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HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN OLA AND ITS  
CHALLENGES TO MODERN ADHERENTS

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RECOMMENDATION

It was mentioned in the early part of this work that this is a summary of the history of Christianity in Ola. It is therefore recommended that research could continue to other areas beyond the scope of this thesis.

### CONCLUSION

This work has examined the beginning, growth, challenges and influences of Christianity in Ola. It has also discussed on the difficulties experienced by early adherents. Research showed that many of the major developments that one can point to today is as a result of the introduction of Christianity. For instance, the establishment of Baptist Day School was seen as a mile stone in the history of the community. Many of the highly educated sons and daughters of Ola received their elementary education in the school including this writer. Baptist Secondary Modern School which was established in 1958 and that was upgraded to the status of Baptist Grammar School in September 1976 is another case in point.

Religious influence is another major area where Christianity has benefited the community. Through Christianity, a lot of social abuses and other ungodly acts have been minimized. It should however be noted that inspite of these positive changes, Christianity has not achieved its maximum potentials in Ola. because of some inherent factors.

An interview was conducted with Pa David Ogundeji Ejiwale before his death, on what he thought was responsible for the backwardness of Christianity in Ola. He explained that worldliness and syncretism were among the factors that are militating against the religion. According to him, the early believers in Christ in Ola accepted Christianity whole heartedly without allowing anything to push them out of the way<sup>1</sup>. He blamed the modern Christians for lack of faithfulness to God in their services as well as for personal carelessness which, according to him has eaten deep into their marrow. He said that the early Christians were

so devoted that they never trifled any Sundays and that worldliness was not found in them, but faith in God alone. Pa Ejiwale regretted the undue acts of many present Christians who claim to be followers of Christ, but are still limping between two opinions; idols and Christ. Pa Ejiwale is right in his assessment of Christianity in Ola. In actuality, one can hardly distinguish between a Christian and non-Christian. They should reflect on Paul's exhortation to all the believers in Christ:

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? . . .<sup>2</sup>

Jesus Christ calls all believers the light of the world. It is the duty of all and sundry in the fold to keep the light shining for those outside to see and confess Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The issue of chieftancy is another problem that is militating against Christianity. Internecine rivalry is always a problem that often draws a line of demarcation among Christians when it comes to chieftancy matter. It is pathetic that those who were formerly known as sincere Christians can no longer maintain their dignities because of this issue. That has made quite a number of believers in the town sustained spiritual and psychological injuries. The infighting within and without the church do serve as blocking stone to the progress of the gospel. The saints are no longer content with the fellowship of the church because leaders who are supposed to direct the affairs of the church have almost lost their visions.

Politics is another factor of set back. The Bible does not go against Christians being a politician but the wrong practice of it. Some have used it as a whip to beat those who did not belong to a particular camp or party. Consequently, those who were beaten never look at those who beat them with a good eye. What often followed were suspicion, hatred, gossip and unhealthy acts against one another. Division in the church and later in the community were among the aftermath of the problem which did serve as sentinel to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Politics is not a do or die affairs. All have to benefit from its use rather than seeing it as an advantage of punishing others.

Dishonest practices within the church and other unholy behaviours are also responsible for retrogression of Christianity at the place. Entrenchment of thorough teaching and discipleship training for members will help solve the problem.

Initially, evangelism was taken very seriously by the church in Ola but this spirit is dying and needs to be revived. Through that, the fire of the gospel will keep on burning and many more people would believe. Hunter, J.H., while quoting Rowland Bingham on evangelism, said, "Let the call of Christ be heard and heeded through the din of the world's conflict and let the church rise to a worthy endeavour to accomplish speedily the work entrusted to her"<sup>3</sup>.

Evangelism is the primary task of the church and which the church should always focus attention if the image of Christianity would be redeemed.

Settling conflict is another way of reviving the faith from its lost glory. It should be noted that there can never be meaningful progress where there is misunderstanding. The issue should be handled in such a

way that would not allow the kingdom of darkness to prevail against the kingdom of God. Whosoever is wounded through it may never forget and mention would be made of it from time to time.

Furthermore, the eyes of the young ones are on the present generation of Christians for their contributions to the growth of Christianity in Ola and not necessarily glory on the achievements of their predecessors. Whatever they contribute would serve as inspiring legacy for the unborn generation so that even if they die, they will still be living.

Some Christian youths in Ola are making efforts to reactivate the faith. This is the task of the whole church and not of the youths alone. It is the work of the church to support any evangelistic Christian fellowship like that with a view to jointly realising the objective of restoring the lost glory of Christianity in Ola.

Despite the fact that Christianity was introduced to Ola in about eighty years ago (1912), unbelief in Christ is still highly recognized. This means that much is left undone. Therefore, the sons of the community who have received calls to Pastoral ministry are called upon to make concerted efforts on how the town could be won to Christ Jesus completely. Pastors and deacons who are leaders and non-natives of Ola also have a role to play to make the gospel known in every home. People need messages that point to their spiritual weaknesses and the way out if Christianity is to be revitalized. Many are yet to be won for Christ even among those who claim themselves as "believers". In the opinion of Hunter, J.H., "The Christian church had lost much to the extent that the gospel is gravely impeded because it has not taken Christ's words at face value and assaulted the strongholds of satan in reliance upon them".

While encouraging Christians on that, Rowland Bingham, who was quoted by Hunter, said,

The normal life of the Christian is a triumphant life. So, the Christian can truly say that the provisions made for triumph are such that it is disloyal to consider defeat. We are always to triumph to be "more than conquerors"<sup>5</sup>.

Paul the apostle also admonished Christians in I Corinthians 15:58 to always stand firm and abide by the work of the Lord because their work for the Lord is not in vain.

Other non-Baptist denominations in the town are also called upon to rise and be more effective in their efforts of preaching the good news.

The earliest believers have left behind many challenges in the way they lived and practiced their religion. Faithfulness, unity, love for one another or practical Christianity and discipline are some of their spiritual qualities from which the modern adherents of Christianity are to draw inspirations. They will do well by reflecting on that and make a practical application of them in their Christian lives. Not that alone, they should also teach their children the same Christian virtues so that the reputation for which the first Christians in Ola were known for may be revived and continued.