

THE EFFECT OF YORUBA INDIGENOUS RELIGION ON
CHRISTIANITY IN IJI-ISIN, KWARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This work is on the effect of Yoruba Indigenous Religion on Christianity in Iji-Isin, Kwara State. The Yoruba Indigenous Religion had noticeable effects on the church in Iji-Isin since the advent of Christianity that hindered the spread of the gospel about eight decades ago. The purpose of the study is to ascertain the extent of the effect of Yoruba Indigenous Religion on Christianity in Iji-Isin, Kwara State. The researcher adopted a combination of historical and descriptive approach, but thematic comparison also form part of the methodology.

The major findings of this work explained the interaction of Christianity with other faiths, historical background and socio-cultural life of Iji-Isin people, mystical powers in Yoruba Indigenous religion and advent of Christianity in Iji-Isin. The work also revealed the operations of Yoruba Indigenous religion and its effects on Christianity in Iji-Isin. It was revealed that to be saved in Christ results in a definite encounter with the Yoruba Indigenous Religion in the town, but when the power of sin was broken, then demonic power becomes impotent.

The researcher made some recommendations these are, that the church should depend totally on the power of the Holy Spirit for God's work, violence prayers, evangelism, discipleship, church planting, follow-up of converts, evaluation of spiritual life, preparing of the believers for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the effective networking of believers at Iji-Isin were among what the church should embark upon. God's word said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, if the son makes you free, you are free indeed" (John 8:32, 36).

5.2 CONCLUSION

This work revealed the challenges to the church by Yoruba Indigenous Religion and how the Lord delivered the church. Jesus said, "... on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18). The evidence abound that Christianity at Iji-Isin went through crisis, and witch-hunting of juju and charms by the Indigenous religion to stop the kingdom of God in the community. Therefore the Iji-Isin community have been set free eternally (John 8:36).

Iji-Isin Christians are zealous for the kingdom of God and love propagation of the gospel anywhere they go. Their Christian life style has not retarded the progress of the people nor affected the quality of their life negatively. It is evident from their life style that Christianity cannot be practiced outside their culture and yet they have contributed greatly to the spread and growth of Christianity both inside and outside Iji-Isin community.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of findings of this work, the following recommendations are considered relevant.

- It is recommended that the church should depend totally on the power of the Holy Spirit like the apostles (Acts 2–4). Oladimeji urged that true repentance and conversion experience will open door for evangelism (8). The fullness of the power of Holy Spirit in believers help soul winning and evangelism. (Terry 12). The church should trust in the power of God alone in order to experience miraculous and over flowing harvest of soul (Acts 6:31; Eph. 5:18).
- Fervent and prevailing prayer should not be overlooked to face the kingdom of Satan and rescued the sinners for the Lord. Goodell, mentioned that the only way to receive from God is by asking in prayers in Matt. 7:7 – 8; and the way to be filled with the Holy Spirit power is by asking in prayers (86) Luke 11:10-13. Aransiola added that warfare prayers through intercessors of the church must be a daily affairs to confront the kingdom of Satan (25). In essence, the church should setup prayer warrior groups that will pray daily for the church like the apostles in acts 2:41 – 45.
- Evangelism should be the major task of the church and everybody should be involved to win souls for the Lord (Matt 28:19 – 20; Mark 16:17 -18). Green confirmed that evangelism is goodnews about Jesus, not advancing the claims of a church,

of an ideology, but of Jesus Himself (9). Believers are not to go and advertise the best church but to promote Christ's work.

- Autrey urged that evangelism is largely a matter of revivals which is still expected today (26) church revivals to build and edify believers in the church should be encouraged from time to time.
- Mission should be supported, and mission emphasis should create an awareness for mission work and mission pastors should be sponsored by the church and individuals (Acts 13:1-4).
- The school of discipleship should be encouraged mostly to grow the new converts into maturity in the Lord and build up the older believers. Through "Christ Indwelling Your Life", "Follow the Master", "Serve the Master, In God's Presence, The Minds of God" materials will grow the faithful believers (Acts 2 and 5).
- Follow up and visitation team is recommended to help the baby Christians and weak believers to grow. Bible study programme also will impact God's wisdom into the life of the converts. Miles was convinced that God's word will reduce sin in believers' life (9) (Psalms 119:11). The church is becoming worldly but Jesus promised His support with the believers Matt. 28:20. Brock *observed that church growth is God's business which is an act of*

Jesus Christ and should be the believers' business too (Brock 65).

- Holy living should be embraced (Levt. 11:44) in order to avoid the operation of indigenous religion in the life of the new converts.
- Social groups is recommended in the church to avoid running back to idol festivals and participation by the new converts because among the indigenous religion, each social group functions as a religions community.
- It is also recommended that the gospel should be preached to all either Muslims or indigenous religion adherents. Attah urged that the gospel should be represented as relevant to the needs of the Africans (34) Most converts underrate Christian worship most at time when their needs are not met and they are tempted to backslide.
- Believers must be prepared by the church for the coming of the Lord. Okwuosa observed that Christian theology has become widely based on the intellect rather than on the revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit (7). It means that Christian life is not the keeping of laws and regulations but in obedient in the word of God for the transformation of life.
- Growth evaluation and spiritual assessment is also recommended for believers to remain focuses in Christ Jesus.

