (1990), Vol.6, No.2, pp.23-76.; (1991), Vol.7, No.1, pp.29-52.; (1991), Vol.7, No.2, pp.41-68.; (1992), Vol.8, No.2, pp.1-28.; African Sense of God's Motherhood' in Spearhead 112-114, (AMECEA Gaba Publications, Eldoret Kenya (1991); 'My Approach to African Theology', African Christian Studies, (1991) Vol.7, No.4, pp.35-53.; 'Ancestral-Based Ecclesiology and Ministry' in L. Magesa (ed.), The Prophetic Rules of the Church in Tanzania Today Spearhead No.115 (AMECEA Gaba Publications, Eldoret, Kenya, 1991).

103 Kwame Bediako (2004), *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience* (New York: Orbis Books), p.57.

104 Andrew F. Walls (2008), 'Kwame Bediako: 1945-2008, Presbyterian Ghana' Dictionary of African Christian Biography. Downloaded from www.DACB.org on 26 June 2011.

105 Walls (2008).

factors that propelled me into researching my topic. There are some perennial issues within African Christianity which Western theologians are yet to answer satisfactorily. For instance, what is the position of the polygamous family within the providence of God in Africa? Since the polygamous family members are not allowed membership of the Baptist Church, let alone Christian ordinances, what will be the fate of those people at the end of age?

In an attempt to provide a solution to the above mentioned gap, Bediako formulated his 'grassroots theology'.[106] In his argument, Bediako claimed that the Ghanaian Christians as well as other African Christians see and speak about Christian faith as a non-Western religion. This view was what Bediako termed as 'grassroots theology'.[107] In his articulation of this grassroots theology, Bediako used the experience of the vernacular prayer and praises (in Akan language) of an illiterate Afua Gyan Christian (a native of the forest town of Obo-Kwahu, the Eastern Ghana) to explain how the indigenous Ghanaians who have faith in Christ see the Lord as their Protector, Provider and Enabler.[108] In times of spiritual warfare, the Christians have faith in Jesus as being ahead of them in fighting their battles. Bediako used Ghanaian metaphors such as *gyta* (lion), *pataku* (wolf) and *sasabonsam* (evil spirit) to explain the fearful nature of the spiritual warfare.[109] In spite of how fearful the warfare can be, Bediako affirmed that the Ghanaian Christians see Jesus as the

106 Kwame Bediako (1993) 'Cry Jesus! Christian Theology and Presence in Modern Africa, (The Laing Lecture for 1993) Vox Evangelica, 23, pp.7-26. Downloaded from http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol23/cry-jesus_bediako.pdf on 26 June 2011, p.6.
107 Bediako (1993), p.6.
108 Bediako (1993), p.8.
109 Bediako (1993), p.8.

Okatakyi Birempon (the One who is capable of fighting, conquering and leading his people in triumph).[110]

In concluding this work, Bediako affirmed that the implication of grassroots theology is that African Christian Theology needs to 'come from where the faith lives, in the life-situation of the community of faith'.[111] He claimed that academic theology needs to be in touch with grassroots theology due to the fact that the two are supposed to complement each other; otherwise academic theology would be detached from the real experiences of the community of faith.[112] Hence, the theology formulated from such a situation may not be able to communicate life in Jesus Christ to the community of faith. Bediako wrote extensively in the areas of the Gospel, African culture, and African Christian identity.[113] I agree with Bediako because there seems to be a difference between the academic theology and the real life experiences of the community of faith in Africa. This could be one of the reasons why there have been some kinds of schisms within the body of Christ in Africa which often lead to a proliferation of churches in the continent.

Among the scholars who have examined African Independent Churches is H.W. Turner. The author presents the history of an African Independent Church called 'The Church of the Lord: *Aladura*' from historical, phenomenological, liturgical and theological approaches. In his work, Turner tried to answer some basic questions

110 Bediako (1993), p.8.
111 Bediako (1993), p.16.
112 Bediako (1993), p.16.
113 *Theology and Identity - The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (Regnum Book, 1992); *Christianity in Africa - The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995); *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience* (Cameroun and Akropong-Akuapem: Cle and Regnum Africa, 2000); *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa, History and Experience* (Orbis Books, 2004) etc.

such as whether *Aladura* is a Christian church and how it has been Africanized. The author answers the first question by examining the background of the Aladura movements[114], the establishment of the Church of the Lord (*Aladura* - founded by Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu)[115] and the expansion of the church[116]. In answering the second question, the author presents the church's life and liturgy, and analyses the church's beliefs and practices.[117]

Turner claims that the *Aladura* movements are authentic African Indigenous Churches. From the evidence surrounding Oshitelu's Christian background at Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria, it is clear that the founder had religious and secular training from the Anglican denomination. Aside from the six years elementary schooling which gave the founder literacy in both English and Yoruba, this 'basic education was supplemented by the supervision and supplementary classes he received as a teacher-catechist…'[118] Hence, it may be right to say that the Church of the Lord: Aladura has Anglican denomination traits coloured with African charismatic personalities.

J. Akinyele Omoyajowo in one of his researches articulates the history of Cherubum and Seraphim (C&S).[119] In the aforementioned work, the author presents the origin, development and early expansion of the C&S in Africa.[120] He also investigates the Church's beliefs, practices, constitution, organization and administration. Based on

114 H.W. Turner (1967), *History of An African Independent Church: The Church of the Lord (Aladura)* (London: Oxford University Press), pp.8-25.
115 Turner (1967), pp.35-53.
116 Turner (1967), pp.54-66.
117 Turner (1967), pp.66-71.
118 Turner (1967), p.52.
119 J. Akinyele Omoyajowo (1982), *Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of an African Independent Church* (Lagos, Enugu, London: Nok Publishers International), pp.3-31.
120 Omoyajowo (1982), pp.3-11.

his historical and theological approaches in his work, Omoyajowo affirmed that C&S is a church:

> …that quite unlike most other African Independent Churches, the C&S came into existence by sheer accident. It was not a separatist sect, nor was it directly the logical outcome of an organized series of evangelistic campaigns. Moses Orimolade was neither a disgruntled nor a rebellious member of any denomination. He began as a general evangelist whose main concern was to win converts for Christ…[121]

Omoyajowo argues that, despite the fact that C&S Church in her bid to contextualize Christianity in Africa seems to have borrowed certain traditional ideas, the church is a Christian church.[122] 'Its borrowing from indigenous tradition must not be seen as an attempt to mask a religion that is 'essentially pagan' with a borrowed Christian veneer'.[123] I agree with Omoyajowo because indigenization of Christianity does not make the adherent unchristian. Hence, C&S is one of the authentic African Churches.

Osadolor Imasogie, the President-Emeritus of The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary (NBTS), Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria and a professor of Religion and Philosophy, has published many books and journals in the areas of African theology and Philosophy. Some of the books and articles are listed below.[124] The significant contribution of Imasogie is that he calls the contemporary African theologians to the need to draw theologies from African traditional religions. According to Imasogie, Christian theology will be meaningful, applicable and relevant to Africans if the

121 Omoyajowo (1982), pp.3-4.
122 Omoyajowo (1982), p.219.
123 Omoyajowo (1982), p.220.
124 'Contextualized African Christian Theology' in Garrett, L.J. *Baptist Theology: A Four Century Study* (Georgia, USA: Mercer University Press, 2009); *Vital Tips for Effective Ministry* (in Nigerian context) (2005); African Theology' a chapter in *Baptist Roots: A Reader in the Theology of Christian People* edited by Curitis. W. Freeman, James McClendon Jr. and Rosulee Velloso da Silva, published by Judson Press, Valley Forge, USA (1999); and 'The Influence of African Traditional Religious Ideas of Worship on Christian Worship Practices in Nigeria' *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* (December 1991)

theologies are drawn from African culture. Imasogie identified three areas to be integrated into African worldview in his book, *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa* (1983). They are: efficacy of Christ's power over evil; the role of the Holy Spirit and the present mediatory efficacy of the Living Christ; and the omnipresence of God and the consequent sacramental nature of the universe. I believe, as Imasogie claimed, that Christian theology becomes meaningful when it speaks to the people within their cultural worldview.

Afe Adogame is an erudite African Christian scholar based in United Kingdom. As a scholar in History of Religions, Adogame is a senior lecturer in World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh. His areas of interest include: 'African Religion, African Christianity, Indigenous Religions, New Religious Movements and Religion in the New African Diaspora'.[125] He has authored and co-authored many books and journals, some of which include the following listed below.[126] One of his significant contributions is in the area of his theology of space-time in the cosmology of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), one of the famous African Initiated Churches (AIC's).[127] In an article on this subject, Adogame claimed that *Ajo* (journey) is a

125 Afe Adogame 'Short Biography: Afe Adogame' Retrieved from http:www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/religion/article_biog?article_id=reco_arti… on 23 May 2011.

126 Afe Adogame (1999), *Celestial Church of Christ: The Politics of Cultural Identity in a West African Prophetic-Charismatic Movement* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lag).Afe Adogame and Roswith Gerloff (2008), *Christianity in Africa and Africa Diaspora: The Appropriation of Scattered Heritage* (London: Continuum); Afe Adogame, Magnus Echtler and Ulf Vierke (eds.) (2008), *Unpacking the New: Critical Perspectives on Cultural Syncretization in African and Beyond* (Munster: Lit Verlag); Afe Adogame (2009), 'Practitioners of Indigenous Religions in Africa and African Diaspora', in Graham Harvey (ed.) *Religions in Focus: New Approaches to Tradition and Contemporary Practices* (London and Oakville, CT: Equinox); Afe Adogame (2009) 'Ranks and Robes: Art Symbolism and Identity in the Celestial Church of Christ in the European Diaspora' *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief V*ol.5 (1) (March), pp.90-97; etc.

127 Afe Adogame (2000), 'Aiye Loja, Orun Nile: The Appropriation of Ritual Space-Time in the Cosmology of Celestial Church of Christ' *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol.30 (1), (February), pp.3-29 .

'concept in Yoruba thought which is strongly related to aiye/aye (world) itself: its uncertainties, unpredictability in human relations, failure at self-actualizing, conflict of relations, insecurity and fear derived from power'.[128] In this article, Adogame used the Celestial Church of Christ as a specimen in examining the Yoruba's concept of *oru*n and *aye*.[129] Through this attempt, it shows 'how CCC has consciously or unconsciously created a synthesis of Christian and Yoruba belief paradigms and ritual forms as a new rationalization, a new ordering of cosmos by the adherents'.[130] Consequently, according to Adogame, the adherents of CCC see the Church as *Oko Igbala Ikehin* (the Last Ship for Salvation); *Ile Esin/Ile Adura* (Church) as a haven for 'heavenly' (spiritual bodies); *Ile Aanu* (Church Compound/Mercy Land) as wilderness and, Celestial City (Imeko, a town in Ogun State, Nigeria) as New Jerusalem.[131] The Yoruba understanding of cosmos motivates the adherents of CCC to shape their theological thought and attitude toward *aye* and *orun*.

The concepts of *orun* (heaven) and *aye* (world) in relation to home and market/farm respectively will be dealt with in Chapters Two and Six of my thesis. Suffice to say again that the Yoruba believe that humankind's life terminates in *aye* (world). *Orun* (heaven) is, however, seen as the place of eternal rest. This view underscores the reason why the Yoruba often express this ideology proverbially that '*aye loja, orun nile*' (world is like market; while heaven is the home - the place of rest). It also shows reason why every *omoluabi* (well-behaved-person) often struggles to live in

128 Adogame (2000), p.3.
129 Adogame (2000), p.5.
130 Adogame (2000), p.5.
131 Adogame (2000), pp.8-25.

accordance with the norms and values of Yoruba Christian community of this *aye* (world) in order to prepare for *orun* (heaven).

Among the recent African researchers is Deji Ayegboyin. In his work published in 2005, Ayegboyin examined *Aladura* movements of Christology. The *Aladura* movements are Cherubim and Seraphim, the Church of the Lord, *Aladura* and the Celestial Church of Christ.[132] Ayegboyin claimed that:

> A careful study of *Aladura* Christology shows that these churches have perceived and responded to Jesus in unique ways that are pragmatic, functional and contextual, reflecting their own understanding and experience of the 'one who went about doing good' (Acts 10:38).[133]

The *Aladura* movements are down-to-earth and indigenous in their Christological formulations. In the Christology of *Aladura* movements, the author maintained 'they employ indigenous concept, symbols, idioms and means of expression that the ordinary worshipper, the person in the street, the trader in the market and the man and woman in the village, can understand'.[134] The *Aladura* movement's Christology is an affirmation of an African initiative in doing theology the Yoruba contextual way.

Adelani Akande is a Baptist pastor in one of the Churches of the NBC. Based on his experience in the field for more than two decades, he affirmed that changes are inevitable in Nigerian Christianity. Some of the reasons mentioned as bases for changes include dissatisfaction, the quest for the ideal and the challenges from the past church history.[135] He therefore concluded that changes are a reality of life and

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132 Deji Ayegboyin (2005), 'Li Oruko Jesu: Aladura Grass-roots Christology' *Journal of African Christian Thought* Vol.8, No.1, p.11.

133 Ayegboyin (2005), p.11.

134 Ayegboyin (2005), p.11-12.

135 Adelani Akande (2006), 'Changes and the Nigerian Society' in Ademola Ishola and Deji Ayegboyin (eds.), *Ecclesiastes the Preacher, the Church, and the Contemporary Society: Papers in Honour of Rev. Dr. S.T. Ola Akande @ 80* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd.), pp.134-137.

they have to reflect in every sector of Nigeria which includes worship. In my opinion, the researcher is right in observing that human life itself is not static. From the study of the past, it can be argued that it appears as if each generation has its unique contribution to the existing ones. The roles of Martin Luther King, Jr., in America, Bishop Desmond Tutu, in South Africa and the Charismatic Movements such as Scripture Union, Students' Christian Fellowship and Baptist Students' Fellowship in Nigeria will be remembered for life in Church history.

In one of the researches of Matthew A. Ojo on 'The Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Pentecostal Resurgence', the history and crises of the awakening were traced and presented chronologically. He mentioned how it was difficult for the NBC to accept the new development, particularly by the older people. The younger people in collaboration with few older people, particularly the elites also alleged:

> …that worship services in Baptist churches are very lukewarm. They have alleged that our prayers are weak and not 'hot enough'. They said we do not heal the sick or raise the dead. They have also alleged that in Baptist churches, miracles do not happen and people are not baptised by the Holy Spirit neither are they able to speak in tongues[136].

This was the situation of the Convention until recently when it appears members repressed the issue and handled it locally.

Ademola Ishola (the General Secretary of the NBC, 2002-2011) and Travis Collins (a SBC missionary) responded to the schism of Charismatic Renewal in the NBC in 1995.[137] The duo (who were then lecturers at the NBTS, Ogbomoso) provided a theological appraisal of the Charismatic Renewal from the Baptist perspective. Based

136 Ojo (2006), 'The Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Pentecostal Resurgence, 1970-2000: Critical Issues for Ecclesiastical Dynamics', pp.347-348.

137 See Travis Collin and Ademola Ishola (1995), *Baptists and the Charismatic Movement* (Ibadan: Baptist Press)

on their field of knowledge as missiologists, they offered positive and constructive ways of responding to the phenomenon. Some of their suggestions include: avoidance of subjective conservatism, the acceptance of creative conservatism, the acceptance of the autonomy of local church and thorough supervision of the NBC seminaries and Bible schools[138]

When the book *Baptists and the Charistimatic Movement* (1995) appeared, it did not solve the Convention's problem on Charismatic movement. Emiola Nihinlola, the then Director of Nigerian Baptist Students' Fellowship, published another book entitled *Nigerian Baptist Convention and Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship Practices* in late 1995.[139] The book covered aspects of worship such as prayers, fasting, speaking in tongues, emotional shouting of 'Praise the Lord', testimonies, night vigils, singing of choruses, laying on of hands and deliverance, to mention a few. He concluded that since Nigerian Baptist youths have a high emotional sympathy and appreciation for Pentecostal worship practices, it will be heretical to describe the groups as 'unbaptistic'. To me too, in as much as emotion cannot be totally ruled out of worship in Africa and for the fact that the groups appear to have had a positive impact on the denomination's renewal, the youths should be allowed to worship in the ways which please them. African people have a tradition of showing their emotion in worship in a way that distinguishes worship from other social events in life.

David O. Olayiwola affirmed that the church in Nigeria is shifting away from missionary hagiography, institutional history and church growth to a more holistic

138 Collin and Ishola (1995), pp.79-91.

139 For more information about NBC charismatic movement of this period, see Emiola Nihinlola (1995), *Nigerian Baptist Convention and Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship Practices* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Limited).

approach which deals with a Christian presence in the total context of a community's experience. He claimed that such experience includes 'the ecology in which the community is situated, the socio-economic structure, the political organization and the religious culture'.[140]

Olayiwola claimed that the Aladura church uses charismatic gifts like prophecy, vision, dreams and healing. It is interesting to note that the *Aladura* make use of the indigenous world-view of the people. In Yorubaland, the Babalawo plays prominent roles in divination, healing and future-foretelling (vision).[141] According to Olayiwola, the use of the aforementioned African gifts in the *Aladura* churches has been able to satisfy the yearning of her members and solve their concrete problems. If the *Aladura* could implement this strategy and seem to be successful, then the Nigerian Baptist can also find ways in which the yearning of the members would be met from the Yoruba socio-cultural milieu.

The role of Amba Mercy Oduyoye cannot be overemphasized. In the early 1980s, Oduyoye re-assessed the theological climate of Nigeria and called on eminent theologians like Professor Osardolor Imasogie, Professor J.O. Akao, Rev. Father Onaiyekan and others to come up with a theology that would answer the need of the Nigerians in their contextual situations.[142] She lamented that all that has been happening is the repetition of the creeds and liturgies brought from other cultural contexts and imposed on the people. In her attempt to serve as catalyst to the

140 David O. Olayiwola (1987), 'The Aladura: Its Strategies for Mission and Conversion in Yorubaland, Nigeria' *ORITA: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XIX(1) June, p.40 .
141 Olayiwola (1987), p.48.
142 Mercy Oduyoye (ed.) (1986), 'Doing Theology in Nigeria: An Agenda' *The State of Christian Theology in Nigeria 1980-81* (Ibadan: Daystare Press), p.v.

aforementioned scholars, she reminded them of the involvement of others who have played key roles in the history of the church. According to her,

> In the formative years of the church, it was what bishops and councils of bishops agreed to that became doctrine, ie, that which is to be believed. Several who gave expression to what they considered to be that which is to be believed were thrown out of the ecclesiastical structures after councils had declared their heterodox teachings 'bad theology'. Some who stimulated the statements of doctrine were teachers at catechetical schools … [143]

It can be argued that despite the fact that Africans are very religious, there is not enough African theology that speaks to the people's situation from their cultural context. For instance, what is the position of God about polygamists' salvation in Africa? Why should a man and his two or more wives be denied baptism and the Lord's Supper in Africa; while a man/woman who divorces and remarries several times is allowed to participate in the Lord's Table in some of the Western churches?[144] I believe, as she submitted, that 'doing theology has always involved the utilization of the available intellectuals'[145] like Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian of Carthage and others. Consequently, she says if the church will experience more growth, there must be a radical review of the state of Christian theology in Nigeria.

1.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the introduction of this research. The aim and objectives of the research have also been presented. The key words used have been defined. I have presented the methodological approaches I used in my investigation on how the Yoruba Christians of the Baptist Denomination would like to worship God within their cultural milieu. The major methods of research I used were questionnaires and

143 Oduyoye, (ed.) (1986), p.1.
144 For example, see Fred Attewill 'Will Taylor Marry Her Ninth Suitor?' *Metro*, Greater Manchester, UK, 12 April 2010, p.9. This article presented real marital life history of Dame Elizabeth Taylor who was proposing to marry her ninth husband.
145 Oduyoye, (ed.) (1986), p.1.

investigative visits. I have also reviewed literature from both Western and African perspectives. From what one has read in the reviewed literature, it is evident that worship has been changing from one mode to another. 'Even the Post-Vatican II Roman Catholics books (of worship) are now appearing in new versions'.[146] It is also noted from the literature reviewed that no liturgical scholarship stood still. In addition to the above observations in Africa generally and in Yoruba in particular, there is a lot of agitation within the church to review the beliefs and practices in line with the scripture and new exposure. There is also a lot of threat to secede if nothing is done. This could be one of the reasons why there are lot of denominations and 'mushroom churches' in Africa. It may be helpful to look into the Yoruba primal religion in order to examine the Yoruba traditional religious world-view, experience, ritual objects and expressions in worship. This is the focus of the next chapter.

146 White (1990), p.9.

CHAPTER TWO
THE YORUBA TRADITIONAL RELIGION

2.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the primal religion of the Yoruba people before the arrival of Christianity and Islam. The motive behind this overview of the Yoruba Traditional Religion is to examine the people's belief in the Supreme Being, the deities and their attitude and postures in worship. The chapter is divided into three main areas. The first part is on the Yoruba Religion. Here, beliefs in Supreme Being, Divinities, Objects of Worship and the problem of evil are examined. In the second part, the Yoruba worldviews about the relationship between the Supreme Being and Divinities is evaluated. The last part focuses on the attitude and posture of the people in the Yoruba traditional religious worship.

2.1. AN UNDERSTANDING OF YORUBA TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Religion is part and parcel of Yoruba heritage. Mbiti explained that this heritage 'is the product of the thinking and experiences of our forefathers. They formed religious ideas, they formulated religious beliefs, (and) they observed religious ceremonies and rituals...'[147]It may be difficult to understand African heritage without the knowledge of the people's religions. Since Yoruba is an African tribe, the same principle applies to the people's culture. The culture of the people is greatly influenced by their religion.

As it is with other Africans, Yoruba religion developed along with other aspects of life with the people. One becomes a member of the faith through the medium of

147 John S. Mbiti (1978), *Introduction to African Religion* (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1975), p.12.

socialization. Once a person is born into a family, he or she automatically becomes a member of the religion practised in the family. It can be argued that submissiveness is part of the culture of the people. From oral traditions and folk laws, children and younger people regardless of their sex are taught to value their traditional heritage. Consequently, when they move from one area to the other, they go with their religion. Mbiti argued that 'even if they are converted to another religion like Christianity or Islam, they do not completely abandon their tradition immediately'.[148] From my own opinion, this could be one of the reasons why some of them engage in what may be seen as syncretism.[149] It could as well be the result of their innate aversion to giving up the religion quickly since it gives local answers to many of their life's problems.

It is also part of the culture of the people to identify themselves with whatever Yoruba religion they belong. One can easily identify this through their names and oral vocabularies. For instance, an *Ogun* worshipper (god of iron) would be named after the god. Examples are: *Ogungbemi* (*Ogun* has saved me), *Ogundeji* (the second honour from *Ogun*), *Ogunlade* (*Ogun* has come) and the likes. Worshippers of *Ogun* often pray, greet and answer greetings with the name '*Ogun*'. It is also common to hear them say ejaculatory prayer such as *Ogun gba mi* (*Ogun* save me), *Ogun a sin o lo* (*Ogun* will accompany you), *Ogun a gbe o* (*Ogun* will bless you). The same thing applies to other worshippers of *Sango, Esu, Oya* and the rest. It is also common to see the devotees of these deities wearing charms or objects associated with their deities. Mbiti explained that some of these objects:

148 Mbiti (1978), p.13.

149 Syncretism is mixing of the element of Christianity with the elements of other religions such as ATR, Islam etc. On Syncretism, see Byang H. Kato (1975), *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* (Kenya: Evangel Publishing House), p.134.

> …are tied round the people's necks, arms, legs, and waists; while some others are kept in pockets, bags, on house roofs, or gates leading into homesteads. Other religious objects are swallowed and thought to remain in the stomach; or they are dug into the ground in the houses and fields…[150]

One of the reasons why the Yoruba use charms is for protection as well as to fight both their external and internal enemies whenever the needs arise. In the past, the people waged internecine wars from time to time. These inter-tribal wars were aimed at defending, or in quest for the expansion of, each kingdom. Okedara and Ajayi affirmed that 'by the mid-nineteenth century…, the Yoruba people were seriously engulfed in fratricidal wars that involved virtually the entire Yoruba race'.[151] Notable among the inter-tribal wars are Egba versus Dahomey, Ibadan versus Ijaye (Egba),[152] Ekiti versus Ibadan and Ife versus Modakeke. The ugly scene of the Ile-Ife/Modakeke war is still conspicuously seen on both sides of the ancient cities.

Culturally, the Yoruba believe that some aspects of their religion should be practised in secret (*awo*) and should not be known to non-members (*ogberi*).[153] This situation is still the same at the time of this research. This secrecy is one of the major hindrances in presenting details of the Yoruba Primal Religion. Bolaji Idowu studied the difficulties in studying African Traditional Religion.[154] According to him, some of the problems facing scholars in this area of study include secrecy of the religion, lack of proper documents due to the illiteracy in the past, the difference between medium of

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150 Mbiti (1978), p.22.

151 J.T. Okedara and S. Ademola Ajayi, (2004) *Thomas Jefferson Bowen: Pioneer Baptist Missionary to Nigerian 1850-1856,* Baptist Press (Nig.) Limited, (Ibadan), p.36.

152 Okedara and Ajayi, (2004), p.36-37.

153 '*Awo*' means secrecy. All the members partaking in that cult secrecy are also known as '*Awo*'; while '*Ogberi*' is a non-member, though such a person may belong to another cult, but as long as he/she is not a member of that particular cult, such a person is '*Ogberi*' .

154 E. Bolaji Idowu, (1973) *African Traditional Religion,* (Great Britain :SCM Press Ltd.), pp.78-83.

expression of one's experience of reality and the reality so expressed.[155] Because of these factors and other reasons, it can be argued that Yoruba Traditional Religion is not easy to articulate fully. Notwithstanding, this researcher will approach the study from a Christian perspective.

A. The Yoruba Idea About *Olodumare* (Supreme Being)

Before the advent of Christianity and Islam in Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular, the people had a clear concept of the Supreme Being through their traditional religion (*esin ibile*). This '*esin ibile*' was in different forms and types depending on family and the community to which one belongs. Awolalu affirmed that this idea of God, the Supreme Being is rooted in the Yorubaland.[156] I agree with Awolalu who claimed that it is rare, if not impossible, to find anybody among the indigenous Yoruba who will doubt the existence of the Supreme Being. My position is based on the fact that it is a common saying that *'Oba bi Olorun ko si'* (There is no king like God). The implication of this proverb is that God is known as the Supreme Being. If there is anybody that holds a different opinion about God, it must be because the person has been exposed to non-African culture such as Western education in Europe and America.[157]

Some scholars have articulated the Yoruba view about God. According to Awolalu,

> some of these writers, certainly, have made thorough research into this concept, and what they wrote was based upon well-established facts. But others who were handicapped by ignorance, total or partial, of the Yoruba language and culture, and who approached their study with preconceived notions, constantly went wide of the mark.[158]

155 Idowu, p.78-83.
156 S. Omosade Awolalu (1979), *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrifice Rites* (London: Longman), p.3.
157 Awolalu (1979), p.3.
158 Awolalu, (1979), p.3.

In as much as the Yoruba's view about God have been presented by erudite African scholars like Bolaji Idowu, Osadolor Imasogie, Omosade Awolalu and others, I would not like to repeat their understanding here.[159] My concern now is to present the Yoruba concept of God, the relationship between God and deities and how God is worshipped.

S.A. Adewale affirmed that the Yoruba believe *Olodumare* is the Supreme Being who created the world and everything in it.[160] It is also believed that *mimo ni Olodumare* (God is holy and pure). This affirmation of purity could be one of the reasons why white colour is usually attached to *Olodumare*, and sometimes the dressing of His worshippers. For instance, during my preliminary field research conducted in December 2007 at Ikorodu, Lagos State, most of the sacrifices seen at cross roads were either in white dishes or white calabashes. Some of the clothes used for the sacrifices were also white. Although the worshippers usually do this secretly, they usually put on white clothes at night. When an herbalist was contacted regarding the reason behind the white dress of the sacrifice's carrier, he said '*Olodumare* is so awesome that we cannot approach him dressed in rags. Hence, any one that would present him sacrifice needs to go with dignity'.[161] From this approach, it can be argued that Yoruba have high regard and honour for God. This regard and honour is reflected in the various names the people often use to describe the awesome nature,

159 For detail of the corrections, see Awolalu, (1979), pp.3-10; Bolaji Idowu (1963) , *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (U.S: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc); and Osadolor Imasogie (1985), *African Traditional Beliefs* (Ibadan: University Press Ltd), pp.12-28.

160 S.A. Adewale (1988), *The Religion of the Yoruba: A Phenomenological Analysis, (n.p.: Ibadan).* See also Daramola ati Jeje (1995), *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba, (*Ibadan: Onibon-Oje Press & Book Industries (NIG.) LTD), pp.164-169.

161 Adeyi Fagbenro, Interview, Alapere, Lagos, Nigeria, 20/12/2007.

power and unquestionable authority of God. These names shall be examined now in order to understand the Yoruba theology about God.

B. The Yoruba Names for God (Olodumare)

To the African in general and Yoruba in particular, a name is very important because it is belief that one's name has to do with where one is coming from and what one may become in future. A name is also important because it tells people about the background of the bearer. Consequently, name-giving is handled with care in the Yorubaland. The proverb '*Ile la wo ka to f'omo loruko*' (one must think deeply and look around one's family before a new born child is given names) shows the importance of name to the Yoruba. In Europe and America, it is common to hear names like Hill, Waterson, White, Bush, Brown, and the like. In these Western worlds, as in Africa, many traditional names have meanings. In the case of the Yoruba, the meanings of names are clearly associated with the bearers and they express hopes and aspiration. In most cases, it is usually a sentence which conveys meaning to people when such names are interpreted. For instance, Oluwamuyiwa (God has brought this baby to our family) shows the family attributed the birth of the baby to an act of kindness from God. Babatunde (father has come back) also means the child is born after the death of his father or grandfather of the family. To them, the deceased is re-incarnated in the child.[162] It is, however, important to note that the Yoruba know that it is not the real father who had died that has metamorphosed. Although in some instances, such a child may resemble the deceased physically and/or in attitude, they

162 A.O. Echeknube (1987), 'The Question of Reincarnation in African Religion: A Re-appraisal' *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, xxi (1 & 2), p.15.

know that it is not the real father.[163] The resemblance could come up as a result of genetic inheritance.

The above explanation regarding names also applies to names given to the Supreme Being by the Yoruba. The names the people gave to God came as a result of their thinking, observation, and experiences of the universe.[164] Some of the names include *Olodumare* (the owner of the power responsible for the creation of the World); *Eleda* (the Creator), *Oba Orun* (the King of Heaven); *Oga Ogo* (the Master of Heaven); *Alabalase* (the One who suggests and executes); *Aterere-kari-aye* (Omnipresent God); *Oba Arinu-rode* (Omniscience God); *Oba Adakedajo* (the silent righteous Judge); *Awamaridi* (the One who no one knows his beginning and end) etc.[165] Whenever the Yoruba talk about '*Olojo Oni*'(the only One who owns today), they are talking about the Creator of heaven and heart. Sometimes, God is called *Baba* (Father).[166]

One may be wondering why the Yoruba people have so many names for God. The Yoruba believe (like the Jews) that God is so big and powerful that He cannot be called by His name. He can only be addressed by His attributes. Also in as much as it is not customary to go directly to their earthly king for the sake of reverence and protocol, they also believe that Almighty God should also not be approached directly. Hence, there are intermediaries between the people and God. Consequently, some powerful men and women were deified for this purpose. For the sake of clarity, some of these minor divinities shall also be considered.

163 Echeknube (1987), pp.15-16.
164 Awolalu (1979), p.10.
165 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.164-165.
166 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.165.

C. The Yoruba Ideas about Divinities

Within Yoruba traditional society, like in most ethnic groups in Africa, the religious structure is hierarchical. Imasogie affirmed that this 'structure begins with a patriarchal unit and reaches through a large array of elders and officials to the king at the top'.[167] In this structure, the King is the constitutional political monarch. He is usually looked upon as 'Father' of all his subjects under his domain. It is a fact that while the subjects are aware of the presence of the king and talk about his royal and absolute power over life and death, they do not go to him directly. Instead, they go to him through intermediaries. Whoever tries to go to the king directly would be regarded as insulting and looking down upon the king's position and authority. Such a person could lose his/her life for such misconduct.

In Yorubaland, each king has many chiefs who serve him in different capacities such as legislature, judiciary and executive. These chiefs who come from different parts of the kingdom are responsible for matters such as the settling of disputes, divorce and other minor misunderstandings. Serious issues like death sentences, assassination, war and other serious communal issues had to be passed to the king for ratification before implementation. A kingdom is also divided into towns headed by *'Baales'* (heads of a town or a group of villages). Each Baale also has its own local chiefs who do the same or similar works as in the king's cabinet. In the case of *Baale's* cabinet, their duty is limited within their local jurisdiction. Each town also has a compound and/or villages headed by *Baale* (the village/compound leader). In this case, such a person is usually the oldest person in the compound or village.

167 Imasogie (1985), p.12.

The same traditional socio-political relationship is applied in the Yoruba traditional religious expression.

> People feel themselves to be very small in the sight of God. In approaching him they sometimes need the help of someone else, just as in social life it is often the custom to approach someone of a high status through someone else.[168]

Hence, there is a need for intermediaries in approaching God. Like the earthly kings appoint *oloye* (chiefs) and *Baales* (head of quarters) as ministers to oversee specific aspects of his kingdom, so also the Yoruba believe that *Olodumare*, the Supreme Being, appoints divinities to look after certain aspects of the realm of the universe. According to Imasogie, *'Olodumare* or *Olorun* is the name for the Supreme Being; while *Orisa* is the generic name for the divinities. Each of the divinities has a specific name'[169] and duties. It is also ~~a~~ common knowledge in Nigeria that divinities are

> …beings of higher order than man in consequence of their nature and functions. They have been employed from the beginning in duties connected with the earth…Thus they are ministers of Olodumare…acting as intermediaries between Him and the world of men.[170]

From the above explanation, The Yoruba believe that the divinities (*orisa*) have no existence without *Olodumare*.[171] They also believe that the *orisa* are ministering spirits and intermediaries between God and humanity.[172]

In addition, it is important to note which intermediaries the people consult for help. Mbiti maintained that some of them were (and still are) '…human beings while others

168 Mbiti (1978), p.62.
169 Imasogie (1985), p.24.
170 Idowu (1963), p.62.
171 Pius O. Abioje, (2000) 'African Traditional Religion Under a Christian Scrutiny' *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XXXII (1-2), p.22.
172 Afe Adogame (2000), '*Aiye Loja, Orun Nile*: The Appropiation of Ritua Space-Time in the Cosmology of the Celestial Church of Christ' *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol 30(1), (February), p.6.

are spiritual beings'.[173] Among the category of human beings are priests, *adahunse/onisegun* (medicine men and women), seers, and ritual leaders.[174] In the case of spiritual beings, they are the divinities, the spirits of the departed national leader, heroes and heroines. Daramola and Jeje presented a number of divinities (gods and goddesses), and notes of how they are worshipped.[175] The gods and goddesses include *Ogun*- (god of Iron); *Sango* (god of Thunder); *Esu* (god of confusion); *Orisa Oko* (god of fertility for farmers); *Egungun* (Ancestral Spirit) etc.[176] The people believe that 'the intermediaries are a link between God, the Creator, and human beings. By using intermediaries, people feel protected and believe that those intermediaries are able to withstand the dreadfulness of God'.[177] They also believe they could speak both the celestial and earthly languages. Hence, they believe the intermediaries are an easy means of contacting the Creator.

D. Belief in Object of Worship

The Yoruba like other Nigerians in Africa believe that objects of worship 'are real, divine, and more powerful than they (appear)'.[178] It is their belief that these objects are not ordinary symbols of the gods or goddesses they represent, but they are endowed with supernatural power. It is also the belief of these people that the spirits behind these objects can bless, help and protect their adherents as well as hinder calamity and punish the offenders. Because of the uniqueness of this object of worship, the Yoruba people adore them. 'No time is too long or short, and no money

173 Mbiti (1978), p.62.
174 Mbiti (1978), p.62.
175 For detail, see Daramola and Jeje, (1995), pp.240-299.
176 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), pp.240-299; see also E.O. Olukoju (1997), 'Esu in the Belief of the Yoruba' *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. XXIX(1&2), (June & December), pp.1-14 .
177 Mbiti (1978), p.63.
178 Adewale (1988), p.4.

is too much or too small to be spent in honour of the object of worship'.[179] Perhaps, it may not be out of order if some of these objects of worship are briefly examined.

i. Deified Trees.

The Yoruba do not just deify any tree even though some trees are noted to possess certain supernatural powers. For instance, it is a commonly held belief that trees like *iroko*, *ose* (baoba tree), *araba, arere*, *peregun* and *odan*[180] manifest and possess some supernatural traits. Hence, such trees are deified. Adewale affirmed that:

> When the Yoruba see signs of the presence of spiritual beings in a tree or when they observe that the tree shows unusual manner causing fear and terror to people, they consult diviners about the tree…whatever the oracle says about the tree, the people believe and perform the rituals declared by the oracles.[181]

Wherever such trees are found in Yorubaland, the people around the area usually deify them. The people offer sacrifices from time to time to request peace and solicit support of the spirit in these objects for blessing, protection and guidance.

Most of the deified trees are found in the bush and in strategic places like the centre of a town or at the market places. It is also pertinent to say that the base of such tree is declared holy and worshippers place sacrifice and offerings there. At times, palm fronds and/or pieces of white cloth are tied around the base of such trees. These signs are to warn non-members (*ogberi*) against trespassing and the risk of misfortune. This symbol is also to distinguish such trees from others around. Adewale also gave a list of some of the ritual elements that may be found at the base of deified trees. These

179 Adewale (1988), p.4.
180 The above mentioned trees are believed to possess spirits by the Yoruba. The trees are common in the forest areas like the Yoruba region in Nigeria.
181 Adewale (1988), pp.5-6.

include: potsherds, water-pot, snail shells, bones, earthen wares, cowries, horns and kola nuts.[182]

An interview with a woman who was once a head of a secret society in Yorubaland (*Erelu Agbaye*), confirmed that the spirits in some trees could be malevolent or benevolent.[183] When she was interviewed on the authenticity of the relationship between the spirit of such trees and human beings, she affirmed that she once had a friend of *'Oluwere'* (Iroko tree's spirit) and most of the powerful charms she was using then were from this spirit. When she was probed further on the nature and form of these spirits in relationship to humans, she affirmatively explained that 'the spirits when in friendship with human beings could put on and exhibit human natures'.[184] But when they are otherwise, 'they have the capacity to metamorphose in a manner which enables them to achieve their goals at the time'.[185] She also claimed the same experience could be found in the spirits of other objects of worship like stones/rocks, rivers/sea, hills/mountains and the like. This is a mystery that may be difficult to explain. It can, however, be argued that it is regarded as a reality particularly among the Yoruba and the other Africans.

ii. Stones and Rocks

Stones or rocks are non-living things, yet some of them are deified by the Yoruba as objects of worship. Adewale noted that 'some rocks have been benefactors to the people in the ancient past and people continue to acknowledge the goodness of the

182 Adewale (1988), p.6.
183 Dorcas Afolaranmi, Personal Interviewed, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. 12 January 2008.
184 Afolaranmi, Interviewed.
185 Afolaranmi, Interviewed.

rock and to be loyal to it by making offering'.[186] For instance, Olumo Rock in Abeokuta, Ogun State Nigeria played a significant role for the people of Abeokuta during the Egba/Oyo war.[187] The rock is one of the popular tourist centres in Nigeria. Because of the role this rock has played in the past, the Egbas in Abeokuta are still worshipping the 'spirit in the rock' until today.[188] On many occasions, the worshippers put on special clothes for the celebration. This festival is an important celebration for the newly married women, the expectant mothers and those who are barren who gather for special prayers. It is their belief that the new wives must be introduced to the god for protection and blessing, and to pledge their loyalty to one another. For the expectant mothers and barren women, they are expected to gather for prayer so that they might produce *'oluomo'* (prime children). The spirit in *Olosunta* rock is also found in another deified rock celebrated in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.[189] Evidently, the ties that bind these worshippers together are strong. This faithfulness could be as a result of the fears that are attached to oaths taken in the past. It is said that anyone who dares to betray such oaths could end up having prolonged sickness or sudden death.

iii. Rivers

It is common belief among the Yoruba that some rivers have certain supernatural powers. This observation is noted due to the mysterious traits exhibited by such rivers. For instance, an unconfirmed allegory says some of the fishes caught in such

186 Adewale (1988), p.7.

187 'Olumo Rock - An African Tourist Destination' http://www.olumorock.com Retrieved on 4 February 2008.

188 It is generally believed that there is a spirit in Olumo Rock. This spirit has been considered to be malevolent to the Egbas particularly during their inter-tribal wars in the past. For detail of this rock and how it is worshipped, see Jola Ogunlusi,(1969) Olosunta Festival', *African Arts*, (3:1 Autumn), pp.52-56.

rivers cannot be cooked. The allegory also claims that such fishes remain as fresh as when in cold water. According to Adewale, the spirit in rivers could be malevolent or benevolent.[190] Because of the mysterious power noted in any river, such rivers are declared sacred.

> Fishes in such rivers must not be killed nor eaten as they are believed to be sacred. The myth connected with the fishes shows that certain people out of covetousness secretly caught the fishes and ate them. They later developed stomach trouble and were not cured until they confessed their secret deeds and rituals of appeasement or propitiations were performed. The fishes have since been forbidden to people to kill.[191]

In as much as fishes in the deified rivers are sacred, the killing of such fishes will be termed to be killing of '*omo-olodo*' (the children of the spirit in the river). Where this warning is ignored, it is believed that such could lead to calamity and misfortune in the environment.

vi. Hills and Mountains

Like rocks and rivers, the Yoruba believe that hills and mountains (*oke*) also have unusual spirits dwelling in them. It is a belief among the people that these places are the 'abode of some spiritual beings'.[192] Hence, they are consecrated and venerated. It is important to note that not all hills and mountains in Yorubaland are believed to possess spirits. 'It is only those declared by the oracle (divination) after manifestations of some unusual signs or characteristics that are sacred'.[193]

Each hill or mountain has a priest or priests. It is the primary function of these priests to lead the adherents in worship. These services of worship are celebrated periodically

190 Adewale (1988), p.6.
191 Adewale (1988), p.7-8.
192 Adewale (1988), p.8.
193 Adewale (1988), p.8.

depending on each locality. The Yoruba believe that the adherents in return receive blessing, protection and support from the spiritual beings behind these hills and mountains. Consequently, people name their children after hills and mountains. Some of the names include: Okedara (this hill has performed wonders); Okegbemi (this hill has saved me): Okesiji (this hill has covered me) and the like. The implication of this gesture is that such hills or mountains are recognized and acknowledged for the assistance rendered. According to Adewale, some of the ritual elements for worship of hills and mountains include: kola nuts, snails, fowl, yam, pounded yam, pap and *ekuru* (meal made of grounded and cooked beans) etc.[194]

v. Ancestral Veneration

The Yoruba also believe that the earth is like a farm or market to which everyone goes in the morning and returns in the evening.[195] No matter how colourful a market is, it is the belief of the people that one must return to his/her abode. When a person dies, it is believed that the person has gone home.[196] Hence, euphemistic words which imply death like '*Baba ti sun*' (Father has rested), '*Iya ti sinmi*' (Mother has rested), '*Lagbaja ti papoda*' (Lagbaja has changed his/her position from the terrestrial world to the celestial world) are commonly used whenever the people talk about departure of their beloved ones. The song below during burial and funeral ceremonies also explains further:

Ile lo lo taa ra 2x	He/she has gone home straight 2x
Baba/iya re'le re	Father/Mother has gone to his/her home
Ile lo lo taa ra.	He/she has gone home straight

194 Adewale (1988), p.9.
195 See also Adogame (2000), pp.3-4.
196 J.O. Lucas, (1948), *The Religion of the Yorubas* (London: C.M.S Bookshop), p.254.

The implication of this song is that the Yoruba believe those who live well while on the terrestrial world would transit into the spiritual world and continue living. It can be argued that the Yoruba believe strongly that the spirit of the departed soul still dwells among his/her people. This could be one of the reasons why the people usually want their people to be buried around their houses/compound. It might be in order to gain easy access to the tombs (*oju orori*) of their people for ancestral worship.

Adewale affirmed that death is a means of transition among the Yoruba.[197] According to him,

> it is also believed that after death a person is capable of continued existence physically in this world and that he is also capable of his previous physical engagements. He may re-marry, have children, build houses and continue his formal occupation. Such persons usually do not identify themselves with any genuine places or families.[198]

The Yoruba hold the view that such people are without genuine genealogy. They are usually referred to as *Akuya/Akudaya* (ghost). Adewale noted that such people do stay where any member of their original family will not be able to see them.[199] When the inhabitants of their environment begin to suspect their presence, such people often relocate to another new environment and continue their normal life.

E. The Problem of Evil

The Yoruba believe that human life on earth is full of mysterious events. These events could be good, bad or a mixture of both. The proverb *'Tibi-tire lada da ile aye* (The earth was created with both good and bad things) could probably better explain the philosophy of Yoruba life. The implication of this proverb is that no matter how

197 Adewale (1988), p.13.
198 Adewale (1988), p.13.
199 Adewale (1988), p.13.

pleasant life may be, there will be some days when life may be bitter due to sorrow that may come in as a result of the loss of someone beloved, properties or both. The proverb *'Eniyan ko le gbare ki o ma gba ibi lojo kan'* (One cannot continuously receive good things without tasting the bitter aspect one day) also echoes the unforeseen evil.

Since evil is inevitable, the Yoruba on many occasions attach meaning to almost every unpleasant happening. Like other Africans, the Yoruba 'look beyond physical events to their spiritual aetiology'.[200] The reason for this is the belief that malevolent forces could thwart human chosen destiny on earth.[201] Daramola and Jeje confirmed that these malevolent spirits could be sorcerers, wizards, witches and other familiar spirits.[202] Olukoju also affirmed that '*Esu* can be used against an enemy to avenge a wrong or cause discomfort or misfortune to that enemy'.[203] How the malevolent spirits can be used along with *esu* to cause havoc to human lives is not the focus of this research at present. From my observation and based on my experiences as a Yoruba man, witches, wizards, and other familiar spirits seemed to be real among the Yoruba people. Their influences on the Christians such as enchantment and evil possession, however, can be argued to be reducing because of the power of the gospel.

Because of the presence of evil on the earth, the Yoruba believe life is uncertain. They also believe that anyone who wants to live a fulfilled life needs additional help from spiritualists such as *ifa* oracle (diviners) who would be guiding the person. *Ifa* oracle (diviner) 'is one who by the virtue of their extra-sensitivity to spiritual reality and

200 Imasogie (1985), p.67.
201 Imasogie (1985), p.67.
202 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), pp.137-140.
203 Olukoju (1997), p.5.

years of training has become 'fathers of secrets'.[204] Through divination, they are able to see beyond the realm of the terrestrial world and foresee the future. According to Parrinder, diviners play important roles:

> if anything is lost, if a barren women desires children, if there is a mysterious disease, if a man is troubled by strange dreams, and for many other causes, the diviner is sought out and has recourse to geomancy. The diviner may be called in at all the important crises of life, at birth to discover the appropriate name to give a child, at betrothal to find the right husband, at death to find who has caused death...[205]

From the above quotation, the Yoruba believe that spiritualists would help them to live a relatively peaceful life. Hence, they are engaged in most important life events. This belief can explain better why the Yoruba are trooping into what they call *'ijo elemi'* (spiritual churches) today.[206] It can be argued, however, that this precaution does not completely stop sad events like accidents and other calamities. As the Yoruba often say, '*Aide iku ni a nso aja mo orun, bi iku ba de a ja aja sonu, a si mu alaja lo*' (When death has not come, one can claim he/she has a charm to prevent it (death); if death, however, is ready to take away that person, it will catch the person regardless of the power of his/her charm). The importance of this proverb compares to what the Bible says: '…no one has power over the day of his death'.[207] Hence, *'iku ti o npa ojugba eni, owe nla ni onpa fun ni'* (the death that kills one's mate is telling one also to be prepared). The significance of this proverb is also that no matter what one does, unpleasant events will come when they will come.

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204 Imasogie (1985), p.67.
205 Geoffrey Parrinder (1954), *African Traditional Religion* (London: Hutchinson House's University Library), pp.120-121.
206 Deji Ayegboyin and S. Ademola Ishola (1999), *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective,* (Lagos: Greater Heights Publications), p.28.
207 Ecclesiastes 8:8 (NIV) .

2.2. THE YORUBA WORLDVIEW ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD (*OLODUMARE*) AND DIVINITIES

The Yoruba hold that there is a strong relationship between Olodumare (God) and the Divinities. Based on the socio-political life which has been enumerated in this chapter, the people believe that God (Olodumare) is so highly placed like their earthly kings who cannot be approached by just everybody. Consequently, the people see the divinities as the intermediaries between themselves and God. The saying '*eni moju Owa la mbe s'Owa, oloju Owa kan ko si bi kose ayaba*' (whoever is close to *Owa* (king) is the one to be sent to appeal to *Owa*, and that is his lovely wife) explains better the relationship between *Olodumare* and the divinities.[208] *Owa* was one of the kings of Ile-Ife. Like Alafin of Oyo, part of his cognomens says '*iku Baba yeye, alase igbakeji Orisa*' (the Almighty, the ruler and companion of the gods).[209] The implication of this cognomen is that the king was empowered to do anything during his reign. He could kill any human being or order the utter destruction of a town or village under his domain. Whenever he was annoyed or offended, the only person that could go to him was his wife. Because of their marital relationship, whatever the wife asked him to do, he used to oblige. Since then, it has become a saying among the Yoruba that whoever is close to a person is to be sent to him or her to appease. Since God could not (and up till now cannot) be physically seen (as the Yoruba king cannot be seen by the subject), the people believe that the divinities could see Him and have dialogue with Him on their behalf.

The Yoruba religion is operated in a communal system. Each compound or community has a shrine to which the people belong. Mbiti confirmed that it does not

208 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.165
209 J.A. Atanda (1978), *The New Oyo Empire* (London: Longman), p.16

matter much whether or not the individual accepts all the beliefs, 'the ceremonies are performed mainly in or by a group of the family, by relatives, by the whole population of one area or by those engaged in a common occupation.'[210] For instance, when children are born into a compound in the past, such children were taken to the family shrine for initiation, blessing and protection. In the past, the newly married wives were also expected to come to the shrine to pledge their loyalty to one another in the family, and for blessing as well as protection. It is generally believed that women possess a lot of spiritual power which could be helpful or harmful to their family members. To the Yoruba, one of the ways of controlling such powers in the past was to invoke the spirit of the family shrine. Today, Christianity has taken away some of these shrines and the rituals. This does not mean that it has been totally wiped out. There could be some people still practising this in some of the rural and remote areas.

2.3. WORSHIP IN YORUBA TRADITIONAL RELIGION

It has been established that the Yoruba have a strong belief that God is transcendent and that he cannot be approached directly. Hence, they approach him through intermediaries. These intermediaries include divinities and spirits. Evidently, the people believe that God is everywhere. This could be the reason why God is called *'Oba-oloju-lukara-bi-ajere'* (The king whose his body is surrounded with eyes). With this attribute, they believe that God sees them at all time. Therefore, they often try to impress God with their attitude and posture in worship.

210 John S. Mbiti (1978), *Introduction to African Religion* (Ibadan: Heinemann), p.13.

A. The Yoruba Attitude in Worship

From the history of the cradle of creation, the Yoruba have been approaching *Olodumare*.[211] Mbiti called this method of approaching him 'worship'.[212] In order to properly understand the attitude of the Yoruba in worship, the meaning of worship from their perspective needs to be enunciated. Worship to the Yoruba is a human response to the presence of the Supreme Being. This response in my opinion could be in the form of adoration, jubilation and petition. To the people, worship seems to be part of social life. This could be one of the reasons why everyone approaches worship with an enthusiastic spirit. Worship can also be described as means whereby the people renew their relationship with one another and God.

One of the African myths says God and the human race had a very good relationship at the beginning of creation. Because of this loving relationship, heaven and earth were not far from each other. *Olodumare* could visit the people on earth and the people could also go to Him at any time. But humankind misbehaved. Consequently, *Olodumare* separated heaven from earth. Due to this situation, the people could not see *Olodumare* as they used to. Henceforth, they had to make sacrifices to appease *Olodumare* before He would visit them.[213]

From the above myth, it can be deduced that God and humankind had a good relationship at the beginning of creation. This belief also goes in line with the teaching of the Bible. In the Genesis account, it is stated that when 'the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the

211 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), pp.240-299.
212 Mbiti (1978), p.54.
213 Mbiti (1978), p.55.

day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden'.[214] The garden that was once a place of joy and fellowship with God became a place of fear and hiding from the Lord for Adam and his wife. Consequently, there was a gap between humankind and God. In other words, sin separates humanity from God but worship brought them together. It can be said then that 'worship creates a sense of friendship between God and people since, in worship, it is (humanity) who strives to approach God'.[215] For the sake of clarity, it will be necessary to examine the content of Yoruba traditional worship.

B. Content of Yoruba Traditional worship

As it has been noted before, there are different divinities in the Yorubaland. These include *Ogun, Sango, Esu, Obatala*, and other ancestral worship. The devotees of these divinities have some things in common. Some of these include prayer, offerings/sacrifices, singing and dancing.

i. Prayer

One of the integral aspects of worship is prayer. To them, prayer is the communication of one's needs, problems and aspirations to *Olodumare*. In prayer, the Yoruba would praise (*juba*) *Olodumare* His divinities before they present their requests (*isure*). Prayer can be said individually and collectively at any time and in any place. There are some people who could pray for a particular situation, namely, the kings, priests, *babalawos* (herbalists), and rain-makers.[216]

214 Genesis 3:8 (NIV).
215 Mbiti (1978), p.55.
216 Mbiti (1978), p.55

When prayer is offered in a family and compound, it is usually led by the head of the family and the oldest in the compound respectively. In the case of a community, village or town, it is usually led by the *'abore'* (the chief of ritual leader) in conjunction with the head of the community, village or town. It is important to note that after *ijuba* (praises), the Yoruba people go straight to the requests when praying. In the case of community prayers, these may 'include choruses or litanies, which are spoken by the group in response to the direction of their leaders. In this way, everyone takes part in the prayer, just as everyone shares in the need expressed in that prayer'[217].

As Awolalu pointed out, it is rare to see anyone among the traditional worshippers, whether in private or communal worship, asking for forgiveness of sin as is common in Christianity and Islam when praying.[218] This does not mean, however, that the people do not have a sense of sin. In Yorubaland, moral instruction is held in high esteem. They believe that when they bring thank-offerings before their divinities with joy and gratitude, all is well.[219] When there is calamity like accident, flood, storm, drought, pestilence and the likes, the people believe it is as a result of sin. Hence, the oracle is consulted to know where the fault lies. Once the cause is revealed, separate worship would be organized as prescribed by the oracle to appease God and his divinities.

217 Mbiti (1978), p.57.
218 Awolalu (1979), p.102.
219 Awolalu (1979), p.102.

ii. Offerings/Sacrifices

In the Yoruba traditional worship, offerings and sacrifices go along with prayers. There is a slight difference between offerings and sacrifices.

> Sacrifices involve the shedding of the blood of human beings, animals or birds; while offerings do not involve blood but are concerned about the giving of all other things such as foodstuffs, water, milk, honey or money.[220]

In Africa, just as in biblical times, it is believed that blood is associated with life. Whenever blood is shed in sacrifice, it means the life of that being; either human or animal is given back to the creator who is 'the ultimate source of all life'.[221] This sacrifice may not be brought unless the lives of many people are in danger. For instance, one of the legends stated that a noble man in Ile-Ife had a beautiful wife (Moremi) and a handsome son (Ela).[222] In Ile-Ife at this time, there was a fierce raid from the Igbo people. When this disturbing raid continued, Moremi, a beautiful woman, surrendered herself to be captured by the invaders. Before she was captured, she secretly went to a river, asking the spirit of the river to give her wisdom and strength in order to find out the secret of the invaders. It was said that she promised the river a big and surprising sacrifice if she could return with the secret. At Igboland, she was made to work as a maid in Igbo's palace because of her beauty and diligence.[223] Consequently, she was able to discover the secret of the people. After the discovery of the strength of the enemy, she fled and retuned to Ile-Ife. When the Igbo people came as they used to before, they were captured. This victory made Moremi go back and pay the vow she promised the river. The river demanded the life of the only son (Ela) of Moremi and her husband. Moremi had no option than to offer the son,

220 Mbiti (1978), pp.57-58.
221 Mbiti (1978), p.59.
222 M.I. Ogunmefun (1929), *Yoruba Legends* (London: The Sheldon Press), p.45.
223 Ogunmefun (1929), p.45.

which she did. This was how the Ela's blood was used as ransom for the people of Ile-Ife.[224] Other situations that may require these type of sacrifices include the time of war, epidemics, calamity, drought and destructive flood.[225]

In the case of offerings, Mbiti claimed that this practice is a way of presenting material or physical things to the deities.[226] It is also a point where the 'visible and invisible worlds meet'.[227] In offering, different kinds of objects, animals and materials are presented. These materials depend on the demand of the oracle, the type of offerings/sacrifice and individual. The Yoruba's belief about materials for offerings is revealed in a proverb that says *'bi a o ba ri adan, a le f'obe sebo'* (if one cannot get larger bat for his/her sacrifice, the person can use *'obe'* a smaller bat as an alternative). This belief implies that the materials to be used for offering depend on their availability. The materials may include kola nuts, animals of different kinds, cooked/raw foods, white cloth, cowries, money, snails, water pots and the like.[228]

Mbiti further affirmed that communal sacrifices/offerings are usually offered in '*igbo oro'* (sacred groove), and/or other specially designated places like a hill, mountain, town centre etc. In the case of an individual's offerings/sacrifices, these are usually done in the home of the individual or at the family/compound altar.[229] Since the people have the idea that God cannot be approached directly:

> the sacrifice and offerings are then made to lesser spiritual beings, such as divinities, spirits and the departed. These act as go-betweens, between men and

224 Ogunmefun (1929), p.45.
225 Mbiti (1978), p.59.
226 Mbiti (1978), p.57.
227 Mbiti (1978), p.57.
228 Adewale (1988), p.6.
229 Family/Compound alter is the shrine in individual home or at the centre of one's compound. It is allowed in the Yoruba community to have these shrines in their homes/compounds apart from the main shrines in the community, village or town.

> God. They are expected to receive the offerings and sacrifices, and then relay people's requests to God. [230]

In Yorubaland, people do not care so much about the recipients of their offering and sacrifices. It is a common saying among the people that *'bi a ba f'agbo f'egun, a j'okun re sile ni* (whenever you offer a ram to ancestral spirits, you must release its rope without finding out what happens next to the ram). As long as the sacrifices and offerings are presented properly, they are satisfied. It must be noted again that prayers always accompany offerings/sacrifices in order to clear the purposes of such gestures.

iii. Singing and Dancing

Another important aspect of worship in the Yoruba traditional religion is singing and dancing. Whenever the Yoruba gather together 'for public worship, they like to sing, dance, clap their hands and express their joy'.[231] There are some prayers which are best said when their choruses and litanies are said or sung by worshippers in response to the leader.[232] This encourages worshippers to participate actively in the service. Hence, the atmosphere of the worship will not be boring and dry of emotion.

During communal Yoruba traditional worship, the subjects have to first gather in front of the palace which is usually located at the centre of the town before the procession to the shrine or sacred groove. During this process, drumming, dancing and *sisun rara/kike ijala* (recantations of the divinities' cognomens in their environment) take place.

> Religious singing is often accompanied by clapping and dancing, which express people's feelings of joy, sorrow or thanksgiving. Through music,

230 Mbiti (1978), p.60.
231 Mbiti (1978), p.61.
232 Mbiti (1978), p.61.

> singing and dancing, people are able to participate emotionally and physically in the act of worship…[233]

From the above quotation, one can infer that singing and dancing are vital to Yoruba traditional worship. Singing and dancing are also ways of venting the emotions of the people in worship.

C. The Yoruba Postures in Worship

As noted in Chapter One, worship is 'a total response to the Ultimate Reality which can be expressed by word as well as by deed'.[234] The posture of worship in traditional religion takes the forms of rites and ceremonies. Awolalu claimed that the posture 'may include prostration, praying, invoking and hailing the spirits of the objects of worship, making offerings, sounding the bell or gong, singing, drumming and dancing, as occasions may demand.'[235] Generally, the atmosphere of traditional worship is usually lively and colourful.

For the sake of clarity, I will explain the Yoruba posture in *ogun* worship (*odun Ogun*-god of iron worship). The reason why I picked *ogun* worship is because it is common in Yorubaland. It is also because the worship is not secret; it is open to both members and non members, although non-members are not expected to participate in the service, but rather they are there as spectators.

233 Mbiti (1978), p.61.
234 Awolalu (1979), p.99.
235 Awolalu (1979), p.99.

According to one of the myths of creation, *Ogun* was one of the divinities that first came to this earth.[236] On their way to earth, there was a thick forest which prevented them from moving on. *Ogun* was said to be the only divinity that cleared the road with his strong cutlass.[237] Because of this special role he had played, the other divinities made him the chief *'Osin-Imole'* (head of divinities).[238] Since then, he became an important god.

Ogun festival (worship) is one of the best and colourful ceremonies in Yorubaland. The festival is an annual event for a communal service. The divinity is frequently worshipped by each family apart from the communal service. For the communal worship, *Ogun* is usually worshipped every year between July and August.[239] After the date of *Ogun* festival is fixed and announced to all the members of the community, everybody is expected to prepare for the day. It is usually celebrated for seven days, but the festivities could last for about three months.

On the day of the worship, the worshippers and spectators would gather in front of the palace. Early in the morning, the drummers would also gather with their drums. They would sing, dance and drink palm wine until it is time to move to the shrine where *Ogun* would be worshipped. All the worshippers including the king and his chiefs would be in their best attire. At the shrine, all the worshippers would dance round the 'stone' which is the symbol of *Ogun*. Then seven dogs would be offered along with foods items such as pounded yam, portage, fowls, kola nuts and palm wine. The head of the dogs would be cut one by one by a chief in charge; and the blood of the dogs

236 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.292.
237 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.292.
238 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.292.
239 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.293-294.

would be poured down on the altar of *Ogun* one after the other. After this, the leading *Ogun* priest would sing the 'praise of the god' (*ijuba*) before 'presentation of the people's requests' (*isure*).[240] Then the worshippers would also offer their own prayers.

Based on my investigative visits together with the previous personal experience of *Ogun* worship, I noticed that the posture of the worshippers at that moment was usually unique. Since this was their prayer time, every worshipper would be pouring out his/her mind. In the midst of the prayer, some would be weeping; while others would be shouting or wailing. The crying or wailing is part of the emotional expression of the people. It could also be as a result of the pains of sorrow they are passing through. Sometimes, there may be a few others who would go into a trance. Such people who are entranced usually claim that the *Ogun* spirit spoke to them. For instance, there was an *Ogun* worshipper (*ologun*) who claimed that *Ogun* spirit told him that all those who were hoping for babies would come with the babies the following year. Since there was no register for the people who were hoping for babies that year, there was no way to ascertain the authenticity of the claim. Hence, to find out the truth of the claim would pose problems.

After the communal *Ogun* worship, individuals would go home with joy and offer sacrifice to their family shrines (*Ogun*). The same process would take place. The exception here is that it would not involve a large crowd of people. Again, instead of the *Ogun* priest leading the service, the head of the compound or family would be the one to lead. *Ogun* worship in family or compound requires the sacrifice of a dog or a

240 'Praise the god' means recounting the cognomens and past good things Ogun had done in the past; while 'presentation of the people requests' (*isure*) means offering of prayers during Ogun worship. These two areas are very important in all the Yoruba Traditional worship.

fowl. This can be done intermittently, periodically or as the needs arise such as the times of sickness, accident, sudden death, difficulty in giving birth and the like.[241]

Ogun worship is special throughout the Yorubaland. What makes it special is the fact that every one whose work relates to iron (such as farmers, drivers, blacksmiths and the rest) must worship *Ogun*. In the past, it is their belief that if the people fail to do so, *Ogun* might fight back and harm them. In the contemporary society, Christianity has erased this belief. Notwithstanding, there may be some church-goers who are still practising syncretism.

2.4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, I have presented the Yoruba idea about *Olodumare* (God), their belief about orisa (divinities), and their belief about the relationship between God and the divinities. In this chapter, I have also affirmed that the Yoruba people have clear ideas about *Olodumare* (God). They also worship Him based on their understanding of God's Supremacy. The people also believe that the Supreme Being is so transcendent that he cannot be approached directly. Consequently, they do approach Him through divinities. Quite a number of these divinities have been mentioned.

I have also presented the Yoruba attitude in worship from the perspective of African Traditional Religion. Using *Ogun* worship as an example, I have presented the ATR contents of worship, such as prayer, offering, sacrifice, singing and dancing. The involvement of worshippers through singing and praying in the local language along with dancing to the local music and musical instruments makes the worship dynamic,

241 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.294.

emotional and dramatic. The purpose of the examination of the Yoruba traditional religion in this chapter is to provide a background for pushing the argument for contextualization in the subsequent chapters. Since traditional religion has been the religion of Yoruba race since inception, how did Christianity emerge in the midst of the people? The next chapter will address this question.

CHAPTER THREE
CHRISTIANITY IN NIGERIA: THE HISTORY OF THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

3.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the arrival of Christianity in Nigeria with particular reference to the arrival of the Baptist denomination in the Yoruba community. In this chapter, a brief and general history of Christianity in Nigeria is explored as a prelude to the history of the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC). As part of the history of the Convention, the chapter looks into the role of the pioneer Baptist missionary, T.J. Bowen. The chapter attempts also to answer the questions of what the beliefs, doctrines, policies and practices of the Convention were. These steps are taken in order to discover the extent to which the denomination was influenced by the Western ideologies and culture at the onset of Christianity in Nigeria generally, and among the Yoruba in particular. The chapter also looks into how the Christianity of the studied community was influenced by African Traditional Religion (ATR).

3.1. CHRISTIANITY IN WEST AFRICA

A. In the Beginning...

Although Christianity had been introduced to some parts of West Africa, particularly Nigeria, before the arrival of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Isichei describes the missionary activities of CMS as the beginning of modern missions in Nigeria.[242] According to Isichei:

> The history of Christianity in Warri (Nigeria) began in the 1570s, when Augustinian monks were sent there from Sao Thome. They converted, not the king (the Olu), but his heir… Formal Christianity had no lasting impact in Benin, partly because, as in Warri, the missionary enterprise was sporadic, and

242 Elizabeth Isichei (1995), *A History of Christianity in Africa* (Great Britain: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), p.160.

> partly because traditional religion was deeply entwined with the sacred monarchy…[243]

It can be argued that another reason Christianity had little or no lasting impact was the mixture of Christianity with commerce and the slave trade. As other neighbouring countries such as Ghana, Togo, and Benin were known to be slave exporting centres since the 1670s, so also was Nigeria.[244] Isichei quoting H. Debrunner affirmed that the slave traders 'feared that the conversion of the people and their chiefs would spoil their trade'.[245] Unfortunately, many slave traders and owners were deeply pious individuals. As James Walving claimed, 'there were hundreds of such men, Europeans and Americans, who praised the Lord for his blessing, giving thanks for profitable and safe business in Africa as they turned their slave ships into the trade winds and headed for the New World'.[246] Although I believe this trade was deplorable, I will limit myself to the discussion of the missionaries who came primarily for mission.

i. Church Mission Society (CMS)

The beginning of the renewal of missionary work in West Africa was generally dated to 1799 when the CMS, formed by the Church of England, selected Sierra Leone as its first mission field.[247] Sierra Leone was selected for several reasons. Firstly, Henry Smeathman, a botanist, had spent three years in Sierra Leone. When the problem of resettling the freed slaves arose, he recommended that the black men and women should be sent to Sierra Leone.[248] Sierra Leone was also chosen in order to evangelize the liberated slaves in the neighbouring country. It was also probably the hope of the

243 Isichei (1995), pp.61-63.
244 Isichei (1995), p.60.
245 Isichei (1995), p.60 quoting H. Debrunner, *The Church in Togo*, p.22.
246 James Walvin (2001), *Black Ivory: Slavery in the British Empire (2nd ed.)*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), p.35.
247 J. Kofi Agbeti, (1986), *West African Church History: Christian Mission and Church Foundation 1482-1919* (New York: E.J. Brill), p.19.
248 Agbeti, (1986), p.19.

missionaries that from Sierra Leone, Christianity would eventually be carried to the rest of Africa.[249]

Although, the CMS had a genuine intention to evangelize the freed slaves in Sierra Leone, the society could not carry out its intention until 1804.[250] The reason for this delay was due to the fact that, although the CMS was a Church of England voluntary mission society, it did not receive the full backing of the Anglican Church authority. A reason for the inability of the Anglican Church to support CMS in the mission project may have been as a result of the gross loss of income for Anglican members due to the abolition of the slave trade. Walker affirms:

> But general Anglican feeling was still not enthusiastic about missions and the society had difficulty obtaining ordained clergymen in the established church to undertake the project. When no Anglican offers had been received by late 1801, they were forced to turn to the Lutheran Berlin Seminary for suitable protestant missionaries. The first two recruits, Melchior Renner and Peter Hartwig, were sent to England for training, and from thence to Freetown in April 1804.[251]

The delay was due to the lack of full support from the home base. To compound the situation, there was also the problem of the unavailability of trained personnel.

ii. Methodist Missionary Activities

In as much as some of the freed slaves had settled in Freetown (Sierra Leone) since 1787,[252] Methodist Missionary activities in West Africa began in 1792.[253] Dr Coke of the Wesleyan Methodist Society in England sent a team to Sierra Leone, to evangelize the Fulani. Although the project did not succeed, it was the beginning of the

249 Agbeti, (1986), p.20.
250 James W. St. G. Walker (1976) *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), p.253.
251 Walker (1976), p.253.
252 Agbeti (1986), p.19.
253 Agbeti (1986), p.49.

Methodist activities in West Africa. The team returned to England and reported what they saw on the ground. The news of Christian settlers in Freetown motivated the Wesleyans to continue to send missionaries from Britain to share fellowship with the Methodists and to offer them encouragement and assistance. At this time, most of the visits were unofficial. In 1811, Coke sent a superintendent minister, the Rev. George Warren, and three schoolmasters to Freetown to cater for the little flock.[254] Warren died towards the end of the eighth month, thus becoming the first casualty in West Africa. William Davies was immediately sent to replace Warren. This was the situation before the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (henceforth referred to as WMMS) was formed in 1813. From Sierra Leone, Methodist work expanded to Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and other neighbouring countries.[255]

In the case of Ghana, Charles McCarthy, the Governor of Sierra Leone was mandated to supervise the British colony in Ghana (Gold Coast) in 1821.[256] He accepted this and established a school in Cape-Coast. His intention was to train brilliant African boys for employment in the colonial administration. The head-teacher of the school, Mr. Joseph Smith, being a faithful Christian introduced Bible reading into the school curriculum. He also said there must be no comment on the passage read. This did not go well with William De-Graft, one of the African students.[257] The action of Smith on forcing his students to remain silent during Bible reading (study) shows how Christianity was exclusively controlled in Africa at the onset. What was the base of this attitude? It can be argued that African students were not (and still are not) in any way inferior to their Western counterparts. Smith's monopoly of the study made the

254 Agbeti (1986), p.49.
255 Agbeti (1986), pp.49-59.
256 Agbeti (1986), p.54.
257 Agbeti (1986), p.54.

students rebel against the action. Consequently, De-Graft formed his own group where they would have opportunity to comment on the Bible. Hence, a meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was formed on 1 October, 1831.[258] Joseph Smith reported the meeting to the then governor, George Maclean. Without proper investigation, the governor imposed sanction on the group and jailed 'William De-Graft, the leader, and John Sam, probably the secretary'.[259] The action of the governor here also suggests that Christianity tended to be the affair of Westerners at the beginning. New ideas were not welcome from the indigenes unless they originated from the then leaders, who were mainly Westerners.

After the release of De-Graft from prison, he maintained communication with his Christian group.[260] He requested his friend – Captain Potter, a sailor – to bring Bibles for his student group in Ghana. Potter, a Methodist, carried the request to the band of the WMMS in London. Consequently, Joseph Dunwell was recruited as the first Methodist missionary to Ghana. He arrived in Ghana on 1 January, 1835.[261] He lived there for just six months before he died on 24 June 1835.[262] During his short period of service, he recognized and reconciled the two groups and their leaders. Hence, Joseph Smith became Dunwell's interpreter, while De-Graft was his lieutenant. De-Graft needs to be commended for his stubborn courage that made him continue with his group. Otherwise, he would have ignored the group after his release from prison and there would have been no communication between him and his friend Captain Potter, who took up the matter with WMMS in London.

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258 Agbeti (1986), p.54.
259 Agbeti (1986), p.55.
260 Jonathan Hildebrandt (1981), *History of the Church in Africa* (Ghana: African Christian Press), p.106.
261 Agbeti (1986), p.55.
262 Agbeti (1986), p.55.

After the death of Joseph Dunwell, the two missionaries sent to replace him also died before they had served a year. The loss made the WMMS decide to commission an African whom they hoped would be able to endure the rigours of the tropical climate and the diseases in the area. Consequently, Thomas Birch Freeman, who had an African father and an English mother was recruited.[263] Freeman's wife died towards the sixth month of their arrival. Thomas Freeman, however, kept on flying the Methodist flag with the help of devoted African helpers. The African climate appears to have been one of the major impediments to successful Christian mission by the Europeans since its inception. Today, modern technologies make the continent more habitable for the majority of the Westerners. After the above general exploration of the advent of Christian mission to West Africa, I am to explore how Christianity crept into Nigeria, my main area of focus.

B. Christianity in Nigeria: Yorubaland

During the first year of Freeman's missionary activities in the Cape Coast, James Ferguson, a trader, and a few other Methodist partners bought a small slave ship from the government. With this ship which was renamed 'Wilberforce'[264], they sailed eastward along the coast and reached Badagry. From Badagry, they moved further and got to a place called Eko (Lagos, Nigeria) – probably the harbour from which they had been shipped as slaves![265] They went ashore and discovered that the main language of the market was Yoruba, their own mother tongue. This shows that Yoruba people were among the freed slaves that returned to Sierra Leone. A few other Yoruba

263 Agbeti (1986), p.56.
264 Agbeti (1986), p.34.
265 F.D. Walker (1942), *A Hundred Years in Nigeria* (London: The Cargate Press), p.12.

left Sierra Leone and settled in Abeokuta.[266] In March 1841, James Ferguson, who had settled down at Badagry, wrote an invitation letter countersigned by the Governor of Badagry – Warraru, to Thomas Dove, his old minister in Freetown, inviting missionaries to come and preach the gospel in Lagos, Nigeria. There was another invitation letter from Abeokuta which was written by the 'Yoruba-Sierra Leonean traders'[267] who had earlier penetrated inland to Abeokuta. Both letters were sent to the Methodist Church Headquarters in Britain.[268]

Consequently, Thomas B. Freeman was urged by the Methodist Church Headquarters in Britain to proceed at once to Badagry and station a mission there. He arrived on 23 September 1892, together with Mr. and Mrs De-Graft who were of Fanti background (Ghana).[269] Freeman was also mandated to visit the city of Abeokuta by way of reconnaissance. A large canoe carried them to Badagry between two and three o'clock in the afternoon of 24 September 1842.[270] Consequently, the Christian religion was officially brought to Yorubaland (Nigeria) via Badagry. The question next addressed is how Christianity spread from Badagry into the interior Yoruba communities.

Christianity in the Interior Yoruba Community: Abeokuta

After the arrival of Freeman at Badagry, he requested Ferguson to visit Abeokuta. Ferguson returned with a welcoming letter from the Alake Sodeke and a gift of a pony with saddle and bridle. On the Sunday afternoon of 4 December 1842, Alake sent men

266 Walker (1942), pp.12-14, See also C. P. Groves (1954), *The Planting of Christianity in West Africa Vol. II* (London: Lutterworth Press), p.46.

267 The 'Yoruba-Sierra Leoneans traders' were the freed Yoruba slaves repatriated to Sierra Leone. After the discovery of their homeland, Abeokuta, many of them left Sierra Leone and settled in their original home country (Nigeria). Walker (1942), pp.12-14 and Groves (1954), p.46 affirmed that more than five hundred Yoruba people returned to and settled in Abeokuta.

268 Walker (1942), p.17.

269 Walker (1942), pp.18-19.

270 Walker (1942), pp.19-21.

to transport Freeman to Abeokuta.[271] With this escort, the three missionaries started the journey on 5 December 1842.[272] Freeman rode his new pony; while Mr & Mrs De-Graft were carried on men's heads in long coffin-shaped baskets. Alake sent more escorts the following day for the protection of the missionaries from molestation by the Egba's enemies. The warm welcome given to Freeman and his companions showed that African people were very receptive to evangelism from the beginning of mission activities in their midst.

On the Sunday afternoon of 11 December 1842, a service was held in the Alake courtyard.[273] Freeman preached the gospel to the king and his people. Thus, Christian worship began in Abeokuta. A few years before, Sodeke had earlier built a unique house for the great God. When Alake took the missionary around the house, he said 'He (God) has heard my prayer and sent you to teach me and my people'.[274] One day the Alake summoned the Muslim leaders and traditional worship priests to his palace. He asked them to explain their religious beliefs. He also called on Freeman to speak about the Great God of the Christian, who had sent him to Abeokuta. One of the chiefs who had accepted Christ said to the Muslims and traditional priests that 'This man's religion is true and both you and myself (sic) must follow it (sic)'.[275] All these activities convinced Freeman that Sodeke and his people were sincere and ready to accept the gospel they brought.

271 Walker (1942), p.24 .
272 Walker (1942), p.24.
273 Walker (1942), p.24.
274 Walker (1942), p.31.
275 Walker (1942), p.32.

When Christianity was introduced to the Yoruba people, 'it took different dimensions and faced diverse challenges'.[276] It is important to mention again that African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Islam had been in existence among the people.[277] The Yoruba adage, '*Aye la ba 'fa, aye la ba 'mole, osan gangan ni 'gbagbo wole de*' (We met *Ifa* (ATR) in the world, we met Islam in the world, but it was high noon before Christianity arrived)[278] emphasizes the fact that Christianity met Islam and ATR in Yorubaland. Islam came to Yorubaland through the cross-cultural influence of the northerners in Nigeria mainly known as the Hausa; while ATR had been the primordial religion of the people.[279] It has been argued that Islamic Religion tends to accommodate ATR in its totality.[280] Lloyd affirmed that Islam seemed to allow practising Muslims to be involved in using charms, amulets and other African witch-craft.[281] In addition, Loiello also maintained that polygamy and the sale of charms were approved by Islam.[282]

In Christianity, the previously mentioned African magical instruments were, and still are, vehemently forbidden. This does not, however, mean that there was no one using the instruments among the Church members. Ayegboyin and Ishola revealed that there were some Churches that seceded from the Missionary Churches as a result of their

276 Oyeronke Olajubu, (2003, April) 'Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus in the Religious Pluralistic Africa' *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies,* xix (1), p.1.

277 J.D.Y. Peel (2000), *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indina University Press), p.187.

278 Peel (2000)**,** p.187.

279 Peel (2000)**, p.**187. For more detail about the spread of Islam in Nigeria, see Akintunde E. Akinade (2007), 'Islamic Challenges in African Christianity' in Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story* (Eritrea: African World Press, Inc), pp.109-112.

280 Stanley R. Barrett (1991), 'Issues and Perspectives on Religion and Society' in Jacob Olupona and Toyin Falola (eds.), *Religion and Society in Nigeria: Historical and Sociological Perspectives* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited), p.16.

281 Peter C. Lloyd (1971), *Africa in Social Change* (London: Penguin Book), p.255.

282 John Peter Loiello (1982) 'Bishop in Two World: Samuel Ajayi Crowther (c.1806-1891) in Elizabeth Isichei, *Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria* (Hong Kong: The MacMillan Press Ltd), p.50.

passion for a genuine form of Christianity.[283] These schisms came up because of the perceived syncretism of some of the then leaders of the Churches. Some of the then pastors were alleged to have regularly consulted native doctors; while some of them were noted for wearing charms and amulets under cassocks.[284] Today, it can be argued that if there is any Church member at all involved in the above aforementioned African magical instruments, such a person is regarded as a Church-goer and not a Christian.

Initially, the Yoruba people who first accepted Christianity seemed to be confused. There was confusion as to what Christianity would be like. Although those who brought the religion made it clear, it appeared strange to the socio-cultural and political setting of Africa in general and the Yoruba in particular. Consequently, there were a lot of challenges faced by the people. Some of the challenges included the acceptability of polygamous marriage, syncretism and education. In the words of Isichei,

> Once converted, people grappled in various ways with the relationship between their new faith, their cultural inheritance, and the needs and obligations of their immediate environment. One of the most enduring, and complicated problems was plural marriage. Some new Christians renounced all their wives but one. For many, this was impossible.[285]

In addition to the aforementioned confusion, there were other Christians who were made chiefs in the church in order to reject the chieftaincy titles of their communities. Notable among the well-known chieftaincy titles in the churches were *Baba Ijo* (the Father of Church)*, Iya Ijo* (the Mother of Church)*, Balogun Ijo* (Commander-in-charge of Church) and *Iriju Ijo* (the Chief Steward of Church) to mention a few.

283 Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999), p.25.
284 Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999), p.25.
285 Isichei (1995), p.159.

Although one of the major aims of Christianity at the beginning of mission work in Africa was to evangelize other religious adherents such as Muslims and African traditional religious worshippers, there was dialogue between the religion and the other two main religious practitioners. According to Olajubu,

> …the goal of the Church since her inception in Africa has remained to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ to all. The means employed in this proclamation is primarily through evangelism, which sometimes encompassed ecumenism. Due to the pluralistic nature of Africa and African religious experience, negotiations between religions are imperative. Hence, dialogue between religions and with adherents of other religions becomes unavoidable…[286]

From the above quotation, one can infer that dialogue was necessary because of the pluralistic nature of Africa, of which the Yoruba is an ethnic group. It could also be for the sake of peaceful co-existence between the religions and the adherents.

Generally, 'religious pluralism is an integral component of the African historical experience'.[287] Olajubu noted that multiplicity is a concept that tends to dominate almost every aspect of African social, economic, religious and political lives.[288] One must note that this plural nature of African religions 'is by nature multi-dimensional and multi-faceted'.[289] As an example, the Yoruba are known to be the people who live together in compounds. In the past, it was rare for a man to move out of his family compound. Even when he marries, he would build his own house within the family land and stay close to his relatives. Currently, civilization and modernization seem to have changed the people's orientation about the close family relationship. Due to the quest for education, people move out of their family compound, even to other tribes and beyond. Again, the contemporary technological innovations of architectural

286 Olajubu (2003), p.1.
287 Olajubu (2003), p.1.
288 Olajubu (2003), pp.1-2.
289 Olajubu (2003), p.2.

designs sometimes require a proportionally fairly large area of land. Hence the people move to a new area where there will be enough land to build upon.

Be that as it may, the Yoruba live together and work together. For instance, in one compound alone, there could be adherents of at least three religions: Christianity, Islam and ATR.[290] It may be rare, if not impossible, to see a community without the presence of the above mentioned religious adherents living together in a house or compound up to the present time. Hence 'tensions, compromises and negotiations'[291] do occur as a result of these close relationships. Since the aim of Christianity, however, was to evangelize the adherents of other religions, the introduction of Western education changed the orientation of the children in schools. As Imasogie claimed, 'the prestige and the enhancement of social status which that education conferred on its recipients blunted any resistance to the inroad of Western culture'.[292] Consequently, it can be argued that Christianity depopulated the other religious adherents among the Yoruba through Western education.

Apart from inter-religious relations, many sects also exist in Africa, particularly among the Yoruba. Olajubu claimed:

> This (intra-religious pluralism) manifests through denominationalism, fundamentalism and sometimes schisms. Instances where a group of Christians regard another Christian group as being unchristian and seek to encourage a change of affiliation for such a group is a reality in Christendom today...[293]

290 Olajubu (2003), p.2.
291 Olajubu (2003), p.2.
292 Osadolor Imasogie (1992), 'A Christian Attitude to Cultural Revival' *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, (December), p.3.
293 Olajubu (2003), p.2.

It may also be necessary to explain the reasons for religious pluralism in Africa, particularly among the Yoruba. Most of the members were converted from ATR and Islam; while some others came out of the Mainline or Older Mission Churches as a result of their excommunication by the foreign missionaries and national leaders of the Historic Churches who could not bear the alleged 'aberration' or 'strange' theological or doctrinal expressions.[294] There were other cultural, political, social and economic factors. By cultural, I refer to the practice of the Yoruba to allow anyone to practise whatever religion he/she desires. The Federal Republic of Nigeria grants such freedom of worship.[295] Furthermore, quite a number of Churches emerged in Nigeria towards the end of the 19th century as a result of political factors. The Churches include: The Native Baptist Church (1888); The United Native African Church (1891); The African Church (1901); The Christ Army Church (1915); and The United African Methodist Church (*Eleja*- 1917).[296] These Churches commenced as a result of the desire to have freedom from the imposed European culture. In the case of social and economic factors, the passion for friendship and finding solutions to socio-economic problems led to this pluralism of religion. For instance, the Christ Apostolic Church was said to begin in Ilesha as a result of the dynamic prayer of Prophet Ayo Babalola which resuscitated a dying baby.[297] Within the various denominations in the Yoruba community, their mode of worship, dress, and their beliefs and practices are not the same. For instance, most of the *Aladura* Churches have a uniform for worship. The uniform usually consists of a single-colour robe. While in these robes, some of

294 Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999), p.21.
295 *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (Lagos: Vol.86, No.27) Article 38, Section 1-3, p.A899.
296 Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999), p.22.
297 Elijah Olu Akinwumi (2004),'Babalola, Joseph Ayodele 1904–1959': Christ Apostolic Church (Aladura) http://www.dacb.org/stories/Nigeria/bablola2_joseph.htlm Retrieved on 04 January 2009.

them forbid the wearing of shoes. The NBC does not engage in any of these *Aladura* beliefs and practices.

3.2. THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION (NBC)

A. The Historical Background

The Baptist denomination known as the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC)[298] is among the denominations that belonged to Mission Churches in Nigeria. The idea for the establishment of this convention by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), U.S.A, came after the break up from the Triennial Baptist Convention of U.S.A. over the issue of slavery.[299] The country of their interest was what the board of the Convention described as 'Central Africa' or 'Sudan' which is today known as Northern Nigeria.[300] Consequently, Thomas Jefferson Bowen was appointed and commissioned as missionary on 22 February, 1849.[301] A few comments about the background and role of this pioneer missionary in Nigeria will be presented later.

At the beginning, NBC was known as Yoruba Baptist Association, probably due to the fact that the denomination was first rooted among the Yoruba.[302] Due to expansion, the denomination extended to other regions such as Eastern, Southern and Northern parts of Nigeria. Thus, the amalgamation of all these Baptist Churches in Nigeria led to the official formation of the NBC in 1914.[303] Collins claims,

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298 See The Report of The Word Council of Churches' Department of Missionary Studies held in Mindolo Ecumenical Conference, Kiwfe and Northern Rhodesia on 6th-13th September 1962.

299 Osadolor Imasogie, 'Nigerian Baptist Convention Past, Present and Its Future' - A Lecture Presented at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Ilorin, 27, September 1991, (Mimeograph) p.2.

300 Imasogie (Mimeograph, 1991), p.1.

301 G.W. Sadler (1950), *A Century in Nigeria* (Nashville: Baptist Press), pp.41-42.

302 Travis Collins (1993), *The Baptist Mission of Nigeria 1850-1993: A History of the Southern Baptist Convention Mission Work in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Y-Books), p.28. See also *The Constitution and Bye Law of NBC* (1914) (Mimeograph).

303 Collins (1993), p.28.

> S.G. Pinnock… was selected as the one to issue the formal invitation to the gathering in Ibadan. The momentous event was held on 11th and 12th March 1914, in Ibadan's Idikan Baptist Church. From 10-14 March of the following year, a large crowd gathered for the meeting in Lagos where the name Yoruba Baptist Association was taken…[304]

It should be noted that the early SBC missionaries settled first among the Yoruba communities. Bowen settled in Abeokuta for about eighteen months before he moved to Orile Ijaye in February 1852.[305] He left Orile Ijaye on a furlough to America for the purposes of giving a progress report, recovery of his health, recruitment of more personnel, as well as seeking for more financial aid.[306] During this furlough, he got married and left America for Orile Ijaye with his wife - Lurana Henrietta - in August 1853.[307] At this second missionary journey to Orile Ijaye, he built 'a mission house, established a chapel, made a number of conversions, and had his first convert, named Tella, who was baptized on July 23, 1854'.[308] He also moved to Ogbomoso where other mission work was done later. Other early Baptist missionaries like S.G. Pinnock and W. Davies were also known to be missionaries working in Oyo and Lagos respectively. Because of the ground-breaking activities of T.J. Bowen in Nigeria, I will now consider his background and role in the NBC.

B. Thomas Jefferson Bowen: The Pioneer Missionary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

T.J. Bowen, the son of a successful farmer, was born on 2 January 1814 in Jackson County, Georgia, U.S.A.[309] As a naturally mentally gifted man, he studied and became

304 Collins (1993), p.28.
305 Okedara and Ajayi (2004), pp.11-12.
306 For the details, see T. J. Bowen's Letter to Bro. Jas B. Taylor, the Executive Secretary, Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, November 10, 1852.
307 See T.J. Bowen's Diary: Entry for 29 August, 1853 and Mrs. L.H. Bowen's Diary: Entry for 9 August 1853.
308 Okedara and Ajayi (2004), p.13.
309 Okedara and Ajayi (2004), p.1.

'one of the most learned men of his time'.[310] Duval described Bowen as an adventurous man; talented with an excellent memory.[311] He was also a man of stubborn determination. These qualities made him excel when he fought against the native Indians in Georgia. In order for Bowen to have inner peace, he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. As he himself said, 'in October, 1840, after a long period of seeking, I obtained hope in Christ and soon was baptized. My happiness in those days was more than language can express'.[312] This inner peace reached its climax when he took up the preaching ministry as his profession. He thus, he became an ordained soldier of Christ.

Bowen was appointed and commissioned as missionary to Nigeria on 22 February, 1849.[313] He left America for Liberia with Harvey Godale and Robert Hill on 17 December 1849.[314] The team arrived in Liberia on 8 February 1850. Within two weeks of their arrival in Liberia, Godale died. Robert Hill also stayed in Liberia, but the reason for this was not given. Bowen, however, left Liberia alone and he arrived in Badagry, Nigeria on 5 August 1850.[315] As soon as he entered Nigeria, he moved inland on the basis of the instruction given to him by the Mission Board of SBC. And so, on 18 August 1850, Bowen reached Abeokuta where he lived till 1852 before he moved to Igboho, his expected destination. Bowen returned to the USA in August

310 Sadler (1950), p.40.
311 Louis M. Duval (1928), *Baptist Missions in Nigeria* (Richmond: Southern Baptist Convention), p.38.
312 Sadler (1950), p.40.
313 Iysle E. Meyer (1982), 'T. J. Bowen and Central Africa: A Nineteenth-Century Missionary Delusion' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 15(2), p. 251, quoting T.J. Bowen, (1857), *Central African: Adventures and Missionary Labour in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849-1856* (Charleston: S.C.), p.25.
314 Imasogie (Mimeograph, 1991), p.2.
315 Imasogie (Mimeograph, 1991), p.2.

1852 due to ill-health and the impossibility of transferring money to him from the USA.[316]

It is worthwhile to recognize the courage of Bowen who risked his life on a voyage to Nigeria, a part of Africa that had become known as a proverbial white man's grave.[317] His determination to go on with the mission will be appreciated more if one considers the details that surrounded his commission. The SBC Mission Board was not willing to send missionaries to Africa for two reasons. Firstly, the board's interest was in China because of the favourable climate and its perceived civilization which the board thought was better than West Africa.[318] Secondly, the experiences of the missionaries sent by the Triennial Baptist Convention to Liberia and Sierra Leone discouraged the board. According to one of the reports presented at Triennial Convention, Boston, 'nine out of the fifteen missionaries sent to Liberia up till 1856 had died, and the others returned home so undone that they never recovered'.[319]

It can be argued that the major causes of the mortality of the early missionaries in Africa were generally malaria and yellow fever. The other causes might include childbirth and the stress of the mission's work. Ekundare claimed that the climatic conditions of West Africa were some of the major obstacles to the early Europeans.[320]

316 Meyer (1982), p. 254.
317 For the nature of the hazardous adventure, see E.A. Ayandele (1968), *T.J. Bowen: Adventure and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849 to 1856* (London: Frack Cass & Co Ltd.), Ch.1.
318 J.A. Atanda (1988), *Baptist Churches in Nigeria 1850-1950: Account of their Foundation and Growth* (Ibadan: University Press), p.xxxii-xxxiii.
319 Atanda (1988), p.xxxiii.
320 R. Olufemi Ekundare (1973), *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860- 1960* (Great Britain: Methuen & co Ltd), p.27.

Edington dealt precisely with the pathology of malaria in West Africa.[321] Edington argued that:

> Three species of malaria parasites occur in this area of West Africa - *Plasmodium falciparum*, *P. malariae*, and *P. ovale*, of which the first is by far the most important and ubiquitous. *P. ovale* is patchy in distribution... A few years ago the same might have been said about *P. malariae,* but recent investigations in Ibadan have disclosed that the nephritic syndrome is common in children …The pattern of malaria in West Africa is holo-endemic or stable, as defined by McDonald (1957). This implies that…the intensity of infection occurs throughout the year…[322]

In collaboration with the opinion of Edington, Jennings affirmed that quite a number of early missionaries died in Nigeria as a result of fever. According to Jennings,

> In Nigeria, the expedition of the Catholic Society of African Mission (SAM), led by Bishop Bresillac, met with disaster in 1859 when the entire party died of yellow fever within a few weeks of arrival. For the first 20 years of SAM, one in four members died each year.[323]

Based on the above report, the SBC Mission Board was not willing to start with what they perceived might lead to a loss of resources and personnel. In spite of these reasons, Bowen strongly advocated for mission in West Africa and surrendered himself to serve as a pioneer.[324]

3.3. DEVELOPING BELIEFS, DOCTRINES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE NBC.

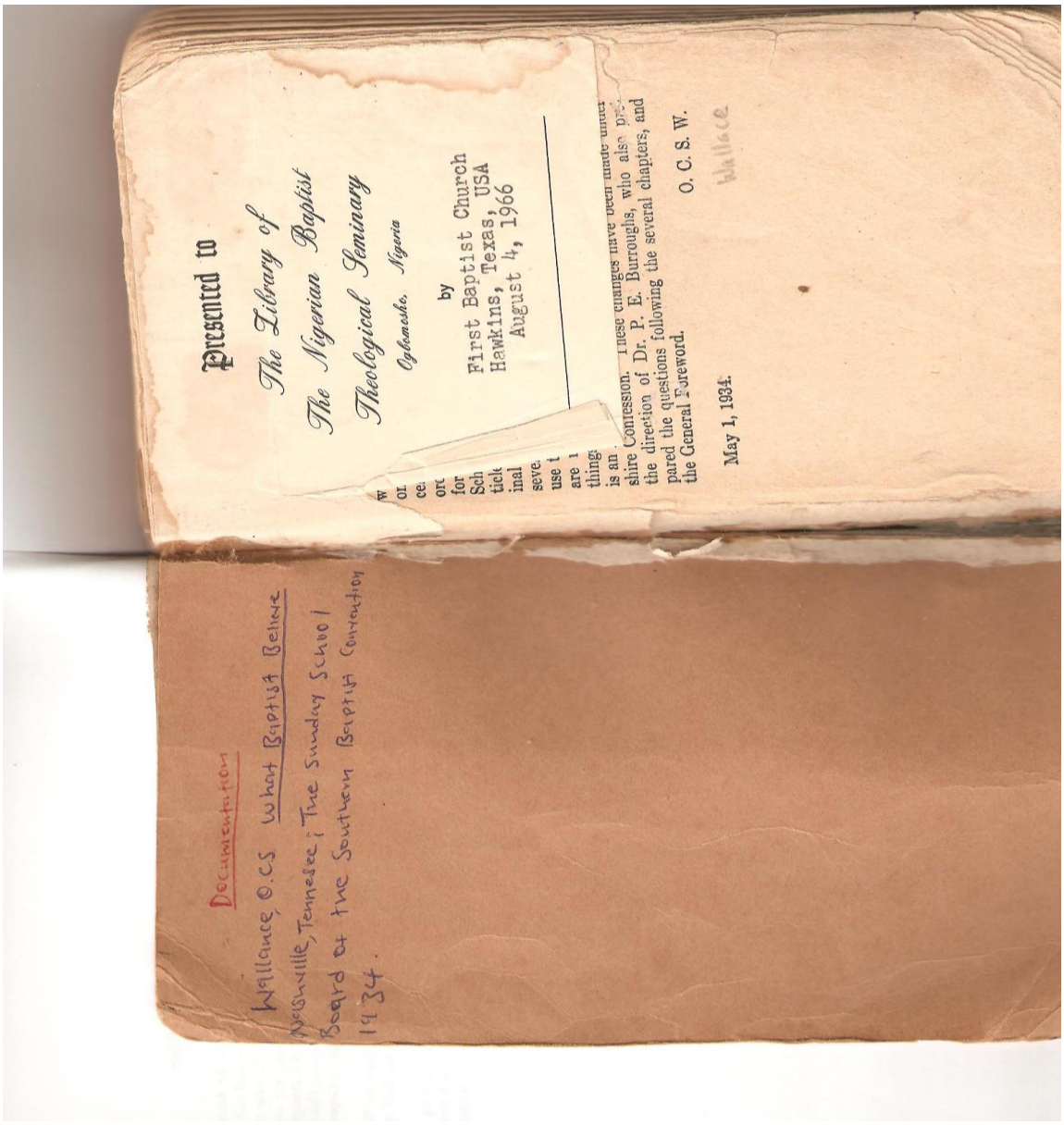
The foundational beliefs, doctrines, policies and practices which the early missionaries brought from SBC to the NBC will be examined here. These will be

321 G.M. Edington (1967), 'Pathology of Malaria in West Africa' *British Medical Journal*, 1, p.715.
322 Edington (1967), p.715.
323 Michael Jennings (2002), 'This Mysterious and Intangible Enemy': Health and Disease Amongst the Early UMCA Missionaries, 1860-1918'*Social History of Medicine* 15(1): p.66.
324 Atanda (1988), p.xxxiii.

extracted from the Constitutions and Bye-Laws of the NBC and books which the early missionaries brought to the Convention as guides.

Generally, there is a dearth of materials on the theologies taught by the early missionaries in Yorubaland. The reason for this dearth of material could be due to oral tradition and the low level of literacy that was common at this period of history. Since most of the Christians could not read and write, they were left with whatever verbal instructions they heard from the missionaries through their interpreters. On the part of the missionaries too, the problems associated with mobility during this period could have hindered the people from carrying loads around. Since in most cases the early missionaries trekked around their mission posts at that time, I doubt if any of them would have liked to carry additional books beside a Bible and possibly a hymn book, as Freeman reportedly did.[325] For instance, *What Baptist Believe*, written by O.C.S. Wallance, was published in 1934. This book did not get to NBTS Ogbomoso, the then only organ of the convention where pastors and Christian educationalists were being produced, until 1966.[326] Consequently, the available documents regardless of the year of the publications are used for this study.

325 Walker (1942), p.28.
326 See the scanned copy of label address on O.C.S. Wallance (1934), *What Baptist Believe* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of SBC), pp.2-3.



A. The Theology of the Baptist Missionaries During the First centenary (1850-1950)

i. The Holy Bible

The Baptists believed that the Bible, which comprises thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament, was written by divinely inspired people.[327] The denomination was of the opinion that the Bible was the record

327 E.Y. Mullins (1921), *Baptist Beliefs* (Louisville: Baptist World Publishing Co.), p.85.

of God's work in the creation of humankind and the universe. Through the Bible, the nature and condition of humankind, the effect of disobedience, God's judgement, salvation, plan and purposes are revealed. The NBC believed that the Bible is 'the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed, and opinion should be tried'[328]. Consequently, the Baptist maintains that 'the revelation of God to the World was completed in Jesus Christ'[329] in which the Bible is to be interpreted.

ii. God

As Mullins claimed, 'it is impossible to define God, because He (God) is more and greater'[330] than humankind can fully comprehend. Notwithstanding, the NBC believes that there is only one God who was, is and will forever remain the creator and sustainer of humankind and everything in the universe.[331] The denomination believes that God has no beginning or end. He is Spirit, Holy, Infinite, All-Knowing, All-Wise and Almighty. The NBC also believes that God, the Redeemer and Preserver, reveals Himself to humanity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet remains 'equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption'.[332]

iii. The Trinity

According to Wallance, the Trinity (which is expressed as the revelation of God to humanity as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) is a mystery.[333] 'This does not mean that there are three Gods; nor does it mean that the One God is three persons in

328 Mullins (1921), p.85.
329 Wallance (1934), p.11.
330 Mullins (1921), p.11.
331 Mullins (1921), p.85.
332 Wallance (1934), p.12.
333 Wallance (1934), p.15.

the complete sense'.[334] The term is a mystery which may not easily be understood fully. In other words, humanity is short of vocabulary to adequately express this mystery. Nevertheless, Trinity means three-in-one. In other words, God manifested Himself to humanity in three characters.[335] Each of these revelations has distinct attributes but without division of the nature of God.

iv. The Father

Like other Christian denominations, the NBC believes that God reveals Himself as a loving Father who cares for all creatures all over the world. It also believes that God sustains by making provision for both the physical and spiritual needs of all His creation. The Baptists believed that there is only one God who is the 'Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth'[336] To the Baptist, God is holy, merciful and worthy to be worshipped.

v. Humanity

According to Wallance, humankind is believed to be created in God's image by God Himself.[337] It is also believed that humanity was innocent of sin at the beginning until humankind was given freedom to choose between obeying Satan or God, the Creator.[338] Consequently, humankind transgressed and faced God's judgement. NBC believes that because humanity could not withstand the original plan of God, God in His infinite mercy initiated redemption and reconciliation through Jesus Christ. Thus,

334 Wallance (1934), p.15.
335 Wallance (1934), p.15-16.
336 Mullins (1921), p.84.
337 Wallance (1934), p.20.
338 Wallance (1934), p.20.

'the Son of God (Jesus Christ) became the Saviour of (humankind) by the choice and consent of the (Godhead)'.[339]

vi. Salvation

It is believed that salvation is God's redemption of the whole of humankind. It is also believed that salvation is offered freely to anyone who confesses his/her sin, turns away from the sin, and in response to the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin, accepts Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Saviour.[340] It is believed that after regeneration (new birth) sanctification through justification leads to glorification.

vii. Church and State

1. The Spirituality of Church: It has been the policy of the NBC that the church is a local assembly of the believers who have confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour. Consequently, membership is voluntary. Regardless of one's colour, race and continent of origin, one becomes a member of a local Baptist church as long as he/she confesses Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and receives baptism by immersion. According to the Texas Baptist position which has been generally accepted by Southern Baptist and eventually passed to NBC,

> We hold the immemorial position of Baptists that all true believers in Christ are saved, having been born again, and this without the intervention of preacher, priest, ordinance, sacrament or church…We hold that all people who (truly) believe in Christ as their personal Saviour are our brothers [/sisters] in the common salvation, whether they be Catholic Communion, or Protestant Communion, or in any other communion, or in no communion.[341]

339 Wallance (1934), p.27.
340 Mullins (1921), p.87.
341 Frederick I. Anderson (1920) Historic Baptist Principles in *Baptist Fundamentals* Philadelphia: The Judson Press), p.22.

From the above quotation, one can say that the Baptist believes that all who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour are heirs of the Kingdom of God.

2. The Voluntary Nature of Religion: According to the principles of NBC, religion should be 'at its root purely personal'.[342] The denomination believes that any forced religion is not a true religion. 'Consequently, no one - parent, pastor, church, or state - has a right to compel any act of forcing religion'[343] on anybody. Based on this principle, the Baptists believe that there must be separation of the church and state. Hence, 'the state cannot rule the church, prescribe its beliefs, or force contribution on any citizen in the shape of taxes for the support of religions' opinions in which she does not believe'.[344]

3. The Equality and Liberty of Believers: It was also one of the principles of NBC that every believer has equal rights to the fullness of the blessing in Christ. Thus, all believers have the same rights in accessing the throne of God. This principle is called the priesthood of all believers. Through this principle, individual differences are also recognised. According to Anderson,

> No two Christians are alike, no two have the same experience, no two see alike the many-sided Christ in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden… There is a possibility that someone else may have penetrated farther into the secret of godliness than we have, and may have attained a larger or profounder view of God than we have, so…we must guard against…spiritual pride, hereditary prejudice, narrow dogmatism, a desire to force our view on others…[345]

342 Anderson (1920), p.8.
343 Anderson (1920), p.18.
344 Anderson (1920) p.18.
345 Anderson (1920), p.20.

The convention believes that each believer is unique, regardless of individual differences. Consequently, all the believers have an equal right to go before God. In the real sense, the degree of the relationship may differ.

B. The Theology of the Present Development of the NBC (1951-2009)

Like other denominations such as Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists and Pentecostals in Nigeria, the NBC also has her own policies and practices that make her a unique body of Christ. With these policies and practices, it is expected of all in the NBC to be modest in all ways. 'By modest we mean not going to great expense, not pretentious in appearance, manner, conduct and amount spent.'[346] Until the early 21st century, some of these policies and practices were not properly documented.[347] The reasons for these lapses could be because of the oral traditional way of communication that prevailed at this period. The few policies and practices that are gathered will be discussed along with the recent ones under four main categories, namely: Jesus Christ: the son of God, marriage and funeral issues, Eucharist and moral issues. These issues are picked up because they are embedded in worship which is the main area of concern of this research. It might be necessary to start with the Jesus' Sonship.

i. Jesus Christ: the Son of God

It is the belief of the NBC that 'God reveals Himself as the eternal Son of God conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Virgin Mary'.[348] It is also believed that

346 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2008) 'Statement of Faith and Practice' www.nigerianbaptist.org/home Retrieved on 25 September 2008.

347 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), *Policies and Practices (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd, Ibadan),* p.1.

348 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2008).

Jesus Christ was born into the world with complete divine and human natures, yet without sin. As human, He ate His local foods (Matthew 26:26), slept (Mark 4:38), wept (John 11:35), and wore Jewish clothes (John 19:23-24), to mention a few. As the divine Son of God, Jesus acted and spoke in perfect union with God (Matthew 26: 39). Jesus Christ is the Messiah, i.e. God in human flesh. It is also believed that Jesus was before the Creation, He is and He will continue to exist forever.[349] Jesus' death on the cross crowned the redemptive activities of God for humanity. He, however, rose up on the third day, 'after which He appeared alive to His disciples and many other witnesses on many occasions and in many places'.[350] It is believed that Jesus was exalted into heaven and He is now at the right hand of God as perfect mediator between the Creator and humankind, particularly every true believer.[351]

ii. Marriage and Funeral Issues

1. Marriage Issues. The NBC sees marriage as an ordinance instituted by God. It is the coming together of a man (husband) and a woman (wife) with the approval and blessing of their parents, the government and the community of the children of God (their local Church). According to the Constitution and Bye-Laws of the NBC, the Convention emphatically stressed:

> Recognizing monogamy as the ideal state of family life according to the New Testament, this Convention places on record its adherence thereto. No known polygamist shall be allowed membership in our churches, to hold any office in the church, to serve as a lay-preacher, or to participate in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[352]

349 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2008).
350 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2008).
351 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2008).
352 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2000), *The Constitution and Bye-Laws*, Article III(6) (Ibadan: Baptist Press Nig. Ltd), p. 3-4. (see also the editions of (1914), Aticle III(4); 1951, Aticle III(6); 1983,Aticle III(6);1994, Aticle III(G). This constitution and Bye-Laws has not been reviewed till the time of this research.

As good as this Western ideology on marriage was it caused a lot of tension for both the missionaries and the indigenous church members. These tensions will be dealt with under the Western influence on Christianity in Nigeria, particularly the Yoruba.

The Convention recognizes that the marriage ceremony involves many processes in Africa generally and in Yorubaland in particular.[353] Just as in Palestine in Biblical times, marriage in Yorubaland involves an introduction, engagement, and wedding.[354] As was the case in the Biblical times, all these stages involve expenses.

In order to reduce the expense of marriage, the NBC made a policy that her members should restrict their marriage ceremonies to that which will edify the name of God. Consequently, unchristian practices such as money exploiters called professional engagers,[355] pre-weddings where money will be showered on the couple-to-be, an expensive wedding gown, the practice of blood covenant and other pagan practices should be totally discouraged.[356] The convention also put it as a recommendation that the Baptist family should allow the bridegroom to pay whatever amount he could afford as a bride price on the agreement with the in-laws.[357] Furthermore, NBC discourages the use of alcohol for any occasion.[358]. Whilst alcoholic drinks are not directly forbidden in the Bible, the NBC, however, recognises the evils perpetuated

353 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.5. For the details of the marriage processes in Yorubaland, see Olu Daramola and A. Jeje (1995), *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba,* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press Books Industries (NIG.) LTD), pp.34–48.

354 Daramola and Jeje (1995), pp.34–48. See also Imasogie (1985), *African Traditional Religion,* pp.60–62.

355 Money exploiters called professional engagers are the paid marriage co-ordinators during marriage ceremonies in Nigeria. Their main duty is to make sure that the marriage ceremony is humorous and traditional. But because of the passion for money, these marriage engagers on many occasions often technically exploit their audience including bride and bridegroom whenever they are contracted.

356 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.5-6.

357 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.6.

358 *Baptist Hymnal With Choruses and Church Covenant* (2000) (Ibadan: Intec Printers Limited), pp.361-362.

when one gets drunk. When one is under the influence of alcohol, it is easier for one to be involved in sexual immorality, debauchery, hatred, discord, jealousy, envy, fighting and the like. In the view of the NBC, total abstinence from alcoholic beverages, especially during ceremonies like weddings, will not only allow the programme to be free from potential rift which might come up as a result of intoxication, but it can also save the celebrants and their relatives from unnecessary expense.

Furthermore, it is also important to mention that the NBC suggests that any intending couples should seek the face of God and voluntary counselling. This counselling includes pregnancy, genotype, blood group and HIV/AIDS tests.[359] While the convention recognises the prerogative rights of the couples-to-be on the results of their tests, the convention maintains it as a policy that any woman found to be pregnant before her wedding must not be joined in any Baptist Church within the Convention.[360] The reasons for this policy are to maintain the sanctity of marriage and to encourage discipline.

2. Funeral Issues

(a) Death/Burial. As I have indicated earlier, life is seen like a farm or market to which one goes in the morning and comes back home later in the day or evening. To the NBC, no matter how long one lives, death is a necessary end. The Yoruba proverb *'iku ko ba enikan sore, eni iku ri ni iku npa'* (death has no favourite nor enemy, whoever it is, his/her turn comes to die) collaborates with Ecclesiastes 8:8 which says '…no one has power over the day of his/(her) death'. Like the Yoruba belief about

359 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.7.
360 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.8.

death, the Convention also believes that the Bible is saying that regardless of one's position or influence in this world, life is terminable at the appointed time. The appointed time is unknown; however, it is a reality for all living souls in the whole universe.

Inasmuch as death is a transition from the terrestrial to the celestial worlds, the NBC opines that the corpse needs to be handled with care, dignity and modesty. The bereaved should not be burdened with unnecessary demands by the Church. It has been observed in the past, 'frequently the bereaved that need to be helped have been forced to go on borrowing. Some have sold their belongings only to exhibit their flamboyancy at the burial of their parents or beloved ones'.[361]

Because of the extravagance that is sometimes associated with burial, the NBC discourages flamboyant dressing of the corpse and an expensive coffin. This flamboyant dressing of the corpse includes the purchase of Western clothes, particularly a coat for men during burial rites. In the case of a woman's corpse, some families could purchase a gown or other Western materials for the burial. Where undertakers are used, they are expected to carry out their duty smoothly. Based on my experiences in involvement of burial services for the past twenty-five years, the convention needs to take the previously mentioned action because Nigerians, particularly the Yoruba, can be said to be extravagant in spending during social events like burials. In my opinion, the prodigal spending needs to be curbed.

361 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2008), p.4 of 5.

(b) Treatment of Widows/Widowers. The NBC frowns at the ill treatment of widows and widowers. This ill treatment comes up as a result of the force of culture which the deceased's spouses are expected to observe. Daramola and Jeje indicated that the treatment given to widows in Yorubaland is shameful.[362] Like other parts of Africa, the deceased are in most cases buried in one of the rooms in their houses. It is, therefore, expected of all widows and widowers to observe compulsory rites after the demise of their loved ones. For instance, the Yoruba widows must stay in their matrimonial room for about three months without seeing the sun. Within these three months, they are expected to go to their husbands' graves three times daily to wail.[363] The number of days of wailing differs from one community to another. According to Daramola and Jeje, the commonest number is seven days.[364] In the olden days, the widows were expected to sleep on the top of their deceased's grave.[365] In the case of widowers, the culture did not expect as much from husbands of the deceased. Such a man is expected to stay at home until the burial of his deceased wife is done. He is, however, free after some few days of the burial. The reason for this disparity could be because men are the ones dictating the way of life generally in Yorubaland. Other areas of ill treatment include:

> the widows are required to sleep on a mat, plank or bare floor; be half clothed, forced to eat from broken plates, sleep in the same room with the corpse, drink the corpse's bathwater, shave her head, and wear mourning cloth which differentiates them...[366]

362 Daramola and Jeje (1995), p.153.
363 Wailing is remembrance of a deceased's good deeds and recounting of the cognomens of the person. It is a rite expected to be done by the survival's spouse especially wives of the deceased among the Yoruba of Nigeria. For more detail, see Daramola and Jeje (1995), pp.153-156.
364 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.153.
365 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), p.153.
366 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.2.

Although some of the above ill treatment seem to be diminishing, especially in Yoruba urban areas, it is a well-known fact that there are other Yoruba church members who are still experiencing some of the above unchristian practices, especially in the rural areas. Consequently, such unchristian practices are rejected unequivocally by the NBC. In order to avoid the unnecessary embarrassment for the living spouses, the convention encourages all members to marry under the marriage ordinance and make their own will as soon as possible. The local Churches are also encouraged to protect and defend widows in their midst.[367] My area of concern on marriage and funeral issues of the members of the NBC is the costly expenses on the Western clothes for special services in the local Baptist Churches in Yorubaland and this will be examined in the next chapter.

3. Eucharist

The two ordinances which have major cardinal points in Christendom are baptism and the Lord's Supper. These two ordinances were instituted by Jesus Christ Himself during His earthly ministry. Each of these ordinances was observed by Jesus and commanded by Him to be observed.

The NBC (like other Baptists in the world) believes that baptism by immersion is the symbol of a believer's confession of faith in Jesus Christ. According to the policies and practices of the NBC, 'only those who have genuinely professed faith in Christ should be baptized… only by an ordained Baptist Minister'.[368] In the case of the Lord's Supper, it is a commemoration of the dying love of Christ. To the NBC, baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper. It is also the policy of the convention

367 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), pp.2-3.
368 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.18.

that 'the elements should include: Bread with or without yeast… and a non-alcoholic beverage'.[369] These elements of bread and non-alcoholic beverage will be further examined in the next chapter.

4. Moral Issues

The issue of morality is a major concern of the NBC. Consequently, the denomination has policies regarding some major immoral practices that are prevalent in contemporary society. Some of these immoralities from NBC's perspectives include secret cults, homosexuality and the promotion of condoms.

(a) Secret Cult. As a body of Christ, the Convention affirms that membership of a secret society (whether indigenous or foreign) is contrary to the teaching of the NBC. For the sake of emphasis, I quote the policy of the convention verbatim here:

> No Pastor, Official or Officer of the Nigerian Baptist Convention shall be a member of any Secret Society whether it be foreign or indigenous.[370]…No Baptist Church co-operating with the Nigerian Baptist Convention shall recognise any known member of any Secret Society (foreign or indigenous) as a member of the church in full standing. Any Church, which condones such members of secret Society within its fold, shall be expelled from the fellowship of the Convention…[371]

From the above quotation, one can infer that the NBC declares unequivocally that such 'syncretism' is not allowed among her members.

369 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.18.

370 Secret Society to the NBC is any of the occult organizations whether foreign or indigenous. Some of the examples of these societies include: witches, wizard, Reformed Ogboni Fraternity, familiar spirit and the like. For more details about secret society in Yorubaland, see Daramola and Jeje (1995), pp.130–142.

371 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), pp.21-22.

(b) Homosexuality. The NBC condemns in totality the practice of homosexuality.[372] The convention affirms the teaching of the Bible on marital relationships which supposes to be between a man and woman. It can be argued that the issue of homosexuality has not arisen in the Convention. The Convention, however, declares her stand on the issue before it arises.

(c) The Promotion of Condoms. The Convention has observed with dismay the promotion of condoms in modern society. The use of condoms is promoted to prevent the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. The Convention noted that the condom is highly associated with promiscuity. Inasmuch as the Convention wants to maintain high moral standards which she teaches and preaches, the use of this material to aid promiscuity is condemned vehemently.[373]

3.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented brief history of Christianity in West Africa before I narrowed it to the beginning of mission activities of SBC in Nigeria. As part of the SBC mission history, I have briefly narrated the roles of T.J. Bowen in the evangelization of Nigerians, especially the Yoruba tribe. In this chapter, I have also presented the beliefs, doctrines, policies and practices of the NBC. The chapter also reveals how Christianity was influenced by ATR in Yorubaland.

From the study of the activities of what Isichei described as those of the modern missionary in West Africa, particularly Nigeria, it is clear that the primary objective of the Church at that time was evangelism, and not involvement in commercial activities

372 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.24.
373 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.24.

or the slave trade.[374] The Methodist Church filled the vacuum which the Church of England had created by its failure to take care of the freed slaves sent to Sierra Leone. The Baptists also penetrated into innermost parts of Africa for the sake of spreading the Gospel. The stubborn determination of these denominations made it possible to have a genuine form of evangelism in West Africa. Notwithstanding, it is necessary to explore the Euro-American Missionaries' influences on NBC, particularly within the Baptist Churches in Yoruba region.

374 Isichei (1995), p.160. See also Andrew Walls, *The Cross Cultural process in Christian History.* (Edinburgh:T&T Clark, 2002), pp.227-235. Walls explained how mission activities moved from traditional method to accommodate lay volunteers, women and professionals such as medical personnel.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN MISSIONARIES ON THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CHURCH WORSHIP IN THE YORUBA LAND

4.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the influence of Western Christian missionaries on the Nigerian Baptist Churches in Yorubaland. This influence will be examined in terms of theological expressions, worship/liturgy, music/musical instruments and dressing pattern during worship. This chapter argues that Christianity was planted with Western philosophical and theological worldviews. From the responses to the questionnaire administered, issues like monogamy, Western clothes and Western materials for rituals were imposed on the Yoruba Christians in the name of religion.

In the light of this, the chapter is divided into six sections. This paragraph and the above form the introduction of the chapter. The influence of the theologies of the Western missionaries on the Yoruba Baptist churches is the focus of section two. Again, since I have presented the foundational beliefs, doctrines, policies and practices which the early missionaries brought from the SBC, USA to the NBC in Chapter Three, what I intend to do here is to reveal the area of their influence on the Churches in Yorubaland. Here, Baptism and Eucharist are examined. In sections three and four, the Western influences on Yoruba Christian worship/liturgy and dressing are the focuses respectively; while section five presents the Western influence on Yoruba music/musical instruments. The conclusion is the last section of this chapter.

It can be argued that the Western missionaries did not deliberately impose their ideologies on the Africans. They did what they considered best, based on their cultural orientation in their own time as the pioneer missionaries. My research sincerely

recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the missionaries who had not only laboured, but also risked their lives for the sake of the Gospel. The research, therefore, builds on their foundations of success by identifying the areas the Yoruba now invest in to build a contemporary theology/liturgy to make their worship more relevant to their needs and set up**.** Consequently, the effects of the Western theology/liturgy on the contemporary Yoruba Baptist Christians need to be identified. Perhaps the theologies of the SBC missionaries might be a good beginning point.

4.1. THEOLOGIES OF THE WESTERN MISSIONARIES

It has been established that T.J. Bowen, the SBC missionary, came to the shore of Yorubaland in 1850. He immediately started Christian education where he taught his converts what the Baptist believes. Suffice to say that the doctrine he taught would be an American pattern of belief system. Since I have presented the Baptist beliefs in Chapter Three, I will now focus on Baptism and the Eucharist which were the major issues influenced by the missionaries.

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Eucharist)

It has been said that the curriculum of Bowen and the earliest missionaries are not available. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the theological teachings of the early missionaries, particularly T.J. Bowen, would not have been different from the SBC faith and practices, the body that commissioned him. Hence, this SBC statement of faith and practice will be examined here along with the issue of polygamy. From the SBC Statement of Faith of 1858, Section XV reads:

> Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and the resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of his giving himself up to God, to live and

> walk in newness of life. It is a prerequisite to church fellowship, and to participate in the Lord's Supper.[375]

The 1963 version of the SBC statement on this Baptism and Lord's Supper seems to be much the same but expressed in slightly different words. For the sake of clarity, I need to quote the Section VII verbatim:

> Baptism and The Lord's Supper
> Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believers' faith…it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.
> The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, though partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.[376]

From the above quotations, it is clear that Baptism is meant for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Saviour. Secondly, there was no other condition attached, like marital status. Again, it is a testimony to one's faith as the believer starts walking in the newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is, however, a prerequisite for church membership and the Lord's Supper. Consequently, anyone regardless of his/her past life who genuinely believes in his/her heart and confesses with his/her mouth that Jesus is the Lord, ought to have been allowed to receive baptism. Invariably such people would have been also given the right to partake in Eucharist.

In the past, the issues of Baptism and the Lord's Supper for believers in Africa have generated heat among the Baptist congregations and other denominations both in the Western worlds and in Nigeria. For instance, at the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion in 1888, twenty-one out of one hundred and four voted in

375 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1858), Abstract of Principle of Faith' Retrieved from http://www.creeds.net/baptists/abstract.htm on 20 January 2010.
376 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1858).

favour of Baptism for the polygamists;[377] while the minutes of the Centenary Conference of Protestant Mission in 1888 vehemently opposed the issue.[378] There were different stages which the issues of Baptism of polygamists reached. Initially, polygamist believers were denied acceptance by the church. There was also a time when the husbands were told to send away all their wives except the first one before they could be accepted into church membership and be allowed to partake in Baptism and the Lord's Supper.[379] In Nigeria, it was reported that Rev. D.H. Loko (with the support of his superior Western minister, Rev. G.O. Griffin, both of the Methodist Church of Nigeria) excommunicated ten prominent members in a meeting on 25th October, 1917, due to their state of marriage as polygamists.[380] Immediately, about fifty-five other self-confessed polygamists also stood up for their judgments. They were also immediately dismissed from the church.[381] The sixty-five polygamists left the church and established another church called United African Methodist Church (Eleja) Lagos a month after their dismissal.

While one may not totally blame the above missionaries for their courage to stand firm with the then church principles and doctrines, one would expect them not to go to extremes. Why should they excommunicate members when the Bible says both the 'wheat' and 'weed' should be allowed to grow together? The harvester will separate them at the appropriate time (cf. Matthew 13:24-30; 25:31-46). Why should they

377 See the full text of the Statement of Lambeth Conference on Polygamy in Africa in Adrian Hastings (1973), *Christian Marriage in Africa* (London: SPCK), Appendix A, pp.117-119; See also Eugene Hillman (1975), *Polygamy Reconsidered* (New York: Maryknoll), pp.31–38.

378 J.J. Johnson (1889), *Report of the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World* (London), pp.48-81.

379 R. Strayer (1978), *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa* (London: Heinemann), p.79.

380 Deji Ayegboyin and Ademola Ishola (1999), *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective* (Lagos: Greater Heights Publications), p.40.

381 Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999), p.40.

humiliate the families; after all marriage has nothing to do with the salvation experience (cf. Ephesians 2:1-10)? There could be a possibility that some of the so-called offenders and those who left the church out of sympathy for their relatives might not return to the faith due to their open condemnation! It might even be possible that some would have gone back to their former traditional religion that accommodates any state of marriage.

Unfortunately, many of the then leaders (who were mostly Westerners) seemed oblivious to the plight of the Nigerian Christians. The few nationals could also not do anything about the situation. In reaction to the sanction on the polygamists, some of them resisted the denial as in the case of Ebenezer Baptist Church Lagos. A church members' reaction will now be discussed.

Among the Yoruba Baptist believers, the issue of Baptism and the Lord's Supper for the polygamists also generated confrontations. This example was the experience of a Baptist pastor in Lagos:

> When Pastor Akande broke the bread and asked the distributors to serve the same, the polygamists were ready with their own game plan, unknown to him. They were seated on one side of the Church and when the deacons refused to serve them, according to Pastor Akande's instruction, the polygamists reacted. They beckoned to the distributors and before anyone could stop them, they had taken the bread. The same pattern followed with the distribution of wine. Pastor Akande was naturally furious after the service as this was the first time some members of his congregation would disobey him as a pastor. Bro. Olaofe Tubi approached Pastor Akande and his statement will remain for all time as a lesson in ecclesiastical matters as an African Approach to Christianity. 'Rev. Akande', he said, 'you know the bread belongs to the Lord and represents the Body of the Lord and the wine represents His blood. Is it your bread? Is it your wine? When we get to Jesus let Him ask us why we participated in His Body and Blood, then we would explain to Him'.[382]

382 Deji Ayegboyin (2006), 'The Eucharist: Then and Now' in Ademola Ishola and Deji Ayegboyin (eds.), *Ecclesiastes the Preacher, the Church, and the Contemporary Society: Papers in Honour of Rev. Dr. S.T. Ola Akande @ 80* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd.), pp.29-30.

This scenario is a life experience at Ebenezer Baptist Church, 49 Campbell Street, Lagos, Nigeria.[383] The bone of contention was whether the polygamists should participate in the Lord's Supper. The pastor who administered the Lord's Supper later became the General Secretary and the Chief Executive officer of the NBC from 26 April, 1979 to 30 April 1991.[384] As a Yoruba man whose theological studies were undertaken in US theological Institutions and Universities, one may not be surprised at his reactions at this time in history when Western missionaries controlled the affairs of the Convention in Nigeria.[385] Baptism and Eucharist still remain challenges to the Yoruba Christians of the NBC. Although the NBC seems to be liberal on these issues now, there is no written statement as to the involvement of the polygamists in Christian rites.

One may be wondering as to the reason(s) why the missionaries in the past would not allow the African Christians to practise the faith within their own culture. There could be the phobia of losing the congregation to indigenous leadership whom the missionaries probably thought would not be able to direct the affairs of the then churches in line with the biblical truth. It could also be the fear of syncretism. Syncretism, according to Stringer (quoting Shaw and Stewart), is the deliberate mixing together of different religions.[386] While one may not totally disagree with what Stringer perceived as syncretism among the African indigenous churches, caution needs to be taken in order to differentiate the contextualization of Christianity from

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383 S.T. Ola Akande, Interviewed. 15 December 2009, Ibadan, Oyo State.

384 Olaseni Egbeyemi (2006), 'Citation and Curriculum Vitae' in Ademola Ishola and Deji Ayegboyin (eds.), *Ecclesiastes the Preacher, the Church, and the Contemporary Society: Papers in Honour of Rev. Dr. S.T. Ola Akande @ 80* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd.), p.591

385 Egbeyemi (2006), pp.590-59.

386 Martin D. Stringer (2005), *A Sociological History of Christian Worship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.226.

syncretism. Most of what Stringer saw among Africans was (and still is) the contextualization of Christianity. For instance, Stringer claimed 'elements of prophecy, healing or exorcism from their local traditions developed more clearly (to) syncretic rites'.[387] Quoting Philip Tovey, what Stringer meant by excessive African traditions are further explained as prostrations, kissing the Bible, clapping, shouting, the use of sign of cross, anointing, laying of hands, the sprinkling of holy water and dancing during the worship service.[388] All the above mentioned attitudes are genuine characteristics of African Indigenous Churches[389] and not syncretism. Due to the lack of a full understanding of the above African Christians' traits, the missionaries perceived them as syncretism and rejected them.

When the indigenous leadership of the NBC took over the affairs of the convention, the fear of losing financial and personnel support probably did not allow the leaders to take the bull by its horns. Until recently, the SBC, USA kept on sending missionaries to the NBC at the convention's (SBC) expense. The SBC also often sent financial grants to the NBC as part of the convention contributions to the missions in Nigeria. Today, the NBC is independent.

B. Elements for Eucharist

There was no specification about the bread used as an element for Eucharist by Jesus Christ in Matthew 26:17–30, Mark 14:23-26 and Luke 22:14–23. Justin Martyr also did not mention the type of the bread.[390] From the common use of the word 'bread' or

387 Stringer (2005), p.227.
388 Stringer (2005), p.227.
389 For more details on African Indigenous Church, see Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999), *African Indigenous Church*.
390 Alexander Robert and James Donaldson (eds.) (2004), *Justin Martyr and Athenagoras: Ante Nicene Christian Library Translation of the Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325 Part*

'loaf', however, scholars tend to agree on unleavened bread as the element used for the Lord's Supper. As to the wine, Justin Martyr claimed that table wine diluted with water was used.[391] From the above information, one can conclude that Jesus used the materials available, accessible and affordable during His time.

Although the first Nigerian convert (the Yoruba man called Tella) was baptized by T.J. Bowen on 23 July 1854, there is no full record of the first Eucharist in the NBC. Within a couple of months after the baptism of Tella, however, Okedara and Ajayi claimed that 'the small congregation of believers was taken through the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, another major ordinance of the Baptist'.[392] The elements used during this period were not specified. The Constitution and Bye Laws of the NBC, however, declares that 'the Lord's Supper is a sacred memorial in which the members of the church by the use of elements such as bread and wine commemorate together in the dying love of Christ'.[393]

Although the history of bread making started in Egypt, North Africa,[394] it was not known to the Nigerians (particularly the Yoruba) until the arrival of the freed slaves in the nineteenth century.[395] According to Rayment, 'the Greeks picked up the technology for making bread from the Egyptians, from Greece the practice spread

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Two. (Kila: Kessinger Publishing Co), pp.63-64.

391 Robert and Donaldson (eds.) (2004), pp.63-64.

392 J.T.Okedara and S. Ademola Ajayi (2004), *Thomas Jefferson Bowen: Pioneer Baptist Missionary to Nigeria 1850-1856* (Ibadan: John Archers (Publishers) Limited), p.13.

393 NBC (1932) *Constitution and Bye Laws,* Article III(4). See also 1951 Article III(4), 1983 edition Article III(4), and 2000 edition, Article III(C), p.5.

W.J. Rayment (2010), 'Bread History' Retrieved from http://wwww.breadinfo.com/history.shtml 28 January 2010.

395 Peter Kilby (1965), *African Enterprise: The Nigerian Bread Industry* (Germany: Hoover Institution Studies), p.6.

over to the rest of Europe'.[396] Kilby claimed that bread-making came to Nigeria through the freed slaves returning from Brazil to Lagos in about 1900.[397] This shows that bread was not part of Nigerian local food (particularly the Yoruba) probably until the twentieth century. It is doubtful whether the converts of Bowen in Ijaye Orile, where the first baptism and the Eucharist were held, would have ever seen bread and possibly Western wine before they were served.

In the contemporary Yoruba Baptist Church, the use of bread and wine have been adopted as inherited elements of sacraments from the missionaries. As I have pointed out earlier, the NBC Constitution and Bye Laws also emphatically stipulate the use of the materials as the acceptable elements. Again, this constitutional bread and wine was also another influence of Western missionaries because it is well known that 'he who pays the piper dictates the tune'. I wonder why foreign food and drink should be spiritualized to the detriment of indigenous ones! Are there not Yoruba foods that can be used in replacement for these foreign foods? This question will be addressed in the next chapter.

4.2. THE WESTERN INFLUENCE ON WORSHIP/LITURGY

The Nigerian Baptist is known as one of the mainline Protestant Churches in Nigeria. I was born into this Baptist family in the mid-1960s. I grew up with the phrase 'But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him' (Habakkuk 2:20) as my pastor used to say it at the climax of his call-to-worship. As a child who regularly used to follow his parents to church services, the impression on my mind then was that one must keep silent and remain silent before God until one got out of

396 Rayment (2010).
397 Kilby (1965), p.6.

Church. Worse still was the fact that our worship service was then a quiet one. As my parents used to guide me, I would sit down silently by my mother/father's side and sometimes fall asleep because of the boredom of the service. Out of curiosity, I would sometimes look around during the service to see the mood of the fellow worshippers. I remember vividly that I had observed some adults also slept during the worship service! Sleeping during the service did not bother me until the mid-1980s when the Baptist Students' Fellowship was established in the local Baptist churches of South-Western Nigeria to cater for the Baptist students' spiritual needs.[398]

What bothered me was the reason for the quietness of people under worship! Why was it that members could not pray aloud as it is done at *Odun Ogun* (Ogun Festival) in my family compound? Having also attended other African Indigenous Churches like the Christ Apostolic Church and white-gown churches such as the Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubim and Seraphim, I had participated in their excited forms of worship services. I asked myself, what could be the reason for remaining in 'silence before God' while others around us jubilate before Him, and in what context should 'remaining silent before God' be appropriately used?

It is a well-known fact that Westerners like quietness in most areas of their lives. This also applied (and still applies) to their religious life. A Yoruba woman lamented that at her arrival from Nigeria in 2005, she could not cope when she went for Sunday worship in a Baptist Church in Manchester, United Kingdom, because it was too quiet for her liking. I have not been to the US, the base of the SBC. I, however, believe the

398 M.A. Ojo (2006), 'The Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Pentecostal Resurgence, 1970-2000: Critical Issue for Ecclesiastical Dynamics' in Ademola Ishola and Deji Ayegboyin(eds.) *Ecclesiastes the Preacher, the Church, and the Contemporary Society: Papers in Honour of Rev. Dr. S.T. Ola Akande @ 80* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd.), p.345.

experience of this woman illustrates the atmosphere of worship in most Western churches. It can be argued that the mood was transferred to mission-established churches in Nigeria at the outset. The opposite is the case of Africans, particularly Nigerians. They like exciting, dramatic and dynamic forms of worship. When a misfortune such as a death/burial happened, particularly of young persons, then such a service could be cold and devoid of a joyful atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the missionaries who brought Christianity to Africa came with their traditional mood of quietness. Some of the indigenous African pastors whom they brought up were also imbibed in this ideology. For instance, Ojo reported that: 'Dr. Akande presided over many cases of what official records often called 'unBaptistic practices', and had to champion the maintenance of what was perceived then as Biblical Christianity of Baptists'.[399] Some of which were regarded as unbaptistic practices as listed by Oyo West Baptist include:

> Shouting during prayer as if God were deaf;
> Foot stamping and fingers snapping at prayer sessions followed by sentimental responses like 'Yes, it shall be done', 'You must do it' 'Jesus', etc;
> Weeping and rolling on the ground during prayers;
> Holding separate prayer meetings while the church is holding one in the sanctuary;
> Night vigil …[400]

The above list shows how the worship service was controlled by the then authority. Today, the story is different. In the words of Ojo, 'by the late 1990s, worship in some Baptist Churches had changed so much that some of the things earlier condemned as unBaptistic practices became acceptable to the generality of members'.[401] This does

399 Ojo (2006), p.328.
400 Oyo West Baptist Conference (1992), *Baptist Beliefs and Practices* (Ibadan: n.p.), p.7.
401 Ojo (2006), p.353.

not, however, mean that there are still no conservative Baptist churches in the NBC. There may be a few members and pastors who still cherish Western forms of worship. Worship has been described as one's personal response to the one true God, i.e., 'an expression of the spirit of man to the spirit of God'.[402] It is an experience that transpires between humankind's spirit and God. Worship encompasses so many different elements in one event. These elements include music, communion, praying, dancing, crying, reading of scripture and preaching to mention but a few. Cornwall believed:

> Sameness is not God's goal for worshippers for he has made us infinitely varied creatures. But some of the differences between races are more cultural than genetic, and quite often the restriction that culture imposes upon a people limits their ability to worship the Lord. Such cultural characteristics as the Arab restriction upon the public appearance of women, the English trait of showing no outward emotion in public, the German tendency to repress individualism in favor of group action, or the American concept that men don't show tenderness lest they lose their 'macho' image, all hinder a full expression of worship'[403]

It can be inferred that there may be cultural inhibitions that prevent Westerners from laudable praise and worship. It may be right, then, to say that some of these cultural inhibitions were carried to Yorubaland. Quite often the worship patterns were too lukewarm and short for exuberant Yoruba Christians. For instance, Paul H. Miller, a professor of Christian Education, taught me in the NBTS, Ogbomoso that the Sunday worship service should not be longer than an hour as it is in America.[404] According to him, out of this one hour, the message (homily) should not be more than fifteen to twenty minutes.[405] The chapel worship of the seminary exemplified the true picture of what I have just described - quietness and brevity.

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402 Judson Cornwall (1985), *Elements of Worship* (South Plainfield: Bridge Publishing, Inc), p.1.
403 Cornwall (1985), p.114.
404 P. H. Miller. Class note taken on RED. 377 (Worship) on 12 November 1992.
405 Miller (1992).

As Mbiti claimed, the Kikanba people in Kenya see Sunday or weekly church worship as '*kivoyo*' (from the verb '*kuvoya*' meaning 'to pray'[406]), so also the Yoruba see Sunday or weekly church worship as *Ojo Oluwa / Ojo Isinmi* (the day of the Lord/ the day set apart for the worship of God). Consequently, coming to church or worship centres is an imperative obligation that every Christian believer has to observe. The people see Sunday as a day of rest. As the Jews held the Sabbath day as a day one must not do any other work,[407] so also do the Yoruba. It is well known among the Christian Yoruba that on Sundays, they have to close their shops and stay indoors in order to worship the Creator. They are usually loaded with enthusiasm which they believe should be displayed as a way of appreciation to the Supreme Being. The Yoruba people also see the mid-week service as *ipade adura* (prayer meeting). The purpose of this gathering is for adoration, supplication and intercession. To the Yoruba, every worship service is an opportunity to express one's heart of gratitude to God.

It must be noted *en passant* that praying had already been rooted among the Africans before the arrival of Christianity. In Chapter Two, I have explained how the typical African traditionalist (*Ogun worshipper*) prays (*wure*). One of the differences between Christian prayer and Yoruba traditional *iwure* (noun from *wure* - prays)[408] is the approach. The ATR worshipper believes that there are some materials needed for *iwure*. The materials could be food items and animals. In the case of Christian prayer, all the materials are not needed. It must also be noted that the faith of the devotees

406 John Mbiti (1986), *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Glasgow: Oxford University), p.69.

407 Pat Alexander (1987), *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* (England: Lion Publishing Plc), pp.121-122.

408 Ayo Opefeyitimi (1988) 'Iwure: Medium of Communicating the Desires of Men to God's in Yorubaland' *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XVIII(1), p.27.

plays a major role in the prayer of both religions. It is well known that the devotees of both religions also have intermittent roles to play in the course of prayer. When prayer is said (whether in public or private), the response of the Christian to such prayer is '*amin*' ('amen'- let it be so); while ATR says '*aase*' (so shall it be). Again the two responses connote a positive agreement on the said prayer.

African anthropologists have tried to study what prayer means in an African setting. Oduyoye affirmed that as far as prayer is concerned, 'no Yoruba lives outside the pale of prayer'.[409] The reason for this seriousness and persistence of Yoruba prayer could be because of the evil that is often perceived to be around them. It could also be due to the unknown future. This latter reason is illustrated with a Yoruba proverb '*Aimo bi ola yo ti ri ni mu ki Babalawo difa ororun*' (it is because of the unknown nature of the future that makes herbalists seek for knowledge of the future at every interval of five days). Mbiti observed that prayer 'is something taken for granted - something as natural and common as singing and dancing'.[410] He cited a series of examples to illustrate how prayer was and still is vital to the African Christians. One of the examples he cited was his experience in Kenya. According to his childhood experience, he and his parents often 'walked up to five kilometers (three and a half miles) to attend the night prayer services'[411]. Idowu expatiated on how prayer is offered in Yorubaland as follows:

> Prayers are offered, not only at worship, but also at any time and in any place…People often stop on their way at shrines to offer brief prayer; or they may speak their prayer in intimate ways to their divinity, whom they believe to be ever present though unseen, as they are engaged…Ejaculatory prayers at all times form part and parcel of the common life of the Yoruba.[412]

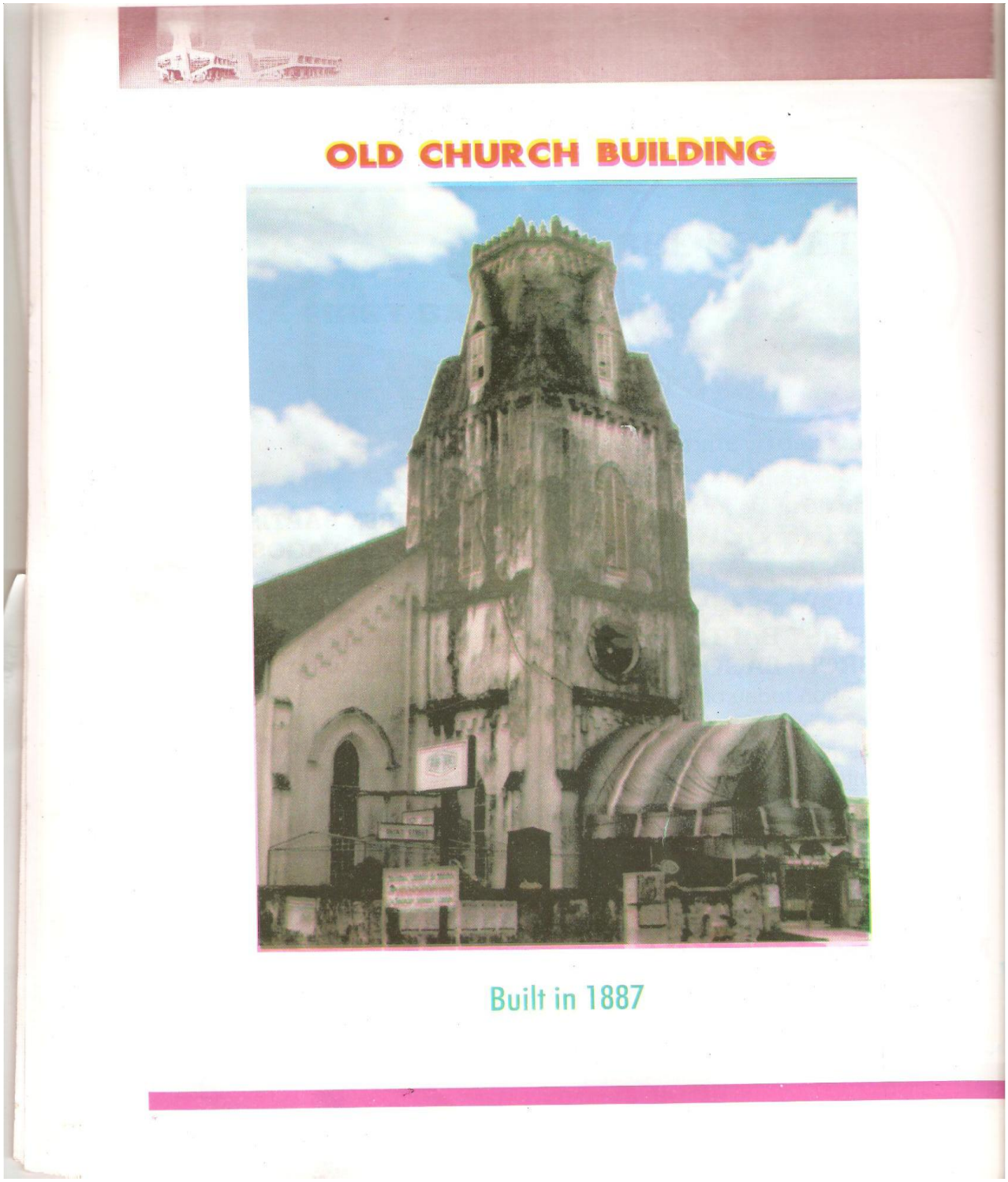
409 Modupe Oduyoye (1971), *Yoruba Religious Discourse* (Ibadan : Daystar Press), p.49.
410 Mbiti (1986), p.70.
411 Mbiti (1986), p.68.
412 E. Bolaji Idowu (1963), *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longman), p.117.

It was this passion of the African style of prayer that the majority of the Yoruba carried into Christianity. It is sad that instead of the Western missionaries willingly recognizing and encouraging this uniqueness among the Yoruba, they appeared to have quenched the spirit.

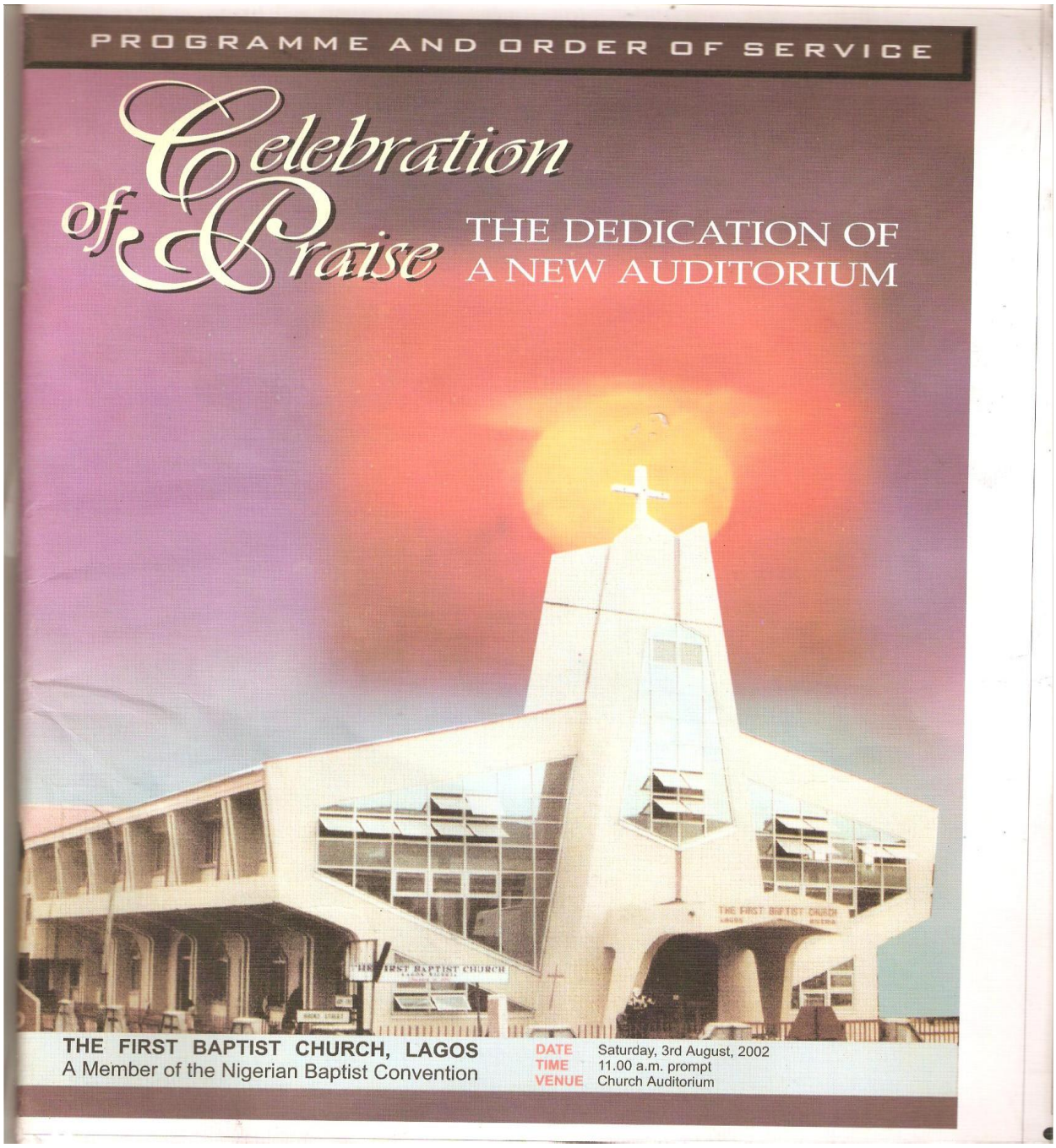
In the case of the NBC, the denomination experienced a Western influence in their worship/liturgy. Perhaps an examination of the order of service of a typical Yoruba Baptist Church might also help to understand the point I have been trying to underscore. I picked the order of worship of First Baptist Church, Lagos as a specimen for this research based on three reasons. Firstly, it is one of the churches directly founded by Western missionaries. Initially it was named 'American Baptist Church, Lagos, Nigeria by the Foreign Mission Board of the SBC'.[413] This church was under the leadership of the American missionaries for almost a century. The influence of the missionaries can be vividly seen, not only from the church programmes, but also from the architectural design of the old church building.[414]

413 D.A. Olaoshun (2003), *History of the First Baptist Church Lagos Vol.2 & 3* (Lagos: Trinity Home Mission Ministry), p.134.

414 See the pictures of both the Old and New Church Building of First Baptist Church Lagos, 24A, Broad Street, Lagos State, Nigeria for comparison.



The old Church building was built in 1887 and demolished in 1999 in order to make room for the new Church building. The foundation of the new building was laid in 1999, completed in 2001 and dedicated on 3rd August 2002.



Secondly, other Baptist churches in Lagos and outside Lagos took their root from this church. Consequently, most of the traditions of the other Yoruba Baptist Churches must have come from the progenitor - the First Baptist Church, Lagos. Thirdly, the church is located at the formal Federal Capital of Nigeria. Since Lagos still remains one of the main economic centres of Nigeria, there is still an influx of other states into

her, among which Yoruba tribes are included. The church is one of the big Baptist Churches where such people worshipped. The order of service includes:

1. Procession Baptist Hymn
2. Call to worship…..
3. Invocation…..
4. Announcements
5. Tithes & Offering
6. Bible Reading
7. Choir Song
8. Preaching
9. Closing Hymn
10. Prayer and Benediction[415]

From the above order of worship for First Baptist Church, Lagos, it is clear that the programme did not give room for the worshippers to participate in the service. All that seemed to be expected of these worshippers, according to the design of the order of worship, was to either watch or listen to whoever was presiding. The area that one may think that the members could participate in the service was during the congregtional hymn. However, since some of them could not read, they were left with the option of becoming spectators during the service. Today, the order of service of the church carries every worshipper along as reflected in the church programme below:

YORUBA SERVICE (10:30AM)
A NSIN OLORUN FUN IRE RE/WORSHIP GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS
Pelu Orin Iyin/With Hymn of Praise YHB 8
Pelu Oro Imisi & Adura/With Word of Inspiration & Prayer
Pelu Orin Ogo/ With Hymn of Glory YHB 285
Pelu Ikini/With Greetings
Pelu Orin Ope/With Praises
OLORUN SORO IRE RE/GOD SPEAKS OF HIS GOODNESS
Orin Ibukun/Song of Blessing
Lati Inu Iwe Mimo/From the Scripture
Lati Enu Awon Akorin/Choir Ministration
Lati Enu Iranse Re/From His Servert
Lati Inu Adura/From the Prayer for Favour

415 The First Baptist Church Lagos (1976, 29th August), *Order of Service for Sunday Worship.*

A NDAHUN SI IRE OLORUN/WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GOODNESS
Nipase Ore ati Idamewa/Through Tithes & Offerings (YHB 20)
Nipa Ifilo/Through Announcement
Nipa Idupe Igbeyawo/Through Marriage Thanksgiving
Nipa Adura ati Ore-Ofe/Through Prayer & Benediction
Nipa Orin Akojade/Through Recessional Hymn YHB 235[416]

From the above Church worship programme, praise in prayer was included. The singing of praises to God is an aspect of worship where both literate and illiterate participate fully. Lindon affirmed that the concept of praise in prayer has been known to the Yoruba for a long time.[417] The word praise is *iyin* in the Yoruba language. According to Lindon, *oriki* (cognomen) is a version of a hymn of praise which is often used in worshipping *orisas*. Each *orisa* has his/her *oriki*. 'In *oriki orisa*, the names and deeds, status and power, points of character and appearance, likes and dislikes of the particular *orisa* are proclaimed in a pithy statement.'[418] Whenever this *oriki* is sung, the Yoruba believe that such *orisa* will be happy and grant whatever request is presented before him/her. As Lindon claimed, 'the Yoruba concept of religious praise can only be understood in the light of their custom of honouring people by reciting their *oriki*'.[419]

The Yoruba people are not alone in this singing of praise. In Exodus 15:1–21, Moses and Miriam led the people of Israel in mentioning the deeds and strength of the Lord. Hannah in I Samuel 2:1-11 prayed to the Lord in songs. Hannah's prayer here was a song of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. The Israelites also sang on their way from the battle with Goliath (I Samuel 18:5-7). The whole book of Psalms are songs,

416 The First Baptist Church Lagos (2010, 24th January), *Order of Service for Sunday Worship.*
417 Thomas Lindon (1990), 'Oriki Orisa: The Yoruba Prayer of Praise', *Journal of Religion in Africa,* XX(2), p.205.
418 Lindon (1990), p.206.
419 Lindon (1990), p.206.

of which the majority were sung by David to the Lord. If all the aforementioned men and women of God sang the praises of God in their own indigenous way, what is wrong if the Yoruba do the same to the Lord? Why must they praise God in the same tunes and use the same musical instruments as the Americans and Europeans? Are there not indigenous ways of praising God in Yorubaland? These questions will be answered in the next chapter.

4.3. THE WESTERN INFLUENCE ON THE YORUBA CLOTHES/DRESSING

It is a well-known fact that the Yoruba, like other Africans, have varieties of clothes for different functions from ancient times and before the arrival of Westernization. They have farm work suits as well as the gorgeous dresses for festivities and ceremonies. These clothings include apron (*ibante*), short breeches, *ibora* (loose cloth), vest, gowns, loose shirts, (*buba, dansiki, esiki, dandogo agbada, sapara, gbariye)*. There are also different trousers (*sokoto*) like *kembe, oyala, tontinrin, efa* and *agadansin*. Also, there are caps like *abeti-aja* (dog-ear-like cap), *origi* and *labarikada*.[420] On the other hand, women also have clothes for different occasions. The women's clothes include *tobi* (apron), *agbeko* (pinafore), *iro ati buba* (wrapper and short gown or blouse), *gele* (head tie) and *iborun* (veil or shawl) to mention a few.[421] The Yoruba still have other valuable materials such as beads, brass, iron, lead, gold bracelets, rings, *osun* (camblood paint), *tiro* (antimony paint) etc. among other things the Yoruba use for adorning themselves.[422] Consequently the Yoruba, like any other tribes, can be described as a people full of customs and costumes.

420 Samuel Johnson (1921), *The History of the Yorubas* (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd.), pp.110–112.
421 K. Ajisafe (1964), *History of Abeokuta* (Abeokuta: Fola Book Shops), p.24.
422 Ajisafe (1964), p.24.

As Imasogie lamented, most of the cherished African cultural heritage became things to be ashamed of as a result of Western influence. In his words, Imasogie claimed:

> It is only fair to mention here that Christianity played a major role in the westernization of Africa. This was made easy by the failure of the early apologists to distinguish between the eternal Gospel and Western cultural hues through which he expressed it. His inability to see this led him to insist that one must assume foreign names at his baptism and wear Western apparel to church worship service as if Christianity was synonymous with Western civilization.[423]

One such cultural heritage influenced by westernization is the mode of dressing, particularly in Yorubaland. From the report of the research carried out among the Yoruba Baptist Christians in Nigeria and presented in Chapter Five of this work, it can be seen that the Yoruba people abandoned their traditional ways of dressing for Western dressing. I have said earlier that in *The Students' Handbook* of the NBTS, Ogbomoso compelled all students to wear Western clothes during official services.[424] In the light of this, it has been part of the orientation given from the seminary that to put on Western dress is to dress officially.

The questions that may come to one's mind now include: is there anything wrong with African, particularly Yoruba clothes? Why can we not use our native dress and costumes during worship? What does the Bible say about wearing of local dress in worship?

Obviously, as a minister, it can be argued that the scripture does not forbid the putting on of local materials in worshipping God. Instead, Alexander maintained that

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423 Osadolor Imasogie (1992), 'A Christian Attitude to Cultural Revival' *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology,* 7 (December), p.3.

424 The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria: *Students' Handbook 1992 ed*. Article II:2. (Bound Copy) .

'because of the hot climate and the limited number of materials available, dress remained fairly standard in Israel for most of that time'[425] Alexander claimed that there was a difference in the clothes of the rich and the poor. The difference was mainly in the quality of the materials used by both calibre of the people in ancient Israel. For instance, 'the poor peasant had only the woollen or goat's hair clothes he stood up in. But rich people had clothes for leisure, clothes of different materials - fine linen, or even silk'.[426] Regardless of the types of clothes of the poor and the rich, it can be argued that these clothes were made from the available local materials like the hair of goats and sheep, and sewn based on their cultural orientation.

Although there was an indication that the prophets in the Old Testament tend to have a common cloth, it was not mandatory. Alexander claimed 'coarse, rough clothing was worn by the prophets.[427] Prophet Elijah (II Kings 1) and John the Baptist (Mark 1:6) were said to have worn such clothes. Using Jesus as a model, he (Jesus) entered into this world at a particular time. As a Palestinian, he wore the clothes of his immediate environment. There was no indication that Jesus Christ or any of his disciples wore any 'uniform'. Otherwise, there would not have been a need for an insider to identify Jesus before his arrest (Matthew 26:47–49). In addition, it must also be noted that there was no indication that Jesus Christ or his disciples wore foreign clothes, rather it was their native clothes, and yet they ministered effectively to the needs of the people of their time. After the ascension of Jesus, there was no indication that the Apostle Paul also had special clothes for ministration. As Jesus has demonstrated cultural

425 Pat Alexander (1987), *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* (England: Lion Publishing Plc), p.169.
426 Alexander (1987), p.169.
427 Alexander (1987), p.170.

affinity within his context, so also I believe it is legitimate for the Yoruba Christians and their pastors to indigenize their faith too.

If the above assertions are true, then why must African Yoruba pastors be forced to put on Western clothes before they can minister in their native land? What spiritual adornments do coats and trousers have that Yoruba native clothes do not have? To me, the clothes one puts on during ministration/worship is not the most important element before God, but it is the level of faith and commitment to God that matters most. It is also the grace of God upon His servant that makes him/her different; it is not the type of clothes one puts on. Therefore, I believe the demand for Western clothes on Africans is unbiblical.

4.4. THE WESTERN INFLUENCE ON MUSIC/MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Music has been described as one of the greatest 'arts that communicates more directly to the heart and emotions'[428] of humankind. The process of making this music relevant to Africa (particularly Nigeria) has received attention from many indigenes. Vindal observed that the early European missionaries have westernized African music since the colonial days.[429] He dated this westernization of African music from 1841 to 1902, a period when Western musical instruments were brought into Nigeria.[430] Adegbite also confirmed that Christian missionaries had their impact on church music in Yorubaland. He lamented that '… a church which calls itself 'African Church' needs to make attempts to evolve an approach to the worship of God in an African

428 George Janvieer (2007), *Leading the Church in Music and Worship* (Kaduna: Baraka Press & Publishers Ltd), p.3.
429 Tunji Vindal (1986), *Ife: Annals of Institute of Cultural Studies* (Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press Limited, p.71.
430 Vindal (1986), p.71.

way so that Christian faith could be brought home to the minds of ordinary people in the language they understand'.[431] Fela Sowande examined the past and the present music ministry in Nigeria. In his article entitled: 'Nigerian Music and Musicians: Then and Now', he examined the place of Western music and its effects on Nigerian music. In his conclusion, he warned that 'Nigerian musicians are expected to work only within the limits of traditional (Nigerian) form of music'.[432]

Laz Ekwueme, who approached this study from sociological perspectives, used the experience of Martin Luther's Reformation in Germany to challenge the music of the contemporary Nigerians. According to him, just as Martin Luther employed the vernacular in making his people experience a meaningful worship in Germany, Nigerians should embrace their languages and use them in any form of Christian worship, which includes singing.[433]

In the opinion of Kato, before the gospel message can be relevant to the Africans, musical instruments such as organ and piano need to be replaced or supplemented with the indigenous musical instruments.[434] Since he approached music ministry from a theological perspective, he maintained that local musical instruments should be used without jeopardy to the truth of the word of God.[435] Edet also examined the state of music in Nigeria. In his article, 'Music in Nigeria', he examined music from the perspective of whether to continue in the Western form of music or to incorporate

431 Ademola Adegbite (1994), 'Christian Missionaries and their Impact on Church Music in Yorubaland' *African: Marburgensia*, Special Issue (15), p 90.
432 Fela Sowande (1967), 'Nigerian Music and Musician: Then and Now' *Nigerian Magazine,* No. 94, September, p.260.
433 Lazarus Nnanyeln Ekwueme (1973/4), African Music in Christian Liturgy: the Igbo Experience' *African Music Society Journal,* 5(3), p.15.
434 Byang H. Kato (1985), *Biblical Christian in Africa* (Ghana: African Christian Press), p.24.
435 Kato (1985), p.24.

Nigerian features in Christian worship. If the worship will be meaningful to the worshippers, he claimed, it has to be conducted in the language of the audience. Consequently, he maintained that Nigerians cannot afford not to incorporate Nigerian features in church music.[436]

From what has been said by the above scholars, it is evident that African music and musical instruments have been greatly influenced by the Westerners. Olaoshun also noted in the honour roll of organists and choirmasters of First Baptist Church, Lagos that American missionaries were the ones in charge of the music of the church from its inception for over seventy-three years. In his words:

> Originally, Organists and Choirmasters of the Church were American missionaries of both sexes, and we were told that they proved their worth and helped to groom many Nigerians, who eventually took over from them. Many of these we do not know, but with effect from the early 1930s, when our own people were in charge, we can still remember them and their contributions.[437]

Acknowledgement needs to be given to the missionaries who had laboured in the aforementioned capacities since 1857 to the 1930s.[438] Despite the fact that the American missionaries controlled the music and musical instruments of the First Baptist Church Lagos, the church from where all other Baptist Churches both in the Lagos metropolis and outside were dispersed, shows to what extent the missionaries must have influenced the aspects of church worship for over seventy-three years. As the Yoruba proverb says, *'bi ewe b'ape lara ose a di ose'* (when a leaf stays long with soap, it will eventually become soap), one may not be surprised about the Western form of music in the Baptist community today.

436 E.M. Edet (1964), 'Music in Nigeria' *African Music* 3(3), p.112.
437 Olaoshun (2003), p.54.
438 Olaoshun (2003), p.173.

Needless to say the drum plays a key role in the social and religious life of the Africans. Dele Ogunlade, the Dean of the Faculty of Music at the NBTS, Ogbomoso, Nigeria claimed that the importance of indigenous musical instruments in the lives of Africans cannot be over emphasized.[439] He also claimed that although most of the Yoruba musical instruments were rejected by missionaries on the grounds that the instruments were identified with idols in Yoruba communities, these musical instruments were often used by the same people after church services. For instance, it is common knowledge that the *Ayans* (the local musical drummers) who usually accompany the celebrants from their homes to their churches, were not allowed to come into churches with these local drums. These *Ayans* would stay outside the church till the end of such a service. When the celebrants came out of their church after the service, they would also use these drums to accompany them home with indigenous music and dance. At present, the decree on the usage of local drums has faded out, but most of the instruments are no longer available. The reason for this lapse is not hard to find. It could be because of the past orientation given to the Yoruba Christians by the early missionaries. It could also be as a result of the effect of modernization in Africa.

It must be noted, however, that drums are played by *Ayan* families. Each drum has its own *Ayan* family designated to play that kind of drum. For instance, in each town or community in Yorubaland, there is an *Ayan* family called *Alubata* (*Bata* Drummer's Family). In most cases, the family's compound of such people is named after their profession, i.e., *Alubata Compound*. There is also a family designated to play talking drums in each community. The family place of abode in the community is also called

439 Dele Ogunlade (2009, 17 December). Interviewed. Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso.

Alayan Compound. Today, one does not necessarily need to come from an *ayan* family before one can play any of the drums in the church. As long as one has the skills, the person is allowed to play the musical instruments.

One of the reasons why talking drums are used in social and religious occasions is because of the ability of the drums, particularly '*Iya-Ilu*' (talking drum's mother), to speak Yoruba words when played by an *Ayan*. [440] As Kaplan said, 'ecstatic communication between the worshippers and their *Orisa* (gods) becomes a more meaningful event on the *dundun* drum (talking drum).'[441] This supports the report I present in Chapter Five of this work about a woman who claimed she always felt at home whenever talking drums were used in church services. Based on my observations in all the Baptist Churches where I have conducted participant-observation, it can be argued that whenever talking drums are used in church services, the low tempo of the service and the high, silent mood of the worshippers often changes to dancing and jubilation, and partial participation of the congregation changes into full celebration galore in such services.

4.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have tried to show the influences of the Western missionaries on the worship of the Baptist Churches in the Yoruba areas of Nigeria. The areas of influence include theology, worship, clothing, music and musical instruments.

440 Steven Kaplan (1988, February), 'Drum and Its Role in Yoruba Religion' *Journal of Religion in Africa,* 18(1), p.20.

441 Kaplan (1988), p.20.

On theology, the Yoruba Christians (like other Africans) seem to depend too much on Western theologies. This over-dependence seems to be the result of psychological slavery which I will discuss in the next chapter. The Westerners appeared to be the think-tanks for the church, despite its location among the Yoruba. The worship service has been a copy of the SBC way of worship, which is devoid of dancing, clapping and twisting of the body. Most of the churches did not have indigenous musical instruments which are cheaper and available close by. Above all, the pastors are forced to put on English clothes as their official dress. In other words, to dress in coat and tie is to dress corporately among the NBC pastors. The influences were, however, not without their consequences. And so the next chapter engages with the view of the Yoruba Baptist Church worshippers on some areas of their Christian worship.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES: SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

5.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the responses of the questionnaire distributed within the Yoruba Baptist congregation co-operating with the NBC. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information from the primary source about how Christian worship can be contextualized among its adherents within the Yoruba communities. The questionnaire also tried to elicit information about the influence of the Western world on the worship of the Baptist denomination in Yorubaland. Based on the questionnaire, the Euro-American influences on worship in the areas of materials for Holy Communion, music/musical instruments, marriage and pastors' clothing in Christian worship were identified.

5.1. SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

I need to acknowledge the fact that investigative visits were made to Churches which, together with previous personal experience of the life of the Church, provided the basis from which the questionnaire was devised. The interaction gives the researcher an opportunity 'to understand how the group develops a skein of relations and cultural constructions that tie it together'.[442] An investigative visit is a method of enquiry that tries to gain a deeper knowledge about various networks of relationships within the group being studied. This deeper knowledge of relationships can be comprehended through an observation of the day to day activities of the people. Consequently, one

442 Steve Herbert (2000), 'For Ethnography' *Progress in Human Geography 24(4),* http://phg.sagepub.com/content/24/4/550 Retrieved on 22 October 2010, p.551.

needs to worship with the people in order to elicit more information and to compare the information with that gathered through the questionnaire.

My investigative visits took place from 1 December 2007 to 28 March 2008. During these periods I was able to visit four Churches within the four Conferences where early missionaries directly lived, worked and established Baptist Churches; i.e., one Church from each Conference. The Conferences were Ogbomoso, Ogun, Lagos, and Oyo West. All the Churches were the first Baptist Church established in each of the Conferences I visited. I picked these Churches because I believe they have original traditions which were passed on to them from the early missionaries. I also used these Churches in order to compare what I read in literature with what is practised in those contemporary Baptist Churches. I stayed at least four weeks in each church. It is a well-known fact that the Yoruba Christians do engage themselves with prayers toward the end and at the beginning of every year. This is not to say that they do not pray during other months of the year. The zeal for prayer during December and January among the Yoruba can be argued to be high every year. Due to accidents, mysterious and destructive events that are commonly associated with the end and the beginning of every year, people do pray to God to wave away such events. In reality, accidents do happen as a result of speeding when driving, carelessness, drink-driving and evil attack. On evil attack, Olukoju claimed:

> The Yoruba recognize the existence of witches and wizards who are imbued with some supernatural powers and who are wicked and merciless, having no regard for anybody, even their own children or close relations. They cause havoc, misery and death to people's lives and afflict them with incurable diseases, poverty, irreparable loss and sorrow...[443]

443 E.O. Olukoju (1997), '*Esu* in the Belief of the Yoruba' *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XXIX(1-2), June, p.13.

In order to prevent the aforementioned attacks from the devil and his agents, it has been the practice of the Yoruba people, regardless of their denominational affiliation, to commit themselves to God at the beginning and towards the end of every year.

Because of time constraints, I worshipped in the sampled Churches both on Sunday and during their weekly programmes, such as Bible study and prayer service. Two of the Churches I visited had a week of prayer; while the third one had a revival service. These weekly programmes were to my advantage because they allowed me to observe them daily and in full capacity. The fourth Church I visited had their normal weekly programmes. I visited the Church in March. Based on what I have seen during my investigative visits, I drew up my questionnaire which was administered in April to June 2009.

In the course of my investigative visits, I discovered that Stringer's view on ethnographic participant-observation about the study of worship is also germane to my research.[444] Stringer claimed that ethnography observes what people claimed they do, what the investigator observes they are doing, and what the people are doing in reality.[445] The observer looks into these three aspects of life and analyses them together in order to verify the actual style of the people under study. While surveys such as questionnaires can reveal what people say they are doing, an investigation visit is capable of eliciting information on what the people are actually doing in their real life. Thus, in Christian worship, the dynamism of worship seems better studied through investigative visits. Consequently, before one can actually comprehend the

444 Martin D. Stringer (1999), *On the Perception of Worship* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press), p. 8. Here Stringer claimed that ethnographic participant observation is possibly the most effective research method to adopt in investigating worship.

445 Stringer (1999), p.50.

nature of posture in, and emotion during worship of the Yoruba Christians of the NBC, one needs to spend a considerable time in worship with the people in addition to questionnaire administration.

During the investigative visits, the difference between what the people claimed they do and the reality of their worship was better comprehended. For instance, I was able to see the difference in the mode of dancing and cheerfulness in worship during the usage of Euro-American musical instruments and Yoruba musical instruments. In addition, I witnessed how talking drums moved the people to jubilation and dancing acrobatically before altars. I also saw the difference in the attitude of singing hymns from the *Baptist Hymn Book* and choruses composed locally. I was able to distinguish the sense of belonging of the people depending on whether the English or Yoruba language was used. I observed that the younger members and the elites seemed to be the ones using the English language; while the older ones preferred their local language. The reason for these differences will be analysed later.

I also need to recognise the fact that in spite of all the ethical steps that I have taken, as I analysed the data collected I realized that some of the questions in the questionnaire seemed to be leading. Despite this weakness, the responses seemed to suggest the people want change. In the response to the questionnaire sent out among the Yoruba Baptist Christians in Nigeria, the respondents were required to comment on six major areas. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix I.

Section I of the questionnaire dealt with demographic information about the respondents. 305 (42.5%) and 413 (57.5%) of the respondents were female and male

respectively. (See *Appendix II, Table I* for detail.) The fact that there was a significant difference between the number of responses of men and women seemed to indicate the domineering attitude of men in the Yoruba society. I have explained the domineering attitude of men in most decisions in Yorubaland in Chapter Two. The difference could also be as a result of the submissive nature of the Yoruba women to their male counterparts in sensitive issues like religious matters. The age of male respondents ranged between 18-70 years; while the age of female ranged between 18–67 years. The academic qualification of the male respondents include Primary Six, WAEC, GCE, NCE, B.Ed., B.Sc., B.Th., M.Th. and Ph.D.; while the female respondents include Primary six, WAEC, GCE, NCE, B.Ed., B.Sc., B.Th., M.Th. As to the states of the origin of the respondents, 9.5% (68) and 8.9% (64) came from Ekiti and Kogi respectively; while 9.2% (66) and 10.9% (78) also came from Kwara and Lagos accordingly. Oyo State has the highest number of respondents with 32.0% (230). The reason for these highest respondents will be explained later. 9.7% (70) of the respondents came from Ogun State; while other 10.6% (76) came from Ondo State. In the case of Osun State, 9.2% (66) emerged from there. Regarding the conference of origin[446] of the respondents, 8.8% (63) and 7.9% (57) came from Ekiti and Kogi respectively; while Kwara and Lagos Conferences have 9.6% (69) and 12.0% (86) accordingly. Other conferences include Ogbomoso 11.1% (80), Ogun 9.0% (65), Oke-Ogun 9.4% (68), Ondo 10.6% (76), Osun 10.0% (72) and Oyo 11.6% (83). Oyo State has the highest number of respondents. The reason for this is the fact

446 As I have explained in Chapter One, conference is the geographical division of the national body of the NBC. It is like state division; however, in some States in Nigeria, Baptist Churches are grouped into two or more conferences probably because of density of the local churches in them. Conference of origin, therefore, is the group to which each respondent belonged as at the time of the administration of this questionnaire. This conference of origin does not necessarily mean the respondent came from the State each conference falls into.

that there are three Baptist Conferences in Oyo State alone. They are: Ogbomoso, Oke Ogun and Oyo West Conferences.[447]

As to the language of worship in Section II, all the respondents indicated that they use both English and Yoruba languages in their worship services. (See *Appendix II, Table II* for detail.) The majority of the respondents - 68.7% (493), however, claimed Yoruba is the language that dominates in their churches; while 31.3% (225) maintained English language dominates their own church worship services. Lagos Baptist Conference has the highest number of English speaking Churches; while Oyo West has the lowest. The reason could be the fact that Lagos State is like 'no man's land'; while Oyo West is in the traditional site of the Yoruba. Almost all tribes, states and many international communities reside in Lagos. Consequently, this compels many of these people to join the church of their choice regardless of their language. The handful of non-Yoruba speakers in the congregation make it imperative to create an English Service at par with the Yoruba service for such people. Notwithstanding, it can be argued that there are some Yoruba indigenes that claimed to be comfortable with English worship because of their Western orientation. This aspect will be dealt with later. In the case of Oyo West, it can be argued that the majority of the Baptist Church members are indigenes of the communities under the Conference. From the questionnaire gathered from Oyo West, there were more semi-illiterates in the membership of the Churches there than anywhere else.[448] This could be one of the reasons why Church worship services are mostly conducted in Yoruba, the language which the majority of the members understand properly.

447 *Nigerian Baptist Convention Book of Annual Report* (2008), (Ibadan: Baptist Building).
448 Out of 83 respondents from Oyo West, 31 Primary 6/WAEC, 20 NCE/Diploma Certificates, 17 Graduates and 15 Post Graduates as their level of education.

The comments of the respondents on the responses of the Yoruba people to indigenous worship style and the exciting form of Christian worship are fascinating. Some of the respondents claim that, 'it is the Yoruba cultural way of worship'; 'it could possibly be that the Yoruba like such a form of worship because of the traditional background coupled with culture'; or 'it is a way to prevent fatigue and boredom in worship'.

Section III elicited information on the Eucharist. In response to the questionnaire, it is the general opinion of the respondents that *'Akara'* (Bread) in Yoruba region is known as a type of local food made from grounded beans fried in hot palm/groundnut oil. 92.2% (662) respondents listed Yoruba *akara* as the local food to be used in the place of bread mentioned in the Bible for Eucharist. (See *Appendix II, Table III* for detail.) Some of the local foods suggested in addition to local *'akara'* by other respondents include: roasted yam 05.4% (39) and roasted plantain 02.4% (17). Most of the respondents affirmed that in as much as Jesus used the local food available in Palestine during his time, they are of the opinion that there is nothing wrong if they, as Yoruba, use their own staple food available to them. There were others who were not sure whether Yoruba *akara* will be acceptable to Christendom. The comments of such people include 'if local *akara* is acceptable, no problem', 'I don't mind', 'if it is allowed'. A respondent whom I suspected to be one of the members commented that 'This is an issue to be discussed by the pastors, let them tell us which one is the right one to use for the Lord's Supper'. From the above comments, it seems the church members are expecting the theologians (pastors as indicated above) to take the lead.

In the case of wine which symbolizes Jesus' blood, the respondents also maintained that there are local drinks to replace the imported wines. (See *Appendix II, Table IV*

for detail.) 60.6% (435) out of 718 respondents from the ten Baptist Conferences where this data was collected suggested *sobo drink* to be a good symbolic blood of Jesus Christ for sacrament. 24.5% (176) of the respondents also mentioned *oyin igan* (diluted honey with water) for the same purpose during Eucharist. Other suggestions from the respondents include: pineapple juice 03.5% (25); mango juice 04.9% (35) and orange juice 06.5% (47).

Section IV was on Western and local musical instruments. According to the responses on the Western musical instruments, jazz drum, piano, guitar and tambourines are said to be found in all the sampled Yoruba Baptist Churches. All the respondents 100% (718) indicated that the above mentioned Western musical instruments are regularly used in their worship services. (See *Appendix II, Table V* for detail.) 27% (195) and 6.3% (45) respondents also affirmed the presence of accordion and pipe organs respectively in their Churches.

In the case of Yoruba (local) musical instruments, all the 718 (100%) respondents claimed that *Agogo* and *Sekere* are available in their Churches; while 76.0% (546) confirmed the regular usage of *Akuba/Koso* in their Churches. 68.4% (491) and 45.7% (328) of the respondents acknowledged the use of *Gangan* and *Iya Ilu* (Talking Drum) respectively in their worship services; while 20.8% (149) and 16.6% (119) respondents claimed they have and often use *Bembe* and *Omele Dundun* respectively. Only 2.1% (15) respondents indicated the use of *Bata* in their Church services. There was no indication of the presence of *Kerikeri, Kangogo, aro, apiti* and *gudugudu* in all the sampled Baptist Churches in Yorubaland.

There were various comments on the responses of the Yoruba worshippers in the sampled Baptist Churches to both Western and local musical instruments used during worship. Some of the comments of the respondents on Western musical instruments include: 'Western musical instruments are sometimes not danceable'; 'the tunes are foreign; not indigenous'; 'no competent instrumentalists to handle them properly'.

Regarding the local musical instruments, the comments of the respondents include: 'very happy'; 'full of joy of the Lord'; 'people feel at home'; 'feeling of indigenous'; rejoicing'; 'excited'; 'inspired'; 'moved in the spirit'; 'thrilled'; feeling of the presence of God in the service'; 'provoked to participate in worship' and 'feeling of the divine touch'. On the observation of the people about the response of the worshippers to local musical instruments, the majority of the respondents claim that 'local instruments speak the language of the people'. Others are of the opinion that local musical instruments have danceable tones that match local songs, while Western musical instruments could be adapted to local music, but are good when used for Western hymns.

From the Section V of the Questionnaire, the average yearly number of weddings conducted per church in which this data were collected was six weddings. 84.8% (609) of the respondents indicated that majority of brides and grooms wear Western clothes during their wedding services in sampled Baptist Churches in Yorubaland; while 15.2% (109) of the respondents claimed they have seen some brides and grooms wearing native clothing during their Church wedding. (See *Appendix II, Table VI* for detail.) 48.9% (351) of the respondents also confirmed that wedding services are conducted in Yoruba language in their Churches; while 24% (172) and 27.2% (195) of

the respondents said the service is conducted in the English language and a mixture of both Yoruba and English languages in their Churches respectively. In the case of hymns used during the service, 61% (438) of the respondents confirmed that their hymns were sung in the Yoruba language; while 39% (280) of the respondents said their hymns were sung in English. 16.4% (118) respondents affirmed that they have seen pastors (officiating priests) wearing native dress while conducting wedding services; while 83.6% (600) respondents claimed their pastors do wear English clothing while conducting wedding services. In the case of the congregation's clothes during wedding services, the majority of the respondents (82.5% (592)) claimed worshippers usually wear their native attire, while 17.5% (126) responded that they have seen a few members wearing English clothing to Church during wedding services.

From this descriptive analysis, one can infer that the majority of the brides and grooms in Baptist Churches in Yorubaland go to wedding services in their respective Churches with English clothing, even when the services are conducted in Yoruba language. Secondly, the majority of the pastors wear English clothing whilst officiating wedding programmes, even when the majority of their audience are Yoruba people in native attire. The reason for these discrepancies has been addressed in the previous chapter.

The responses to the pastors' dressing in Section VI show that the majority of the Baptist Pastors in the sampled Churches often put on English clothes during their worship services. (See Appendix II, Table VII for detail.) For instance, out of the 63 respondents in Ekiti Conference, 42 (66.7%) respondents indicated that their pastor

often puts on English clothes during worship; while only 21 (33.3%) claimed their own pastors use Yoruba clothes while leading worship services. In the case of Kongi and Kwara, 29 (51.8%) and 45 (65.2%) affirmed English clothing against 27 (48.2%) and 24 (34.8%) of Yoruba clothing respectively. The response of Ogbomoso Conference reveals that 51(63.8%) claimed their pastor often puts on English clothes; while 29 (36.2%) of the respondents confirmed Yoruba clothes. 38 (58.5%) out of 65 respondents in Ogun confirmed that their pastors often use English clothes in worship services; while the remaining 27 (41.5%) maintained Yoruba clothing. In the case of Oke Ogun, 36 (52.9%) indicated English clothes during worship; while only 32 (47.1%) claimed that their pastors often put on Yoruba clothes. Lagos Conference has the highest number of the pastors who put on English clothes during worship. According to their responses, 77 (89.5%) out of the 86 respondents claimed their pastors often put on English clothes, while 9 (10.5%) affirmed their pastors often put on Yoruba clothes during worship. In the case of Ondo and Osun Conferences, 45 (59.2%) and 53 (73.6%) claimed their pastors often put on English clothes; while 31 (40.8%) and 19 (26.4%) signified that their pastors often use Yoruba clothes in worship services respectively. In Oyo Conference, 49 (59.0%) claimed their pastor often used English clothes; while 34 (41%) maintained that their pastors often use Yoruba clothes in worship. Above all, 465 (64.8%) out of 718 responses indicated that their pastors often put on English clothes as against 253 (35.2%) who claimed that their pastors often put on native clothes. Based on the overall data analysis of the above, it can be argued that the majority of the Baptist pastors often dress in English clothes during worship in their respective Churches. The reasons for this preference will be discussed later.

The respondents stated that they wear the following clothes when attending Church services: *Agbada* and *sokoto, Iro* and *Buba, Esiki, Aso Ofi, Buba* and *Sooro, Mola Style, Kaftan, Kembe, Kampala* and trousers. Others include T-shirt, shirt and trouser and coat. The respondents stated that they thought their pastor should be dressed in the following types of clothing: *Agbada, Esiki, Buba ati Soro, Iro ati Buba, Aso Ofi, Kampala Kembe and Gbariye*. Other response includes: 'no preference as long as whatever they (pastors) put on does not hinder their ministration'. On the reasons for the preference of the type of clothing for pastors during worship, the majority repeated their responses regarding the question on whether there is anything wrong for the contemporary Baptist pastor to put on their local clothing during ministration. The comments include: 'there is nothing wrong', 'it is biblical', 'it is a way to contextualize worship', 'it is a sign of indigenous Christian worship' and 'it is the inculturation of Christianity'. In the questionnaire response, a respondent sees the Baptist pastors' putting on of the Yoruba indigenous clothing as 'the total freedom from the slavery which came along with Christianity right from the inception'.

5.2. RELECTIONS ON THE THEMES EMERGING IN THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Once the questionnaires were returned, an established methodology of qualitative interpretation was applied. The information given was validated by comparing the data with the information gathered from investigative visits. I also compared the information available in the literature on the subject before generalization was made on the whole population. Hammersley defines validity as the extent to which the information given by the subject accurately represents the phenomena to which it

refers.[449] Lee quoting Midanik remarked that most researchers used to refuse to validate their result by comparing them with data from other sources. Some of the reasons he mentioned include the tediousness and expense of such research.[450] There are a number of different sources of criteria which can be used to assess the validity of data. According to Lee, the sources include (i) other information obtained from within the interview/questionnaire itself; (ii) data from other surveys; (iii) collateral reports, for example, from family members, partners etc., (iv) the use of official reports, (v) episode data such as sales records and others.[451]

Nevertheless, from the questionnaire administered and investigative visits conducted among the Yoruba Baptist members in Nigeria, their responses can be summarized under five headings, namely: alienation, confusion, dissatisfaction, protest and re-orientation. These five headings will now be developed.

A. Alienation

The word 'alienation' has been defined from different perspectives. For instance, in law, it is known as 'the voluntary and absolute transfer of title and possession of real property from one person to another'.[452] Alienation is a concept that was used in German philosophy during the 18th and 19th centuries.[453] Alienation became a significant word in sociology through Karl Marx.[454] Marx defined alienation as 'a

449 Martyn Hammesersley, *Reading Ethnographic Research: A Critical Guide, (2d. ed.)*, (London: Longman), p.62.
450 Raymod M. Lee (1993), Doing *Research on Sensitive Topics,* (London, Newbury Park and New Delhi: SAGE Publications), p.90.
451 Lee (1993), p.90.
452 The Free Dictionary By Farlex 'Alienation' Retrieved from http://www.thefreedictionary.com/alienation on 16 November 2010.
453 Alienation: Online Dictionary of the Social Sciences. Retrieved from bitbucket.icaap.org/dict.pl on 16th November 2010.
454 Alienation: Online Dictionary of the Social Sciences.

separation of individuals from control and direction of their social life'.[455] He was of the opinion that humankind's alienation came as a result of the socially structured separation between human beings and their works. He claimed that in capitalist societies where most workers depend on the direction of others, the separation reached the highest intensity. According to Marx, in capitalist societies, individuals were separated from ownership and were controlled and directed by their bosses. As a result of this dependence, the workers were unable to work based on their personal creative expression. They could also not meet some of their own needs such as job-satisfaction and job-reward.

From the above explanations, alienation is living like a foreigner in one's fatherland with or without consciousness. It seems to be a gradual process which may involve the individual and their community. Dean used three words to describe the state of alienation in individual and community life, namely: powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation.[456] By powerlessness, Dean meant a state in which one is 'being used for purposes other than his own'[457] wish or intention. In the case of normlessness, he argued that it is a state of purposelessness which could arise as a result of 'absence of values that might give purpose or direction to life, the loss of intrinsic and socialized value, the insecurity of the hopelessly disoriented'.[458] Whereas social isolation could be 'a feeling of separation or isolation from the group standard'.[459] Alienation which is like a state of sleep often leads to confusion. Confusion arises because of the differences between the fantasies during sleep and the reality of life.

455 Alienation: Online Dictionary of the Social Sciences.
456 Dwight G. Dean (1961), Alienation: Its Meaning and Measurement' *American Sociological Review*, 26(5), p.754.
457 Dean (1961), p.754.
458 Dean (1961), p.754.
459 Dean (1961), p.755.

Although the data collected shows that the dominant language in the worship of the sampled churches was Yoruba, there seemed signs of alienation from the language of communication, mode of dressing, musical instruments and method of worship. I will begin with the alienation from Yoruba language.

i. Alienation from Yoruba language

From the data, the Yoruba language appeared to be the language commonly used among the ten Baptist Conferences located in Yorubaland. Nevertheless, there seemed a significant number who claimed English language dominated in their worship services in Yorubaland. 70 (31%) and 39 (17%) of those who affirmed the domination of English language came from Lagos State and Ogbomoso Baptist Conferences respectively; while the other eight Baptist Conferences from the other eight states shared the remaining 116 (52%) responses.

One may be wondering as to the reason for the significant number of the Ogbomoso Baptist Conference respondents who indicated English language as the dominant language in their churches when one compares the figure with other two Baptist Conferences in the same Oyo State i.e., Oke Ogun and Oyo West. Apart from the direct effect of the early Baptist missionaries who served as lecturers and medical personnel in NBTS and Baptist Medical Hospital both in Ogbomoso respectively during the nineteenth till late twentieth centuries as I have argued before, there is also the presence of a Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, recently established in Ogbomoso. The location of these institutions in the centre of the city attracts the presence of non-Yoruba speakers both from Nigeria and outside the country. In the case of the early Baptist missionaries in Ogbomoso, their inabilities to speak and hear

Yoruba language made them establish English speaking churches such as Antioch Baptist Church and an English section of some Yoruba Baptist congregations. Consequently, the elite joined the missionaries. By way of influence, the elite were alienated from their cultural value systems and also began to establish English speaking churches such as the University Baptist Church Ogbomoso[460], and Araromi Baptist Church Ogbomoso (now The Glad Tidings Baptist Church Ogbomoso)[461] among others.

In addition, Lagos is a cosmopolitan city where many tribes from across the country and international communities reside. The state is located in the Southwest of Nigeria. It was carved out of the old Western Region on May 27, 1967, based on Decree No. 14 of 1967 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Creation and Transitional Provisions).[462] The state was also the Federal Capital of Nigeria up till December 12, 1991 when the capital was relocated to Abuja.[463]

Before independence, Lagos was one of the seats of the colonial rulers in Nigeria. Consequently, the state is one of the modernised cities of Nigeria. Ekundare confirmed that:

> The first direct British political interference in Nigeria came in 1851, with the British military action against Lagos in an effort to force the king of Lagos (Kosoko) to abandon the slave trade. In 1861 Lagos was ceded to Britain and was administered as part of the Gold Coast (Ghana)… By 1897, however, the

460 University Baptist Church Ogbomoso , 'University Baptist Church' Retrieved from http://ubcogbomoso.com/history.html on 4 November 2010.
461 Taiwo Joseph Oke, 'The Royal Ambassador, Ogbomoso North-West Baptist Association: The Glad Tidings Baptist Church Ogbomoso' Retrieved from www.raogbomosonorthwest.org/IPD.html on 4 November 2010.
462 Nigeria: Lagos State 'Lagos State' Population' Retrieved from www.onlinenigeria.com/links/lagosadv.asp?blurb=318 22 July 2009, p.1.
463 Nigeria: Lagos State 'Lagos State' Population', p.1.

> whole of Yorubaland had been annexed to the Colony of Lagos as its protectorate.[464]

A lot of studies have been carried out on the impact of this colonialism on Nigeria and Nigerians. For example, Imasogie lamented on how Western culture was imposed on the Africans, particularly the Nigerians through Christianity and formal education.[465] While some of the impacts were positive and benevolent to Africans in general, and Nigerians in particular, others were negative and malevolent to the society. For instance, education through which civilization/modernization came to Africa is one of the legacies inherited from the colonial system/missionaries. Through education, a lot of the Africans' ways of life changed. One such way was the mode of communication which was significantly noticed in this research. Ekundare affirmed that 'the few people who were educated gradually acquired a new but foreign culture, which in turn modified the mode of life and began to create a new social class - the educated - in Nigeria'.[466] Consequently, it can be argued that the colonials/missionaries made the Africans, particularly the Yoruba (in Lagos and a few other parts), either neglect or forget their indigenous language, while the Westerner's language was promoted. As I had observed earlier based on Dean's view on the effects of alienation,[467] the promotion of English language in Yorubaland shows the powerlessness of the African languages in the presence of Westernization. More details on how English language became the *lingua franca* of Nigeria will be given in Chapter Six.

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464 R. Olufemi Ekundare (1973), *An Economic History of Nigeria 1860-1960* (Great Britain: Methuen & Co Ltd), p.12.

465 Osadolor Imasogie (1992), A Christian Attitude to Cultural Revival' *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, No.7, December, pp.3-4.

466 Ekundare (1973), p.65.

467 Dean (1961), p.754.

ii. Alienation from indigenous method of worship

Africans are generally known to be emotional in worship. I have given an example of the emotion in the ATR worship in Chapter Two as an illustration of the experiences of Yoruba Christians. In Christian worship, this emotion can be said to be part of what makes the worship unique and different from Euro-American worship style. One of the factors that aid this emotion is the involvement of local material in worship such as indigenous music. In response to the questionnaire, some people claimed that probably due to the shortness of some worship conducted in the English language, there would not be enough time for music and dancing during such worship. Others claimed that when one tries to dance along with the music used in the services conducted in English, the style of dancing would not be like that of the Yoruba style. In the Yoruba style of dancing, one is expected to dance acrobatically or twist one's body during such a dance. Such worship in Western ways tends to be devoid of emotion.

As in eastern Jamaica, singing and dancing are two of the major modes of religious expression in worship in Yorubaland.[468] There are many scholars who have examined the roles of music and dance in worship from Africans' point of view. For example, Moore believed that by dancing to music during worship, it is a way by which one can be possessed by the deity one worshipped.[469] In his recent research, Primus also affirmed that through music and dance, the deity can be praised and invoked within the worship atmosphere.[470] Although African dance seems to be entertaining in nature,

468 Joseph G. Moore (1979), 'Music and Dance as Expressions of Religious Worship in Jamaica' in John Blacking and Joann W. Kealiinohomoku (eds.), *The Performing Arts: Music and Dance* (Great Britain: Mouton Publishers), p.293. See also Olu Daramola and A. Jeje (1975) *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press), p.171.

469 Moore (1979), p.293 .

470 Pearl Primus (2002), 'African Dance' in Kariamu Welsh-Asante (ed.) *African*

Snipe claimed that it is more than entertainment in religious worship.[471] In African Christianity, singing and dancing are seen as essential parts of worship. These essential parts of African worship are what Snipe also confirmed Christianity forced the Africans to deny.[472] This absence of African emotion in worship is what Dean also referred to as a state where the people are alienated from the norms and values of their society.[473]

Another area of worship where the Africans seemed to have been alienated is in the giving of Christian names. Although the names of the respondents were not written on the questionnaire for the sake of confidentiality, it is a well-known fact that most of the Christians in Yorubaland have both Biblical/English and indigenous names. The early missionaries expected the indigenous believers to change their names to a Biblical/English name at baptism. This changing of name is known as '*isami*' (christening). Later on, the giving of Biblical/English names during naming ceremonies became the Christian tradition especially among Yoruba adherents. The bearing of English/Biblical names was thought to be the symbol of Christianity. There are some scholars who have commented on this attitude. For instance, Imasogie affirmed that the Western missionaries insisted 'that one must assume foreign names at his (her) baptism and wear Western apparel to church worship services as if Christianity was synonymous with Western civilization!'[474] Most of the Biblical/Western names such as Christopher, Caroline, Christianah, Crowther, Daniel,

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Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry (Trenton and Eritrea: African World Press, ILN), p.14

471 Tracy D. Snipe (2002), 'African Dance: Bridges to Humanity' in Kariamu Welsh-Asante (ed.) *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry* (Trenton and Eritrea: African world Press, ILN), p.67.

472 Spine (2002), p.67.

473 Dean (1961), p.754.

474 Imasogie (1992), p.3.

David, Janet, Julius, Wright, Benson, Clement etc. in the Yorubaland today can be said came into being as a result of the alienation of the people from their indigenous names.

iii. Alienation from Local Musical Instruments

It is also amazing to discover that most of the indigenous musical instruments appeared to have been replaced with foreign musical instruments among the sampled Baptist churches. Although these local musical instruments are affordable and available in most parts of the Yorubaland, they are not prominent in the churches compared to the ratio of the foreign musical instruments. Apart from *agogo* and *sekere* (which all the respondents affirmed their presence and usage in the sample churches), other indigenous musical instruments indicated include: *Akuba* 546 (76.0%); *Gangan* 491 (68.4%); *Iya Ilu* 328 (45.7%); *Omele Dundun* 119 (16.6%) and *Bata* 15 (02.1%). Other local musical instruments like *Kerikeri, Kangogo, Aro, Apiti, Gudugudu, Gbedu, Igbin* and the rest were not indicated as available in all the sampled churches. On the other hand, apart from the accordion and pipe organ (which were not commonly available, probably due to modernization and the huge amount of money involved in getting these instruments), many other Western musical instruments were available in all the sampled Churches.

The reasons for the non-availability of the aforementioned local musical instruments are not hard to find. One of the reasons could be as a result of the effect of Westernization on Africa in general. Imasogie claimed,

> Civilization came to be identified with westernization and any form of civilization outside that was regarded as barbaric. The Nigerians, like any other Africans, started to consider their culture as inferior. It was only a matter

> of time before this sense of inferiority developed into a sense of shame to be identified with what the Westerners branded as primitive culture.[475]

It can be argued that the psychological effect of the above inferiority complex was the abandonment of local musical instruments. In other words, the people have internalized what they were told about the local musical instruments. The consequence of the internalization can be described as 'psychological slavery'.

Na'im Akbar, a psychologist, defined psychological slavery as enslavement that 'captures the mind and imprisons the motivation, perception, aspiration and identity in a web of anti-self-images, generating a personal and collective self-destruction'.[476] Akbar's definition of psychological slavery is relevant to my aim. It is probably the best definition to adopt as my definition in this research. He argued that it is the slavery that 'feeds on the mind, invading the soul of man, destroying his (/her) loyalty to himself (/herself) and establishing allegiance to forces which destroy'[477] his/her potentials.

From the above definition, one can infer that psychological slavery starts when one internalizes what he/she is told is bad in his/her culture. Psychological slavery seems to be a gradual process that involves individuals and the entire Yoruba community. Some of the effects of psychological slavery include alienation, distortion, inferiority complex, low self-esteem, loss of self-confidence and loss of self-identity. In other words, when one is suffering from psychological slavery, such a person or group of persons might not be able to unashamedly display their cultural identities and

475 Imasogie (1992), p.3.
476 Na'im Akbar (1996), *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery* (Tallahassee: Mind Productions &Associates, Inc.), p.v.
477 Akbar (1996), p.v.

heritages. For instance, Akbar claimed that when a person is made to believe or see God in the image of another nationality than oneself, that person may believe that the other nationality is superior to his/her own.[478] Once that belief is internalized, the victim will eventually believe that the other nationalities:

> are superior and that you are inferior, and sure enough you will start acting inferior. You begin to dress inferior. You begin to see inferiority. You begin to think inferior. You begin to have families that are inferior. You become economically inferior. You become academically inferior...[479]

Suffice to say from the above quotation that psychological slavery destroys self-consciousness, cultural orientation, self-thinking pattern, self-feeling and self-action. When one is enslaved psychologically, the person loses his/her sense of independence and personal ego. In other words, instead of a victim of psychological slavery exhibiting his/her own personal worth, the person will depend on his/her enslaver's ways of life.

During the course of my interview with a man from *Ayan family*[480] in Ogbomoso, for instance, the man told me that the main reason why they do not play *bata* in the church was that Christians had thought that *bata* was evil and should not be used to worship God. When he was probed further on the evil behind this local musical instrument, he claimed it is evil because the early missionaries had identified *bata* with *Sango* (the god of Thunder). The local drum has been the one used for the *Sango* festival. Consequently, the Christians had been brain-washed by the early missionaries to believe that this local drum was evil, and therefore should not be brought to Church

478 Na'im Akbar (1987), *Chain and Images of Psychological Slavery* (Jersey City: New Mind Productions) pp.54-55.

479 Akbar (1987), p.55.

480 *Ayan family* means the family whose main occupation is to entertain people with playing of local musical instruments. The musical instrument could be any of the ones mentioned in this chapter.

and used for worship. Hence, the orientation of the people regarding the use of *bata drum* has been changed against their culture. To me, there is no evil in *bata* like any other local musical instruments. The fact that the *bata drum* has been the main musical instrument for the local deity is an indication that it can be useful in worshipping God.

As a result of alienation from indigenous musical instruments, some have been forgotten by the Yoruba. For example, when I was administering my questionnaire, a man (aged about 40 years) asked me to describe *kerikeri* (one of the local talking drums) for him to know whether it was available and in use in his church. While I was describing the drum, other participants were laughing at the man's ignorance about the local musical instruments. The inability of the above mentioned man to identify *kerikeri* in his church is a symptom of alienation from his cultural affinity. It is also what Dean described as social isolation, i.e., separation from the Yoruba standard of life.[481]

iv. Alienation from Way of Clothing

It is also quite amazing that the majority of brides and grooms preferred English clothes to local Yoruba clothes, despite the fact that most of the wedding services were conducted in Yoruba Churches, with Yoruba language and the majority of the congregation being in Yoruba apparels. The question that may come to one's mind includes why the young couples tend to prefer Western wedding gowns to their indigenous clothes?

481 Dean (1961), p.755.

Most of the contemporary couples-to-be seem to use Western gowns and suits as a result of what they considered modernization. For example, in the course of discussion during my participant observation in a Church in Lagos, I asked a married woman about the type of clothes she wore during her wedding ceremony and why she chose those clothes. The woman humorously answered '*awa o wo aso awon ara oko*' (we did not wear the clothes of bush/countryside people). Her response showed that there are some Yoruba who regard the local clothes as the primitive clothes with which the elite should not be identified. I asked her further what she meant by regarding the Yoruba clothes as primitive. She claimed that since she has left her countryside for university, her orientation has changed. Consequently she often wears Western clothes and that has become part of her lifestyle. Moreover, she said in her place of work as a banker, the dress code that is allowed from Monday to Thursday is Western. According to her, Friday has been the only day she and other staff are allowed to wear native dress.

From the response of the above woman, it is clear that some young people still considered local clothes as reflecting a primitive way of life. It can also be inferred that some of the young people feel ashamed to identify with what they considered as primitive ways of life. Again, the code of dressing in some of the companies where these young people are working is also a factor that makes the people shift to Western clothes. Since they are expected to put on Western clothes from Monday to Thursday, according to the above banker, it is certain that most of their clothes would be sewn in Western styles. By this way of clothing, such people are alienated from their indigenous ways of clothing. This is an indication of imposed culture that alienates such people from their cultural ways of life. Consequently, the people's socio-cultural

and religious needs could not be met since the English language has replaced their local language, Western clothes are forced on them instead of their native clothes, Western musical instruments are used to the detriment of indigenous ones and most of African emotion in worship seems to be silenced. To me, this is living like a stranger in one's father/motherland. No wonder alienation is like a 'sleep' during which most of what one does are reflex actions. However, when one awakens it leads to a state of confusion.

B. Confusion

Confusion has been defined as a state of 'unsettled, undecided, lacking direction or goal, uncommitted to one's present position and uncertain of one's future status'.[482] Medically, confusion is a state of 'disturbance of consciousness characterized by inability to engage in orderly thought or by lack of power to distinguish, choose, or act decisively'.[483] To me, I believe that confusion from a socio-cultural perspective is a state of disorientation characterized by an inability to think, speak, act and live within the norms and value systems of one's cultural milieu.

Some factors have been identified as the causes of socio-cultural confusion. The search for answers to the questions - who/what am I and how do I feel about myself?[484] - could lead one into confusion. In addition, the belief about one's specific

482 Confusion: Definition of Confusion by the Free Online Dictionary. www.thefreedictionary.com/confusion Retrieved on 17 November 2010.

483 Confusion.*(n.d.) Merriam Webster's Medical Dictionary. Retrieved 17 November 2010 from Dictionary.Com Websit*e: http://dictionary.refernce.com/browse/confusion

484 J.D. Campbell, P.D. Trapnell, S.J. Heine, I.M. Katz, L.F. Lavallee and D.R.Lehman (1996), 'Self- Concepts Clarity: Measurement, Personality Correlates, and Cultural Boundaries' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 70, No.1, p.141.

traits within one's value system in the midst of the influx of foreign cultures can also be another source of confusion. For instance, Smythe and Smythe confirmed that:

> The process of westernization and the growth of cities have been accompanied by far-reaching political changes. The influx of foreign ideas and the furious expansion of a program of education modelled upon that of the United Kingdom have brought to traditional indigenous culture an assault which has already had broad ramifications.[485]

The implication of the assault that came from the influx of foreign ideas on indigenous culture was the problem of adjustment 'to both indigenous traditional society and the British colonial structure'.[486] This problem of adjustment was nothing but confusion. Smythe and Smythe tagged this confusion as 'the role of cultural conflict'.[487] They claimed that there was confusion about Western and indigenous values. Confusion began when the elite woke up from their cultural sleep and discovered that something was wrong within their cultural value system. The elite (as the Smythes used the word) is the group of 'people who, for whatever reason, claim a position of superior prestige and a corresponding measure of influence over the fate of the community of which they are part'.[488] It was a gradual awareness to cultural identity. At the beginning of the awareness, there may be timidity because one is not sure whether one is on the right course of action. For instance, after independence in 1960, the then elite were not sure whether Church membership enhances one's status or hurts it; whether native dress was being rejected or accepted and whether polygamy should be rejected or accepted.[489] The confusion still continues as the Yoruba seem to want to go back to their roots, yet they want to appear as being modern.

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485 H.H. Smythe and M.M. Smythe (1960), *The New Nigeria Elite* (Stanford: The Stanford University Press), p.3.
486 Smythe and Smythe (1960), p.8.
487 Smythe and Smythe (1960), p.9.
488 Smythe and Smythe (1960), p.3.
489 Smythe and Smythe (1960), p.9.

As far as the NBC is concerned, I observed that some Yoruba Christians have seen the need to go back to their roots, but at the same time they have the desire to be modern. Hence, such people are confused. The confusion includes whether to be loyal to the founding fathers/missionaries or not. There also seemed confusion about educational hybridity.

i. Loyalty to founding fathers/missionaries

From the result of the questionnaire and investigative visits, it seemed that there was confusion about loyalty to their founding parents. For instance, during the administration of the questionnaire in one of the Churches I used, an elderly man who wants to remain anonymous whispered to me saying, 'by filling this questionnaire genuinely, will it not contradict our tradition? (Baptist policies and practices as inherited from missionaries)'. When the man was probed further on 'our traditions', he said: 'in the past, the bread and wine made by *Oyinbos* (white men) were the only sacraments approved for the Lord's Supper; while the pastor must always put on coat, tie and hat like the White men themselves'. He finally said that he would be happy if the Lord Jesus can be celebrated in his own Yoruba culture. He, however, warned me that I should not mention his name as the source of this information. When I asked him the reason why he decided to contribute to my research under anonymity, he said he would not be the one to pull down what his grand-parents received from the missionaries and handed over to the present generation.

In Yorubaland, children are supposed to keep the instruction(s) given to them by their parents. In other words, a child is not expected to deviate from the cultural and religious heritages passed to him/her by the parents. Any child that deviates is

considered to be a bastard. Such a deviation is also perceived to attract consequences such as bad luck, life-long crises and other nemeses. The fear of the consequences of what the missionaries condemned is still in the heart of some African Christians. Such was the elderly man above who contributed in anonymity to this research. He wished he could worship God within his cultural milieu, yet he was entertaining fear as to what would be the consequence. Hence, this state of relationship brings confusion. As a student of the Bible, I believe there will be no adverse effect in worshipping God from the African cultural milieu.

ii. Confusion from Educational Hybridity

There are other Christians whom I perceived as having dual loyalty, probably as a result of their exposures to Western ways of life. Due to former education, some Yoruba were asking questions such as who they are and what makes them who they are. The response of such people to the question of indigenization is affirmative, yet they find it difficult to totally do away with the Western ways of life due to the contact with westernization.

Due to cultural contact between foreign and indigenous cultures, it can also be argued that the way of life of some Yoruba people changed. Idowu once argued,

> The contact with an alien culture may be as a result of colonization, the conquest of a people as a result of which the conquerors settled another people in an area of the indigenous culture or of normal migration from one place to another.[490]

The consequence of that contact, according to Idowu, is that such 'a people's indigenous culture is never really the same again - there is some change through

490 E. Bolaji Idowu (1975), 'An Introduction: Religion Cultural Renewal' *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. IX, No.2, December, p.80.

absorption or fusion of cultures, or by the imposition of an alien one'.[491] This absorption of culture appeared to be shown in the result of the questionnaire administered among the Yoruba Christians of the NBC. For instance, the language spoken, the hymns, the musical instruments used in the worship and the clothes of the pastors all indicate that there was disorientation from the culture of the people.

Apart from contact with Westernization through formal education, there were other means by which this cultural contact came into Yorubaland. One of them was through the slave trade. For instance, slave traders who were mainly European and Americans that settled along the coast for their illegitimate businesses had a lot of impact on the people they lived with.[492] Lagos was said to be one of the main settlements of the traders. One of the reasons for settlement along the coastal regions was due to the fact that water was the only main transportation to and from Europe and America at that time. A lot of Nigerians (particularly the Yoruba) were carried across the Ocean from Lagos by the slave traders. Notable among the slaves was Joseph Wright, a Yoruba of the Egba Alake (now Abeokuta) who was shipped abroad from Lagos during the nineteenth century.[493] Bishop Ajayi Crowther too would have been among the slaves if not for the interception of the antislavery squadron.[494] In the process of the abolishment of slavery, Burns confirmed that there were slaves who had escaped from their masters on the mainland, crossed the lagoon in canoes and sought freedom under

491 Idowu (1975), p.80.
492 Ekundare (1973), p.26.
493 William D. Piersen (1977, April), 'White Cannibals, Black Martyrs: Fear, Depression, and Religious Faith as Causes of Suicide Among New Slaves' *The Journal of Negro History*, 62(2), p.149.
494 John Loiello (1982), 'Bishop in Two Worlds: Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1806-1891) in Elizabeth Isichei (ed.), *Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.), p.34 .

the British flag.[495] It can be argued that the slaves who had contact with the Western slave traders and masters were to an extent disoriented by their masters' culture. As I have argued before, the Western names and clothing in Yorubaland today can be said to be the result of the aforementioned contact. According to Peel, some of them who had acquired Western names dropped such names for their indigenous name sometime later.[496] For instance, H. Autus Williams, a descendant of Saro and the Editor of the Nigerian Daily Telegraph in 1920-1930 changed his name to A. Fagbenro-Beyioku.[497] There are still other Yoruba who bear both Western and indigenous names together; probably such people are products of two cultures. An example is Olufemi Johnson, one of the Baptist pastors in Lagos. I have also witnessed those who wore both Western and indigenous clothes together, probably as a result of confusion about taste. The fact that some of the people changed their names to indigenous ones is evidence of dissatisfaction about their situation.

C. Dissatisfaction

Oliver defined dissatisfaction from marketing 'as a judgement that a product/service, feature, or the product itself, provided (or is providing) an unpleasant level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment'.[498] From consumer experience based on Oliver's definition, dissatisfaction arises out of the failure of a service or product to meet the adequate or expected needs of consumers. The expected need could be in terms of taste, fashion, durability, adaptability,

495 Sir Alan Burns (1972, January), *History of Nigeria 8ed* (Great Britain: George Allen and Unwin Ltd), p.132.
496 J.D. Peel (1968), 'Syncretism and Religious Changes' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 10(2), p.138.
497 Peel (1968), p.138.
498 Richard Oliver (2010), *Satisfaction: A Behavioural Perspective on the Consumer (2nd. Ed.)*, (Armonk and London: M.E. Sharp. Inc), pp.8–9.

economic, portability and availability. In other words, when a service or product is not meeting some or all of the above needs, there may be a feeling of disappointment.

In my own view, dissatisfaction is the feeling of being displeased and discontented with one's situation or circumstances.[499] It is a stage of concretization which makes one gain his/her confidence and enlightens others who may or may not yet realize their predicament. It is equally the beginning of exhibiting anger as one deals with what is wrong in the society. Being the beginning of reflection and digging into the root of the situation, dissatisfaction helps one further to find more about what has gone wrong and possible solutions to the situations. As more investigation is being carried out, group formation is inevitable. Consequently, talking to and learning from each other makes strategies realistic. Some of the characteristics of dissatisfaction manifestations include feelings of disappointment, frustration, being let down and regret. Some of the above mentioned feelings reflected in the research conducted among the Yoruba Christian of the NBC, especially in the area of Western musical instruments.

Dissatisfaction about Western Musical Instruments in Worship

As I have said earlier, there were various comments from the responses of the Yoruba worshippers in the sampled Baptist Churches that show their dissatisfaction about Western forms of worship. For instance, statements such as 'Western musical instruments are sometimes not danceable'; 'the tunes are foreign; not indigenous'; 'no competent instrumentalists to handle them properly' indicate the respondents' displeasure. During my investigative visits to one of the Baptist Churches, a

499 Dissatisfaction from the Merriam-Website Online dictionary. www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/dissatisfaction Retrieved on 17 November 2010.

respondent said ‘we are used to them (Western musical instruments) and have adapted them to make us happy and joyful in the presence of the Lord’. When the person was asked further on the reason(s) for adoption of Western musical instruments to make them happy, he said ‘we were told that these (Western musical instruments) are the instruments allowed in Christian worship, but when we get out of the Church, we can use our local musical instruments during our social events such as engagement, naming and burial programmes’. When I asked the man further on the source of the instruction, he claimed ‘it was the instruction given by the early American and European missionaries which has become a tradition in this Church’. This unthinking authoritarian acceptance of imposed tradition of Church is a concern of this researcher. As Tennent affirmed, I as a theological researcher ‘want to see how theology works in authentic (and) real-life context’[500] in the contemporary Baptist Churches in Nigeria.

Dissatisfaction about the imposition of Western ideologies on the NBC has been handled from two perspectives in the past. From the literatures available, the first perspective was repression; while the second one was protest. Regarding repression, there were some issues where the members of the convention refrained from forceful action. For instance, whenever the issue of polygamist baptism comes up, the Convention members have been suppressing their feelings and abide with whatever decisions were arrived upon.

500 Timothy C. Tennent (2007), *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), p.xvii.

D. Protest/Reaction

Turner defined protest as 'an expression or declaration of objection, disapproval, or dissent often in opposition to something a person is powerless to prevent or avoid'.[501] From this definition, two things can be inferred, namely communication of objection to an on-going event/circumstance and the powerless nature of the communicant to stop the situation. No wonder the Merriam Webster Dictionary defined protest as an act of objecting to our display of unwillingness to support an idea or a course of action.[502]

Turner in his further explanation affirmed that protest is often staged to (i.) express grievance on a wrong or injustice, (ii.) correct perceived error(s), (iii.) draw attention of the one(s) who has committed the error to the situation of the protesters, (iv.) draw the attention of the sympathizers to the plight of the protesters and possibly move them into action.[503] According to Turner, many forms of protest are peaceful and do not involve strife and violence. In most cases, however, protest leads to vandalism, arson and maiming of persons.[504] When protest moves to this stage, Turner said it is a way of expressing outrage against injustice.[505]

Protest is not a new phenomenon in Christendom. It took the early Christians persistent protest to gain their freedom from the Roman Empire. Cairns claimed that 'the blood of many martyrs was the seed of the church'[506] during the Apostolic era. In

501 R.H. Turner (1969), 'The Public Perception of Protest' *American Sociological Review*, 34, p.816.
502 Protest. Definition of Protest, the Merriam-Website Online Dictionary. www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/protest Retrieved on 17 November 2010.
503 Turner (1969), p.815.
504 Turner (1969), p.816.
505 Turner (1969), p.816.
506 Earle Cairns (1996), *Christianity Through Centuries: A History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), p.93.

the case of the early Roman Catholic Church, 'Monasticism arose, partly as a reaction from and partly as a protest against, the worldliness of the organized Church'.[507] The protest against the absolute papal power of Roman Catholic bishops in 1517 upwards broke the absolute power and brought out new Protestant Churches such as Lutheran, Anglican, Calvinist and Anabaptist.[508] Up to today, a lot of Churches are emerging as a result of protest against one thing or other. Ayegboyin and Ishola gave a lot of reasons for the Church proliferation in Africa, especially Nigeria.[509] Notable among other reasons they gave were protests against westernization and syncretism in most main-line Churches.[510]

In the case of protest in the NBC, this can be traced as far back as in 1888. For instance, in the then First Baptist Church Lagos,

> there was a drive to return to African names. Thus David Brown Vincent became Mojola Agbebi, Lewis Stone became Lewis Fadipe and Lajide Mills became Lajide Tubi. These Africans felt that authentic African names must reappear from beneath that cultural imperialism of the west with which Christianity has undoubtedly been closely linked.[511]

The secession of Native Baptist Church (now called Ebenezer Baptist Church Lagos) from American Baptist Church Lagos in 1888 was another protest as a result of the inability of Rev. W.J. David (American) to see Rev. Moses Ladejo Stone (Yoruba) as his mission partner instead of a mere 'servant'.[512] Stone (who was then receiving

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507 Cairns (1996), p.25.
508 Cairns (1996), p.27.
509 For more detail, see Deji Ayegboyin and S. Ademola Ishola (1999), *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective,* (Lagos: Greater Heights Publications).
510 For detail about the protest against westernization and syncretism, see Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999).
511 Elijah Olu Akinwumi (2002) 'Stone, Moses Ladejo c.1850 to 1913 Baptist Nigeria' www.dacb.org/stories/nigeria/stone_moses.html Retrieved 27 October 2010.
512 James Bertin Webster (1964), *The African Churches among the Yoruba 1888–1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.55.

twenty-five shillings as his monthly salary) requested an increase in the salary from David. When David did not grant the request, Stone with the help of his house boy, opted for the selling of firewood along the road to Victoria Beach. There were two accounts on how Stone left the services of American Baptist Church. One account claimed that Stone resigned out of frustration and the resignation was unilaterally accepted by David[513] without following Baptist policies and practices.[514] The second account maintained that Stone's sale of firewood aggravated David, and he (David) consequently unilaterally suspended Stone for alleged bi-vocational ministry.[515] Whichever version is correct, the major facts are that Stone left the Church with the full knowledge of the Missionary-in-charge (David) and without the knowledge cum approval of the Church members. When the members did not see Stone in the Church the following Sunday, they approached David for explanation about his (Stone's) whereabouts. David rebuffed the people who approached him, claiming that he has the power to hire and fire.[516] The matter was also represented at the next Church business meeting. There again, David was adamant about his decision regarding Stone. Thus, Stone's unlawful dismissal led his sympathizers (about two hundred African members) to move out of the Church and form what is known today as Ebenezer Baptist Church Lagos. The First Baptist Church Lagos was left with about twenty-five members, who apparently were American and British citizens.

513 Webster (1964), p.55.
514 Baptists are known for a congregational system of administration where no one person has absolute power over decisions that relate to the church.
515 Akinwumi (2002).
516 Akinwumi (2002). The action of Rev. W.J. David also reveals among other reasons why indigenous church members had dissatisfaction in worshipping under Western influence.

In addition, Y.A. Obaje, the immediate past President[517] of the NBTS, Ogbomoso, during his student period also led his colleagues to protest against the wearing of uniform (white shirt with tie and long trousers) in 1972. When Obaje was contacted on the telephone, he claimed his action came out of the struggle for self-identity as an African.[518] He maintained that as a mature student of the seminary, he could not understand the rationale behind the imposition of shirt, tie and trousers on the Africans since they have their own clothes. Moreover, he claimed he did not know any university or its equivalent institution in Nigeria at that time where the students were forced to put on such a uniform. He said that was the reason why he staged the protest in front of the institution's chapel and set ablaze all the uniforms at his disposal.

There are other Christians who are dissatisfied with the imposition of Western cultures in the name of religion among the Yoruba. For instance, at the induction of a Baptist Pastor in Lagos State in 2002, the moderator of the association of which the inducted pastor belonged disallowed a fellow pastor from officiating on that day. The pastor who was disallowed did not wear a suit and tie like other officiating pastors. After the induction service, the matter was taken up by other pastors and they showed their displeasure at the moderator's action taken against the pastor in '*buba and soro*' (Yoruba clothes). The moderator defended himself by pointing to the code of dressing

517 President is the American title for the Head of Institutions such as universities and seminaries. Since NBTS is a satellite campus of SBTS, this title was given to the head of the seminary. Again this is another form of imposition. Vice-Chancellor is the title used in Nigerian Universities and the equivalent.
institutions.

518 Y.A. Obaje (2010, 23 October, 06:35pm), Telephone Interview, Abuja, Nigeria.

from NBTS, Ogbomoso. He further claimed that coat and tie has been the 'traditional' official dress of a Baptist pastor from inception.

Up until the time of this research, a section of the Students' Handbook of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso reads: 'For formal or official occasions, male students are required to wear a dark suit and tie with a white shirt. Female students are required to wear dresses as specified by the seminary'.[519] In as much as this handbook is carried over from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, USA,[520] to which the Ogbomoso campus is affiliated, one may not be surprised at the imposition of this foreign dress to the detriment of the indigenous dress. Consequently, it has been part of the orientation given from the seminary that to put on Western dress is to dress officially. This imposition of foreign clothes also underscores the reason why the majority of pastors sampled were said to be in Western clothes during wedding services in the sampled Baptist Churches. There may be a few Baptist pastors who are still loyal to the continuity of the Euro-American clothing as documented in the NBTS Student Hand Book. Notwithstanding, there are others who feel the error of the past must be corrected regarding the pastor's clothing. This researcher belongs to the latter group. It is my candid opinion that there is nothing wrong with our traditional clothes as far as wearing them during ministry.

E. Reorientation

The word 're-orientation' comes from 'orientation' which simply means the act or the process of aligning with one's mode of living or belief systems. Re-orientation,

519 The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria: *Students' Handbook 1992 ed*. Article II:2. (Bound Copy) .

520 J. Kofi Agbeti (1991),*West African Church History II: Christian Missions and Theological Training 1842–1970* (New York: E.J. Brill), p.77.

therefore, is a change in the set of attitudes or beliefs that one had before. This includes the change of focus and direction. The prefix 're' before 'orientation' gives an impression of a new or reverse direction in which something is previously oriented.

Re-orientation often occurs as a result of the new exposure. In Africa, particularly Nigeria, re-orientation often took place as new understanding emerged from time to time. I have earlier given an example of the Nigerian elite as the Smythes claimed.[521] It is this new elite that served as agents of re-orientation in Nigeria. Apart from socio-political re-orientation that took place in Nigeria, religious re-orientation is also taking place. I have explained the experiences of the early Yoruba Christian in Chapter Two regarding their confusion about 'Africanness' and Westernization. Notwithstanding, re-orientation continued as the new Church denominations emerged from time to time in Nigeria.

In the case of the NBC, re-orientation is progressing in terms of language of worship, musical instruments, Eucharist and ways of clothing. These areas of re-orientation will be analyzed one after the other.

i. Reorientation in terms of language of worship

A number of people are looking for their true self or identity. Such people want to be themselves in terms of their ways of life. This could be the reason why the Yoruba language is said to be the dominant language of worship among the sampled Churches. It might be because Yoruba is the language commonly used by both the

521 Smythe and Smythe (1960), pp.3-5.

literate and illiterate in their day-to-day activities. It could also be because the language is rich with imageries and proverbs. Biobaku maintained that,

> Yoruba proverbs are self-evident truths which give the gist of what one wants to say in a brief and unmistakable form. A proverb can drive home a point or describe a situation in a few striking words… Proverbs may have the form of either a plain statement of fact or of a warning. Their most important characteristic is that they bring out more sharply and clearly than ordinary speech the point one desires to make[522]

In communicating ideas or describing a situation, the use of some proverbs present them in picturesque and challenging ways. For instance, '*Ogun omode ko le sere pe ogun odun*' (Twenty children may not play for twenty years) is an indisputable truth both now and then. In the pre-colonial era, twenty children could not play for twenty years because of the slave trade that was then common. Ekundare confirmed that 'many families were separated for good. Villages were often destroyed during slave raids, and inter-tribal wars led to bloodshed among the people'.[523] Inevitably, twenty children could not play for twenty years in such situations. They might either be captured and sold to foreign land or killed in the process of raiding their towns or villages. Today, the quest for better education and jobs after education makes the proverb relevant for other reasons. Hence, the Yoruba have ways by which truths are communicated without much stress.

ii. Re-orientation in terms of musical instruments

The comments of the respondents on local musical instruments are other indicators of the yearning for the authenticity of genuine African Christian forms of worship. The comments include: 'very happy'; 'full of joy of the Lord'; 'people feel at home'; 'feeling of indigenous'; rejoicing'; 'excited'; 'inspired'; 'moved in the spirit';

522 S.O. Biobaku ,ed. (1973), *Sources of Yoruba History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.77.

523 Ekundare (1973), p.34.

‘thrilled’; 'feeling of the presence of God in the service’; ‘provoked to participate in worship’ and ‘feeling of the divine touch’. During my investigative visits in another First Baptist Church, I approached a woman who was dancing with all her strength before the Church’s altar during thanksgiving, an aspect of worship on that day. I asked her why she was full of excitement when talking drums were used in the worship. The woman said, ‘these local musical instruments (talking drums) speak our language (Yoruba) and once they are used in worship, one’s soul will be lifted because God will communicate to the person in the language the person understands’. I agree with this woman’s comment because I believe one can only communicate and be communicated with in the language(s) the person understands. In this situation I believe the Yoruba people can be communicated with through the talking drums that speak to them in their local language.

iii. Re-orientation of Eucharist

It is also interesting to note that Africa is full of materials useful for the building up of the human body physically and spiritually. As the Yoruba often says, ‘*ohun ti a nwa lo Sokoto wa lapo sokoto*’ (what one would search for to the extent of travelling about a thousand miles to Sokoto State is in his/her immediate environment). As I have reported earlier, the respondents preferred Yoruba *akara* produced from local beans to roasted yam and roasted plantain. These materials are farm products cheaply available in any place in Nigeria. Likewise, Sobo drink seemed to be preferred to *Oyin Igan* ‘honey’, pineapple juice, mango juice and orange juice in replacement of imported wines for Eucharist by the people.

Sobo drink is the name given to the juice extracted from a plant called Roselle/Sorrel (*Hibscus Sabdariffa)*. A research carried out recently maintained that *Hibiscus sabdariffa* is one of the plants that is consumed for its health benefits in Nigeria.[524] According to Owoade in his findings, 'juice/concoction prepared from *Hibiscus sabdariffa* is taken as a preventive/curative measures against diabetes and hypertension in Nigeria'[525] Ajayi *et al* also confirmed that there are some pharmacological properties in *Hibiscus sabdariffa* that are anti-hypertension.[526] In the opinion of Farombi and Ige,

> *Hibiscus sabdariffa I* (Malvaceae) exists as shrubs often with fibrous stems believed to be native to Africa and it is lemon tasting. It has gained wide acceptance in folk medicine in treating many diseases including hypertension, pyrexia and liver disorders…It is used in making *'Sobo'*, a local popular drink in Nigeria.[527]

In as much as the *sobo* juice extracted from this local plant has been medically certified to be medicinal to the human body, I believe it should be equally appropriate as a spiritual symbol in Holy Communion. In my own opinion, it can be a way of indigenizing Holy Communion among the Christian adherents in Nigeria.

iv. Re-orientation about way of clothing

Although there was an indication whereby a respondent saw the putting on of native clothes as a barbaric way of life, the majority of the respondents, however, appeared to believe it is a way of maintaining self-identity. The comments of the respondents on

524 Abiodun Olusoji Owoade (2008), 'Biochemical Properties of Hibiscus Sabdariffa'. A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of John Moore University, Liverpool for the Degree of Master of Philosophy. p.75.

525 Owoade (2008), p.75.

526 M. Ajayi, H J. Chai, A.M. Mustafa, A.H. Gilani and M.R. Mustafa (2007), 'Mechanism of the Anti-Hypertensive effect of Hibiscus Sabdariffa', *Journal of Ethnopharmacology,* 109(3), p.388.

527 E O. Farombi and O.O. Ige (2007) 'Hypolipidemic and Antioxidant Effects of Ethanolic Extract from Dried Calyx of Hibscus Sabdariffa in Alloxan-Induced Diabetic Rats' *Fundamental and Clinical Pharmacology*, 21, p.602.

pastors' wearing native dress such as 'there is nothing wrong', 'it is biblical', 'it is a way to contextualize worship', 'it is a sign of indigenous Christian worship' and 'it is the inculturation of Christianity' shows that nowadays there is an element of re-orientation. I have earlier reported that a man sees the Baptist pastors' putting on the Yoruba indigenous clothing as 'the total freedom from the slavery which came along with Christianity right from the inception'. On the type of clothing the respondents want their pastors to put on during service, their responses include: *Agbada, Esiki, Buba ati Soro, Iro ati Buba, Aso Ofi, Kampala, Kembe* and *Gbariye.* I believe by putting on their native dress, it makes one look gorgeous like kings.

5.3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion to this chapter, I have presented the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire report administered among the Yoruba Baptist Churches in the South/West of Nigeria. I have also presented the reflections on the themes emerging in the results of the questionnaire.

From the reports of the questionnaire responses, it seemed that many Yoruba Christians are yearning for genuine Christian forms of worship within their cultural context. One can now agree with Akao, who claimed:

> The joy and emotional religious expression exhibited in Pentecostal worship has a strong appeal for the Nigerians who by nature are expressive and emotional. Most members of the orthodox churches get fascinated by this new liturgical glamour… the pastors in the mainline churches are now becoming less formal and rigid in their order and duration of service while the old spirit of solemnity is gradually giving way to joyousness and a jubilant liturgy…[528]

528 J.O. Akao (1991), 'Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Influence on Worship in the Mainline Churches of Nigeria', *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, 6, p.27.

The Baptist Denomination was one of the mainline Churches which appeared to be rigid and methodical in worship. There was always a programme for worship which sometimes may have hindered flexibility in worship. Notwithstanding, due to the yearning for an independent, spirit-filled and exciting form of worship, there is a greater awareness now for the need to be flexible and relevant to the changing needs of the congregations. The awareness is also created because both old and young have a special appeal for indigenization of Christian worship.

As good as this yearning may be, many of the members are fearful of taking the bull by its horns. The fear probably came as a result of the thought that the action may be tantamount to the destruction of what the early Christian parents and the missionaries had built. There are some members who do not have the courage to speak their minds for fear of being accused of blasphemy. Among the Yoruba culture, any issue that relates to God is treated as sacred.

From the findings above, the questions that one may be tempted to ask include: when are Nigerians going to take their full freedom from the Western influence? Why must the Yoruba worship service still reflect the American and European character after about half a decade of independence? Is there any biblical justification for oppressing the seminarians by forcing them to put on Western dress to the detriment of their own cultural backgrounds? These and others questions are begging for answers in the next chapter - The challenges.

CHAPTER SIX
THE CHALLENGES OF INDIGENIZATION OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

6.0. INTRODUCTION

A. The Desire for Indigenization

The desire for the indigenization of Christianity in the African continent has been one of the areas of focus in the recent past. The need for this desire arose out of the challenges facing 'the African to relinquish the post of onlooker in worship and adopt that of the participant'.[529] The desire could also be as a result of other reasons that will be discussed in the later part of this introduction.

This chapter, however, aims to look into the challenges of the indigenization of Christianity among the Baptist Churches in Yorubaland of Nigeria. Of course, there may be so many challenges that face the indigenization process. The chapter, notwithstanding, intends to limit itself to areas such as the dominance of Western theology and theological vocabularies, the Western ideologies on polygamy and Baptist ordinances, the Western cultural legacies left by the colonialists, the challenges of Western life styles and the integration of local music and musical instruments. The limitation is necessary in order to avoid ambiguities. Before the presentation of the challenges, the reasons for the indigenization will probably be helpful in order to understand the Africans' plight regarding the indigenization.

529 Oyeronke Olajubu (2001, December), 'The influence of Yoruba Command Language on Prayer, Music and Worship in African Christianity' Journal of African Cultural Studies, 14(2), *p.173.*

B. Why the Indigenization of Christianity among Africans?

The principle of presenting Christianity in the cultures and languages of the people to whom the Gospel is proclaimed is not new. In the early church, the then leaders disagreed over the extent to which the church should adopt Hellenistic cultures. While some of the leaders submitted that the Gospel challenges the existing cultures, others claimed that the Gospel needs to accommodate other cultures so as to 'win' the people into the church.[530] These positions changed suddenly when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the late fourth century. The orthodox churches translated the liturgy from Greek to their local languages. Latin became the language of the Western Church of Rome and therefore Latin was used in worship.[531]

After Christianity spread outside the Greco-Roman Empire, especially to Northern and Western Europe, the Protestant reformers promoted the translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into vernacular languages. Notable among these reformers were John Wycliffe, William Tyndale and Martin Luther.[532] The reformers were of the opinion that all Christians have the right to read and interpret the Gospel in their own local languages. It can be argued that this right of interpretation of the Bible into one local language motivated Martin Luther to 'Germanize' Christianity in Germany. The Anabaptists also developed the theology of the priesthood of all believers and the separation of church and state. Hence, the door for expression of faith within believers' cultural environments was opened.[533]

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530 Paul G. Hiebert (1989), 'Indigenization' Global Anabaptist Mennonites Encyclopedia Online. Retrieved 11 February 2011 from http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/154ME.html.

531 Hiebert (1989).

532 For more on the reformers and their reformative activities, see Robert Vaugan (1831) *The Life and Opinion of John De Wycliffe D.D., Vol 11 (2ed)*, (London: Holdsworth and Ball), Fran Rees (2006), *William Tyndale: Bible Translator and Martyr* (Minneapolis: Copas Point Books), R. H. Bainton (2009), *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing PLC) etc.

533 Hiebert (1989).

It may be logical, therefore, to say that Africans too are following history regarding the contextualization of Christianity. If the language of worship could be developed from Hebrew and Greek to Latin, English, German and other languages in the Western world, then it is legitimate for the Africans to also worship God within their own cultural context.

Moreover, the argument of Bevans and Schroeder on the church as 'missionary by its very nature'[534] is also germane to my discussion. According to the argument of the writers based on their study of the Acts of the Apostles, 'the church becomes missionary by attending to each and every context in which it finds itself'. Bevans and Schroeder argued that as the church grew slowly in the early Apostolic era, the church began to accept 'half-Jews' (Samaritans), individual Gentile proselytes or God-fearers (the Ethiopian official), worthy Gentiles (Cornelius and his household) and, finally, Gentiles *en masse* (in Antioch).[535] Since the scope of the church as a missionary organization is 'the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8), then it is legitimate for African Christians to worship God in their own context.

Furthermore, the fact that the Western missionaries presented Western culture along with Christianity at the beginning, calls for a critical theological re-construction from an African worldview. For instance, in the early part of 19th century, it was the general assumption of the Westerners that the churches 'on the mission field would be modelled on the churches at home'.[536]Consequently, 'church designs, liturgies,

534 Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder (2008), *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (New York: Orbis Books), p.2.
535 Bevans and Schroeder (2008), p.10.
536 James B. Scheier and Stephen B. Bevans (eds., 1998), 'Consultation on the Gospel and

clerical dress, musical instruments, hymns and tunes, decision-making processes'[537] were exported into the mission field churches. I have given some of the examples of the above foreign cultural heritage in the NBC in Chapter Four, and more examples will be given later. Unfortunately, these so called 'standards' were accepted on the 'false assumption that the Bible gave the specific instructions about such matters and that the home churches' pattern of government, worship, ministry and life were themselves exemplary'.[538] In as much as one can only give out what he/she has, I believe the African Christians also have their own tastes and values. It is therefore legitimate for them to be proud of what they have as heritage and to use it for the edification of the Kingdom of God on earth. This step is necessary in order to loosen the grip of Western culture in African Christianity.[539]

Again, it is a fact that some Western mission-minded leaders resisted westernization of Christianity in Africa. Henry Venn[540] and Rufus Anderson[541] were said to have reacted against the mono-cultural ideology imbibed in the mission. They called for indigenous churches that would be 'self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating'.[542] As good as the proposed mission strategies of Venn and Anderson were, some Western mission organizations seemed to agree with the principle but

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Culture, Willowbank, 1978: Lausanne Committee for the World Evangelization' in *New Directionsin Missions and Evangelization 1: Basic Statements 1974–1991* (New York: Orbis Books), pp.263-264.

537 Scheier and Bevans (eds., 1998), pp.263-264.

538 Scheier and Bevans (eds., 1998), p.264.

539 Kwame Bediako (2004), *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience* (New York: Orbis Books), p.57.

540 For more information about Henry Venn, see Chapter One, Footnote 1 and Wilbert R. Shenk (1977), 'Henry Venn's Legacy' *Occasional Bulletin of Mission Research*, 1(2), pp.16-19.

541 For more information about Rufus Anderson, see Chapter One Footnote 3 and C. Peter Williams (1990), *The Ideal of the Self-Government Church: A Study in Victorian Mission Strategy* (The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, Leiden) and Warren B. Newberry (2005), 'Contextualizing Indigenous Church Principles: An African Mode' *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies,* 8(1), pp.95-115.

542 Scheier and Bevans (eds., 1998), p.264.

used another method to retain their Western ideologies on their mission churches. For instance, the report of Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE)[543] affirmed that some missions:

> have accepted the need for the indigenous leadership and have then gone on to recruit and train local leaders, indoctrinating them (the word is harsh but not unfair) in western local thought and procedure. These westernized local leaders have then preserved a very western-looking church, and the foreign orientation has persisted, only lightly cloaked by the appearance of indigeneity.[544]

In other words, Western ways of worship and lifestyles have persistently existed among the Africans, especially in Yorubaland of Nigeria. Examples have been given in the previous chapters. In view of the persistence of the Euro-American ways of life reflected in the mode of Christian worship in Africa, there is a need for the development of a radical concept of a truly indigenous church. This step is needed in order for the church to re-discover and express its self-identity within its cultural environment.

The dissatisfaction about the worship style of the contemporary Yoruba Christians of the NBC is another reason for contextualization. The Yoruba Christians seemed to have realized that something is wrong with their mode of worship. This dissatisfaction has made some of them begin to dig to the root of the problem and to find out more

543 The history of Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) began in 1971 when Billy Graham convened the meeting of the world Christian leaders on advisability of the world evangelization. Consequently, the leaders of the evangelical Protestant Christians came together from 15-25 July, 1974 at Lausanne, Switzerland for the purpose of strategizing, inspiration and fellowship. After this congress meeting, there was an inclination for making the congress have a long term impact on the world evangelism. There and then, the Lausanne Continuation Committee was formed and this committee metamorphosed to LCWE in 1976 with the aims to serve as international catalyst, clearing house, information centre and motivational source for evangelization of the world. For more information on LCWE, see 'Lausanne 1974: Historical Background'. Downloaded from http://www.lausanne.or/Lausanne-1974-background.html on 03 March 2011.

544 Scheier and Bevans (eds., 1998), p.264.

about what had gone wrong with their systems. Travis Collins, one of the SBC missionaries to Nigeria, affirmed that:

> Reports show that early Baptist missionaries were not unlike missionaries of other groups. Many missionaries, including Baptist, were prejudiced, ethno-centric and colonialistic in their world-view. Some did not go a long way towards identification with Nigerians...There are reports of missionaries acting harshly towards their African employees...[545]

The psychological pains associated with the reflection of some of the above African experiences makes one think about what to do at present in order to preserve the African cultures for future generations. Reflections on the above experiences also give one the conviction that a truly African church, 'a church in which the local Christians make their own decisions on issues such as church policy, ethics and worship style',[546] needs to be encouraged. It is now necessary to examine the challenges facing indigenization among the Yoruba Christian.

6.1. THE CHALLENGES OF DOMINANCE OF WESTERN THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL VOCABULARIES

In Chapter Two, I presented a summary of the African worldview about God. From this, it can be argued that the people have true reverence for God. This reverence is reflected in their posture during worship. For instance, prostration and kneeling down are cultural signs that indicate respect. According to Daramola and Jeje, when a child wakes up in the morning, he/she greets the parents by prostrating/kneeling down.[547] It could be said that this cultural virtue is taken into religion in order to honour the Creator. Prostrating/kneeling down is an everyday way of expressing reverence to

545 Travis Collins (1993) *The Baptist Mission in Nigeria 1850–1993* (Ibadan: Y-Books), p.18.
546 Collins (1993), p.27.
547 Olu Daramola ati Adebayo Jeje (1995), *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yruba* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press), pp.1-2.

God in worship. Although the Western Christian may not prostrate/kneel down in worship, the absence of this genuflection does not mean they do not have reverence for God in their worship. The point I am emphasizing here is that Africans generally have a common terminology for revering God which is quite different from the Western Christians.

Furthermore, there are other terms and religious experiences that are peculiar to the Yoruba in Christian worship which one may not find in the Western world. Desmond Tutu argued that:

> we have had a genuine knowledge of God and that we have had our own ways of communicating with deity, ways which meant that we were able to speak authentically as ourselves and not as pale imitators of others. It means that we have a great store from which we can fashion new ways of speaking to and about God, and new styles of worship consistent with our new faith.[548]

Africans, particularly the Yoruba, have their own terms and styles of Christian worship. For instance, '*arabaribiti aleluya*' ('Hallelujah')[549] is often used in worship. Wharry observed that 'Hallelujah' is one of the 'call-response expressions commonly used as back channelling cues for preachers among African-Americans'.[550] Mitchell affirmed that the Africans who migrated to America took their religious practices with them. He claimed that although the migrated Africans later accepted the white man's religion, they did not practice the religion in the white man's ways. Consequently, 'it became the black man's [sic] purpose… to shape, to fashion, to create the religion offered to him by the Christian slave masters, to remould it nearer to his own heart's

548 Desmond Tutu (1978) 'Whither African Theology?' in E. Fashole-Luke *etal* (eds.) *Christianity in Independent Africa*. (London: Rex Collings), p.366.

549 *Arabaribiti Halleluya* is an unusual way of praising God. It is the shouting of hallelujah in merry-go-round manner which serves to ascribe glory to God's majesty.

550 Cherly Wharry (2003) 'Amen and Halleluyah Preaching: Discourse Functions in African American Sermons' *Language in Society*, 32, p.210.

desire…'[551] This quotation suggests that the Africans who were taken to America and possibly other parts of the world as slaves were not totally dis-robed of their 'Africanness', especially in the area of religious heritage. It also suggests that Africans generally, whether at home or abroad, have their own ways of expressing themselves in worship. The Yoruba people are not an exception. 'Hallelujah' is often shouted in almost all of the worship services. Theologically, the word ('Hallelujah') is 'an expression of praise, joy and thanks to God'.[552]

Before the middle of the 1990s, shouting 'Hallelujah' in worship seemed to have been seen as one of the excessive charismatic traits in the NBC.[553] The missionaries disallowed the shouting of 'Hallelujah', probably because of one or more of the reasons I have given in Chapter Four. I have earlier mentioned the fear of losing the control of worship and the fear of syncretism. The indigenous leaders also disputed the use of shouting 'Hallelujah', possibly as a result of their indoctrination from the Western orientations. This issue was one of the major sources of conflict between the young vibrant church members who wanted exciting African forms of worship styles, and the older members who perhaps wanted to keep the faith as it had been handed to them by the Euro-American missionaries.

In 2002, in the midst of the NBC's crisis regarding the shouting of 'Hallelujah', Obaje, the President of the NBTS, Ogbomoso responded to the issue from the book of Revelation 19:1-7. As a professor of Philosophy and Systematic Theology, he

551 Henry Mitchell (1970), *Black Preaching* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Publishers), p.6.
552 'Hallelujah/Halleluyah' *The Complete Christian Dictionary for Home and School* (1992), (USA: International Bible Society).
553 Travis Collins and Ademola Ishola (1995), *Baptist and the Charismatic Movement* (Ibadan: Publishing Board Nigerian Baptist Convention), pp.83-85.

explained that 'Hallelujah' and 'Amen' are two words that have their roots in the Hebrew language which have been used by almost all human languages.[554] In Nigeria, for example, the word 'Hallelujah' has assumed an unbelievable status in the heart and mind of some Christians. While it cannot be denied that some worshippers use 'Hallelujah' excessively during worship, it must be noted that the reason for this excess could be as a result of the emotional attitude of the people in worship. It could also be because the shout of 'Hallelujah' is seen as an expression of giving honour to God in worship. One needs to see an *asunrara* (Yoruba praise-singers) and those who chant God's cognomens in palaces and worship respectively to fully comprehend how deviant are the excesses of emotion in worship.

From an African perspective as Obaje claimed, 'Hallelujah' is an expression of giving honour to God.[555] While Obaje maintained that 'Hallelujah' can be interpreted as (i) 'Let us praise the Lord' or (ii) Join me in praising the Lord, or (iii) Let the name of the Lord be praised or (iv) Blessed be the name of the Lord', he claimed that the responses to (i)-(iii) should be 'Hallelujah' while the last one (iv) should be 'Amen'.[556] He, however, warned that the 'Hallelujah' and 'Amen' need to be used reverently, jubilantly and meditatively.[557]

My contribution to the ways to make a joyful noise to the Lord and praise the Almighty God particularly during worship is to shout *arabaribiti-hallelujah*. On many occasions, the way in which the 'Hallelujah' is shouted is described as *arabaribiti*

554 Yusuf Amen Obaje (2002), *Hallelujah Amen: A Study of the Meaning, Type and the use of Hallelujah and Amen* (Lokoja: Access Academy Publications Limited), p.4.
555 Obaje (2002), pp.8-9.
556 Obaje (2002), pp.30-34.
557 Obaje (2002), p.45.

which often included a loud voice with emotion, the twisting of one's body in a 'merry-go-round' manner, and the waving of hands accompanied by drumming. The implication of these genuflections is the belief that worship must be done within one's cultural way of life so that a good result may follow. These genuflections with emotion seem to energize the Yoruba Christians in worship. The Yoruba believe that when a loud 'Hallelujah' is shouted before the presence of God, they would have victory over their problems and enemies.

Apart from the genuflection and emotion in the Yoruba Christian worship, the Yoruba believe that it was a truth that as Jericho was conquered by the Israelites through blowing trumpets and loud shouts, so they believe they can also experience the same victory over their problems. In Joshua 6:1-27, the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua were instructed to march round the city of Jericho seven times with the priests blowing trumpets. On the seventh time, the Israelites were told to give a loud shout when they heard a long blast sounded on the trumpet. It was reported in Joshua 6:20-21that 'when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city'. As a result of the experience of the Israelites in the Bible, *arabaribiti aleluya*is formulated. This is the shout of 'Hallelujah' that is similar to the shout in the passage quoted above.

It can be argued that even until recently the African theologians and religious educators depend much on Western thought. Until towards the end of the twentieth century, the majority of the academic staff of the NBTS, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria, the highest Baptist institution where pastors and religious educators were

(and still are) produced in the country, were Americans.[558] The indigenous academic staff were also either trained in Europe or America. Since the majority of the Christian teachers, religious educators and pastors were either direct or indirect products of Euro-American seminaries and universities, most of the lessons taught were more or less a carry-over from the syllabus of the Westerners. Again, it was reported that during the furlough of J.C. Pool (the Principal of the NBTS, Ogbomoso) to America in 1937, the SBTS, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A. 'appointed a faculty (staff) committee, Dr. J.B. Weatherspoon and Dr. W.H. Davis, to work with Dr. J.C. Pool, to set the Curriculum for a course designed to lead to the Bachelor of Theology degree'.[559] Up until the time of writing, the degrees awarded in the institution are still being moderated by the SBTS, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A. Consequently, it can be argued that although the NBTS Ogbomoso was (and still is) located in Yorubaland in Nigeria, the policy makers were Americans. Moreover, almost all the libraries in Nigeria and other parts of Africa are full with the books and journals written by Westerners. These books and journals have been the main text books depended upon as guidance even in Yorubaland.[560]

558 See The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Prospectus (1989), (Ogbomoso: Adebayo Printers).

559 J. Kofi Agbeti, (1991), *WestAfrican Church History II: Christian Mission and Theological Training 1840-1970* (New York: E.J. Brill), pp.76-77.

560 See Course Outlines for 'RED 377 Christian Worship' Taught by Rev. Prof. Paul H. Miller and 'RCT 241 Baptist Doctrine' Taught in Semester Two, 1993/1994 by Rev. Dr. Travis Collins .

RED 377 CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

COURSE DESCRIPTION 1992–1993 Revd. Miller

A study of the history, principles and practice of Christian worship, giving attention to plans, methods and materials which will be helpful in worship in West Africa.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to identify the Biblico-historical and psycho-social bases for worship, the principles of worship, and the chief forms in which they find expression in Christianity.

Students will be able to plan a well-ordered and to lead a well conducted congregational worship suitable for bringing about deeper and richer religious experience within the context of the worshipper.

TEXTBOOKS

McNutt: WR. Worship in the Churches

Blackwood, Andrew W. The Fine Art of Public Worship. New York Abingdon – Cokesbury Press, 1939.

Black

Dobbins, Gaines S. The Church at Worship. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962.

McNutt, William R. Worship in the Churches. Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1941.

Palmer, Albert W. The Art of Conducting Public Worship. New York: The Macmillan /Company, 1961.

Course Requirements

1. Regular Class Attendance
2. Students must keep adequate notes from all reading assignments
3. Two Examinations – one mid-term and a final exam (It will be Comprehensive + unpredictable)
4. Research – Write a paper of no more than ten hand-written pages on any aspect of worship. Due date Nov. 14.
5. Group Work: Each group will plan and conduct a 40 minute worship

Outline

I. Definition
   McNutt, Chapter 1
   Blackwood, chapter 1

II. Biblical-Historical Basis
   Blackwood, chapter 2
   Palmer, chapter 4
   Dobbins, chapter 2

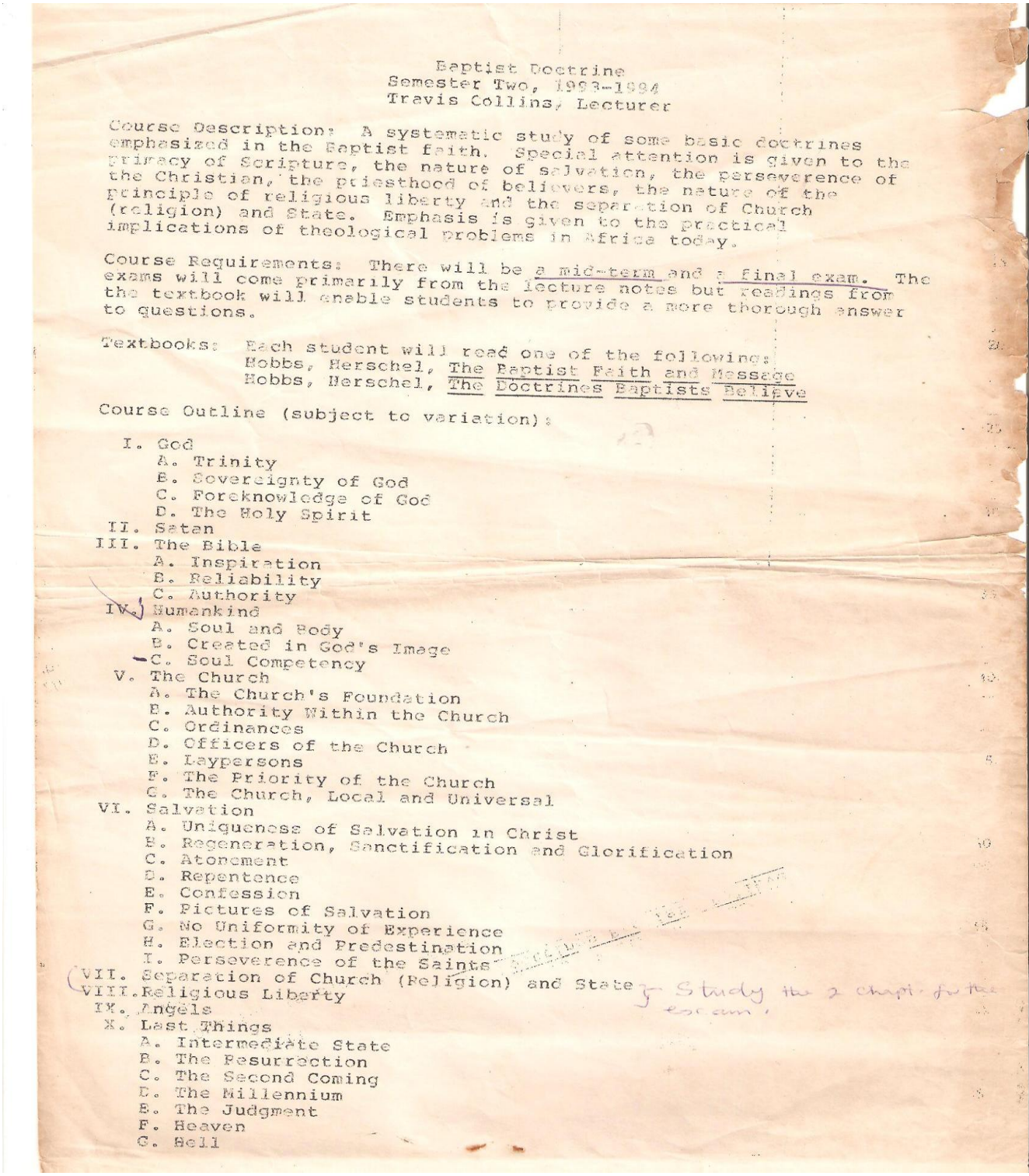
III. Psycho-Social Basis
   McNutt, chapters 2 and 15
   Dobbins, chapter 10
   Blackwood, chapter 4

IV. Leader in Worship
   McNutt, chapter 7
   Blackwood, chapter 13

V. Physical Design for Worship
   McNutt, chapters 8 & 9
   Palmer, chapter 6

VI. Way and Patterns of Worship
   Dobbins, chapter 6
   Blackwood, chapter 10
   Palmer, chapter 5

VII. Socio-Cultural Context of Worship



Baptist Doctrine
Semester Two, 1993-1994
Travis Collins, Lecturer

Course Description: A systematic study of some basic doctrines emphasized in the Baptist faith. Special attention is given to the primacy of Scripture, the nature of salvation, the perseverence of the Christian, the priesthood of believers, the nature of the principle of religious liberty and the separation of Church (religion) and State. Emphasis is given to the practical implications of theological problems in Africa today.

Course Requirements: There will be a mid-term and a final exam. The exams will come primarily from the lecture notes but readings from the textbook will enable students to provide a more thorough answer to questions.

Textbooks: Each student will read one of the following:
Hobbs, Herschel, The Baptist Faith and Message
Hobbs, Herschel, The Doctrines Baptists Believe

Course Outline (subject to variation):

I. God
   A. Trinity
   B. Sovereignty of God
   C. Foreknowledge of God
   D. The Holy Spirit
II. Satan
III. The Bible
   A. Inspiration
   B. Reliability
   C. Authority
IV. Humankind
   A. Soul and Body
   B. Created in God's Image
   C. Soul Competency
V. The Church
   A. The Church's Foundation
   B. Authority Within the Church
   C. Ordinances
   D. Officers of the Church
   E. Laypersons
   F. The Priority of the Church
   G. The Church, Local and Universal
VI. Salvation
   A. Uniqueness of Salvation in Christ
   B. Regeneration, Sanctification and Glorification
   C. Atonement
   D. Repentence
   E. Confession
   F. Pictures of Salvation
   G. No Uniformity of Experience
   H. Election and Predestination
   I. Perseverence of the Saints
VII. Separation of Church (Religion) and State
VIII. Religious Liberty
IX. Angels
X. Last Things
   A. Intermediate State
   B. The Resurrection
   C. The Second Coming
   D. The Millennium
   E. The Judgment
   F. Heaven
   G. Hell

It must be noted that the majority of the text-books recommended even for the academic session of 1992/1993 were thirty to fifty years old. This defect reflects the fact that the text-books were probably used by the teachers when they were students

themselves. Most of these books were still in the syllabus of the NBTS as at January 2010 when this researcher visited the institution. Up until the time of this research, books published locally seemed not to carry the same weight as the ones published in Europe and America. This could be one of the reasons why Otijele lamented that:

> One cannot observe the treatment of African (and anything African) in academic disciplines of the Western universities and colleges and in world conferences without feeling a 'lump in the throat' for one reason or another[561]

The reason for the feeling of a lump in one's throat could be the way in which anything pertaining to Africa is often treated. As an African, one cannot but ask oneself about the disparity between the treatment of the Westerners and the Africans despite the fact that Christianity tends to be spreading rapidly in the African continent.

African theologians are not in any way inferior to their counterparts in Europe and America. In view of this fact, the words of Archbishop Anthony Mayala of Mwanza, Tanzania as quoted by Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz may be relevant here. Mayala was quoted as saying his pastoral team needed to contextualize their 'churches so that it may be like a mirror in which we believers see ourselves and recognize our true face and feel completely at home in our Christian faith'.[562] Mayala empowered his pastoral team regarding the indigenization of worship, probably because of the major roles the leadership often plays in both political and religious organization in Africa. For instance, it was the pastoral leadership of the early missionaries who impacted Euro-American ideologies into African ways of life. As one of the wise sayings of the Yoruba goes '*eniti o mo atiwa Olunagun naa ni yoo mo atilo re*' (whoever serves as the aid to the arrival of *Olunagun* (trouble) must be the

561 P. Yakubu Otijele (1991, December), Understanding the African Worldview: A Religious Perspective' *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, 4, p.1.

562 Anthony Mayala Cited by Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz (1996), *Towards An African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa), p.19.

one to escort him (it) out). The implication of this Yoruba proverb is that in as much as the Western cultures in many of the African churches today were introduced by pastoral leaders, they (the pastoral leaders) will probably be the best people to educate the African believers about the errors of the past.

There is a counter argument that change does not necessarily need to come through leadership; it has to come from the worshippers themselves. For instance, the Yoruba often say: '*bi onigba ba se pe igba re ni a nba pee* (the way you perceive and present your calabash (image) is the way the outsiders will also perceive and acknowledge it). The implication of this proverb is that the Yoruba culture expects every individual, regardless of one's level in the society, to have a good self-image and present it in that manner to the outsiders. For example, the wearing of native attire during ceremonies such as weddings, namings, thanksgivings etc. will not only convince the other indigenes that the indigenous clothes are good, it will also serve as an example for other Yoruba to follow. As for me, I tend to agree with the formal argument since education seems to be the major road to enlightenment. The pastoral leaders through enlightenment are probably the agents to remove the internalized ideals from Yorubaland.

In other words, the African cultural values cannot be applied through Western ideologies. Instead, the Gospel message ought to be integrated into the African culture. Since Jesus Christ is the Lord of all tribes from all cultures of all nations in all continents, he needs to be 'known, seen, and understood in the context of each culture just as God, the Eternal Spirit, became incarnate as a human being in a particular

culture'.[563] Certainly there is more need for theology that will meet the needs of Africans within their own cultural milieu. Kwame Bediako recognized this fact and teamed up with S.K. Aboa, the principal of the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong, Ghana, to start a research library which specializes in African theology, language and cultural studies.[564] One of the objectives of the institution 'is to provide training in theology in the African context that equips young scholars to find Christian answers to African questions'.[565] African theology is capable of handling African world views and contemporary phenomena just as Western counterparts do the same in their own contexts. There are African Christian researchers who have been trying to work in this area of the contextualization of Christianity in Africa. Notable among the scholars in this area of studies are John Mbiti, Charles Nyamiti, Kwame Bediako, Justin Ukpong, David Adamo, Osadolor Imasogie, Afe Adogame, Yusuf Obaje, Deji Ayegboyin, Mercy Oduyoye etc.[566] This research is also an attempt to join the discussion and the struggle of making Christianity contextual in Africa, especially among the Yoruba of Nigeria.

6.2. THE CHALLENGE OF WESTERN IDEOLOGIES ON EXCLUSION OF SOME AFRICAN BELIEVERS IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP AND BAPTIST ORDINANCES

In Chapter Four, I have explained the reasons why some of the African believers were not allowed to partake in Baptism and Eucharist rites. This Western influence on the NBC posed some challenges to the Africans. One of the challenges is how to meet the

563 James O. Adeyanju (2009), 'indigenizing Theological Education for Relevant Christian Theology in Africa' in Ademola Ishola, Deji Ayegboyin and Sayo Oladejo, *Pedagogy: The Church, Leadership and Theological Education in Africa: Papers in Honour of Professor Emeritus Osadolor Imasogie Ph.D. @ 80* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Limited), p.151.

564 Kwame Bediako (2000), *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience* (Yaounde and Akropong-Akuapem: Editions Cle and Regnum Africa), p.ix.

565 Bediako (2000), p.ix.

566 See pp.46-60 for some of the contributions to knowledge of some of the above listed scholars.

spiritual needs of the polygamists in the light of the Western influence. Consequently, this section presents my argument in favour of the inclusion of the African polygamists in Baptism and Eucharist.

A. Exclusion of Some African Believers in Christian Worship

The major reason I discussed in Chapter Four for the exclusion of some African believers in Baptist ordinances was marital status, namely polygamy. Before one can understand the challenges facing the African Christians, one needs to reflect on the nature of the marital status of the biblical families and the contemporary families in Europe and America.

From my study of the Bible and observation of the contemporary society in Britain, I believe a form of polygamy is practised all over the world and throughout the ages, though in different forms and styles. From the Old Testament period to the New Testament, polygamous families featured. Abraham, the father of faith, had three wives - Sarah, Hagar and Keturah (Genesis 16:1-4, 25:1-4). Jacob had four wives- Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah (Genesis 29:31-30:24). Elkanah also had two wives- Hannah and Penninah (I Samuel 1). King David was said to have had many wives and concubines (II Samuel 5:13-16; I Chronicles 3:1-9). In the New Testament, I Corinthians 5:1 says, 'It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man had his father's wife'. The fact that the expression 'his father's wife' was used instead of his mother suggests the adulterous woman was probably the step-mother to the son. Since incest was a serious offence in their culture, I also believe it might not be possible that a man would sleep with his mother. Consequently, it would probably mean that his father

had more than one wife which the son coveted. Again caution needs to be taken here because one is not really sure whether the mother of the covetous man was alive at the time when the illicit sex happened. If the mother of the covetous man was alive at the time of the sex scandal, then the father of the son can be described as a polygamist. Otherwise he was not. Furthermore, one of the requirements for the office of overseers and deacons in the letter of Paul to Timothy is also an indication that there were polygamists in the New Testament Church. Paul's statement '…husband of but one wife' (I Timothy 3:2) is an eye opener to the fact that there is a possibility of polygamists who might also be active in the church of Ephesus where Timothy was the Overseer.

In Europe and America, the custom is to engage in a relationship with one man or woman at a time, after which such union can be dissolved and one may remarry another person. This divorce and remarriage are allowed as many times as possible.[567] Hillman called this style of marriage 'consecutive polygamy'.[568] According to him, consecutive polygamy is 'when a man has one wife after another, or consecutive polyandry when a woman has one husband after another.' In another part of the world, what Hillman described as simultaneous or contemporaneous polygamy is practiced.[569] In this context, a man or woman is allowed to marry more than one wife or husband at a time. In Yorubaland, the praxis of the people permits a man to marry as many wives as he wishes and keep them under his roof simultaneously. It is, however, well-known among the Yoruba that their culture does not permit a woman to

567 For example, see Fred Attewill (2010, 12 April), 'Will Taylor Marry Her Ninth Suitor?' *Metro*, Greater Manchester, UK, p.9. This article presented the real marital life history of Dame Elizabeth Taylor who was proposing to marry her ninth husband.
568 Eugene Hillman (1975) *Polygamy Reconsidered* (New York: Orbis Books), p.10.
569 Hillman (1975), p.10.

marry more than one husband at a time. The Yoruba culture vehemently frowns on any married woman who engages in illicit sex. The reason for this disparity is because Yorubaland is known to be a patriarchal community. Men appear to dictate the rules of living.

It might be necessary to say that a polygamous family is not without some defects. For example, Bolaji Idowu claimed that a polygamous man cannot but stumble in dealing with several wives simultaneously.[570] From my personal experience too, this fact cannot be denied. Many polygamous families are known for strife and jealousy. The strife and jealousy are well pronounced in one of the Yoruba *odu Ifa* (*Ifa* corpus). The *Ifa* corpus says:

Okan soso poro l'obinrin,	It is one and only one wife,
Dun mo lowo oko;	That brings pleasure to any husband;
Bi won ba di meji,	When there are two wives,
Won a d'ojowu;	They become rivals;
Bi won ba di meta,	When they increase to three,
Won a d'eta ntule;	They destroy the home;
Bi won ba di merin,	When they increase to four,
Won a d'iwo lo rin mi ni mo rin o…[571]	They laugh one another to scorn…

It is interesting to note how *Ifa* corpus presents polygamous life in the above quotation. Nevertheless, Wande Abimbola, a renowned scholar of *Ifa* thought and Yoruba Traditional Religious Theology, maintained that it is not a condemnation of polygamy *per se*, but it is the analysis of the problems that are associated with the polygamous family life such as fighting, rivalry, wickedness and witchcraft.[572] In other words, a polygamous family is more prone to marital crises than a monogamous family.

570 E. Bolaji Idowu (1963) *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher), p.73.
571 Wande Abimbola (1975), *Sixteen Great Poems of Ifa* (Niamey: UNESCO), pp.112-113.
572 Abimbola *(1975),* pp.105-106.

In spite of the weaknesses that are associated with polygamy, the family life has been actively participating in worship since ancient times. Abraham, Jacob, Elkanah, King David and the others in the Old Testament were not condemned nor denied their right to worship God during their time. From my observation from the scripture, God also had a meaningful relationship with Abraham (Genesis 15,16,18,19,22). Jacob had several encounters with the Lord in his dreams (Genesis 32:22-32, 35:1-15); while Elkanah often worshiped at Shiloh with his two wives and children without any hindrance (I Samuel 1:1-5). In the chronicles of the people of faith in Hebrews 11, their names were mentioned. In Europe and America, church members involved in 'consecutive polygamy' and 'consecutive polygyny' were (and still are) not denied the right to baptism and the Lord's Supper. The people are allowed full membership in their respective churches.

In the NBC, the acceptability of consecutive polygamy/polygyny poses a challenge to the Convention. The challenge arose as a result of the gap left by the missionaries and the indigenous leadership of the Convention. Up until the time of this research, the Constitution and Bye-Laws of the NBC as quoted in Chapter Three emphatically reject the membership of the polygamous family. Does this mean that God has no salvation plan for the people? If consecutive polygamy is allowed in the churches of Europe and America, why should simultaneous or contemporaneous polygamy in Africans be rejected in the same church of God? If baptism is meant for anyone who believes and confesses that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Saviour regardless of his/her marital status, I believe such believers should not be hindered.

Above all, I believe the grace of God supersedes the creeds, laws, policies and practices of humankind. Grace is described as unmerited favour. This is what I believe the Lord through Christ Jesus has done for every human being that confesses that Jesus is the Lord. Ephesians 2:4-9 says: '…it is by the grace you have been saved… For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast'. From this quotation, I believe the grace of the Lord does not preclude the polygamists from being full members of the Baptist Church.

There are many children of polygamists who are ministers of the Gospel today. This researcher is one of those that the Lord gives the grace. My father had two wives and I am the first born of the family. A pastor and founder of a Baptist Church in Liverpool is also a product of a polygamous family.[573] He was born by the second wife of his father, yet he is one of the most dynamic African Baptist pastors in the United Kingdom today. There are other pastors from polygamous families, both within and outside the Baptist denomination. I believe, therefore, based on the above evidences, that the polygamous family are also heirs of God's grace like the other monogamous Christian families. Consequently, the polygamous family should partake in Baptism and Eucharist without any further hesitation.

B. Baptist Ordinances

The Nature of the Elements

About the elements for Eucharist, I have explained in Chapter Five how bread and wine were in use. Notwithstanding the fact that the Constitution and Bye Laws of the

573 Philip Bukola Oyewale (2008, 27 January), Illustration Used in Message Preached at Pentecost Baptist Church Liverpool.

NBC uses the phrase ‘element such as bread and wine’ indicates that other elements can be adopted or adapted. Be that as it may, the result of the questionnaire administered and reported in Chapter Four shows that local *akara* and *sobo* drink were generally accepted for Eucharist. In my opinion, I believe local *akara* baked from beans and *sobo drink* are acceptable instead of foreign bread and wine respectively.

6.3. THE WESTERN CULTURAL LEGACIES LEFT BY THE COLONIALISTS

Although the colonialists have returned to their countries of origin, some of the Euro-American cultural traits they introduced still exist in Yorubaland. Notable among these legacies left behind are Western clothes and the English language as the *lingua franca* of the country. I have explained how Western clothes (particularly coat and tie) became the official dress for the pastors in the NBC in Chapter Four. I have also explained the possible reason for the couple’s preference of a Western wedding gown to indigenous clothes. I have argued in Chapter Four that it is the grace of God that gives the unction to function; it is not the coat, cassock or even native clothes. If this is true, I believe the African, particularly the Yoruba pastors or priests do not necessarily need to look like their Western colleagues in terms of their clothing before they can effectively minister among their people.

As to the English language as the official *lingua franca* of Nigeria, the recent research conducted by Dada revealed the effects of the usage of the language (English) on the Yoruba language. Based on the 300 questionnaires he administered, all ages used English for almost all official matters. For unofficial matters, the older respondents used Yoruba more than English; while the younger respondents used either both or

English more. According to Dada, if the trend goes on as the research revealed, the younger generation may not be proficient enough in the Yoruba language to pass it on to the next generation. Dada claimed:

> The Yoruba language has been classified as one of the major languages in Nigeria simply because of the population that speaks it. The language has been developed to the point of a school subject from primary school to the university level mainly in the southern part of the country.[574]

The English language was introduced to the Yoruba community around the Seventeenth Century by the Europeans.[575] The introduction crept in as a result of the establishment of the language for the then commerce between Europe and the Yoruba. Besides being the language of trade, the missionaries also came with the same language - English. Thus, commerce and Christianity brought the English language into Yorubaland. It was also the language used by the colonial administration in all British colonies, of which Nigeria was one. During independence in 1960, Nigeria as a country adopted the English language as the official *lingua franca* of the country.[576] Consequently, the citizens became bilingual.

One of the effects of the legacies the colonial masters left in Nigeria is that most educated 'Yoruba parents force their children to adopt English as the first language and the only language that matters for international and academic purposes'.[577] One may be wondering as to the reason for forcing children to adopt the English language as the first language among the Yoruba. One of the possible reasons could be the fact that the English language has been one of the required subjects from primary to

574 S A. Dada (2007), 'Language Contact and Language Conflict: The Case of Yoruba-English Bilinguals' *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics*, 29, p.88.
575 Dada (2007), p.88.
576 Dada (2007), p.90.
577 Adeyemi Adegoju (2002), 'Toward Re-focusing Indigenous Languages for Sanctity: The Yoruba Example' *AAU: African Studies Review*, 1(1) p.129.

university levels, whereas Yoruba or other indigenous languages are not compulsory for pupils in Nigeria. It could also be as a result of the fact that speaking the English language has been one of the ways of distinguishing the elite from the masses in Nigeria. To me, it is as a result of disorientation and confusion. It is sad today that some children have stopped talking in their mother tongue. The implication of forcing the Yoruba children to speak in English is that the parents are extending the ideology of the colonial rulers in Yorubaland.

Obviously, there are other pupils who are comfortable in using the Yoruba language but were forced to speak in English. Dada who revealed this truth claimed that:

> … the use of English as a medium of instruction in Nigerian secondary schools is limited to the classroom. In most of these schools, English is compulsorily, spoken only during the school hours and a fine is imposed on pupils who speak the mother tongue… In spite of the imposed restriction, whenever the teacher is not around, the pupils revert or switch to the indigenous language. This shows that pupils find it relatively comfortable or easier to converse in their mother tongue than in the English language.[578]

The post-colonial critics see the English language as one of the instruments of imperial domination. According to Barber, postcolonial critics argued 'that indigenous languages and literatures were devalued and displaced, and the colonial subject culturally and linguistically dispossessed, leading to deep loss of self-esteem and cultural confidence'.[579] To me I see the English language as a means of communication within the international community. If the Yoruba language is also encouraged and developed by both the Westerners and indigenes, it probably would have been among the top international languages.

578 Dada (2007), p.102.
579 Karin Barber (1995), 'African-Language Literature and Postconial Criticism' *Research in African Literature*, l26(4) (Winter), p.4.

The use of the Yoruba language in worship to me, therefore, seems to be more relevant to the Yoruba rather than using a borrowed language. The worshippers need to be encouraged to worship God in their mother tongue. Just as some Baptist Churches have been doing in many urban areas, the Church can organise English services where other non-Yoruba speakers have the opportunity to worship.

6.4. THE CHALLENGES OF WESTERN LIFESTYLES

Another area of challenge which calls for serious reflection among the contemporary Christians in Yorubaland is what I term as the effects of Western life styles on the ethical standard of faith, particularly among the Baptists. Although Christianity is about 'how to live', this implies that the church needs to set a standard that is biblical and cultural for the members. This is important not only for ethical standards within a denomination like the NBC, but for the fact that members also look up to their churches for both social and spiritual guidance. I have discovered from my interactions outside my cultural community that what is morally wrong in one context may not be so in another context. For instance, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and gambling may not seem morally wrong to some European Christians; whereas they are regarded as sins in an African context, especially in Yorubaland. Again, abortion in a Nigerian context is morally and ethically wrong. In the Western world, it appears as if it is not because it is legalized; albeit with certain safeguards.[580]

Consequently, the extent to which the Churches in Africa, particularly the Yoruba, allow Western ideologies to influence them is a big challenge. Ethically, it seems that the ability of the Baptist Denomination to make informed moral decisions is needed

580 See Christopher Tietze (1964) The Demographic Significance of Legal Abortion in Eastern Europe' *Demography*, 1(1), p.119.

more urgently now than ever. I believe there is wisdom in African traditional ways of passing instruction to one's offspring. I have explained this traditional way of educating children in Chapter Four. It is a way by which children learnt through participant-observation. The NBC, through parents, needs to provide a cultural and biblical identity for the younger generation due to the influx of ideologies in the contemporary Nigerian Christian communities.

Furthermore, the issue of the dressing style of the contemporary Western society is another major challenge in the Nigerian environment. In Europe and America, it appears that their societies allow anyone to dress half naked. Seductive clothes are worn publicly without any feeling of shame!

It is one of the cultural norms of the Yoruba, however, to dress properly in the society.[581] The concept of *omoluwabi* (a morally upright person) denotes that one must behave well both within and outside one's environment.[582] The Yoruba ideology of '*ko ni itiju ati ifa aya ni ri ihoho'* (one who has no sense of shame and 'oracle of heart')[583] is tagged to those who tend to misbehave in the society. The proverb '*irinisi ni iseni lojo*' (the way one dresses before he/she goes out determines the reception one would be given outside) emphasizes that every *omoluwabi* (gentleman and woman) need to dress as the norms and values that the Yoruba demand. The implication of this proverb is if one dresses in line with the norm of Yoruba society, the way he/she

581 Daramola ati Jeje (1995), pp.93-99.
582 Idowu (1963), pp.154-156.
583 The 'Oracle of heart' according to the Yoruba is the humankind conscience that helps one to determine the right from the wrong behaviours. See also Bolaji Idowu (1963), pp.154-156 on 'Oracle of heart'.

would be entertained and the place his/her host would give such a person would be different from anyone who dresses casually or abnormally.

Consequently, it is the tradition of the Yoruba to dress according to the norm and value of the society before they step out of their houses. Notwithstanding, some young people especially teenagers and youths in secondary and post secondary institutions are caught in the habit of seductive ways of dressing in contemporary Yoruba society. There could also be few a young adults who dress in these Euro-America ways as a result of living in Western worlds before they returned to Nigeria. Because the seductive clothes are escalating among the young people in the NBC, the convention in her policies and practice:

> appeals to all church members, church organs, and churches to use every opportunity to seriously discourage seductive dress such as body hugs, spaghetti strap, off-shoulders, transparent clothes that reflect underwear, see-through blouses, bell-bottoms, mini skirts etc among our girls and even women.[584]

The reason behind this appeal is the fact that it is expected that 'Christian ladies (and men) should continue to dress decently in order to win others to Christ and to enhance'[585] Christian witness in the midst of other faiths.

It is interesting to note that Yoruba clothes make the one who wears them feel dignified, have a sense of worth and the feeling of being at home. It is also important to note that the Yoruba clothes also make one feel 'complete' whenever the clothes are worn. The proverb '*Aifini peni, aifi eniyan p'eniyan ni o nmu ki ara oko san ibante wo'lu*' (lack of respect for human dignity and norm of the Yoruba society make the

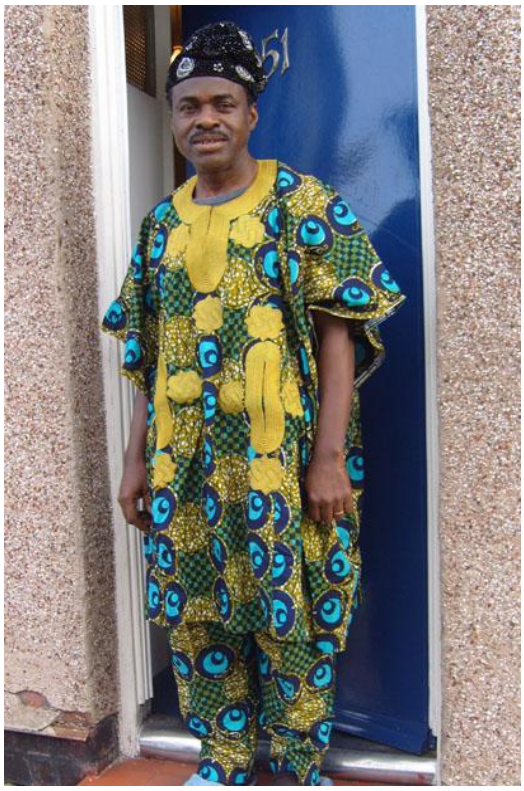
584 Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005) *Policies and Practice of the NBC* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd), p.14.
585 Nigerian Baptist Convention (2005), p.14.

countryside inhabitants put on only an apron while coming to town) tends to ridicule any Yoruba indigene who dresses shabbily in society. The implication of this proverb is the fact that nudity, if indeed it happens, is expected among the uncivilized in the countryside. Consequently, to maintain human dignity and for the sake of ethics, the wearing of indigenous clothes is recommended and encouraged.

The following clothes are some of the examples suggested by the questionnaire respondents for their pastors as well as other Christians to wear for worshipping their Creator: They are:

A. Agbada, Buba ati Sokoto pelu fila

B. **Esiki/Dansiki pelu Sokoto ati fila**



C. Iro ati Buba pelu gele ati Ipele (Women's Cloth)

D. Iro ati Buba pelu gele ati Ipele

It must be noted that *ipele* (women's wrapper) can be either put on the shoulder as seen in Picture C, or used as an outer layer wrapper as seen in Picture D above. The above women's clothes can be found amongst all cultures in Nigeria. Some missionaries have also recognised the importance of wearing the clothes of the people. See below an SBC Missionary in Nigeria during her farewell service.

E. ***Aso Adire/Kampala*** **(Dyeing Cloth)**

F. ***Aso Ofi*** **(for wedding)**

G. *Buba ati Sokoto/Iro ati Buba toke-tile* for wedding.

6.5. THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING LOCAL MUSIC AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS INTO CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

A. Indigenous Music

In Chapter Four, I explained the influence of Western music and musical instruments on Africa, particularly the Yoruba. Based on the explanation, the question that may come to one's mind is: Have the Westerners offered us a deeper spirituality and life style? As Africans, what have we now got to offer ourselves and the entire world? I believe the Westerners have offered Africans what they had. They should not be blamed for what they have offered since one can only offer what one has at hand. The onus now lies on the Africans themselves to present what they have for the world to see them. In the light of this, I will present some of the indigenous songs and musical instruments the Africans have from the perspective of the Yoruba. It must be noted that this researcher is not a music minister. My attempt to present Yoruba music in this research therefore will be from the perspective of a pastor.

Suffice to say that music and musical instruments are important in worship generally. Part of the importance of music in worship is 'to praise the deity for the good things such as provision, protection and redemption'.[586] It is also believed that through music, the deity can be invoked in a worshipful atmosphere. Consequently, the deity can control such worship and thereby possess and bless the worshippers. According to Idolor, possession of devotees is possible 'with the aid of some music (and drumming), by which the psyches of the devotees are stimulated to facilitate the readiness of their body for divine habitation of the deity'.[587] This possession of devotees in worship through singing and drumming can be argued to be one of the reasons why the indigenous music and musical instruments should be promoted among the African Christians.

It is interesting to note that the Africans have songs for different occasions and seasons. For instance, the Yoruba have songs for the beginning and the end of the year, Easter, praise, harvest, naming, and burial/funeral services. They also have songs for different situations such as confession, anxiety and a time for encouragement. Examples of songs for some of the above category will be presented now.

i. Songs for the Beginning/the End of the year:

Odun titun de	The New Year has come,
JesuMo be o o	Jesus I implore you,
Ekun Asuntona	Crying along the roads in the year,
Mama mu bami o. Amin.	May it never be my portion. Amen.

586 Emurobome Idolor (2007) Music to the Contemporary African' *Journal of Social Science*, 14(1), p.14.

587 Idolor (2007), p.14.

This is one of the songs that most Yoruba often sing in January of every year. It is a song about faith in the Lord as well as a petition song that people believe when sung, their prayer would be answered by God. The Yoruba believe that every year is always loaded with both good and sad events. One of the ways by which the Yoruba prevent the sad events is by trusting God through the singing of the above songs. After January, the Yoruba have some other songs:

Osu kinni ma ti koja,	The first month (January) has passed,
Osu keji ma tun nlo,	The second month (February) is also going,
Ire ti se temi	The blessing that belongs to me,
Ayo ti se temi	The joy that belongs to me
Baba fifun mi	Father (God), release them to me,
Ninu osu tawa yi	In this month.

This song is about God's providential act of mercy. It is often sung in worship any time after the first month of the year. Thus, God is seen as provider and sustainer. It is also a prayer song that often accompanies the first song sung in the month of January. While singing, the month mentioned in the first and second lines, i.e, '*osu*…' depends on the actual month the worshippers are in. After September, the Yoruba believe the year is moving to an end. Hence, the following song is commonly sung at that period:

Odun nlo s'opin o Baba Mimo,
Fi 'so re so wa o Baba rere,
Ohun to npawon lekun o ninu odun,
Mama je ko sele si wa o t'oko t'aya

Meaning:
The year is going to an end Eternal Father,
Protect us oh good Father,
Those events that often make people cry,
May they never happen to us as wife/husband.

Generally, it is believed in Nigeria that the 'ember months'[588] are often full of tragedies. The Yoruba are of the opinion that the end of the year often involves some

588 'Ember months' are the last four months of the year. The months are ended with 'ember'. For

sad events like accidents. Information gathered shows that motor accidents often occur in December and January of every year.[589] The causes of the accidents are attributed to the high speed of most road users and the bad conditions of the majority of Nigerian roads. There were also the reports of the effects of alcohol on the road-users particularly during the Christmas period.[590] In order to plead for God's protection and to take control of one's life and journey throughout the period, this song is often sung. Consequently, God is seen from the above song as a protector and a provider of unseen guidance.

ii. Easter songs

The Yoruba have the following songs as examples for Easter:

Iku oro ti nba ku,	Painful death that I would have experienced,
Iya ese ti nba je,	Punishment of sins that I would have suffered,
Gbogbo re lo ti ko lo,	All He (Jesus) has carried away,
Jesu Oluwa O ma se o	Jesus my Lord thank you,
Tori mi l'O se jiya.	It is because of me you have been crucified.

Bolaji Idowu argued that 'sacrifice is the essence of the religion of the Yoruba as it is of every religion the world has ever known'.[591] Sacrifice is a means by which the African finds communion with *Olodumare* and other deities. In Yorubaland in particular, each deity has his or her taste. Hence, the sacrifice offered to a deity depends on the delights of such *orisa*. For instance, *Ogun*, (god of iron) delights in

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further information on 'ember months', see Ike Anya, Chikwe Ihekweazu Ndubuisi Edeog (2007), Nigeria Health Watch: Ember Months and Trafic Accidents" Retrieved from http://www.nigeriahealthwatch.com/2007/12/ember-months-and-road-trafic-accident on 19 June 2010 .

589 Chinedu Vicent Akuta (2009), 'Alcohol and Road Accident in Nigeria' Daily Sun (Monday November 30) Retrieved from http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/opinion/2009/nov/30/opinion-30-11-2009-oozhtm on 19 June 2010.

590 Osita Chidoka (2010), '130 Died in Road Accidents in Seven Days, Hit-And-Run Drivers Kill 11 FRSC Officers' Retrieved from http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note-id=258503489964 on 19 June 2010.

591 Idowu (1963), p.118.

dogs, fowls, roasted yam, snails and palm wine; while *Sango* (god of Thunder) likes ram and bitter kola. *Esu* (god of confusion) prefers a cock while *Orunmila* relishes rat and fish.[592] It is an abomination for anyone to offer a disliked sacrifice to any divinity in Yorubaland. If this happens, it is the belief of the Yoruba that such a divinity would fight the donor of such an inappropriate sacrifice. The highest sacrifice in Yorubaland, however, is the offering of a human being to a divinity or divinities for atonement or propitiation.[593] Idowu confirmed that before British rule in Nigeria, there were divinities to which human beings had to be offered at least annually. Such divinities include *Oramfe* of Ile-Ife and Ondo.[594] The motivation was the belief that a human being must be offered as 'a sacrifice of appeasement in order that the community might be saved'[595] As Idowu also maintained, no-one can categorically say that human sacrifice is not being practised even today, though in secret. Needless to say, human sacrifice, whether in the past or present, is barbaric and unchristian.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ as a propitiation for human sins is different from the human sacrifice among the Africans. It is different because the human used for African sacrifice is often a stranger, probably captured at night. The victims of human sacrifice are often forced, and do not willingly surrender themselves for the sacrifice. In the case of Jesus Christ, He willingly surrendered himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for human sins. Idowu also affirmed that African human sacrifice is an occasional as well as an annual event.[596] This shows that a quite number of people would be compulsorily killed in many villages and towns every year! Jesus Christ's sacrifice was once and for all, for people of all nations in the world. Nevertheless vicarious

592 Idowu (1963), p.118.
593 Idowu (1963), p.119-123.
594 Idowu (1963), p.119.
595 Idowu (1963), p.119.
596 Idowu (1963), p.119.

sacrifice, therefore, is not strange to the Yoruba. The evidence of this assertion is clearly seen in the above Easter songs. The theology of the song indicates that Jesus Christ was offered as an atonement for human sin. That was the reason why He (Jesus) endured the crown of thorns, spearing, ridicule and crucifixion so that everyone who believes in him can be saved. In the light of this, the Yoruba believe that it was the love of God for the world that enabled Him to be offered as the 'only begotten son that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life' (John 3:16). In response to what the Lord has done, the Yoruba believe one needs to give his/her life to Jesus.

iii. Petitional Song

Through music, petitions and confessions are also presented by devotees to God in worship. One of the common Yoruba songs is a good example of these petitions and confessions. The song is:

Dari ji mi o Jesu	Forgive me Jesus,
Emi o ni se be mo	I will not commit the sin any more
Baba ro teje Re	Eternal Father, remember your blood.[597]

This song is one of the indigenous petitional as well as confessional songs that is often sung in worship. It is a song used to plead for forgiveness in order to have a meaningful encounter in worship. The Yoruba recognise sin as a hindrance between humankind and the Deity or divinities. For instance, when there is an epidemic disease or a nationwide drought or famine, the Yoruba believe their sins must be responsible for such a calamity. Hence, a propitiatory sacrifice must be offered to

597 Isola Ezekiel Olaoye (1995), *Anointed Choruses for the Children of God* (Lagos: n.p.), p.33.

appease the grieved Deity or divinities.[598] This sense of appeasement can be said to be carried over into Christianity. The Yoruba proverb '*a ki mo rin k'ori o ma mi*' (no matter how religious one is, no one is perfect) shows the Yoruba recognition of *adamic* nature of human beings. Consequently, they believe, '…if we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness…'(I John 1:8-10)[599] I believe the Bible is saying that once we as humankind have recognized our shortcoming, confess it and turn away from such ways, God in his infinite mercy will forgive us, restore and reunite our relationship with him (God).

iv. Burial/Funeral Songs

For burials, the Yoruba have a lot of songs to celebrate the life of the departed soul. The Yoruba see life as finite. This is in line with the Scripture that says 'a man born of woman is of few days' (Job 14:1-5) and that there is no one that has power on the day of his death (Ecclesiastes 8:8). There is a Yoruba song which reflects their understanding of death:

Egbe: Ajo laye (3x)	Chorus: This world is like going on a journey,
Ajo ma laye je,	It is a journey,
Bo pe bo yani,	No matter how short or long,
A o pada sile. (2x)	We must return home. (2x)

According to the Yoruba, as I have earlier argued, the world is seen as a market or farm to which men and women go in the morning and return home later in the day.[600] This depends on the purpose of the one going to 'the market or farm'. Once one has

598 Idowu (1963), p.123.
599 I John 1:8-10.

600 Afe Adogame (2000), 'Aiye Loja, Orun Nile: The Appropriation of Ritual Space-Time in the Cosmology of the Celestial Church of Christ' *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol.30, Fasc.1 (February), pp.3-4.

accomplished the purpose, one has to return home whether one likes it or not. The Yoruba also believe that it does not matter the age at which one returns, what is important is what one has done within the time allotted to him/her. The Yoruba proverb *'iku ko mo omode, iku ko mo agba, iku ko ba enikan sore, eniti iku ba kan ni iku nka*' (death does not have pity on children, nor pity on adults, death has no friends, whoever it is, it is his/her turn, whenever it is their turn, death takes them away) shows that the Yoruba understand that anyone may die at any time. Ironically, no one knows his/her turn. Probably, one would have prepared well before one dies.

The use of local songs in Christian worship of Africa, particularly the Yoruba is not negotiable. One may be wondering as to the reason for the shortness of most of the Yoruba songs. The main reason is for easy memorising and accessibility to both the young and the old whether literate or illiterate. Since there are diverse cultures in the world of which the African continent is a part, care needs to be taken in order not to universalize a culture to the detriment of others. In the opinion of Idolor:

> Every kind of music possesses matrices which identify with a culture and represent a people with a common culture. Using a sound matrix, it is therefore possible to discern the nativity of a piece of music…The compositional technique such as statement of themes and their developments with sequences, repetitions, tonal shifts, orchestration, dynamic shadings, part singing, text, texture, rhythm… are all representation of a culture.[601]

From the above quotation, it can be right to say that music is a part of humankind's life style. In other words, music in a society depends on the type of the culture of that particular society. Consequently, it may be wrong to universalise hymns although they may be adapted. In the words of Lerma, 'it is sociologically and aesthetically dishonest to assume that any other cultural area or time has an obligation to transplant

601 Idolor (2007), p.15.

a musical power, or spirit, or quality from Europe'.[602] If music will be meaningful to the African Christian worshippers, particularly in Yorubaland, it needs to be composed within the cultural worldview of the worshippers and accompanied with local musical instruments. The implication of this contextualization is that such music will not only be danceable within the cultural styles, the music with the drumming must be congruent with the musical matrices, texture as well as rhythm of the adherents. Again, since such music is in the context of the worshippers, the messages in the music and the accompanied drumming will probably be more meaningful and well understood by the adherents.

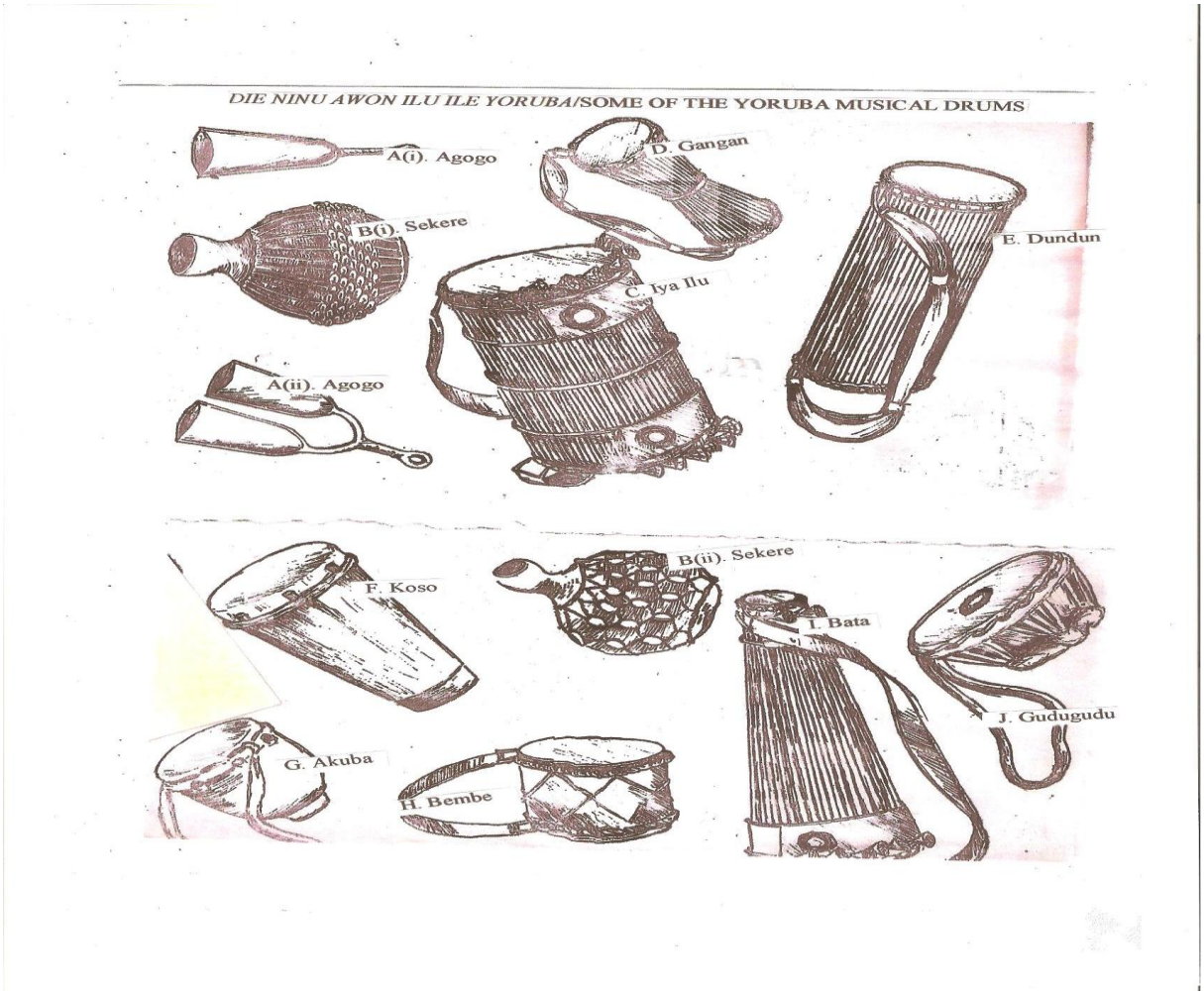
Yoruba music is tonal rather than accentual. The Yoruba language itself is heavily tonal. For instance, *Ayo* could mean a different thing depending on the tone in which it is spoken. For example: *Ayo*- game or skill; *Ayo*- name of a tree; *Ayo*- joy; *ayo*- sneak in; *ayo*- we are full or satisfied with food or drink. It is when the right tones are used that communication is meaningful to the listeners. This tonality is one of the unique characteristics that make Yoruba music different from the Euro-American songs. The tones are basically pentatonic (five tones) instead of chromatic. Hence, the text and the rhythm of the song will be meaningful to the listeners when the tonalities are correct. Therefore, the interpretation of the music and musical instruments determine the dance steps that the listeners will apply.

B. The Indigenous Musical Instruments

The indigenisation of musical instruments is another area of concern for this researcher. It has been reported in Chapter Four that most of the local musical

602 Dominique-Rene Lerma (1974), 'Humanistic Perspectives from Black Music' *Journal of Musical Research*, 1(3), p.225.

instruments are not available in some of the Baptist churches where the research data was collected. There are many musical instruments that need to be incorporated into Christian worship. Some of them include: *bata, agogo, sekere, dundun, gangan, bembe, aro, akuba* and others. The local musical instruments, especially talking drums, are designed in such a way that they actually produce distinctive tones. Consequently, the drums are able to communicate in the tones of the people. Incorporation of the aforementioned musical instruments to Yoruba Christian worship will not only make the worship indigenous, it will also make such worship meaningful and admirable. Consequently the worshippers would be very much at home in their worship services. The following are the pictures of some of the aforementioned indigenous musical instruments:



Picture adapted from Daramola ati Jeje (1975), pp.180-181.

This Bata picture was taken at Alubata Compound, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria on 18th December, 2008.

Generally, the love of the Yoruba for indigenous music and musical instruments both at home and abroad cannot be overemphasized. The Yoruba proverb: *'iwo le jo, emi le jo, kokoro meji lo pade'* (you can dance, I can dance as well, two dancers have come for a competition) shows that dancing to music as well as drumming can lead to competition among the Yoruba. The type of drum and drumming determines the dance. The danceable and cultural tunes of the indigenous musical instruments, among other reasons, make them desirable in church worship, particularly among the contemporary Yoruba Baptist Church members.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The challenges of indigenisation of Christianity among the Yoruba have been the focus of this chapter. I have been able to outline some of the possible reasons why indigenization is inevitable before the presentation of the challenges facing the Yoruba Christian through five categories, namely, the dominance of Western theology and theological vocabularies, the Euro-American ideology on polygamy and Baptist

ordinances, the Western cultural legacies, the Western lifestyles and the need for the integration of music and musical instruments. Some of the examples which I have discussed in this chapter include: African Christian theological terms such as *arabaribiti aleluya*, native clothing, worship in local Yoruba language, acceptance of polygamous families as full members, usage of local materials for Eucharist, and involvement of indigenous music and musical instruments.

The words of Obaje might be appropriate in concluding this chapter. In one of his articles, Obaje claimed that 'the word of God comes to us in the very context of who we are, where we live, and how we practice the very faith that has been handed down to us'.[603] I believe this assertion is true because for God to have meaningful communication with an individual, that communication has to come in the way the person understands and within the cultural context of the person. Since one's faith is best expressed within one's cultural milieu, I believe that the indigenisation of Christian worship among the Yoruba Christians of the NBC is not negotiable, it is imperative. Some of the other indigenous ways of worship will also be considered in the next chapter.

603 Yusuf Amen Obaje (1991, December), 'The Theology of Worship from An African Christian Perspective' *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*, 4, p.40 .

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE RESOURCES FOR AN INDIGENOUS BAPTIST CHURCH WORSHIP

7.0. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the church has been struggling to fulfil the mandate entrusted into her hand. The mandate is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations of the World and to disciple those who accept the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20). It can be argued that this mandate has not been totally fulfilled in Africa, particularly Nigeria, partly because of the failure to contextualize the teaching of the Bible into the culture of the believers. It might also be as a result of the effect of psychological slavery which I have discussed in Chapter Five. Traditional worship in Yorubaland generally takes a series of forms, rites and ceremonies including praying, singing, drumming, dancing, prostrating, kneeling down, chanting divinities' *oriki* (cognomens) and feasting.

In Chapter Six, I suggested some indigenous materials to be incorporated into the worship of the Baptist Churches in the Yorubaland. In this chapter, however, I present some of the other indigenous ideologies which need to be included in the contemporary Yoruba Baptist Church worship. Consequently, this chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part presents indigenous elements of worship. The second part is on the *oriki* (indigenous praise-names/cognomens)[604] of God. It is my submission in this chapter that, when both the indigenous elements of worship are incorporated into Baptist Churches cooperating with the NBC in the Yorubaland, the

604 *Oriki* (cognomens) are praise names often used among the Yoruba to inspire the addressee. They are also a form of prayer in Yoruba Traditional worship. This *oriki* will be further examined in the second part of this chapter.

worship services will reflect the African worship style and be satisfying to the worshipping community.

7.1. INDIGENOUS ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP

It will be difficult if not impossible to present a standardized order of worship for all the Yoruba Baptist Churches under the NBC in this research. The reason for the difficulty is due to the fact that the NBC believes in the autonomy of the local church and the power of the Holy Spirit working in the Church through the leadership.[605] The leadership could be a trained pastor or a lay leader. Each pastor or leader is, therefore, responsible for having an order of service for the congregation to follow. Besides, one needs to be careful so that one will also not commit the error made by the early missionaries regarding the imposition of their ideologies on the converts. In this section, however, I will suggest some of the indigenous elements which one may expect in the order of service of the contemporary Yoruba Baptist Churches. The list includes: *iyin* (praise)/*ijuba* (chanting of the cognomens of God), *iwure* (prayer), *ikilo* (homily), *idupe* (offerings), *ifilo* (announcement) and *aweje-wemu* (feasting).

A. *Iyin/Ijuba Olodumare* (Praise/Praising God)

In almost all traditional worship in Yorubaland, song, dance and drumming are some of the key elements of worship which occupy vital positions. The three elements of worship often go together. Consequently the three will be examined under this section. In the ATRs, the aforementioned elements of worship are engaged before procession to the shrine, in the midst and at the close of the worship. For instance,

605 The Nigerian Baptist Convention (1914), *The Constitution and Bye-Laws* (Article III, no.1) (Mimeograph). See also the Revised Editions: 1951(Article III, no.1), p.3, 1983 (Article III, no.1), p.3, 1994 (Article III:A), p.5.

> Osun festival[606] commences with *iwopopo* (procession) which is traditional clearing of the main road. Then, *ijuba fun awon oba to ti waja* (sacrifice to the past Ataojas) will precede *Olojumerindinlogun* (lighting of the sixteen lamps believed to have been seized from the *Osanyin* by the co-founder of Osogbo)…[607]

Before *Iwopopo* (procession), worshippers would gather in front of the palace, singing, dancing and drumming. In the case of *Ogun* worship, the drummers and the worshippers would gather in front of the palace or at the head of the town singing and dancing even before the commencement of *Ogun* worship. Similarly, there are singers (ensemble) in *Sango* (god of thunder) worship. At the *Sango* shrine, for instance,

> The chanters, usually women, and numbering from six to ten persons, are seated on dried-grass mats with their legs stretched out before them; they wear matching traditional dress of *aso-oke* (cloth). The chanting ensemble is comprised of a leader and answering group. The leader chants a long series of *oriki* (praise names) while the answering group repeat essentially the same type of refrain intermittently…[608]

The significance of these women singers is to invoke the spirit of *Sango* into the worship. It is believed that when a person's *oriki* (cognomens) are recited, such a person would be persuaded to display his/her power. So also, the Yoruba believe in the divinities who are themselves ministers of God. In all the ATR worship, the Yoruba usually engage themselves with music. 'The praise name of each divinity (god) is (often) recited by the worshippers at the beginning of any worship. Also

606 Osun is one of the goddesses celebrated in Yorubaland. It is an annual event which comes up in August of every year. The goddess is believed to be in charge of fertility, love, beauty and intimacy. She is also believed to possess magical power. Through this magical power, the Yoruba believe the goddess has the ability to give children (through birth) to barren women, power to heal the sick and to set free the afflicted persons by means of the medicinal water from the river. For more on Osun Festival, see 'Welcome to Osogbocity Homepage: History of Oshogbo' www.osogbocity.com, Gbenga Faturoti (Wednesday, 05 April 2006), 'Osun-Osogbo: Where the Spirit Grove' *Nigerian Planet* Downloaded from www.nigeria-planet.com/nig_osun_oso_spirit.html and Peter Probst (2004), 'Keeping the Goddess Alive: Performing Culture and Remembering the Past in Osogbo, Nigeria' *Social Analysis,* 48(1), Spring), pp.33-54.

607 Osun Osogbo Cultural Festival. Retrieved http://cometonigeria.com/forum/index.php?topic=1889.0 on 8 July 2010.

608 David Welch (1973), 'Ritual Intonation of Yoruba Praise-Poetry Oriki' *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*, vol.5, pp.156-164, Retreived from http://www.jstor.org/stable/767500 , on 17 July 2010, pp.156-157.

certain songs dedicated to the divinities are sung in their honour as occasion demands'.[609] In the light of the above explanations, *Yiyin Olorun* (Praising God), *Ilu Lilu* (Drumming) and *Ijo Jijo* (Dancing) will be examined as ways of integrating Christian worship into African context.

i. Y*iyin Olorun* (Praising God)

I believe *iyin* (praise) can be used as an indigenous element in Christian worship. My research, therefore, suggests that the worship service should commence with singing and reciting of the cognomens of God in local language. This celebration of God will not only prepare the worshippers with an expectation to meet the Lord in their cultural way of life, it is also a way to allow them to be possessed by the Holy Spirit of God. The significance of this reciting of the praise name of God at the beginning of the worship is that the worshippers believe that their worship will be acceptable and their prayer would be answered.[610] I have illustrated this belief in Chapter Five based on my encounter with a woman dancing enthusiastically during worship. The woman told me she believes that the more she praises God with her dance, songs and praise names, the more she is blessed.

ii. *Ilu Lilu* (Drumming)

It is hard to sing during worship in Yorubaland without the accompaniment of musical instruments. The musical instruments depend on the song, the deities worshipped and the type and purpose of the worship. For instance, the instrument may be hand

609 O.B. Akinfenwa (N.D.), 'Music and Dance as Elements of Worship in Yoruba Religion' *Journal of the Performer*, 7(9), pp.95–105. Retrieved from http://www.unilorin.edu.ng/publications/akinfenwa/music%20and%20dance.doc on 18 July 2010, p.6.

610 See Appendix III for some of the cognomens of God which can be either adopted or adapted into Baptist Church worship in Yorubaland.

clapping, 'two pieces of bamboo, sticks, or metal, held by each member of the congregation; it may be a drum (or drums); it may be a stick and a gong, or a stick and gongs, it may be all of these together'.[611] Consequently, the music and the musical instrument could 'be quiet, loud or noisy'.[612]

The place of musical instruments cannot be over emphasized in the contemporary Baptist Churches in Yorubaland. I have briefly explained in Chapter Six how some of the musical instruments are designed in such a way that they actually produce distinctive tones. With these distinctive tones, most of the local musical instruments speak in the language of the Yoruba people. Hence, their accompaniment in worship does not only make their worship contextual, it also enables them to worship satisfactorily and meaningfully. The pictures of some of the local musical instruments also have been presented in Chapter Six of this research.

iii. *Ijo Jijo* (Dance)

It is a general philosophical ideology of the Yoruba that '*Onisango to jo ti ko ta pa, abuku ara re lo ta*' (A Sango adherent who dances without flinging his/her legs brings discredit to himself/herself). According to Yoruba mythology, *Sango* was one of the past kings (*Alafin*) of Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. During his lifetime, he loved *bata* drums so much and danced to the drum in a unique way that was different from other people. One of the unique ways was by flinging his legs when dancing to *bata* drums. After his death and deification, it became the custom of the devotees of *Sango* to fling their legs when dancing to *bata* drums as *Sango* did during his life time. The

611 E. Bolaji Idowu (1963) *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publisher), p.113.
612 Idowu (1963), p.113.

implication of not dancing according to Sango's style is that the divinity will not be pleased with such a person; hence his/her worship would not be accepted. Consequently, the prayer request of the person will not be granted.

The above explanation shows the importance of dance in worship. *Sango* adherents are not the only worshippers dancing in their worship. Dance is a prominent element in worship (like song) in the rest of the Yoruba divinities' worship. It is rare to see people singing and accompanied with musical instruments without dancing. Idowu claimed that 'there is a place for dancing in the rituals, especially during sacred day worship and certainly during the annual festival celebrations'.[613] The dances, according to Idowu, 'are not mere random movements or mere emotional responses to the rhythm of music'.[614]Rather, they are symbolic.

In Yorubaland, there are some symbolic expressions commonly used among the people. Adewale enumerated some of the symbolic expressions which represent the real objects or feelings.[615] For instance, kolanut and bitter kola are favoured by the spiritual beings in Yorubaland and they are symbols for long life/old age. Offering these elements in ATR worship is a symbolic expression of asking for long life or old age. Similarly, honey is a symbol of peace and joy. Offering this honey in an ATR worship service is also tantamount to asking for peace and joy in one's life.[616]

613 Idowu (1963), p.115.
614 Idowu (1963), p.115.
615 S.A. Adewale (1988), *The Religion of the Yoruba: A Phenomenological Analysis* (Ibadan: n.p.), p.46.
616 Adewale (1988), p.46.

In the case of dancing in a worship service, it is an expression of, appreciation of, and happiness with one's deity. Offering it in worship along with songs is an expression of tendering one's heart of gratitude to God. Since the Yoruba believe that '*yiniyini ki eni se'mi ni*' (giving praise for the favour received makes the benefactor do more), dancing in worship is a way of asking for more favours. Adewale recognized this fact and aptly expressed his view on it as follows:

> Rhythmic and acrobatic dancing increases the blessings of the worshippers according to the belief of the adherents of the religion. The more active the worshipper, the greater are his/her blessing…The worshippers behave like mad persons, but they are not mad, they are just struggling to impress their gods.[617]

Although dancing acrobatically in Christian worship might be seen as bringing pagan rituals into the worship from a Western perspective. I strongly reject this position on the grounds that worship seems to be cerebral in the Western world; while it is embodied in the African continents. In other words, the Westerners do not carry their emotion into worship. On the other hand, the Africans go into worship with their souls, minds and bodies and consequently use them during worship. In my own opinion, the use of dance in Baptist Church worship is a way of meeting the total needs in Christian worshippers. In addition, dancing in a worship service makes all the Church members actively participate in worship and satisfactorily express themselves before their Creator.

B. *Iwure* (Prayer)

Prayer is another vital aspect of worship in most religions that the world has ever known. *Iwure*, as it is called in the Yoruba traditional worship, often employs Yoruba-command-language. The Yoruba-command-language (otherwise known as

617 Adewale (1988), p 69.

incantation) is described as restricted poems that have mystical and cultic power.[618] It is the chanting of words according to their formula. *Ofo* is the general name for all forms of incantations in Yorubaland. It can be benevolent as well as malevolent. The usage depends on the intention of the chanter. *Ayajo*, however, is referred to as the chanting of the 'past events and their outcome recalled as precedents for the current situation'.[619] It is the belief of the Yoruba that when *ofo* or *ayajo* is chanted according to the prescribed formula, it is always efficacious.

According to Oyeronke Olajubu, a Professor of Yoruba oral literature, the use of the Yoruba-command-language in some 'aspects of African Christianity cannot be divorced from the Yoruba cosmic view'.[620] Based on the Yoruba worldview, it is believed that supernatural beings exist which, in the opinion of the Yoruba, need to be consulted and appeased especially, in worship. In the worldview of the Yoruba:

> there is a strong link between the seen and the unseen. The Supreme Being, divinities, spirits and the ancestors all constitute the supersensible and their power to influence occurrences in the lives of mortals at various stages of life are recognized and appreciated.[621]

Recognition of this link between Africans and their environment facilitates the need for consultation between mortal and immortal through the incantations which include *ofo* and *ayajo*. I believe the Yoruba cannot but be involved in this practice because of the evil forces perceived to be around them. 'Witches and wizards were said to

618 O.O. Olatunji (1984), *Features of Yoruba Oral Poety* (Ibadan: University Press), p.139.
619 Oyeronke Olajubu (2001, December), 'The influence of Yoruba-Command-Language on Prayer, Music and Worship in African Christianity' *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 14(2), p.173.
620 Olajubu (2001), p.173.
621 Olajubu (2001), p.174.

possess mysterious power that are denied the rest of the population'.[622] In Yorubaland, witches and wizards are:

> believed to be responsible for most of life's misfortunes. They are also believed to have the power of metamorphosis; that is, it was thought that they could change at will into non-human creatures like bats, leopards, mosquitoes, crocodiles. While in these guises, they could harm their neighbours. One method of killing that was widely attributed to witches was vampirism or blood-sucking. At night, using their mysterious powers, they were said to pass through closed doors to get to their sleeping victims, whose blood they drank. The victims became progressively weaker and might eventually die…[623]

Belief in witchcraft is not only limited to the African, it also has its history in the pre-modern age. A witch (whether male or female), as Thomas defined it, is a person who is in the possession of a mysterious power for the purposes of inflicting injury and killing other people.[624] In his research, Brown claimed that 'the Christian communities grew up through the belief in human vested agents of good, endowed with inherent power, as bearers of the Holy Spirit to combat superhuman agents of evil'.[625]Jesus Christ cast out demons; so also did Peter and Paul later in their gospel ministries. Paul even declared in one of his epistles that 'our (Christians') struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the…spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms'.[626]

Before modernity in Europe, witchcraft was recognized even by the British Government. Evans-Pritchard (a Professor of Social Anthropology from 1946-1970)

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622 Elechi Amadi (1992), *Ethics in Nigerian Culture* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Ltd), p.21.

623 Amadi (1982), p.21.

624 Keith Thomas (2004 ed.), 'The Relavance of Social Anthropology to the Historical Study of English Witchcraft' in Mary Douglas, *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations: Anthropology and Ethnography* (Great Britain: Routledge Library Editions), p.48.

625 Peter Brown (2004 ed.), 'Sorcery, Demons, and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages' in Mary Douglas, *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations: Anthropology and Ethnography* (Great Britain: Routledge Library Editions), p.31.

626 Ephesians 6:10.

was the pioneer researcher of the belief in the existence of witchcraft. Using the Azande people of Sudan, Evans-Pritchard claimed that belief in witchcraft was (and still is) ubiquitous in Africa.[627] He, however, claimed that some of the ill-fated activities attributed to the evil works of the witchcraft could be seen as cosmological or accidental events by Westerners.[628] Years later, he also influenced other social anthropologists such as Douglas whose work was based on the pioneer work of Evans-Pritchard.[629]

The contemporary intellectuals may deny the existence of witchcraft in England and elsewhere, but the older generations knew the havoc that surrounded witchcraft and did everything within their capacity to protect the then inhabitants. For instance:

> …the Acts of Parliament which made witchcraft a statutory offence reflected the popular emphasis on damage (*maleficium*) rather than Devil–worship. There were three Acts - 1542 (repeated 1547), 1563 (repeated 1604), and 1604 (repeated 1736)….1604 Act made it a capital offence to covenant with, or to entertain evil spirit, but it still displayed the earlier preoccupation with *maleficium* by making it a felony to kill anyone by witchcraft, while imposing a lesser penalty for less serious types of injury[630]

Thomas has it on record that many people were prosecuted under the above Acts in England.[631] The above emphasis on witchcraft seems to be a thing of the past in the contemporary English society, probably due to modernity.

In African society, however, belief in witchcraft still exists. My research will not present how witchcraft operates because I am not researching on witchcraft *per se*.

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627 E.E. Evans-Printchard (1937), *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford: The Claredon Press), p.63

628 Evans-Printchard (1937), pp.65-70.

629 Mary Douglas, ed. (2004), *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations: Anthropology and Ethnography* (Great Britain: Routledge Library Editions), p.xi.

630 Thomas (2004 ed.), pp.49-50.

631 Thomas (2004 ed.), p.50.

My concern here is how the Yoruba Christians, like other African religious adherents, protect themselves against evil forces. Because of the evil forces, life is seen as uncertain to the African.[632] The uncertainty of life underscored the reason why many Africans (unbelievers) often protect themselves with charms and amulets.[633] When the African Christians face a similar experience, they fall to prayer in order to overcome the power of the devil. For instance, in 2002, I experienced a spiritual attack at night. A young lady who confessed to this atrocity later claimed she led a group of witches to my bedroom one night to suck my blood.[634] Truly I knew that there were strange spirits around us that night, though I could not see any physical manifestation. I woke my wife and children and started reciting some Bible passages to ward off the perceived evil spirits around us that night, only to later discover the source of the attack during the confession of the young lady. To Westerners, the above experience may be viewed as an ordinary nightmare. To the Africans, however, where the existence of witchcraft is believed, it is easy to understand why life appears unsafe and uncertain. During this type of scenario, the Yoruba believe in the efficacy of the use of the Yoruba command language in prayer. We embark on prayer because we believe in the supremacy of the power of God over the devil.

In Christianity, prayer is said according to the will of God. No matter the need(s) of the devotees, the attitude towards Christian prayer is often the same with Jesus Christ during his agony in the garden of Gethsemane. 'Not as I will, but as you (God) will'

632 Osadolor Imasogie (1986) *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa* (Ibadan: University Press Limited), p.60

633 Imasogie (1986), p. 63.

634 E.G. Parrinder (1976) also testified to the evil activities of witchcraft in his book, *African Traditonal Religion* (London: Sheldon Press), p.117. See also the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (1999), Section 38(4) that forbids secret societies.

(Matthew 26:39) is usually the norm of the Christians toward prayer. Using the Yoruba-command-language in Christian prayer this way will, therefore, not result in syncretism.

The desire to use the Yoruba-command-language is one of the resources for the contemporary Christian worship in Yorubaland. *Erelu Agbaye* (Evangelist D.B. Oluwatimilehin), a chief occultist who later became a Christian evangelist, claimed that the Christians have words from the scripture which can be used in the same way a*fose* and *ayajo*.[635] Asking her whether she had used some of them after her conversion, she confirmed she had used the Bible passages several times. The Ola Aresa of Mashifa, Ejigbo, Oba Evangelist Matthew Oyekale (Adegbokun III) also witnessed to the efficacy of the chanting of the word of the Holy Bible. According to the *Kabiyesi* (King), in the testimony he gave during an open air crusade in Lagos, when his subjects wanted him to accept his second wife, he rejected her on the ground of his religious conviction.[636] His subjects tried to hypnotize him in order to accept the woman they brought for him. He said he started chanting some biblical passages with the prefix *nitori ti a ti ko pe* (for it is written). One of the texts the *Kabiyesi* claimed he chanted was Psalm 27. According to the testimony of the *Kabiyesi*, his attackers were defeated and ran away. Evangelist Elijah Afolabi, a formerly notorious cult member who is now a Baptist evangelist, maintained that 'a Christian who cannot use the word of the Bible in praying is playing'.[637]

635 Dorcas B. Afolaranmi Oluwatimilehin Interviewed. Osogbo 15 December 2009.
636 Matthew Adegbokun (The Ola Aresa of Mashifa, Ejigbo), Message Preached at First Baptist Church Alapere on 15 February 2005.
637 Elijah Afolabi. (2003), 'Jija Ogun Emi'. (Cassette Recording).

I believe that through the word of God, victory is sure for the children of God. I also believe that any part of the scripture that relates to prayer (such as Psalms 23) can be used along with the phrase 'for it is written'. Jesus used the phrase 'it is written' along with some of the Old Testament passages to defeat his archenemy during his temptation in the desert.[638] Using the phrase along with other Bible passages emphasizes the fact that it is not our word; rather it is the word of the Lord. I believe that using some of the Bible passages with the phrase 'for it is written' will be efficacious just as Jesus used them.

C. *Ikilo* (Homiletics)

Although there seems to be no written scripture for the ATR, their words of meditation are embedded in '*odu ifa*' (messages from *Ifa* corpus). This *odu ifa* is only available to the priest who has the knowledge of the particular religion. Regardless of the unavailability of the written literature for ATR, the priest in charge often exhorts the adherents based on the *odu ifa* that comes out during the divination in worship.

In Christian worship, we have the Holy Bible which the Yoruba believe is the word of God written by inspired men and women. This Holy Bible needs to be used in a way that speaks to the Yoruba in their own cultural background. For instance, in the parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30 and Luke 13:19), *otili* seed (pigeon pea - *cajanus indics*) can be used in place of the mustard seed. This *otili* seed is very thin and tiny when it germinates. However, it develops and becomes a big tree which a human being can climb before a year runs out. Using this local plant (*otili*) which is known to all and sundry within their context will make the message

638 For detail, see Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.

meaningful to the worshippers. As the Bible is read and interpreted in the culture of the worshippers, the people will:

> now feel that they are automatically initiated into the mysteries of the Biblical truth, the mysteries of the Christian way. They now have full access to the word of God. Now God speaks their language - and the Bible is now their Bible. They are at least freed to take it seriously and to apply it in the ways they understand.[639]

This divine Holy Word of God needs to be more integrated into African cultures, which include their 'world-view, mentality, spiritual awareness, creativity and modern challenges'.[640] Using the Bible this way does help the worshippers to see God speaking to them in their cultural value systems.

D. *Irubo* (Offering)

In Chapter Six, I explained that each divinity has his/her taste which must be adhered to by the worshippers. Idowu claimed that the offering could be prescribed as well as voluntary. In whatever form, the offering to any of the divinities must be without defect. The Yoruba proverb '*ma so pe o rowo mi, o yan guguru f'eegun, eegun naa ni ma sope o rowo mi o gbe omolangidi le lowo*' (do not say I have not brought something for you, he/she (the worshipper) fried corn for *eegun* deity, the deity in return also handed over a toy baby as an appreciation of the fried corn offered) shows the importance of the types of material used for sacrifice. If one uses defective offerings, the Yoruba believe such a person's prayer may not be fully answered.

From the Christian perspective, the story of Cain's and Abel's offerings in Genesis serves as a warning. Consequently, it is expected of every worshipper to offer the best

639 John Mbiti (1986), *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press), p.28.
640 Mbiti (1986), p.228.

to the Lord as sacrifice. Offerings could be in cash and/or in kind. The offering depends on one's environment and the purpose. For instance, during the harvest thanksgiving service, one may not be expecting the worshippers in Lagos metropolis to bring the same farm products brought by the people in Oyo, Ogbomoso, Ife, Akure and other areas where farming is practised. Since the majority of the Lagosians and other metropolitan inhabitants are workers in offices, they should be expected to bring cash as their own offerings.

E. *Orin* (Hymns/Songs)

Hymns play a major role in worship. One of the roles music plays is the edification of the body of Christ. To edify is to build up and strengthen the growth of members of the community of believers. As Onwochei affirmed, 'music generally moves people and reaches their inner emotions'.[641] Christian music does the same in the life of believers. It can even be argued that Christian music 'is much more potent, sharp and powerful because of both the origin and the heavenly power that backs it'.[642] Through music and meaningful worship, communion with our Heavenly Father can be said to be achievable. I have given examples and analysis of some of the indigenous songs often sung in Yoruba Christian worship in Chapter Six.

It is believed that music moves God when it is sung in a way that pleases Him. For example, the Bible says:

> ...All the Levites who were musicians…stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres…they raised their voice in praise to the Lord and sang: 'He is good; his love endures forever.' Then the temple of the Lord was filled with a cloud, and the priest could not

641 Pic Onwochei (2006), *The Effective Music Minister: The Spiritual and Moral Demands* (Lagos: McDee Communications Limited), p.43.

642 Onwochei (2006), p.43.

> perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God.[643]

Although there is no record of the language used by the singers in the above passage, they would probably sing in their own Hebrew language. The fact that cymbals, harps and lyres were mentioned as the musical instruments used shows the importance of indigenous musical instruments in the worship. Alexander affirmed that 'there were three kinds of (musical) instruments in Israel - string, wind and percussion'.[644] Harps and lyres belonged to the group of strings; while cymbals were from the percussion group.[645] If God could be moved by the singers above, I believe he can be moved by African singers too.

The example of the women's ensemble in *Sango* worship is an indication that the contemporary Baptist Church also needs to be encouraged to organize more singers who will sing the praise of God and also exhort the worshippers with their songs. The ensembles may comprise men, women, boys and girls of different levels in age and education. The reason for the different levels is to accommodate the full age range of life in the Church to be actively participating in worship. In order for the choir members to be at home regarding clothing in worship, *kanpala/adire* clothes or any other local clothes will be needed in the place of Western choir robes. It has been a tradition that choir members need to put on choir robes in every worship service. The robes are sewn in Euro-American styles. The picture (below) of the choir member of First Baptist Church, Kosofe, Lagos in worship is an example of the Euro-American choir robes often used in most of the Baptist Churches in Nigeria.[646]

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643 II Chronicles 5:11-14.
644 Pat Alexander (1986), *The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* (USA: Lion Publishing Plc), p.191.
645 Alexander (1986), p.191.
646 For more information and picture of Children Choir of First Baptist Church Kosofe, see 'First

F. *Aweje-Wemu* (Feasting/Celebration)

In Chapter One, worship has been defined as the celebration of God's presence. Christian worship is centred on God, based on his revelation as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It can be argued that in an African setting, worshipping God is embraced in its totality. I am aware that Obaje has published remarkable works on 'Christian Worship as a Celebration of God's Existence'[647] and other related topics. For instance, Obaje claimed that Christian worship from an African perspective is a:

> private and communal act of praising God, of drumming and dancing to his glory, of praying to God, of meditating upon God's words as contained in the Holy Scripture, of hearing God's voice, of remembering God's acts, of redemption, of preaching the gospel, of giving tithes and offering, of dedicating one's life to God as a living sacrifice, of rejoicing over God's love for man and the whole creation and of doing all things to God's glory - in spirit and in truth.[648]

BaptistChurch Kosofe' http://fbckosofe.net/ Retrieved on 31 July 2010.

647 Yusuf Amen Obaje (1986), 'Christian Worship as a Celebration of God's Existence' *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* (January), pp.23-34.

648 Yusuf Amen Obaje (1982), 'The Church as a Theocentric Community With Special Reference to Certain Aspects of Traditional African Ideas of God and Man' An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, p.250.

Obaje sees the celebration of God's presence (worship) as a service that needs to be incorporated into the African rites of passages. He maintained that there is 'already existing context in which the idea of celebrating God's existence on the occasions of planting and harvesting new seeds, christening, puberty, marriage and burial ceremonies can flourish'.[649]

My further contribution to worship as a celebration of God's presence is in terms of feasting (*aweje-wemu*) in the worship. Celebration in an African worldview denotes rejoicing, jubilation and commemoration which in most cases attract socializing, singing, dancing, drumming, and feasting. This idea of celebration can be better understood when one looks into how the Yoruba worship gods and goddesses in ATR. I have narrated how *Odun Ogun* (*Ogun* Festival) is celebrated in Yorubaland in Chapter Two. Worship in ATR is a celebration in which every worshipper - the priest(s), the king or the head of the community and the other members of the community (the adherents) - joyfully wine and dine together especially at the end of the worship.

Inasmuch as one of the cultural ways of the Yoruba worship is celebration, it still needs to be fully incorporated into Christian worship. Furthermore, celebration in worship as seen in ATR involves every adherent. Obaje appears to be right, then, by saying: 'The corporate celebration of God's existence ought not to be a monologue where the pastor or the Priest does it all; while those in the pews remain as passive observers'.[650] Since all humankind is born into a cultural context, everything that is good in that culture may be a vehicle for God's celebration. If this assertion is

649 Obaje (1986), pp.28-33. Emphases are mine.
650 Obaje (1986), p.27.

acceptable, then the ideal of the imposition of a universal cultural way of worship as the only standard in which God is to be worshipped needs to be discouraged. As Obaje maintained:

> The Christian churches in Africa cannot continue to look up to the Churches in Asia, Europe and America for its mode of worship. It should not continue to determine the validity of its own worship experience only by the standard of the so-called mother Churches outside Africa. Its worship experience must reflect, first and foremost, the contents of Biblical revelation and vital aspects of African worldview and philosophy.[651]

Certainly, the non-African may not be able to see the celebration of God's presence (worship) through African eyes. It is a pity that not much has been written on African Christian liturgy, partly because we have depended so much on Western literature for so long. It could also be as a result of the psychological slavery that I have discussed earlier. Since celebration is part and parcel of African life, I see no reason why the church should continue to worship God in a manner which reflects bereavement and sorrow!

The climax of celebration in Yorubaland is feasting. Without eating and drinking, it can be argued that celebration is not complete. In most Baptist Churches in Yorubaland, the periods where feasting is often involved in their worship are Easter, Song Services, Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday and Christmas. Other services could be said to be devoid of dining and wining. The contemporary Baptist Churches also need to share at least light meals and drinks at the end of every service.

651 Obaje (1986), p.27.

7.2 THE USE OF THE *ORIKI* (COGNOMENS) OF GOD IN WORSHIP

The ATR worshippers believe that they have to worship God within their cultural orientation, using *oriki* (cognomens) of God and the gods. Several African scholars have written and are still writing on *oriki* from a Yoruba perspective. Johnson treated *oriki* as the attribute names which are added to the given names.[652] The attribute names could be given as a result of the roles, status, likes and dislikes of the person. This could be one of the reasons why Bolanle Awe saw *oriki* as *inagije* (nicknames) which are often used for amusement.[653] Babalola, however, affirmed that chanting *oriki* often makes a family proud of its pedigree.[654] Although data could not be given, Babalola claimed that through chanting *oriki*, the sick and insane can be healed; while the crying babies can be pacified. The progenitors in the spiritual world can also be moved and favour their living generation as a result of *oriki* chanting.[655]

In considering the Yoruba prayer of praise, Lindon maintained that *oriki* is the most elaborate form of praise-prayer in the art of Yoruba traditional worship.[656] According to him, 'the *orisa* are deified remote ancestors and/or natural forces'.[657] He further claimed that the *orisa* 'have inspired lengthy hymns of praise which are among the finest religious and literary products of the Yoruba culture'.[658] Lindon affirmed that:

> *oriki orisa* are often chanted in the initial stage of religious ceremony. They attract the attention and good will of the *orisa* and even in some cases, induce him/her to appear among his/her people through the phenomenon of

652 Samuel Johnson (1921), *The History of the Yorubas* (Lagos: C.M.S.) pp. 85-88.
653 Bolanle Awe (1974), 'Praise Poem as Historical Data: The Example of the Yoruba *Oriki*' *Africa*, Vol.44, pp.331-332.
654 S.A. Babalola (1966), *The Content and Form of Yoruba Ijala* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp.23-25.
655 Babalola (1966), pp.23-25.
656 Thomas Lindon (1990), 'Oriki Orisa: The Yoruba Prayer of Praise' *Journal of Religion in Africa*,XX(2), p.205.
657 Lindon (1990), p.205.
658 Lindon (1990), p.205.

> possession and trance. The *orisa* is pleased. …*Oriki orisa* also constitute the standard Yoruba prayer of thanks for favours received.[659]

In the opinion of Barber, *oriki* 'are the principal means by which a living relationship with the past is daily apprehended and reconstituted in the present'.[660] To me, *oriki* are forms of praises by which the Yoruba glorify themselves and their gods in a manner that is in complete conformity with their cultural affinity. Hence, *oriki* (cognomens) in this research will be regarded as a praise-name. When *oriki* is invoked, *ori eniyan a wu* (it inspires the addressee). It can be argued that *oriki* does the same to the gods in Yorubaland. For instance, chanting *oriki* of a god in worship changes the atmosphere of the entire service to spiritual elation in most traditional worship. The spiritual elation can even go to the extent of a trance. The evidence of this trance, which I have witnessed during the *Odun Ogun* (Ogun festival), has been given in Chapter Two.

Since the Yoruba, regardless of their faith, are the same in terms of cultural orientation, the Christian believers among them also have indigenous *oriki* for God. These *oriki* come from the various experiences of different people about God's omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, love, favour, mercy, deliverance, provision and redemption. Calling the cognomens of God is often done with singing, drumming and dancing. The significance of this is that the Yoruba believe that a genuine form of worship must be dynamic, dramatic and reverent. This could be the reason why the Yoruba usually approach worship with all seriousness and awe. In order to indigenize Christian worship among the contemporary Yoruba Christians, singing the cognomens of God needs to be appropriated into worship. The Yoruba have numerous cognomens

659 Lindon (1990), p.222.
660 Karin Barber (1991), *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow: Oriki, Women and the Past in a Yoruba Town* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), p.15.

for God.[661] Some of these cognomens which are often called at worship and during prayer will be analyzed now under two broad headings, namely: the Biblical and the indigenous praise names of God. The indigenous praise-names of God will be further sub-divided later. I will begin with the biblical names of God.

A. The Biblical Names of God

Some of the praise-names of the Lord from the Yoruba perspective have a Biblical background. Most of the names developed out of believers' experiences with God, similar to Biblical cases. Some of the examples of the Lord's cognomens are: *Oluwa* (Lord), *Olorun* (God), *Oluwa awon oluwa*, (The Lord of lords), *Olorun awon olorun* (The God of gods). '*Olu*' or '*Olo*' in Yoruba denotes the possessor or owner of the suffix that follows. Hence, *Oluwa* means '*Olu to ni awa*' (the Owner of us/the Owner of humankind). While '*Olorun*' means '*Olu ti o ni orun*' (the Owner of heavens). So also '*Oluwa awon oluwa*' (the Lord of lords) denotes '*Olu ti o ni awon oluwa inu aye*' (the Owner of the terrestrial kings).

Oluwa (Lord) or *Olorun* (God) to the Yoruba, therefore, means more than lip praise. As the Yoruba often say: '*eni ti o ni eru ni o ni eru re*' (whoever owns a slave, owns also the slave's properties). In the past when slavery was allowed, it was the custom that whoever owned a slave also owned the slave's belongings.[662] God is seen as the ultimate reality that owns humankind and their properties. He is also seen as the One who mends or repairs and maintains the lives of believers. This belief is aptly echoed in this Yoruba prayerful song:

661 See Appendix III for the full list of some of the *oriki* (cognomens) of God in the Yoruba language.

662 Olu Daramola ati A. Jeje (1995), *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press), p.121.

Olu-orun o!	The owner of heavens oh!
Bami taye mi se,	Repair my life please,
K'aye mase pamiti,	So that people may not abandon me,
Bi aso t'oti gbo.	Like a worn-out cloth.
K'aye mase s'ominu,	So that people may not bin me,
Bi ewu t'oti f'aya.	Like clothes turned to rags.
Kaye mase fi mi sofo,	So that people may not waste me,
Bi omi ojo.	Like rain water.
Baba bami t'aye mi se.[663]	Father repair my life.

From the above song, the Lord God is known as *Olu-orun*. He is also seen as the sustainer who preserves human lives from being rotten.

The Yoruba also call God: *Metalokan* (The Trinity), *Olorun Baba* (God the Father), *Olorun Omo* (God the Son) and *Olorun Emi Mimo* (God the Holy Spirit). The Yoruba Trinitarian concept comes from their interaction with the scripture. Obviously, there is no such ideology in ATR. Notwithstanding, the Yoruba Christians often pray with the names of the Trinitarian God-head. For instance, Deji Ayegboyin affirmed that the Christ Apostolic Churches[664] in Nigeria often start their prayer with: *Ni oruko Jesu* (in Jesus name)[665] which is repeated about three times. In the Celestial Church of Christ and Cherubim and Seraphim, they often add the words below in addition to the above.

Olorun Baba,	God the Father
Olorun Omo,	God the Son
Olorun Emi Mimo…	God the Holy Spirit…

Praying in the above ways shows the Christian Yoruba belief in the Trinitarian Godhead as the owner of the key to Heaven. Consequently, their names are called repeatedly throughout the prayer. Since the Yoruba, regardless of their denomination,

663 Isola E. Olaoye (1995), *Annoited Choruses for the Children of God* (Lagos: n.p.), p.50.

664 Christ Apostolic Church is one of the indigenous Church Denominations in Nigeria. The group started in 1928. For more information, see Adewale Alokan (1991), *The Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)* (Lagos: Ibukunola Printers).

665 Deji Ayegboyin (2005), '*Li Oruko Jesu*: *Aladura* Grass-roots Christology' *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 8(1), p.11.

often have get-togethers where Christian prayers are said, the prayer styles are copied by other Christian believers.

Due to the remarkable roles the fathers of faith had played, the Yoruba often use their names to call God. For example: *Olorun Abrahamu* (God of Abraham), *Olorun Isaki* (God of Isaac) and *Olorun Jakobu* (God of Jacob) are often used in prayers. From the Yoruba perspective, God is seen as the Supreme Being. His supremacy and sovereignty is above gods, or divinities and earthly kings.

B. The Indigenous Praise-Names of God

Most of the indigenous praise-names of God developed out of believers' experiences with God. None of these names are applicable to any *orisa* (god). It is also a way of honouring God. This idea of honour came from the understanding of giving respect to the Kings, the gods and the goddesses in Yorubaland. These indigenous names and cognomens are composed from descriptions of God 'Himself', His relationship with people, and His marvellous works. Thus, the indigenous names and cognomens will be examined under the aforementioned perspectives.

i. Description of God as Sovereign '*Kabiyesi*' (King)

In the past, the roles of Yoruba Kings regarding political leadership of their domains could not be overemphasized. In Chapter Two, I briefly explained the political organization of the Yoruba political leadership. Kings were seen as the lords of their respective kingdoms. The Yoruba proverb '*Oba ba lori ohun gbogbo*' (king rules over everything within his domain) shows how important and powerful the Kings were in

Yorubaland. The powerful authority attached to Kingship could be one of the reasons why they (Kings) are often referred to as *Kabiyesi* (One whom no one dare question).

Based on the above relationship of the Yoruba and their Kings, the Christians among them therefore see God as the One that has absolute power over both their Kings and themselves (the subjects). Consequently, God is seen as the '*Oba awon oba'* (the King of the kings). It is one of the traditions of the Yoruba that once a King is enthroned and crowned, he has become the head of that community regardless of his age. It is therefore expected that all members of that community must honour him by prostrating/kneeling down while greeting the King. Under no circumstances is the King expected to prostrate/kneel down for anybody regardless of the age, affluence and position of the person within and outside each kingdom. It is the understanding of the Yoruba that the Kings, however, may prostrate/kneel down while worshipping God. Hence the Yoruba see God as '*Oba ti ngba idobale/ikunle awon oba miran*' (the King who takes the prostration/ kneeling down of other kings). This King of the kings (God) is also seen as '*oba tin be ni ibi gbogbo ati ni igba gbogbo*' (the God who is everywhere at all times). In the case of the earthly Kings, their rulership is limited to their kingdom. Hence God is praised by the Yoruba Christians as '*Adagba-dagba ma paro oye' (*Ancient of days, whose destination never changed).

Since God is seen as everlasting whose position remains unchanged, he is viewed as the oldest being in the heavens and earth. Consequently, God is seen as *Olorun Agbalagba* (God that is full of age). Old age in Yorubaland denotes wisdom and commands respect. The Hebrews also had a similar tradition about old age. In Leviticus 19:32, the Bible says 'Rise up in the presence of the aged, show respect for

the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.' As a result of old age, I believe that such people must have acquired a wealth of experience, which at times the younger people need to consult. Consequently, the Yoruba maintain that God is the *Arugbo Ojo* (the Ancient of Days) who needs to be honoured and worshipped. This belief is also echoed in one of the Yoruba songs as follows:

Arugbo ojo,	Ancient of Days,
Emi ko le gbagbe yin o…	I cannot forget you…
Laye o.	In this world.

ii. The Praise-Names of God Reflecting God's Family Relationship

In Yorubaland, God is seen as and called 'Father'. Some of the obligations of father in Yorubaland as elsewhere are protection, provision and guidance. The obligation of a father to his children shows the reason why most Yoruba Christians often relate to God (as we do) as an earthly father. Many women see Jesus as '*Olowo ori mi*' (the one who paid my bride price). Some other Yoruba women often call God '*oko mi*' (my husband). *Olowo ori* and *oko*, however, are not used in the sense of the sexual relationship between husband and wife in Yorubaland. It is used to describe the other husband/wife relationships that exist between women and Jesus. Some of them include the lordship and ownership that whoever pays the bride price has over the bride in Yoruba culture.[666]

iii. The Praise-Names of God Reflecting Reliability and Dependability

Owibee-sebee (He that speaks and acts without any hindrance), *Awimayehun* (He who speaks and does not change His words) and *Onimajemu* (Covenant-keeping God) describe God's sovereign authority. In normal circumstances, whatever a king says

666 For more information about wife/husband relationships in Yorubaland, see Daramola ati Jeje (1975), pp.34-48.

must not be altered in Yorubaland. It is like the law of the Medes and Persians, as King Darius was reminded of in Daniel 6. God is equally seen as *Asoromaye*, (He whose prophecies come to pass). In the past history of the Yoruba, experiences have shown that there were many Kings who had spoken and what they said could not come to pass. An example was Sango, one of the past Kings of Oyo who was said to have committed suicide, probably as a result of despair and frustration.[667] There were other Kings who were incapacitated, either by their kingdom tradition or other kingdoms' military force. For example, Basorun, the head of *Oyo Mesi*[668] before the 19th century 'had the power to request the death of any *Alaafin* (King on the throne) who was held to have been rejected by the gods'[669] of the Oyo kingdom. The Ibadan war against Orile-Ijaye was also said to have forced Kunrunmi, the King of Orile Ijaye, to commit suicide. The Yoruba believe that God cannot be frustrated by anybody or any kingdom.

iv. The Praise-Names Reflecting God's Independence

From the Yoruba understanding, God is seen as *Alakoso orun at'aye* (The Ruler of heaven and the world) and *Atogbojule* (Dependable God). He is also seen as O*ba ti enikan ko fi joye, besi ni a ko le ro loye* (the King who was not enthroned by his subject and whom no one can dethrone). In Yorubaland, the Kings are enthroned by their subjects. There are several rituals and customs to be followed in the process of enthroning a King. The details of the enthronement of a Yoruba king will not be given

667 B.A. Agiri (1975), 'Early Oyo History Reconsidered', *History in Africa*, 2, Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171463 , p.9.

668 Oyo Mesi were the seven most powerful traditional chiefs in Old Oyo Kingdom. Their main duty was to constitute the Royal Council. The title of the head of these chiefs was Basorun. This Basorun was also the chief priest of *Orun worship* (probably sky god) celebrated a annually during which the chief priest enquiried whether the incumbent *Alaafin* (king) was acceptable to the gods or not in Oyoland. For further information, see Johnson, *(1921),* pp.70.

669 Agiri (1975), p.9.

since it is not the main focus of this section. My concern here is how the Yoruba arrived at the names given to God. Since the Yoruba believe that no one created God, His origin is obscure. Hence no one enthroned him as the *Kabiyesi* of the universe. If the assertion is true, then the Yoruba seem correct to see God as *Eleda* (Creator) *Akoda aye* (The first among all things) and *Aseda orun* (the one who established the heavens). *Okan lana* (Same yesterday), *Okan loni* (Same today), *Okan lola* (Same tomorrow) and *Okan titi aye ainipekun* (Same forever) emphasize the immortality of God. The Yoruba believe God lives for ever; while all other gods/divinities (some of whom were human beings before they were transformed into spirit beings), cannot be compared with Him.

v. The Praise-Names of God Reflecting the Bestowal of Salvation

The name *Olugbala* (Saviour) appears to be the Yoruba literal interpretation of the word Saviour in the New Testament. The Yoruba, however, had an ideal of deliverance even before Christianity was introduced to them. I have narrated how Moremi's only son (Ela) was sacrificed for the deliverance of the Ife people from the raid of the Igbo tribe in Chapter Two. Hence, Ela was seen as the saviour of the Ife people from their calamities. In the case of *Oludariji* (Forgiver), *Oba t'o se'gun agbara ese* (God who delivers us from the hold of sin) and *Oba t'o san gbogbo 'gbese wa* (God who pays the price for our sins), God is seen as the King who has power to discharge the offenders as acquitted.

vi. The Praise-Names of God Reflecting His Power

The Yoruba believe that God is mighty and that his wisdom is unfathomable. *Oyigiyigi* (Great and Almighty) denotes the unchangeable nature of God.

Alagbawi eda (Defender and the Advocate) and *Alakoso orun at'aye* (The Ruler of heaven and the world) reveal the supreme rulership of God in all situations. The power ascribed to God is reflected in the following song:

Alagbara ni Baba	Power resides in the Father
Alagbara ni Omo	Power resides in the Son
Alagbara ni Emi Mimo	Power resides in the Holy Spirit
Yoo se temi pe.[670]	He will do all that concerns me perfectly.

This is to say that the Yoruba believe that God has the final say on any matter relating to the existence of all creatures in the world. The Yoruba believe that whatever happens to anybody is an act of God. The proverb '*kadara ko gboogun*' (destiny has no remedy) shows that no one can change the agenda God has for any one in this world. Whether one likes it or not, the plan of God for the individual's life cannot be thwarted. This is one of the reasons why parents often want to know their children's destiny immediately after birth.

vii. The Praise-Names of God Reflecting His Deliverance, Protective and Defensive Activities

In the time of struggles with unpleasant situations in the life of Christians in Yorubaland, God is often called upon as *Olowogbogboro* (God whose hand is long enough to reach to any length), *Olorun awon omo ogun* (The Grand Commander of Heavenly warrior), *Olusegun* (The Conqueror), *Gbanigbani ni'jo ogun le* (Our Defence in time of war), *Ogbagba ti ngb'ara adugbo* (The Protector) and *Oba ti nyoni kuro ninu ofin aye* (God who rescues from the dungeon). *Atofarati* (Our defence), *Apata ayeraye* (The Rock of ages) and *Odi wa* (Our shield) are more about God's deliverance in the time of both physical and spiritual attacks.

670 Olaoye (1995), p.36.

As it is in the belief of *Aladura* Churches, so also some other Yoruba Christians strongly believe in the healing power of God. One of the phrases often used in times of sickness, as Ayegboyin recorded, is:

Oluwa wo mi san, emi o si san,	Heal me O Lord, and I shall be healed
L'Oruko Oluwa, emi o san,	In the name of the Lord, I shall be healed
Oluwa gbami la, emi o si la	Save me, and I shall be saved,
Loruko Oluwa, emi o la.	In the name of the Lord, I shall be saved.[671]

Although some of the *Aladura* do not believe in the use of orthodox medicine; they often used natural phenomena such as water and oil with prayer. The reason for this avoidance of orthodox medicine could be as a result of the emulation of the faith of Prophet Ayo Babalola (the CAC progenitor) who is credited with using '*omi iye*' (living water) from River Aayo of Osun State, Nigeria in the place of both native and orthodox medications for the healing of many diseases.[672] Because of the intra-communal relationships among the Yoruba regardless of their faiths and denominations, faith healing becomes one of their practises. In the case of the Yoruba Baptist Christians, we engage the use of orthodox medication with prayer. The SBC established hospitals along with other Christian institutions which were previously established by the convention. With faith in the Lord, we believe whatever medication given is efficacious.

Asorodayo (The God who gives joy), *Ogbeja k'eru o ba onija* (God who fights for the defenseless), *Jagunjagun ode orun* (The Great Warrior of heaven) and *Aduro tini bi akoni eleru* (The Faithful God) tell of God's protective, defensive and omnipresent natures, particularly in time of difficulties. Apart from the inter-tribal wars of the

671 Ayegboyin (2005), '*Li Oruko Jesu*: Aladura Grass-root Christology', p.19.
672 J.O. Ojo (1988), *The Life and Ministry of Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola: From 1904-1959* (Lagos:The Prayer Band Publications), p.207.

past, there are different problems that often confront individuals and communities. These problems could be the reason why the Yoruba people often say *ogun laye* (living in the world is like going to the battle field). In the opinion of the Yoruba, '*Olorun lo ngbe ija ti eru yoo si ma ba onija'* (God is the One who fights for the defenceless). Hence God is seen as the dependable defender of the Christian believers.

viii. The Praise-Names of God Reflecting His Mysterious Manifestations

The Yoruba have many cognomens for God based on His relationship with people. For instance, there are so many mysteries which are difficult to comprehend. An example is sleep, which is common to all humankind. The events that occur while one is sleeping seem to make the Yoruba believe in *Oba t'ao ri, sugbon t'a nri ise owo Re* (The unseen God, but we feel His impacts). God is also seen as *Onise iyanu* (Miracle worker), *Onise ara* (Wonderful worker) and *Onise nla* (Great worker). The unseen nature of God and His impacts are often acknowledged in the following song:

Osuba Re re o	You are worthy Oh! God
Osuba Re re o	You are worthy Oh! God
Oba t'a o ri	Invisible God
T'an rise owo Re	Miracle Worker
Osuba re re o.	You are worthy Oh! God.

Truly, no one has ever seen God face to face. However, He has been revealing Himself to humanity through the daily events such as sleeping and waking up, healings, comforts, provisions, deliverances and other acts of His mercy and love to humanity.

God's nature when answering the prayer requests of the Yoruba is revealed through *Oba to j'ewe at'egbo lo, Oba to ni kowa t'owa* (The God who commands), *Olorun t'o n gbo adura* (God who hears prayers), *Olorun t'ape t'o n je* (The God who one calls

and answers) and *Oba t'o n dahun adura pelu ina* (The God that answers by fire). In Chapter Three, I have explained that some Church members in Yorubaland often engaged the use of diabolic power. Surprisingly, they discovered that God is even more powerful than the said diabolic power.

In addition, the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient natures of God are also revealed in the other cognomens given to God by the Yoruba. For instance, the phrases *Aduro gboingboin lehin asotito* (Defender of the truthful), *Atofarati* (Our Defence), *Atogbokanle* (The trustworthy God), *Atofokante* (Our Confidant), *Adakedajo* (He who Judges silently), *Oba ti kii s'ojusaju* (The just God) and *Oba t'enikan o le pe l'ejo* (The king that cannot be judged) show the omnipotence of God. The Yoruba see God as the dependable defender who is ever constant, present and all powerful in any situation. Consequently, God is seen as the One who has absolute power over every creation in the world; while *Atererekariaye* (The One who is everywhere) and *Eletigb'aroye* (The great ear that hears complaints all over the world) affirm the omnipresence of God. From this affirmation, the Yoruba believe that God is everywhere at any time. Time and space cannot hinder God from achieving His goals at any time of any day. In the case of the omniscient nature of God, the Yoruba see Him as *Arinu r'ode* (God who sees the visible and the invisible), *Awamaridi* (Unsearchable God) and *Oba aseyiowu* (Unquestionable God).

ix. The Praise-Names of God Reflecting Love and Awesomeness

God's love also manifests in the following cognomens: *Alatilehin* (Our succour), *Alaanu* (Merciful God), *Oloore-ofe* (The gracious God), *Olorun ayo* (The God that gives Joy), *Olutunu*, (Comforter) and *Olubukun* (The blessed God). Because of the

peace that is usually associated with faith in God, He is also seen as *Olutunu* (Our Comforter), and *Olufe okan wa* (Lover). So also God is seen from His merciless judgements to the wicked people as *Erujeje* (Dreadful God) by the Yoruba. Because of the above experience of the Yoruba, God is often seen and called:

Alagbara t'agbara nrisa,	Power that instills fear into other powers,
Obarakata ti nba Satani leru,	The awesome One, who frightens Satan,
Alagbara bi ara,	Powerful as thunder,
Gbani gbani t'ansaya,	Refuge to which one can always run,
Arogun gbogun mi.	A defender who swallows all battles.[673]

To the Yoruba, no one is able to restrict God's power. He gives judgements without partiality. Consequently, He is seen as *Oba-adakedajo* (the One who judges rightly in silence) and defender of the defenceless.

In Christian worship, particularly in Baptist Churches, chanting the aforementioned cognomens of God makes the worship meaningful and contextual. It can be argued that Churches where the praise-names of God are used will be full of worshippers. In so far as some of the main purposes of coming to Church are to pay homage to the King of the kings and to pray for blessing, for protection and for provision to mention a few, the worshippers are likely to participate actively in such worship.

7.3. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented some of the indigenous resources for a meaningful worship experience among the Yoruba Christians of the NBC in Nigeria. The resources suggested were twofold. The first has to do with the elements of worship which the indigenous Yoruba people seem to have been expecting. Whilst conducting

673 Ayegboyin (2005) '*Li Oruko Jesu*: *Aladura* Grass-roots Christology', pp.15-16.

my research, I remember a man asking me, 'When will Nigeria be totally free from the influence of Western colonialism?'[674] This shows that there is a great yearning for a worship atmosphere that reflects the culture of the worshippers in Yorubaland.

The second indigenous resource suggested was the use of the indigenous praise-names (cognomens) of God in worship. The Yoruba are fond of singing the praise-names of people, especially important personalities like kings. They are also fond of doing the same to their divinities. They believe that in singing the praises of the divinities and their kings, they would be happy in return and grant them favour and blessing. Inasmuch as it was recorded that God was pleased when consecrated Hebrew worshippers sang His praises to the accompaniment of their local musical instruments in the Bible, I believe singing God's praise-names is a necessary condition for an authentic form of Christian worship among the Yoruba Baptist Churches in Nigeria.

Obviously, the contextualization of Christian worship makes the worshippers hear about and worship God in their own language, within their own worldview and with their own available materials. As Christianity continues spreading far and wide in Africa, contextualization of the faith gives Christianity a golden opportunity to be rooted in the cultures and worldview of the people with more sensitivity to the religious, sociological and psychological needs of the believers.

674 John Ademola Aworinde. (2009, 17 December). Interviewed. First Baptist Church, Okelerin, Ogbomoso.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION

8.0. INTRODUCTION

Worship in an African milieu is imperative for the Yoruba Baptist Christians in order to experience holistic and fulfilling worship. If the ritual experience does not support the attainment of this goal, then the yearning for indigenized Christian worship would be unfulfilled. The Euro-American worship styles would have remained as they were since the inception of Christianity in Nigeria. It is, therefore, possible to draw conclusions on two key questions as to contextualized worship for the targeted group. Firstly, what are the major reasons for the yearning for African forms of Christian worship? Secondly, will the future Yoruba Christians be able to maintain contextualized worship? To answer these questions, I need to review the findings of this thesis.

8.1. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

A. The Burden of the Research

The burden of this research involves making a contribution to the task of indigenizing Christianity in Africa. To this effect, the research has presented the worldview of the Yoruba about God from the ATR perspective. This research identified and analysed the Yoruba understanding of God, divinities, the problem of evil and the relationship between God and the divinities. Using *Ogun* worship as an example, I have also presented a Yoruba attitude to worship and a description of the content of their liturgy and posture in worship. The reasons for choosing *odun ogun*, as I explained in Chapter Two, were as a matter of affinity and the openness of the worship to both members and non-members.

In Chapter Three, I examined the beginnings of Christianity in Nigeria, before I narrowed this down to the arrival of T.J. Bowen, the pioneer missionary of SBC to Nigeria in 1850. The development of the beliefs, doctrines, policies and practices of the NBC from 1850 to 1950 and from 1951 to 2009 were also presented. It is interesting to note that while in the first one hundred years the American Baptist Missionaries were in control of the affairs of the NBC, there was involvement of the indigenes in the leadership affairs of the Convention during the second period. The evidence of the involvement of indigenous leadership is clearly seen in the policies and practice of the Convention, especially on issues such as marriage, funeral and morals.

From the investigative visits and the works of other scholars, I was able to draw out the influences of Euro-American missionaries on the NBC churches among the Yoruba in Chapter Four. I discussed the Western influence on the Yoruba theology/theological vocabularies, worship/liturgy, clothes/dressing and the music/musical instruments. I focused on questionnaire responses in Chapter Five. Here, I presented the summary of the questionnaire analysis and reflections on the themes that emerged from the questionnaire.

Because of the challenges that Euro-American influences posed to Christianity in Yorubaland, I examined ways of overcoming the challenges in Chapters Six and Seven. To this effect, I suggested that indigenous food and drink (*akara* and *sobo drink)* need to replace the foreign bread and wine used for Eucharist. I also affirmed that pastors in the Yoruba Baptist Churches need to identify with their people regarding their clothing. So also the couple, who do not need to be like their European

or American counterparts regarding their mode of clothing during their wedding ceremony. In the case of music/musical instruments, it is my candid opinion that the Yoruba indigenous music/musical instruments need to feature more in all the worship services. I also claimed that some of the Yoruba ways of life must be incorporated into Baptist Church worship in the Yorubaland including the chanting of *oriki Olodumare* (God's cognomens), *ijuba* (God's praise-name), *aweje-wemu* (feast) *et cetera*.

B. Worshipping in African Context

Worshipping in an African context is one of the essential issues which theologians and Christian communities have been discussing for many years. Many scholars have written on the general argument about making Christianity and Christian theology relevant to the Africans. Some of the research works have been reviewed in Chapter One of this work. Notwithstanding, Mbiti claimed

> We have to Africanize Christianity. That is, give an indelible African character. It is not enough to transplant prefabricated Christianity from Rome or Geneva to Kampala or Lagos… We have to produce a type of Christianity here which bears the imprint MADE IN AFRICA.[675]

As far back as 1965, Bolaji Idowu stated that the Nigerian Church (probably the Methodist Church to which he belonged, which was then more than one hundred years old) "has not developed a theology which bears the distinctive stamp of Nigerian thinking or meditation…(but) theologically, she has been spoon-fed by Europeans all along."[676] Kato, the first General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, stated that "Christianity must be expressed in such a way that Africans really understand and see themselves at home in Christianity."[677] He stressed

675 John Mbiti (1971), *The Crisis of Mission in Africa* (Mukono: Uganda Church Press), p.3.
676 Bolaji Idowu (1965), *Towards an Indigenous Church* (London: Oxford University Press), p.22.
677 Byang H. Kato (1975), *Theological Pitfalls in Africa.* (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House), p.15.

further that "the notable desire to indigenize Christianity in Africa must not be forsaken. An indigenous theology is a necessity."[678] Recently, Samson Ayokunle has also shown in his research that whether at home or abroad, African Christians will ever remain African in their worship.[679] This could be one of the reasons why the people often carry their religion along to wherever they go in the world. People have responded to the above call, but much still needs to be done.

My contributions to the above discussion on the reasons for a contextualization of Christianity in Africa are fourfold. Firstly, this research presents some indigenous elements to be used in the place of foreign ones during Eucharist worship. *'Akara'* (native food made from beans) and *'sobo drink'* (drink extracted from *Hibscus Sabdariffa*) are recommended for Eucharist by the correspondents. I am not aware of anyone who has used these elements for Eucharist within and outside the NBC. The application of the above indigenous materials is a proactive way of bringing about Christianity to reflect African ways of life. Similarly, this research also places on record that polygamist Christian believers are also heirs of God's grace. Consequently the polygamists, as long as they genuinely have faith in Christ Jesus, need to be enrolled for baptism and therefore be baptized like monogamist Christian believers.

Secondly, the use of God's praise names (*Oriki Olodumare*) in worship cannot be overemphasized. It is an indigenous way of speaking about God's beneficence. In my opinion, praising God within the cultural norms makes worship authentic.

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678 Kato (1975), p.16.

679 Samson Olasupo Ayokunle (2007), 'Elements that Sustaining Public Worship among the Diaspora African Christian Worship in Liverpool' Thesis Submitted in Accordance with the Requirements of theUniversity of Liverpool for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy, p.248.

Consequently, I believe the worship services could become meaningful, edifying and satisfying for the participants.

Thirdly, the Baptist Pastors need to identify with their people in terms of their clothing. It has been established in this research that Jesus Christ, our perfect model, did not wear clothes other than his native ones; neither had he decreed a uniform for his disciples during his earthly ministry. There is obviously no record in the Bible where Jesus mandated specific clothing, let alone making Euro-American clothes as the model. In the research conducted, the respondents also affirmed that there is a need for the Baptist Pastors to reflect the traditional clothing of the worshippers. According to the respondents, when the Yoruba Pastors wear Euro-American clothes, their appearance in the pulpit often reminds one of the passage that states, 'the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau'.[680] Since ministration in worship is different from a drama that entertains, it is not necessary to wear costumes when going to the pulpit. Hence, the Yoruba Baptist pastors need to be natural and indigenous in terms of clothing while ministering among their people.

It is also my opinion based on the research that the inclusion of indigenous musical instruments makes the Yoruba Christian actively participate in their worship service, giving them a satisfactory worship experience. The worshippers are not only happy during and after such services, but may demand further occurrences of such a worship experience. It can be argued that one of the motivating factors for people trooping into churches in Africa is socialization. People like to meet in a community where their

680 Since suit and tie was the official code of clothing of NBC Pastors, ministers have been looking likeAmerican and European counterparts whereas they are indigenous Nigerians. See also the story of how Jacob pretended to be Esau by way of his clothing in Genesis 27:1-40.

social needs are met along with spiritual needs. Consequently, most Yoruba Christians are probably found where there are danceable songs accompanied by local musical instruments. They are likely to prefer a gathering in which they find:

> the story of God's salvation, love and grace unveiled in their own language, the language they understand with their whole being, the language of their childhood and old age, the language of their dreams and expectations, their fears and their hopes.[681]

Certainly, Yoruba Christians may feel at home in an environment that reflects their norms and value systems. There is also a tendency for a quick assimilation of the faith where the learning process takes place in one's own cultural environment.

The sustainability of the Yoruba Christians' indigenous worship style depends on three variables: the extent to which the Yoruba people continue to recognize their uniqueness, promote their potential and preserve their cultural heritage; the extent to which the Yoruba pass on their cultural heritage to the younger generations; and the extent to which the Yoruba encourages their younger generations to cherish their cultural heritage.

The Yoruba proverb '*ohun ti a ni ni a nnani, omo asegita a ma naani epo igi*' (one needs to be contented with whatever one has, just as a child of a wood seller often cherishes wood shavings) shows how every Yoruba indigene is expected to cherish his/her cultural heritage. The mode of and posture in worship are part of cultural heritages. It has also been established that the Yoruba have their own indigenous music, musical instruments, clothes, foods and drinks. Application of the

681 John Mbiti (1986), *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press), p.26.

recommended indigenous materials in the contemporary Yoruba Church is a way of encouraging the younger generation to cherish their cultural heritage.

As to the extent to which the Yoruba encourage their offspring to worship in Yoruba ways of life (that is, passing on the cultural heritage to the younger generations), the proverb '*kekere ni Imole ti ma nko omo re ni aso*' (the Muslims teach their children from infancy how to worship in Islamic way) emphasizes the importance of the roles of parents on the spiritual formulation of their children. The implication of this is the fact that the future of the younger generation regarding their willingness to worship God lies in the hand of their parents. This parental obligation is in line with what the Bible says in Proverbs 22:6: 'Train a child in the way he/she should go, and when he/she is old he/she will not turn from it'. The proverb '*omo ti a o ko ni gbe ile ti a ko ta*' (an untrained child sells off his/her parent properties) explains the interpretation of the above text from the Yoruba context. Hence, they believe the Bible is saying it is the responsibility of the parents to lead their children to God through worship. Therefore, the worship lifestyle of the parents is still very influential in determining the future worship style of their children.

Another question that one may ask is whether the next generation will maintain the *status quo* of their parents regarding worshipping God in African ways. My research will not be able to give a specific answer to this question concerning generations that are yet to be born. I will leave this aspect for future research. Nevertheless, all things being equal, there is the likelihood that future generations will maintain the same worship style as that of their parents. The Yoruba proverb '*omo ajanaku ki ya arara, omo ti ekun ba bi ekun ni yoo jo*' (an elephant must not give birth to a dwarf, so also a

lion's children must be as brave as their parents) gives hope that the Yoruba offspring will always follow their parents in maintaining the same Christian worship styles.

8.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study of the contextualization of Christian worship of the Yoruba Baptist Christians in Nigeria, my research findings using the experiences of ATR and African cultural backgrounds have drawn attention to the way African Christians need to worship God from within their socio-cultural milieu. My final question is to ask what further insights my thesis can bring into Christian worship which may inspire the worshippers as well as to contextualize the worship. This question will be addressed now.

A. Erasing of the 'Psychological Slavery' from the Yoruba Christian Minds

From the findings of my research, I discovered that most of the local musical instruments were not found to be in use in the majority of the churches. The reasons for these lapses have been identified in Chapters Four and Five. One major reason that needs to be re-emphasized is the feeling of inferiority. The colonial masters have left Nigeria, yet the state of mind of some Christian leaders and members still remains the same regarding the '*do's*' and '*don'ts*' of Christian worship as they were given at the inception by Western missionaries. I therefore suggest that, first and foremost, there is a need to erase the 'psychological slavery'[682] in which the Yoruba Christians put themselves regarding worship and dictating the nature of the Christian faith. This psychological slavery seems applicable to the leaders as well as the members. The leadership seems to cling onto power and therefore stays with old ways.

682 On 'psychological slavery', see pp.172-174.

B. The Use of Indigenous Materials such as *Akara* and *Sobo drink* for Eucharist Having removed the psychological slavery regarding the '*do's'* and '*don'ts*' of Christian worship in Yorubaland, the use of local materials for Eucharist is another issue that needs to be implemented. Bread and wine are not indigenous materials to Yorubaland. From the responses to the questionnaire used in this research, *akara* (native bread) and *sobo* drinks (drink extracted from *Hisbiscus Sabdariva*) were at the top of the list of items suggested by Baptist Church members. I therefore recommend the use of these materials for Eucharist as a way of indigenizing Christianity in Africa.[683]

C. The Pastors/Priests and Couples need to Wear Indigenous Clothes During Ministration and Wedding Ceremonies Respectively

I have argued in this research that the clothes one wears has nothing to do with the inspiration received from God through the Holy Spirit. As long as one dresses modestly, I believe the African Pastor is able to do what other Western contemporaries are doing. For instance, I have been wearing my native dress for the past three years in both England and Nigeria. Based on this change of attitude, a member of my church came to me after ministration of the last Sunday of the year 2010 and said: 'we thought you will become an Oyinbo (Western) man by the time you will return from your overseas studies, but I am surprised that you are even more of a Yoruba man now than before you left'. When I asked the man what he meant by this statement, he said he has observed that I am more at home in my Yoruba garments than ever before. Again, during the centenary celebrations of a Church in England, this researcher wore his native dress and ministered effectively with other Western colleagues in their

683 See pp.158-159 and 191-192.

cassocks. I must say here that this research has helped me to find my own authentic cultural identity. It has further opened my eyes to see the need to worship God within my socio-cultural (Yoruba) background. I, therefore, recommend the use of native clothes as one of the ways of indigenization of Christianity in Africa. I also recommend that our brides and grooms wear our African clothes.

D. The Use of Local Music and Musical Instruments in Worship

I have affirmed that most of the indigenous songs are composed with the language and words meaningful to the composers. Using such music within their cultural context is likely to be advantageous to the worshippers. Such music is not only meaningful to the adherents alone, but also contributes to the variety of expressions of the universality of the Christian faith. Using indigenous musical instruments to accompany such music makes the worshippers celebrate God within their cultural milieu. Therefore, indigenous music and musical instruments are an inherent and vital part of the Yoruba Christian worship services.

E. The Review of the Students' Hand Book and Syllabus of the NBTS Ogbomoso

In view of the fact that the NBTS Ogbomoso is the highest citadel of learning in Nigeria for the NBC where indigenous pastors and Christian educators are produced, I therefore recommend that the Students' Handbook and the syllabus of the institution be significantly reviewed. This step is necessary in order to shake out the Western captivity of theology, churchmanship and lifestyle of the institution of the NBC.

F. The Need for Change of Attitude in the International Communities about Africa and African Theologies

I would also like to suggest that the international communities need to change their perception about Africa and African theologies. This perception is reflected in the fact that many Western universities and seminaries do not have African based courses. For instance, Lokel lamented thus:

> Several years ago, I was a student of Bible at the prestigious Pontifical Bible Institute (*Biblicum*) in Rome, pursuing a Licentiate degree in Scripture with several other African students as well…I should like to remark that my stay there would have been even more profitable had the courses I followed also trained me how to read the Bible meaningfully in my context as an African. If my memory serves me well, I do not remember seeing anywhere in the congested syllabus any course specifically addressing African approaches to the Bible or something similar…[684]

Going by the experience of Lokel, a South African theologian who studied in Rome, some other Africans who studied abroad are also not better prepared for the work in Africa after their training. The international community of learning, therefore, needs to be more aware of the needs of the Africans and thus give the same to the students under them. I recognize that developments of this nature have already occurred but suggest that further work is necessary.

8.3 GENERAL REACTION OF THE PEOPLE TO THIS PROJECT

Generally, there were two categories of people who reacted in two different ways to this research. They are Baptist Pastors (who I termed leaders) and the church members.

684 Philip Lokel (2006), 'The Importance and Challenges of Finding Africa in the Old Testament: The Case of the Cush Texts' A Published Ph.D. Dissertation Submitted to the University of South Africa, Downloaded from http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/773/thesis.pdf?sequence=1 p.269

A. Leaders

i. Leaders with Vested Interest and Psychological Slavery

During the course of the questionnaire administration and participant observations, I came across some Baptist leaders who seemed to have a vested interest in the continuation of worship as it was since its inception. From my interaction with some of them, I discovered that their interest in the continuation of the Euro-American worship style in Yorubaland was due to the psychological slavery which I have discussed in Chapter Five. I also observed that some of them benefitted from Western scholarship. There were a few others whose interest in the continuation of a Western worship style was due to the fact they have lived in the Western world for so many years. Consequently, they have acclimatized themselves to the Western ways of life. There were still a few others who have neither directly nor indirectly benefitted from Western scholarship nor have lived in the Western world, and yet had a vested interest in the continuation of Euro-American worship style. From my interaction with some of them, I perceived that most of the leaders of this category came from the so-called 'elite' in Yorubaland. I have defined the word 'elite' in Chapter Five as being the social class of people who seemed to have first received civilization in Nigeria. Because of the status of the past generations of this people, they do not readily welcome indigenization as such.

ii. Leaders with more Objective Minds

There were also other leaders with more objective minds. They genuinely questioned some of the content of Christian worship in Yorubaland. Out of eager inquisitiveness and a desire for knowledge, they want to know what will happen if they practise Christianity within their cultural background. Some of these leaders maintained that I

am pursuing a right course and encouraged me to keep it up. For instance, Aworinde, the pastor of First Baptist Church Okelerin, Ogbomoso, maintained that the contemporary 'Christians in Yorubaland need more scholars who will enlighten us (the Yoruba) on how to use our cultural heritage in worshipping God'[685].

B. Members

Like the leaders, I also encountered two different groups of church members while on field research. The groups are (i) members who felt the faith of their fathers must be strictly adhered to and (ii) members who opined that their faith has to be integrated into the African cultural context.

i. Members who felt the Faith of their Fathers must be kept

Surprisingly, a few members agreed that the Yoruba cultural heritage needs to be promoted and kept, but were of the opinion that the faith passed to them by their fore-fathers needs to be kept as a given. One may not totally blame this group for their opinion because it is due to the instruction given to them by their parents. In Yorubaland, dying parents often instruct their children to keep their faith. This does not necessarily include the expression of faith.

ii. Members who Believed that their Faith has to be Contextualized

The majority of the Baptist members completing the questionnaire were of the opinion that Christianity needs to be contextualized in Africa. Some of the people in this category seemed to be alienated. For instance, a man asked me the reason why they had been worshipping in probably the same way that the members of Orile Ijaye

685 John Ademola Aworinde (2009, 17 December). Interviewed. First Baptist Church, Okelerin, Ogbomoso.

worshipped during T.J. Bowen's time in the 1850s. There were others who said that a lack of enlightenment was responsible for the state of psychological slavery in which they had been living regarding Christian worship. In short, this research serves as a catalyst to some members of the NBC. The research also enlightens the people about the actions needed to be taken in gaining our freedom from psychological slavery.

8.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This researcher does not try to pretend to have exhaustively dealt with all the issues regarding the contextualization of Christian worship among the Yoruba. Of course, there may be many issues untouched. I suggest future researchers look into some of the following issues as part of their contribution to the quest to root Christianity in Africa.

A. The Issue of *Isami* (Change of Name at Baptism)

In the early years of the work of SBC in Nigeria, there were misconceptions about the culture of the Africans, particularly the Yoruba. For instance, at baptism, the believers were expected to change their indigenous name to either a Biblical or English name, or to add one or more names. Consequently, it is expected of the believers to bear names such as Gideon, James, Christopher, Janet, Deborah, Samuel, Ezekiel, Daniel, Emmanuel, Mary, Hannah, to mention a few. The reason given for this change of name by the missionaries was for the African believers to be christened (*sami/isami*). Does name bearing make one Christian? This is an issue that needs to be further investigated by future scholars.

B. The Use of African Lexicons, Idiomatic Expressions and Wise Sayings in Worship and African Theology

Adeyanju asserted that 'the idioms and the wise sayings (proverbs) of the ancients of Africa are not yet fully integrated into man-God speech in worship in Africa'.[686] These idioms and wise sayings are means by which the Africans communicate with themselves and their gods. The Yoruba often use images and code languages in communication. In communication among the Yoruba, for instance, '*Oba ti w'aja'* literarily means 'the king has entered into the roof'; whereas the true meaning is 'the king has died'. Similarly, '*isu re tita'* literarily means 'the yam plant has produced yam tuber', whereas the meaning is 'the woman is pregnant' or 'the man has a load of money now'. The interpretation of this idiomatic expression depends on the context of the discussion. To what extent can the lexicons, idioms and proverbs of the main African languages such as Yoruba be useful in communicating the messages of God to the Africans? This is another area that needs future researchers' attention.

C. The Need for More Research and Books on African Christian Theology

I need to recognize that much has been written on African Christianity, but less from the NBC perspective. If there is any time that Africans need more resources on African Christianity, it is now. This is the time for more Africans to present their Christian worldview. In this way, most of the African theologies about the efficacy of prayer, all-night prayers, deliverance from evil possession, interpretation of dreams, interpretation of the Holy Bible from cultural context, *arabaribiti hallelujah*, *et cetera* will be exposed to the whole wo

686 James O. Adeyanju (2009), 'Indigenizing Theological Education for Relevant Christian Theology in Africa' inAdemola Ishola , Deji Ayegboyin and Sayo Oladejo, *Pedagogy: The Church, Leadership and Theological Education in Africa: Papers in Honour of Professor Emeritus Osadolor Imasogie Ph.D. @80* (Ibadan: Baptist Press (Nig.) Limited), p.157.

8.5. OVERALL CONCLUSION

In conclusion of this thesis, it is necessary to say that before Christianity can be properly rooted among the NBC in Yorubaland of Nigeria, our socio-cultural worldviews need to be taken into consideration, our theological formulations which arise from the socio-cultural worldview need to be considered and accepted, and our materials also need to be appreciated and used during worship.

There is assurance that if the three aforementioned factors are put into consideration among the Yoruba Christians, the people will not see God as a 'stranger-God, the god of the white man, who is unfamiliar with the local spiritual problems'.[687] It is also the hope of this researcher that when all the factors are put into consideration, the indigenous Africans will experience meaningful and natural forms of Christian worship within their culture.

As the Yoruba Christians try to worship God within their cultural context, we (the African theological leaders) need to live up to the expectation of being the reservoirs for new ideas. We should also provide appropriate theological explanation about the actions of our people from their cultural context. This explanation is needed in order for the world to know the reason behind our actions. As other African Independent Churches allow some of the aspects of traditional ways of living such as polygamy, healing, dancing, drumming and trance-like worship in their churches, the NBC also needs to integrate Christianity into the daily life of the worshippers. In order for the society to be reached with the gospel, the Baptists need to develop substitutes that are culturally oriented to replace the foreign or imported ideologies in their midst. It is

687 Imasogie (1986) *Guidelines for Christianity Theology in Africa*, pp. 69-85.

imperative, therefore, that Christianity in Yorubaland bears African tones, languages, cultures and worldviews. In other words, Jesus Christ should no more be painted in a foreign and alien colour for the Yoruba.

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APPENDIX I

DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL OF ARTS, HISTORY AND CULTURE
(PARTNERSHIP FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, LUTHER KING HOUSE)
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER,
MANCHESTER

TOPIC: 'TOWARDS A CONTEXTUALIZATION OF WORSHIP: A CHALLENGE TO THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION'

INVESTIGATOR: Rev. C. Olu Oyemomilara

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,
This questionnaire is to elicit and collect information on how to contextualize Worship among the Yoruba Christians of the Nigerian Baptist Denomination. The questionnaire want to know to what extent was the influence of the Western Missionaries (Europeans and Americans) on the worship of the said community. It also wants to find out how the Yoruba people can worship God genuinely within the context of their cultural valued system?
Can you please give very frank response to each of the items below? Your sincere response to each item will be highly appreciated and treated with strict confidence.

SECTION I

GENERAL QUESTIONS
AGE…….SEX…….STATE OF ORIGIN…….……...
CHURCH……ASSOCIATION……..CONFERENCE……....
.EDUCATION: PRY 6/WAEC…….NCE/DIPLOMA…… GRADUATE…….
POSTGRADUATE…….

SECTION II

LANGUAGE OF WORSHIP
1. What language(s) is/are used during worship in your church?
.....
……
2.Which of the languages mentioned above
dominates?.....

.....
3. Comment on this claim: The Yoruba Christian worshippers enjoy worship that is charged with fascinating and exciting form of worship with local singing and drumming, clapping, dancing, and stamping of feet…….
……
……
……
……

SECTION III
EUCHARIST

1.When '*Akara*'(Bread) is mentioned in the Bible, what is your understanding of the equivalence of '*akara*' in Yorubaland?……
……
……
2. Can you please list the indigenous Yoruba food that can be used in the place of bread (*akara*) mentioned in the Bible for Eucharist?.....
……
……
……
3. Please comment on the usage of the above local foods as a replacement of bread (*akara)* for The Lord's Supper in the contemporary Nigerian Baptist Churches……
……
……
……..
4. Can you please list the Yoruba wine/drink extracted locally that can be used in the place of imported wine in Eucharist service?…….
……
……
……

SECTION IV
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
Western Musical Instruments

1. Can you please list the Western musical instruments available in your Church for worship services?.....
……
……
……
2. Which of the above mentioned Western musical instruments are regularly used in your worship?.....
……
……
….....
Local Musical Instruments
3. Can you please list the Yoruba musical instruments available in your Church for worship?.....
……
……
……....
4. Which of the above listed Yoruba musical instruments are regularly used in your worship?.....
……
……
5. From your observation, how do Yoruba Baptist worshippers respond to Western and local musical instruments when used during worship in your church?
a. Western Instruments…….....

……
b. Local Instruments……...
……
8. Do you believe that the Yoruba Christians in Baptist Churches feel at home and respond better to worship when local musical instruments are used than when Western musical instruments are used. Please give full explanation.
……
……
……

SECTION V
WEDDING SERVICE

1. How many wedding services are conducted in your church yearly? ……..
2. What type of wedding clothing is put on by the brides and grooms?
Native……English….
3. What was the language commonly used during the wedding services?:
Yoruba… …… English……. Mixture…….
4. What type of music is often used during the wedding?
Yoruba…. English….
Mixture….....
5. What type of clothing do the officiating ministers (Pastors on program) often put on during weddings? Native…. English….
6. What kind of clothing is used by the congregation?.....
……
……
…….

SECTION VI
PRIEST DRESSING

1. What type of dresses your pastor(s) often put on during worship?.....
……
……
2. As a Yoruba man/woman, what are the examples of native clothing you cherish most?.....
……
……
……
3. Which of these Yoruba dresses will you like Baptist priest to use even during ministration and why?.....
……
……
……
4. Is there anything wrong for the contemporary Baptist Pastor to put on their local clothing during ministration? Can you please give full explanation to your answer?……
……
……

DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL OF ARTS, HISTORY AND CULTURE
(PARTNERSHIP FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, LUTHER KING HOUSE)
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER,
MANCHESTER

TOPIC: 'TOWARDS A CONTEXTUALIZATION OF WORSHIP: A CHALLENGE TO THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION'

OLUWADI: Alufa. C. Olu Oyemomilara

IWADI
Olufe,
Oluwadi yi ngbiyanju lati se ofintoto nipa ona ti awon Yoruba ti Ijo Onitebomi Orilede Nigeria le gba sin Olorun laifi eto ati asa awon alawo funfun (awon oyinbo) kun eto ijosin naa. Ewe, oluwadi yi tun fe mo awon ona ati asa ajeji ti awon oyinbo ajihinrere ti o mu esin Igbagbo wa si ile alawo dudu fi kun esin naa nigba iwase. Ni akotan, oluwadi yi fe mo bi awon Yoruba se le sin Olorun ninu asa ati ise won ti o ba ife Olorun mu gege bi okan ninu eya ile alawodudu. Nitorinaa, e jowo, nje e le dahun awon ibeere isale wonyi lekunrere pelu otito inu? Nho dupe pupo bi e ba dahun awon ibere naa tokan-tokan, bee naa si ni awon idahuhun naa yoo wa ni ipamo gege bi asiri.

APA KINI
IBERE GBOGBO GBOO

OJO ORI…….AKO/ABO……IPINLE …….……...
SOOSI……AJUMOSE……..AJO IPINLE…….....EKO:
IWE MEFA/MEWA…….NCE/DIPLOMA…… GRADUATE…….
POSTGRADUATE……

APA KEJI
EDE IJOSIN

1. Awon ede wo ni e nlo lati sin ninu ijo yin? .....
…….
2. Eewo ninu awon ede naa ni o bori awon ede ti o ku?.....
…….....
3. Se alaye lori gbolohun oro yi: Awon Yoruba ma ngbadun ijosin ti o gbona ati ti o si kun fun orin, ilu, ijo atewo ati ifesejinnle…..…… ……..
……
……
……
……

APA KETA
ONJE ALE OLUWA

1. Nigbati a ba nsoro nipa 'Akara' (Buredi) ninu Bibeli, kini ohun ti 'Akara' tunmo si ni Ile Yoruba?..…….

……
……
……
2. E ko sile awon onje ibile Ile Yoruba ti a le fi dipo akara (Buredi) inu Bibeli ti Jesu lo fun Onje Ale Oluwa ninu Ile Ijosin ode oni ……
……
……
……
……
3. E se alaye ero okan yin lori lilo okan ninu awon onje ibile Yoruba ti e ti ko sile ni oke yi dipo akara (buredi) ninu Ijo Onitebomi ode oni?.....
……
……
……
4. E ko sile awon oti elerindodo/ohun mimu Ile Yoruba ti a le fi dipo oti waini Oyinbo (wine) ninu isin Onje Ale Oluwa ninu Ile Ijosin ode oni?.....
……
……
……
……

APA KERIN

Awon Ohun-Elo Orin

Awon Ohun Elo Oyinbo

1. Nje e le so fun wa awon ohun elo orin Oyinbo ti e ni ninu Ijo yin fun ijosin?
……
……
……
2. Ewo ninu awon ohun elo orin Oyinbo ti e ko sile yi ni e ma nlo lemo-lemo?.....
……
……
……..
Awon Ohun Elo Orin Yoruba
3. Nje e le so fun wa awon ohun elo orin ibile ti e ni ninu Ijo yin fun ijosin?
……
……
……
……
4. Ewo ninu awon ohun elo orin ibile ti e ko sile yi ni e ma nlo lemo-lemo?.....
……
……
5. Ninu akiyesi yin gege bi Yoruba, Nje e le se alaye iha ti awon Onigbagbo Yoruba ko si awon ohun elo orin ti Oyinbo ati ti Ibile Yoruba nigbati a ban lo won ninu ijosin?
a. Awon Ohun-Elo Orin Oyinbo …….....
……
……
……

b. Awon Ohun-Elo Orin Ibile Yoruba
…….....
……
……
……
8. Nje awon Kristiani Yoruba ti Ijo Onitebomi ma nturaka daadaa ninu isin ni akoko igba ti a ban lo awon elo orin ibile ju igba ti a ban lo elo orin awon oyinbo lo? E se alaye lekunrere? ……
……
……
…….

APA KARUN
ISIN IGBEYAWO

1. E so fun wa iye igba ti e nse igbeyawo ninu ijo lodoodun?.....……
2. Iru aso igbeyawo wo ni awon iyawo osingin ati oko won saaba ma nso ninu ijo yin? : Aso Ibile….. ……Aso Oyinbo….....
3. Ede wo ni e saaba nlo ninu isin Igbeyawo ninu ijo yin?:
Yoruba……. Ede Oyinbo…… Amulumola Ede Yoruba ati Oyinbo……
4. Iru orin wo ni e saaba ma nko ninu isin igbeyawo ninu ijo yin?
Yoruba…… Orin Oyinbo…… Amulumola…. .
5. Iru aso wo ni awon Alufa ti o wa lori eto isin igbeyawo ma nwo?
Aso Ibile …….Aso Oyinbo……
6. Iru Aso wo ni o wopo ti awon ara, ore, iyekan tabi ibatan oko ati iyawo ma nwo lakoko isin igbeyawo? ……
……

APA KEFA
ASO ALUFA

1. Iru aso wo ni (awon) Alufa yin saab ma now lakoko ijosin?.....
……
……..
2. Gege Okunrin/ObinrinYoruba, iru aso ibile wo ni e feran lati ma wo ni opolopo igba?.....
……
……
…….
3. Eewo ninu awon aso Ile Yoruba wonyi ni e o fe o ki awon Alufa yin ma wo lati fi se ise iranse tiwon naa ni akoko ode oni ati pe kini idi re ti e fi fe ki awon Alufa yin wo awon aso naa?.....
.....
…….
……
4.Nje ohun ti o buru ni ki awon Alufa Ijo Onitebomi iwoyi maa wo aso ibile won lati fi se ise iranse won? E se alaye lekunrere ……..
……..
…….

APPENDIX II

TABLES SHOWING THE RESULTS OF DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table I. Showing the Demographic information about the Respondents.

Number Of Gender	**Age**	**Accademic Qualification**
Male- 413	18-70	Primary six, WAEC, GCE, NCE, B.Ed, B.Sc,B.Th,M.Th, Ph.D
Female-305	18-67	Primary Six, WAEC; GCE, NCE, B.Ed, B.Sc, B.Th,M.Th.

State of Origin		Conference of Origin	
Ekiti	68	Ekiti	63
Kongi	64	Kongi	57
Kwara	66	Kwara	69
Lagos	78	Ogbomoso	80
Ogun	70	Ogun	65
Ondo	76	Oke Ogun	68
Osun	66	Lagos	86
Oyo	230	Ondo	76
		Osun	72
		Oyo	82
TOTAL=718	**718**		**718**

Table II Responses on types of Language of Worship in Sampled Yoruba Baptist Churches.

Conference	**State**	**Language of Worship**	**Language**	**Dominated**
Ekiti	Ekiti	Yoruba & English	40 Yoruba	23 English
Kongi	Kongi	Yoruba & English	38 Yoruba	19 English
Kwara	Kwara	Yoruba & English	59 Yoruba	10 English
Ogbomoso	Oyo	Yoruba & English	41 Yoruba	39 English
Ogun	Ogun	Yoruba & English	50 Yoruba	15 English
Oke Ogun	Oyo	Yoruba & English	60 Yoruba	08 English
Lagos	Lagos	Yoruba & English	16 Yoruba	70 English
Ondo	Ondo	Yoruba & English	59 Yoruba	17 English
Osun	Osun	Yoruba & English	57 Yoruba	15 English
Oyo West	Oyo	Yoruba & English	73 Yoruba	09 English
TOTAL			**=493 +**	**225 = 718**

Table III. Responses on Local Foods which can be used for Sacraments in Sampled Yoruba Baptist Churches

Conference	*Akara* (local cake made from beans)	Roasted Yam	Plantain	Total No. of the Respondants
Ekiti	56	05	02	63
Kongi	50	03	03	56
Kwara	63	04	02	69
Ogbomoso	72	06	02	80
Ogun	61	03	01	65
Oke Ogun	63	05	--	68
Lagos	80	06	--	86
Ondo	74	--	02	76
Osun	67	04	01	72
Oyo West	76	03	04	83
TOTAL	**662 (92.2%)**	**39 (05.4%)**	**17 (02.4%)**	**718 (100%)**

Table IV. Responses on Local wine extracted locally which can be used for Sacraments in Sampled Yoruba Baptist Churches

Conference	Sobo Drink (*Hibscus Sabdariffal*)	Oyin Igan (Honey)	Pineapple Juice	Mango Juice	Orange Juice	No. Of the Respondents Per Conference
Ekiti	38	15	02	06	02	63
Kongi	29	11	05	07	04	56
Kwara	41	17	--	04	07	69
Lagos	63	15	--	--	08	86

Ogbomoso	69	07	--	--	04	80
Ogun	31	23	02	05	04	65
Oke Ogun	39	18	07	--	04	68
Ondo	44	21	06	02	03	76
Osun	36	21	03	05	07	72
Oyo West	45	28	--	06	04	83
Total Resp.	435	176	25	35	47	718
%	60.6	24.5	03.5	04.9	06.5	100%

Table V. Responses on types of Western and Local Musical Instruments Available and Useable During Worship in Sampled Yoruba Baptist Churches

Western Musical Instru-ments	Ekiti	Kongi	Kwara	Lagos	Ogb Omo So	Ogun	Okeogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo West	Total	%
Jazz	63	56	69	86	80	65	68	76	72	83	718	100
Piano	63	56	69	86	80	65	68	76	72	83	718	100
Pipe Organ	--	--	14	18	13	--	--	--	--	--	45	06.3

Accor Ion	15	13	18	28	40	19	12	18	15	17	195	27.0
Guitars	63	56	69	86	80	65	68	76	72	83	718	100
Tanbo Urines	63	56	69	86	80	65	68	76	72	83	718	100
Local Musical Instruments												
Iya Ilu (Talking Drum)	29	13	12	58	68	21	23	33	20	51	328	45.7
Gangan	50	23	32	72	62	48	37	39	57	71	491	68.4
Omele-Dundun	9	--	18	47	25	--	8	--	--	12	119	16.6
Agogo	63	56	69	86	80	65	68	76	72	83	718	100
Sekere	63	56	69	86	80	65	68	76	72	83	718	100
Akuba/Kos	41	39	52	51	73	45	57	43	67	78	546	76.0
Benbe	08	12	15	08	18	13	17	16	19	23	149	20.8
Bata	-	-	-	10	05	-	-	-	-	-	15	02.1
Kerikeri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kangogo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Apiti	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gudugudu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table VI. Showing Responses on Wedding Service among the Sampled Yoruba Baptist Churches.

Bride&Groom Clothing. Language used.Hynms used in Service. Congregation. Clothing

Conference	Average no. of wedding conducted per church in a year	Native Clothings	English Clothings	Yoruba	English	Mixtur of Yoruba & English	Yoruba Hymns	English Hymns	Priests in Native Clothings	Priests in English Clothings	Members in Native Clothings	Members in English Clothings	
Ekiti	05	14	49	35	15	13	44	19	08	55	53	10	
Kongi	04	12	44	30	09	17	30	26	07	49	45	11	
Kwara	04	08	61	38	15	16	40	29	08	61	62	07	
Ogbomoso	08	30	50	38	23	19	53	27	20	60	72	08	
Ogun	06	10	55	32	18	15	39	26	05	60	59	06	
OkeOgun	07	09	59	38	09	21	43	25	11	57	61	07	
Lagos	09	--	86	12	35	39	37	49	02	84	51	35	
Ondo	06	11	65	31	21	24	43	33	09	67	63	13	
Osun	05	05	67	39	12	21	51	21	23	49	57	15	
OyoWest	08	10	73	58	15	10	58	25	25	58	69	14	
	108	**109**	**609**	**351**	**172**	**195**	**438**	**280**	**118**	**600**	**592**	**126**	

Table VII. Showing Responses on Clothing of Baptist Pastors During Church Service's Worships among the Sampled Yoruba Baptist Churches

Conference

Conference	Clothing in English	English Clothing %	Clothing in Yoruba	Yoruba Clothing %	Total No. of the Respondants
Ekiti	42	66.7	21	33.3	63
Kongi	29	51.8	27	48.2	56
Kwara	45	65.2	24	34.8	69
Ogbomoso	51	63.8	29	36.2	80
Ogun	38	58.5	27	41.5	65
Oke Ogun	36	52.9	32	47.1	68
Lagos	77	89.5	09	10.5	86
Ondo	45	59.2	31	40.8	76
Osun	53	73.6	19	26.4	72
Oyo West	49	59.0	34	41.0	83

APPENDIX III

ORIKI OLODUMARE (GOD'S COGNOMENS/PRAISE-NAMES)

Oluwa (Lord)
Oluwa wa (Our Lord)
Olorun (God)
Olorun wa (Our God)
Oluwa awon oluwa (The Lord of Lords)
Olorun awon oloru, Kabiyeesi, (The King)
Oba awon oba (King of Kings)
*Olodumare (*The Almighty)
Arugbo ojo (Ancient of days)
Olorun agbalagba (Ancient of days)
Adagba ma paaro oye (Unchanging God)
Olorun ti o yipada (Unchanging God)
Olorun kan lailai (The only God)
Ikan lana (Same yesterday)
Ikan loni (Same today)
Ikan lola (Same tomorrow)
Okan titi aye ainipekun (The Same forever)
Oba ti mbe nibi gbogbo ati igba gbogbo (The Ubiquitous God)
Metalokan (The Trinity)
Olorun Baba (God the Father)
Olorun Omo (God the Son)
Olorun Emi Mimo (God the Holy Spirit)
Olorun Abrahamu (God of Abraham)
Olorun Isaki (God of Isaac)
Olorun Jakobu (God of Jacob)
Olorun owu (The Jealous God)
Olorun ti kii s'enia ti yoo fi paro (God that is not man that could change his word)
Alewilese (The one when He Speaks, He Acts accordingly)
Aleselewi (The One when He acts, He can as well Speaks)
Owibee sebee (He that Speaks and Acts without any hindrance)
Awimayehu (He who Speaks and does not change His words)
Asoromaye (He who prophesize and comes to pass)
Onimajemu (Covenant keeping God)
Olulana (The Wonderful Way Maker)
Olorun oro (Word), (The God of spoken word)
Oba ti o gbe oro Re ga ju Oruko Re lo (The God who exalts his word more that his name)
Olutoju wa (Our Keeper)
Onibuore (God whose barn is full of blessing)
Afunni ma s'iregun (The God who blesses without asking for reward)
Adanimagbagbe (The creator who never forgets the created)
Oyigiyigi (Great and Mighty)
Kabiyesi (One who nobody dares question)
Alakoso orun at'aye (The Ruler of heaven and the world)
Atogbojule (Dependable God)
Alagbawi eda (Defender and Advocate)

Alagbada ina (He that covers Himself with fire branded robe)
Alawotele oorun (He whose underwear is Sun)
Asorodayo (The God who give joy)
Oba t'o mu 'banuje tan (God who puts end to sorrow)
Ogbeja k'eru o ba onija (God who fights for the defenseless)
Jagunjagun ode orun (The Great Warrior of heaven)
Olowogbogboro (God whose hand is long enough to reach at any length)
Olorun awon omo ogun (The Grand Commander of Heavenly warriors)
Aduro tini bi akoni eleru (The Faithful God)
Erujeje (The Most Dreadful)
Oba t'o mu iji dake roro (God who commands the storm to be still)
Alaabo (Our keeper)
Oluso (Our Guard)
Olupamo (Our Keeper)
Oludande (Our Deliverer)
Olugbala (Our Saviour)
Olutusile (Our Deliverer)
Oludariji (Our Forgiver)
Oba t'o se'gun agbara ese (God who delivers us from the hold of sin)
Oba t'o san gbogbo 'gbese wa (God who pays the price for our sins)
Olorun ajinde (The Resurrected Lord)
Olutunu (Our Comforter)
Olufe okan wa (My Lover)
Oba t'o yan wa fe (God who has predestined us)
Olusegun (The Conqueror)
Ajasegun (The Conqueror)
Gbanigbani ni'jo ogun le (Our Defense in time of war)
Ogbagba ti ngb'ara adugbo (The Protector)
Oba t'o pin okun pupa n'iya (God who parted the Red Sea)
Olorun t'o mu Jodani sa niwaju awon omo Re (God who parted the River Jordan)
Oba t'o bi odi Jeriko wo (God who fell down the walls of Jericho)
Olorun t'o kolu Egipiti l'ara awon akobi re (God who killed the first born of the Egyptians)
Oba t'o ju gbogbo orisa lo (The almighty God)
Olorun t'o tobi ju gbogbo aye lo (Greater than all the earth)
Oba t'o da monamona fun ojo (The God who created lightening for the rain)
Oba to j'ewe at'egbo lo,Oba to ni owa t'owa (The God who commands)
Oba t'oni olo, t'olo (The God who commands)
Oba t'oni k'owa, t'owa (The God who commands)
Oba t'oni k'omasi, ti o si si mo (The God who can close a door and no man can open)
Oba t'ao ri, sugbon t'ari ise owo Re (The unseen God but we can feel his impact)
Olorun t'o n gbo adura (God who hears prayers)
Oba t'o n dahun adura (Prayer answering God)
Olorun t'ape t'o n je (The God that you can call and he will answer)
Oba t'o n dahun adura pelu ina (God that answers by fire)
Eleda (Creator)
Akoda aye (The first among all things)
Aseda orun (He established the heavens)
Oba t'o fi'di aye s'ole s'ori omi (He who established the earth on waters)

Oba t'o mo wa (The Potter),
Oba t'o mo wa (He that knoweth us),
Oba t'o mo ohun gbogbo (The all knowing God)
Olorun t'o le se ohun gbogbo (God who can do all things)
Oba ti ohun gbogbo nbe n'ikawo Re (God who has the whole world in his hands)
Oba to joko soke orun to f'ile aye se itise Re (He makes the heaven his seat and the earth his foot stool)
Oba ti ntu won ka nibi ti won nti da'na iro (He who causes confusion in the camp of the enemy)
Atererekariaye (He spreads out across the earth)
Eletigb'aroye (The great hear that hears all over the world)
Alatilehin (Our succor)
Alaanu (Merciful God)
Oba ti aanu Re duro lailai (God whose mercies endureth for ever)
Oba alade alafia (The Prince of peace)
Oloore ofe (The gracious God)
Olorun ife (The God of Love)
Olorun ayo (The God that gives Joy)
Olutunu (Comforter)
Olubukun (The blessed God)
Onise iyanu (Miracle worker)
Onise ara (Wonderful)
Onise nla (Great God)
Mimo, Mimo, Mimo (Holy! Holy! Holy)
Oba t'o ninu mimo (Righteous God)
Oba alaya funfun (Immaculate God)
Ologo meta (The TrinityOlotito, (The Truthful)
Olododo (The Truthful)*Iye*,(Resurrection)
Aduro gboingboin lehin asotito (Defender of the Truthful)
Imole ninu okunkun aye (The light in darkness)
Alagbara l'orun ati l'aye (Mighty in heaven and on the earth)
Oba ti nyoni kuro ninu ofin aye (God who rescues from the dungeon)
Atofarati (Our defense)
Atogbokanle (The trustworthy God)
Atofokante (Our Confidant)
Adunbarin (Worthy to walk with)
Adunbalo (Worthy to follow)
Adunkepe (Worthy to call unpon)
Apata ayeraye(The rock of ages)
Atobiju (The Almighty)
Atofarati bi oke (Our support and defense)
Apata wa (Our rock of Ages)
Odi wa (Our shield)
Alabarin aye wa (Our companion)
Olupese (Our provider)
Olugbega (The lifter of our head)
Oluranlowo (Our help)Ireti wa,(Our hope)
aye (God on earth)
Olu orun (God in heaven)
Oba ti gbobo oba nt'owo Re gb'ase (Kings from whom kings take directives)

Adakedajo (He who Judges silently)
Adajo ma fi t'enikan se (The just Judge)
Oba ti kii s'ojusaju (The just God)
Oba t'enikan o le pe l'ejo (The king that cannot be judged)
Oba aseyiowu (Unquestionable God)
Oba tii s'agan d'olomo (The god who opens the womb of the barren)
Abiyamo ode orun (The great mother of heaven)
Atorise (God who can turn bad situation to good)
As'oloriburuku d'olorire (God who can remove the inadequacies from one's life)
Arinu r'ode (God who sees the visible an the invisible,)
Olumoranokan eda (He who sees the intent of the heart of man)
Oludamoran (The Great adviser)
Baba wa (Our father)
Ore wa (Our friend)
Ibi isadi wa (Our refugee)
Aabo wa (our protector)
Oluwosan (the healer)
Asoku d'alaye (He who brings the dead to life)
Olorun alaaye (God of the living)
Oba ti n p'ojo iku da (God who can change appointment with death)
Oba ti emi gbogbo enia wa l'owo Re (He who has the keys to our existence)
Oba ti nti t'enikan o lesi (He who shuts and no one can open)
Oba ti nsi t'enikan o leti (He who opens and no one can close)
Awamaridi (Unsearchable God)
Eleruniyin,Abetilukara bi ajere (God who is all ears)
Aiku (Living God)
Aisa (Unchangeable)
Oba ti ki sun, ti ki togbe (The king that neither sleeps nor slumbers)
Oba onise nla (The great worker of good)
Onigbonwo wa (Our sponsor)
Olorun pipe (Perfect God)
Olorun rere (Good God)
Akiri s'ore (He who goes about doing good)
As'ore kiiri (He who goes about doing good)
Gbongbo idile Jesse (The root of the tribe of Jesse)
Oba t'o f'oro da ile aye (He that created all things by his spoken word)
Oba to ti wa k'aye o towa (He who was in existence before creation)
Oba ti o ma wa nigba t'aye o ni si mo (He who will remain at the end of all things)
Oloruko nla (The great name)
Ologojulo (The glorious God)
Emi ni ti nje Emi ni (I am the I am)
Oba t'oni gbogbo ope (He who deserves all praise)
Olorun t'oni gbogbo iyin (He who deserves all honour)
Oba ti ko ni pin ogo Re pel'enikankan (God that does not share his glory with any man)
Oba t'o ti wa, t'o si wa, ti o si ma wa lailai (The God that was, that is and that will remain for ever)
Ibere ati opin (The Alpha and Omega)
OBA AKIKITAN, (Eternity will not be enough to praise and honour you, O Lord.)