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IGALA WORLD VIEWS AND CONTEXTUALIZATION: A DIACHRONIC AND HOLISTIC STUDY
OF CULTURAL THEMES AS A VEHICLE FOR EVANGELIZING AND THEOLOGIZING

Apeh, John Enejo, D.Miss.
Biola University, School of Intercultural Studies, 1988

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**IGALA WORLD VIEWS AND CONTEXTUALIZATION: A DIACHRONIC
AND HOLISTIC STUDY OF CULTURAL THEMES AS A VEHICLE
FOR EVANGELIZING AND THEOLOGIZING**

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the School of Intercultural Studies

Biola University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Missiology

by

JOHN ENEJO APEH

May 1988

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AND HOLISTIC STUDY OF CULTURAL THEMES AS A VEHICLE
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ABSTRACT

Igala World Views and Contextualization: A Diachronic and Holistic Study of Cultural Themes as a Vehicle for Evangelizing and Theologizing

John Ẹnejọ Apẹh

Working on the assumption that the Igala culture was not suitable and conducive for evangelization, the Western missionaries came to evangelize the Igala and imposed their own culture on the people. This Western cultural imperialism led to the situation where the present form of Christianity among the Igala is labelled a "White man's religion" by unbelievers.

The Igala Christians' reactions against this cultural ethnocentrism have led to a conflict where some Christians advocate a complete de-Westernization of the gospel. Others who are conservative are afraid that cultural renaissance might result in syncretism. This problem has generated hostilities among Igala Christians and no attempt has been made to de-Westernize Christianity of the seeming Western cultures in which the gospel came wrapped in.

This dissertation is a diachronic and holistic study of Igala cultural themes. The dissertation presupposes that Igala world views when used as frames of reference for contextualization will enhance the communication process of the gospel message. The process of contextualization which involves the study and adoption of cultural themes is a de-culturalization of Western culture from biblical Christianity and theology.

The dissertation is divided into three parts. Part one examines the social organization of the Igala and especially analyzes social festivals and ceremonies and the institution of marriage and the entire kinship system. In this section, the influence and power of the ancestors are examined in relation to the activities of the living. The issue of political leadership in relation to kinship, authority, legitimacy, support and decision-making processes are also investigated. Furthermore, the analysis of social organization shows the dynamics of contemporary Igala society and cultural change. These structural changes affecting the family and social structures indicate that world view change are largely compelled by economic factors.

Part two of the dissertation takes a look at the religious beliefs and practices of the Igala. In these, the nature of sin, sacrifice, spirit world, salvation and death, are examined together with cases of Christians facing problems of traditionalism. Examined too are the nature of the traditional problems and how the Igala church responds to them. Analysis of data relating to the religious practices and beliefs of the Igala provides evidence for the religious content of their culture. Moreover, moral order in Igala society is taught by the use of myths, proverbs and stories which are used predominantly by the older people; the Igala believe that morality is not only a religious issue but social and cultural.

In part three, the cultural themes identified in parts one and two are applied to evangelism and contextualization of theology. The relevance of the cultural themes to evangelism and theological education are shown and highlighted. The application of selected cultural themes, having been biblically screened, shows justification for their use in evangelism and theological education.

The dissertation, while establishing the relevance and importance of cultural themes, reveals that there are cultural questions of significant theological importance and concern to the Igala that Western theology does not anticipate. Furthermore, this dissertation contributes to our knowledge of Igala culture in the followings ways, namely:

- 1) The threat of syncretism could be minimized as people are made aware of the dangers of complete reliance on culture for theologizing.
- 2) That contextualization can give credibility to the gospel message as people will relate better to the gospel that is not wrapped in Western culture.
- 3) There are significant volitional changes taking place in Igala society and most of these changes are economic in nature.
- 4) The process of theologizing will effectively replace the Western philosophical basis and premises upon which the present Christian theology was built.

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SECTION ONE
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

THE RESEARCH BACKGROUND

MISSIOLOGICAL TENSIONS: GOSPEL AGAINST CULTURE

The history of modern Africa is incomplete without the history of Christianity in Africa. Christian missions have done so much for Africa and Africans. The Christianization and evangelization of Africa was at the risk of the lives of the missionaries (Wambutda 1970). In West Africa, many missionaries lost their lives as they faced dysentery, malaria, yellow fever, etc. The high mortality rate led many to call the West African region, "the white man's graveyard" (Pobee 1977).

The heroic act of missionaries has been highly esteemed by many. Wambutda said that we stand in deep gratitude to their unselfish services (Wambutda 1970:169). Missionaries laid a groundwork in religion, health, and education under difficult and dangerous circumstances. What missionaries have done is almost beyond belief (Stevenson 1957:1191). Taryor has observed that all over the continent, the influence of missionaries is clearly evident, even impacting the physical environment (Taryor 1974:63). Timothy notes that missionaries were exposed, in addition to inadequate medical facilities, to bad roads (where they exist), bad water, poor communication, and hostilities (Timothy 1971:31).

It is undisputed that missionaries were also committed to their primary task of evangelism. They were men and women who were sincere and felt that they were called by God to go into all the world to preach the gospel to all creatures (Taryor 1974). Missionaries to Africa were also instrumental in reducing many languages to written form (Desai 1962). According to C. Kraft, when one considers the diversity of African cultures, the varying background of missionaries, and the intensity of their dedication in the face of extreme risk and hardship, one is forced to marvel at the grace and power of God for the unexpected (C. Kraft in Pobee 1977:160).

Missionaries knew the danger they faced. There was the certainty of loneliness and imminent risk of death (Nkrumah in Pobee 1977). These sacrifices, dedication, and commitment cannot be easily forgotten. We have to concede and conclude that West Africans owe a lot to missions (Pobee 1977).

In spite of all these remarkable sacrifices and the phenomenal growth of the church under the campaign of pioneer missionaries, missionaries were unequivocally committed to changing the culture of the people to Western ways of thought (Taryor 1974). Rather than allowing the gospel to confront the culture, they allowed ethnocentrism to dictate how the gospel message was presented. It was presented in far too many instances with liturgies that are not congruent with the local situation, but express the gospel in another culture, irrelevant architecture, foreign art forms, and music (Costas 1983:5).

Working on the assumption that Africans are cursed (being descendants of Canaan in their understanding of Genesis 9:26-27), the African

Christians watched the missionaries as they destroyed their customs and cultures (Wambutda 1970). According to Wambutda, the issue of polygamy, African feasts, and the drinking of locally brewed corn wine became evangelistic issues (Wambutda 1970), and were sometimes made conditions for salvation and church membership.

Some Western Christian missionaries adopted a "tabula rasa" doctrine, the belief that non-Christian philosophies and religions must be entirely eradicated before Christianity can be effectively introduced (Tucker 1983:65; Bediako 1983:83). Other theories gave rise to "Western cultural imperialism" and the Westernization of the Igala church. This was precipitated by the belief that Africans have no religion (Hastings 1967:60), and this belief made missionaries hesitant to suggest that any "preparation for Christianity" existed in this form (animism) of religion (in Bediako 1983:85). As a consequence, Africans became empty vessels to be filled with European and American goods (Westermann 1926:426) and must obey the missionaries' motto, "you must become like us" (Oosthuizen 1968:235).

The hostile attitude of the historic missionary churches led many African leaders to establish independent churches which accommodate themselves to the realities of African culture and traditions (Thomas 1986:85), and sometimes allow polygamy among their members. The newly independent African churches accepted the use of traditional musical instruments, ancestral veneration, healing, and the belief in the spirit world. The early missionaries were willing to sacrifice their lives to abolish these practices (Desai 1962).

GOSPEL AGAINST IGALA CULTURE

Among the Igala people of Central Nigeria, the contributions of Christians missions and missionaries in the fields of education, medicine, and social change rightly deserve a commendation. The phenomenal expansion of Christianity through the Plymouth Brethren, Qua Ibo, and Roman Catholic missionaries is incredible. The translation of the Bible into the Igala language by the Dibbles and Grosses will forever continue to be the most important single project embarked on by missionaries.

The dissertation is primarily concerned with developments in the Igala protestant denominations. Thus, reference to Igala Christians or church is of these denominations; and while the author cannot speak for all the protestant denominations, most of what he says is based on the developments in the Igala Plymouth Brethren Assemblies with which the author is most intimate and familiar.

The Igala people faced similar problems with the coming of missionaries. The gospel was brought to the Igala people with many Western trappings. The missionaries maintained mission stations on the hills far away from the communities in which they lived. They fraternized and identified themselves with the British colonial officers, their own kind of people. The message they gave condemned the Igala culture. They vehemently outlawed polygamy and drinking of corn wine (*Obulukutu*) and also forbade people from taking part in festivals. They branded indigenous cultures as heathen and pagan. In most cases, the rejection of all cultural customary practices became conditions to be met before one became a Christian. While some of these practices were incompatible with

Christianity, the manner in which they were condemned caused more harm than good to the church.

The manner in which missionaries conducted their activities showed utter ignorance or neglect of the need of the Igala people. This lack of knowledge or foresight has created many problems for the Igala church. The Igala church is a carbon copy of the Western church and has not been conditioned to its sociocultural environment. Some Igala Christians are searching for a true identity and, in protest against the traditional Westernized church, have left to establish independent churches. These people are reacting against the Westernized position of the church towards the issue of customs and practices in the form of traditional musical instruments, polygamy, and the use of corn wine. Filbeck says, people more than ever are sensitive to cultural imperialism and domination imposed on them by outsiders, whether it is in the form of economics, politics, or religion (Filbeck 1985:XII).

In recent years conflict between missionaries and anthropologists over the value of tradition created the impression among Igala youth that missionaries have waged a campaign against the Igala and that anthropologists stand for the protection and preservation of their (Igala) tradition and customs. Anthropologists charged that missionaries were misfits; that they knowingly or unwittingly destroy the societies and cultures within which they worked (Sutlive 1985:61); and that they (missionaries) preach the gospel of Westernization. The younger generation of Igala Christians have ignorantly accepted these accusations, and have turned against Christian missionaries.

It is in this regard that people began to call for de-Westernization of the church. According to Filbeck, when people are dissatisfied with the abstract way of Western form of Christianity, they are likely to reject Christianity because of the foreign package it comes wrapped in (Filbeck 1985).

Recent studies (Partain 1986) have shown that many Africans think of Christianity as a foreign religion. The gospel is often not seen as offering resources for life's most deeply felt experiences. According to Partain, when African Christians are faced with death or famine or infertility, they usually resort to traditional rites and beliefs (Partain 1986:1066). The errors of ignorance, insensitivity, and poor judgment of the missionary past need to be corrected. Crane rightly observes that if today we are in revolt against the mistaken assumption that the gospel of Jesus Christ is set over against African world view, culture, customs and even religious beliefs, it is because we have come to know the gospel as a universal message whose relevance is not limited to any culture, world view, social institutions or even religion (Crane 1964:408).

Christians must be willing to ask whether there has been an authentic engagement between the gospel of Christ and the cultures of Africa or whether authentic Christian faith can flourish in every culture. The challenge that the missionary faces in today's world is nothing less than the challenge of communicating the gospel across cultural boundaries (Filbeck 1985). Understanding the world view of the people one is addressing with the gospel is important and a vital prerequisite to its effective communication.

THE RESEARCH SETTING

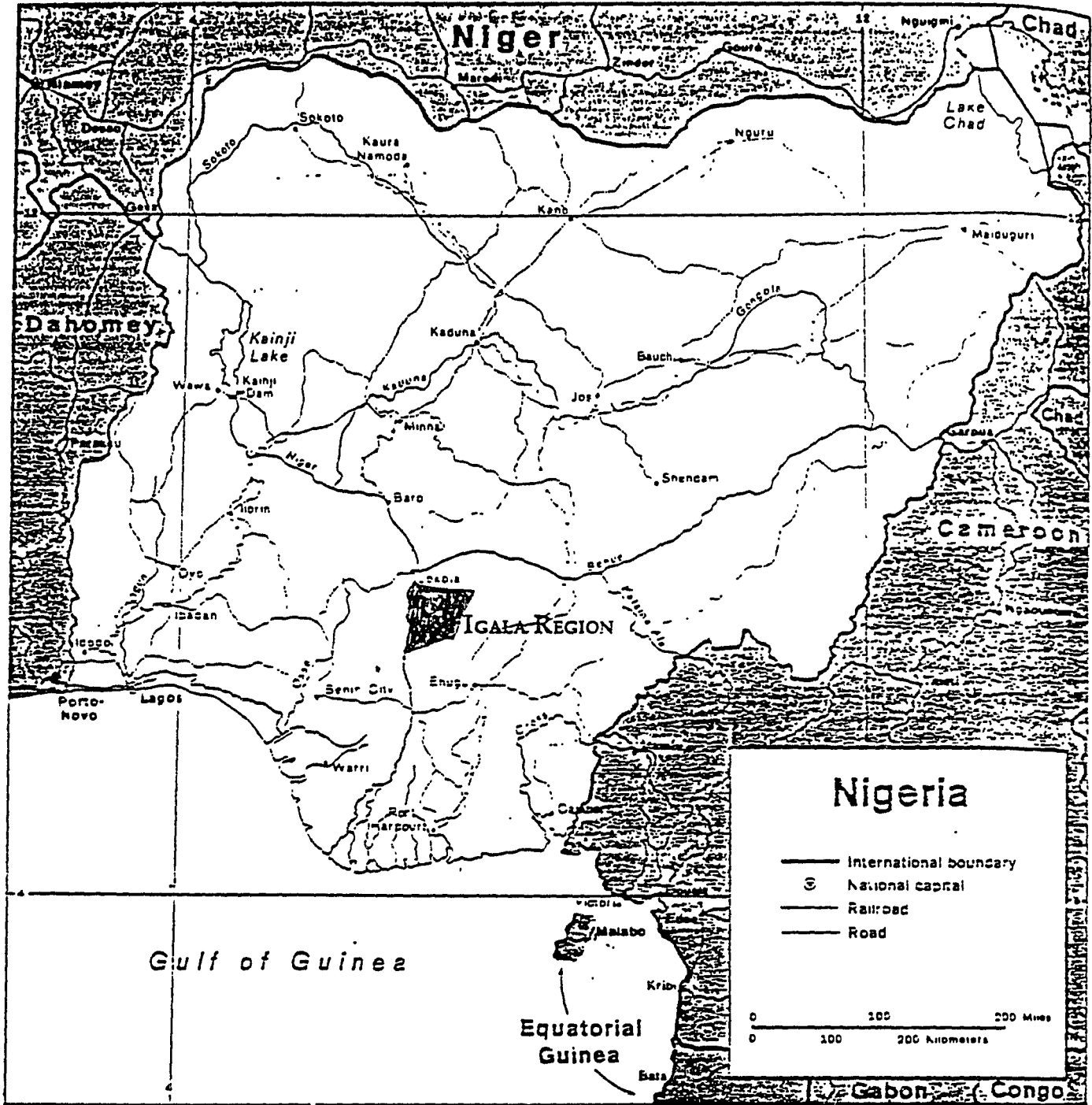
The research is about the Igala tribe of Niger-Benue Confluence of Nigeria. To the north, it is bounded by the Benue River and to the west by the Niger. According to Armstrong, to the east of the Igala division is the Idoma division of the former Benue province, and on the south, are the Ibo peoples of the former Onitsha province (Armstrong 1955:77).

The total land area of Igala is between 4,900 (Boston 1968:4) and 5,000 square miles (Armstrong 1955:77), with a population of about 500,000 in 1964 (Shelton 1971:17) which in a recent estimate (1981) has increased to about 1.8 million. It is strategically located and there had been important contacts with Europeans during the slave trade and British expedition in the Niger (Armstrong 1955). See Figure 1 for a map of Nigeria Showing the Igala Area.

It is generally accepted that Igala forms a sub-group of Kwas with Yoruba in Niger-Congo family (Silverstein 1973). While Yoruba and Igala are fairly closely related languages within the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo family, researchers have classified Igala as a separate language (Boston 1968).

On physical environment, it has been agreed that the crystalline works of the western bank of the Niger extended into Igala between Ocheu and Itobe, but almost immediately dip under the Cretaceous sandstones which constitute the rock formations of the greater part of the country (Armstrong 1955). There is high forest vegetation and rainfall is well distributed, averaging 50 inches a year. Boston observes that typical crops grown include

FIGURE 1: MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING THE IGALA AREA



yams, cocoyam, maize, millet, and guinea corn. He also identifies fruits of the oil palm and other species (Boston 1968).

Perhaps the most definite historical statement that can be said about the Igala is that they had a common origin with the Yoruba and that the separation took place long enough ago to allow their family linguistic differences (Armstrong 1955). However, there has not been any real agreement as to the accurate traditions of origin. Crowder favors Yoruba origin; Armstrong favors Yoruba and Benin; while Clifford argues in favor of Jukun tradition having been influenced by Meek and Palmer respectively (Armstrong 1955). Boston states that in view of the wide range of contact with other peoples which has tended to produce variety and divergence in Igala traditions concerning the origin of kinship, to select one or the other of these traditions for special emphasis, as was done in the past, is to misrepresent the nature of the corpus as a whole (Boston 1969:42).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN IN NIGERIA

The Plymouth Brethren came into being in Nigeria at about 1919 through Mr. Alfred A. Hewstone, a Briton who came and settled among the Igala after his service in Egypt and France with the Salvation Army. In 1920, the Hewstone's published an article in the mission magazine, "Voices for the Vineyard," about the Igala people of Central Nigeria and opportunities for evangelistic outreach and church planting.

In response to the Hewstone's appeal for more laborers, the Dibbles joined them in 1921, having been commended by some assemblies in Buffalo, New York. They were later joined by the Grossses who were commended by

the Hunter and Allison Street Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They were at this stage involved in evangelism, establishment of assemblies, discipleship, language studies as well as Bible translation.

In order for mission stations to be established in a corporate name, the Plymouth Brethren missionaries from Britain and the United States of America adopted the name "Christian Missions in Many Lands," the same name of the service organization of the Plymouth Brethren of U.S.A. In 1929 Christian Missions in Many Lands was incorporated in Nigeria as an independent missionary organization without any external control. Those who were instrumental in establishing this organization were Messers Alfred Hewstone (British), James Ramsden (British), Raymond Dibble (U.S.A.) and Malcolm Gross (U.S.A.)

The Brethren missionaries succeeded in establishing many independent Assemblies. However, they failed to see the importance of developing national leaders to replace themselves. In most cases, they felt more comfortable working with uneducated people than in cooperating with active, educated and promising national leaders.

Although the charter trustees were foreign missionaries, the organization was set up to function without any affiliation to the Brethren organization overseas.

The Christian Missions in Many Lands has been involved in many different ministries since its inception in 1919. These ministries are directed at the spiritual and physical needs of the people among whom they minister. The assemblies have a strong standing team of evangelists who are actively

reaching the unsaved with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. There are about 200 assemblies in the CMML fellowship. More assemblies are being planted to provide spiritual nurture for those led to Christ through the evangelistic teams. Membership is between 50,000 and 60,000.

Audio-visual evangelism is one method used by CMML. This ministry involves the use of gospel films for evangelism. These films, acquired from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Gospel Films, and Ken Anderson, have also been used in conferences and crusades. Plans are under way to translate other films into the local language of the people.

The CMML is involved in summer missions. In this program, students in CMML schools are recruited to work with summer missionaries from other countries. Since 1983 CMML has established relationships with some U.S. based missionary organizations to receive summer missionaries for various kinds of Christian service among the Igala people.

In its educational programs, CMML has two high schools, eight elementary schools, one special school for the handicapped and two Bible schools. These educational institutions have contributed to the economic development of individuals and have also provided leadership in the assemblies. There is a need to focus attention on cross-cultural training as opposed to the strict Western educational programs in place now.

The CMML has two functional medical clinics which are meeting the physical needs of people. These clinics have in the past served as avenues for evangelism as the medical personnel share their faith with those for whom they care.

Today, the CMML remains autonomous and a missionary organization of the Assemblies in Nigeria. As a corporation, the Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML) is controlled by a board of trustees appointed by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders is the association of recognized elders in the assemblies in fellowship with the CMML. The CMML board of trustees has five members and has two officers, the Chairman and the Secretary. As of January 1988 the Trustees are S.O. Ejigbo (Chairman), P.I. Ebikwo (Secretary), J.M. Adojo, J.M. Ocheni, and J.E. Ap̄h.

HISTORICAL PICTURE OF TENSION

There are five historical periods in the history of the Igala church and Nigeria which are significant in tracing the historical development of tension in the church. The events of these periods show the issues upon which the church and the colonial government focused. The development of tension in the church can be understood if viewed comparatively with political developments of the nation in each of the five periods.

The task of developing and reconstructing the history of the Igala church is a complex exercise given the fact that proper records were not kept. According to Kwast, historiographical process requires research activities of interviews, correspondence, field observations, and archival and library research (Kwast 1973:296). In presenting the historical picture of tension in Igala church, both historical and anthropological methods pertinent to ethnohistorical research were used.

The period between 1847 and 1932 was a period when the Anglican missionaries had their first contact with the Igala people. Crowther (1855)

believes that the first contact of the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) with the Igala was between the years 1841 and 1847. These Anglican missionaries did not settle among the Igala, having rejected the request of the Attah Igala (Igala King) to establish a school. However, in 1919, the Plymouth Brethren missionaries arrived and settled among the Igala people.

The Plymouth Brethren refer to this period as the pioneering stage, characterized by evangelistic outreach. Placed in the larger political scene, this period could also be described as a period of imperialistic expedition and exploration (Crowther 1855). The British government under the Imperial Majesty fought with different tribal kingdoms in Nigeria and proclaimed Nigeria a British protectorate. During this period the British colonial government was in total control of Nigeria. They also assisted the missionaries in ensuring their settlement and safety.

While on the political front, Nigerians were subjects of the Crown in their own country, the missionaries began to establish churches and institutionalized the Western pattern. Thus, in the political and religious sphere, the colonial officers and missionaries worked mostly with older people with little or no education. This was the peak of commercialization, civilization, Christianization and colonization in the history of Nigerian political and religious life. Both the colonial officers and missionaries succeeded in developing for themselves servants out of the older and uneducated people who accepted the Western ways as the only right way.

The second period was between 1933 and 1950. This was a time when the Brethren missionaries, having been joined by the Qua Iboe Mission missionaries (who arrived from Calabar, Southeast Nigeria) began to plant churches and establish structures for teaching the Bible. The missionaries were also involved in Bible translation and literacy work. It was a period of paternalism when missionaries were in total control and the national believers were not considered good enough to participate in missions. Politically it was a period of pro-western acculturation. The colonial government established their economic and political structures and were aided by the missionaries who established schools where people were trained. However, this period also saw the formation of nationalist movements and the inception of struggle for political freedom and independence.

Through education and interaction with the white people during World War II, Nigerians realized that if given the opportunity, they could do what the white people were doing. Tension arose out of the desire for independence and self-identity. While the agenda was political independence in the political arena, the church through the few educated representatives challenged the missionary organizations for their inability to allow Nigerians in leadership positions. This further led to the establishment of many independent churches.

From 1951 to 1960 was a period of Westernization in the church. The educational and medical institutions became instruments of Westernization as those who went to Christian schools and worked with missionaries on mission stations were trained to think in Western ways. These people later emerged as the educated elite.

On the other hand, on the political front, the struggle for independence continued. The education, mostly provided by mission schools awakened nationalism and patriotism which gave impetus to the reactions against Western cultural imperialism. During this period, the church was Westernized, and those outside the church have been secularized through education. Conflicts developed as a result of this disparity or polarity. Those leaders in the church who were trained in missionary schools acted as the missionaries' mouthpiece always defending them against the accusations of those who had been secularized and had no sympathy for the missionaries.

The fourth period, 1961 to 1973, was a period at which the educated class in the church began to react against the teaching of the missionaries. Traditionally, those in the church working with the missionaries had no opportunity for education. However, after political independence in 1960, the government established many public schools. Opportunities for education became available to many and Christians availed themselves of such opportunities. It was these unprecedented opportunities which led to the secularization of the Christians in the Igala church. The excitement which followed political independence, selfhood and sense of identity compounded the misunderstanding existing between missionaries, their supporters and those who saw missionaries as part of the colonial administration.

This misunderstanding led to the emergence of the young educated group. This group of young educated people is composed mostly of those who are not committed Christians but may have some exposure to missionary activities. The attacks on missionaries and their activities were defended by the older people's group who had been Westernized by

missionaries. Soon, it became a conflict between the older and younger generation of Christians.

The fifth and final period, 1974 to the present, can be described as a period when the historic churches have discovered the importance of indigeneity for the churches in Nigeria. Many different independent churches emerged and the situation was competitive and characterized by disunity.

Politically, the government in 1972 promulgated the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree which made it impossible for foreigners to control businesses. The government also acquired sixty percent of the shares in all big companies controlled by foreigners. Others were nationalized and these developments were hailed by the people.

When the church saw these developments, missionaries who had been reluctant to hand over to national believers rushed to appoint indigenous leaders who were not prepared and qualified. In many cases, missionaries appointed their longtime allies to replace them.

Furthermore, when the people discovered that political independence did not guarantee economic prosperity and the political stability expected, the people developed a negative attitude towards the colonial government and any foreigner who sympathized with Western governments. They called for cultural revival and challenged whoever was opposed to such a call for revivalism. It was at this time that the young people with professional theological education became directly involved in the conflict.

These developments in the church and political arena show the historical picture of tension in the society of which the Igala church is a part. The insistence of the church to maintain orthodoxy angered those young people who wanted to see changes, remove any trace of Western culture and replace them with indigenous forms. However, another group of young educated Christians felt that the manner by which changes are advocated is not conducive to the growth and expansion of the church.

SITUATION OF CONFLICT TODAY

The conflict which arose out of the tension and hostility over time in the history of the church and nation has split the Igala Christians into different ideological camps. This dissertation specifically addresses nine different factions of people involved in the conflict, especially those within the Igala Plymouth Brethren with which the author is more familiar. The tenth faction which the author has in mind is the pagan population with whom the Igala Christians interact, live and enter into dialogues. These different factions fall into four broad categories of ideological commitment; to a Western church, to a de-Westernized church, to a contextualized church, and to pagan tradition.

Those closed to any change are two different groups of old people who want to maintain the Westernized church and would not be open to changes and the introduction of traditional forms into worship. They are (1) old people in leadership positions, and (2) old people in non-leadership positions. Both groups are closed to de-Westernization and cultural revival in the church.

Those advocating complete de-Westernization are five different groups in this category who call for a complete de-Westernization of the church which includes cultural revival and professional theological education as the basis for all leadership appointments within the church. Furthermore, they believe that the old must make way to the young educated men who alone are qualified to lead the church, and bring about the change the church needs. Those in this category are (1) old people in leadership positions, (2) old people in non-leadership positions, (3) young educated Christians with professional theological education, (4) young educated Christians without professional theological education, and (5) educated nominal Christians who have been secularized and believed that Christianity must be clothed in traditional forms to be relevant to the Igala people.

Those struggling with tension between tradition and Western Christianity consist of two different groups of people, who believe in gradual de-Westernization and critical examination and analysis of Igala culture. They are calling for changes but want to see the Bible as basis for all changes and contextualization. These are (1) young people with professional theological education, and (2) young educated people without theological education. They are, however, in the minority.

Those against Western Christianity are pagans and animists who worship God through their ancestors. They strongly believe in their own traditional religious practices and are opposed to Christianity. The inability of the Western missionaries to recognize the religious content of their beliefs and practices aggravated tension and conflict. This fourth group is the group that the Igala church is reaching with the gospel and, for whom tension

between tradition and Western Christianity is preventing them from embracing biblical Christianity.

There is another reason for the involvement of those with professional theological education in the present conflict. For while they are opposed to Westernization, they themselves have retained some form of it. For example, they like Western education, titles, dress (clerical and wedding), architecture, and even Western leadership structures. The bottom line is economics and power. The Plymouth Brethren's belief in the priesthood of all believers is evidenced in their practice of having no paid clergy, no one man ministry and no titles such as "Reverend." Furthermore, theological education is not believed to constitute an automatic inroad or call to the ministry of the church.

Conflict arises as a result of the inability of these theological school graduates to assume pastoral and leadership positions upon graduation. In the first place, the assemblies do not have pastors in charge of the local assemblies. They have a group of elders who shepherd the flock. In the second place, the only available position in the leadership core have been filled by experienced older people. Their hope of becoming a pastor or a leader with or without titles soon after theological training is often dashed. Some have resorted to using intense local feelings about Westernization to rally around support for their cause in order to split the congregation, change the structure and create positions for themselves.

Perhaps this explains why the early Brethren missionaries did not sanction education for the nationals as they feared that they would be

influenced by other denominational teachings; and clamour for the missionaries' own positions and make structural changes in the assemblies.

THE DIMENSION OF RESEARCH

This dissertation calls for a gradual de-Westernization and contextualization of the Church having taken into consideration the historical picture of tension of Nigeria, its implications for the Igala church, and the nature of tensions and conflicts in which the various factions are involved. Given these historical rooted tensions, the author intends to investigate tensions in Igala world view today. This investigation is to determine the tradition which people wish to revive or return to, what is termed "Westernized" Christianity, and as well as the emerging secular views among Igala youth.

The author wished to draw from this study of world views in conflict, themes and practical strategies for de-Westernization and contextualization. By de-Westernization, the author means a careful examination and removal of what is cultural baggage from the West that can be rejected as non-essential to the Igala church. Some of this Western cultural baggage includes cassock or clerical robes for ministers, Western wedding forms and rituals including its forms of dress such as the white bridal gown which are said to constitute a Christian wedding, Western musical instruments such as the accordion, piano, organ and guitar which were used to replace traditional instruments, and the use of European hymns. These are to be rejected as non-essential elements of biblical Christianity. Other Western teachings concerning the supernatural and what is referred to as superstitions deny the reality of the

spirit world. They should also be rejected as not being the teaching of Scriptures. The bone of contention is not the use of these Western forms but the fact that they were introduced to replace the traditional forms and presented as essential elements of Christianity.

The contextualization of the Igala church and theology involves a critical examination of the historical practices of the Igala so as to determine what cultural practices lend themselves to contextualized worship, evangelism and theological education. In this direction, the introduction and incorporation of the concepts of God, the Spirit world, man, leadership principles into theological education are significant. Furthermore, the use of cultural communication methods and the receptor's frame of reference in evangelism and theology following a critical scriptural scrutiny is crucial to contextualization exercise.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE REVIEW OF ETHNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE

Few ethnographic studies have been done about the Igala people since 1856 by researchers for different reasons. Boston (1968), which is the most comprehensive of all published work on Igala Kingdom, lays special emphasis on the Igala kinship, social organization and political system. Although Boston faced certain crucial problems relating to variants in the traditional chronology, and the problem of separating the political facets of the traditions from their historical functions (Boston 1969:29), he was able to do extensive historical analysis of the origin of Igala kinship upon which the political system is built. He describes the Atta to be a strong ruler like the

Yoruba Oba (Boston 1969:30) and shows the organization of the kingdom (Boston 1968) with reference to its divine nature (Boston 1968) and its heredity (Boston 1969:30). Boston's extensive studies confirmed and updated previous studies done by Armstrong (1955) and Seton (1929).

Studies done by Seton (1929) deal with the social organization of the Igala people. Special emphasis was placed on the family (Seton 1929:149) and rituals (1929:158). He also looks at the issue of belief systems with special reference to their belief in God, creation of man and woman, and the origin of God (Seton 1929:42-43). The Igala people were discovered to be superstitious (1929:49), firm believers of the spirit world and the world of ancestors (1929:47).

Armstrong's studies ranged from social organization (1955:76) religious beliefs to a description of festivals, traditions of origin and economic activities (1955:83-85). Other studies deal in part with the Igala empire at its golden age in the 18th and early 19th century (Ukpabi 1965:29) and on cultural themes such as family structure, social and religious practices and belief systems (Apeh 1987). Although Shelton's research was primarily on Igbo culture and only mentioned Igala culture as far as Igbo contacts with them, it picks up some important issues in relation to Igala kinship, political organization (1971:25-26), the conquest (1971:25), and the spirit world (1971:22).

It must be conceded that published materials available on Igala culture are either outdated or too sketchy. This brevity and outdatedness accentuates the significance and need for a contemporary, comprehensive and diachronic study of Igala cultural themes.

WORLD VIEW THEORY

World view is the English translation of the German word *Weltanschauung*. According to Olthius, this word is found in Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), and in the Western intellectual tradition, a world view or *Weltanschauung* has been treated as a comprehensive and unified system of thought (Olthius 1985:153).

World view has been defined in different ways over the years by anthropologists, philosophers, psychologists and sociologists. It was called "the natives' point of view" by Malinowski (1922:517), "climate of opinion" by Whitehead (1925, 1933), "religion" by Boforas (1925), "folklore" by Jensen (1939) and Jacobs (1955). It was called "cosmology," "other world" (Jensen 1939, Wagley 1940), "pattern" (Benedict 1934), "ideology," "theme" (Opler 1945), "World hypothesis" (Pepper 1942). Others called world view "Superstitious" (Kroeber 1957), "experiments of living" (MacBeath 1952), "cognitive maps" (Toleman 1948), "ethos" (Bateson 1958), "Forms of life" (Wittgenstein 1953), "primitive categories" (Philips 1965), "cognitive and existential," "Existential and normative postulates or values" (Geertz 1957, Hoebel 1966), "language" (Cappell 1960) (in Jones 1972).

Contemporary scholars do not differ significantly in their definitions from the past scholars. Ong (1959) sees it as "world as a view," Dundes (1971) as "folk ideas." Mary Douglas calls it "symbolic meaning" (1971, 1973), "a set of very midrange vectors" (Jones 1972), "Picture on the gains in looking on the World" (Galdston 1972), and "philosophical presuppositions or assumptions." (Jacobs 1979).

While most writers or scholars speak of the same cognitive world in different terminologies, recent missiological researchers have shown that Malinowski's definition (1922:517) has been widely accepted but widened to incorporate Redfield's definition (1953:85), which calls world view "the native outlook on things." According to Dundes, "Malinowski's conceptualization makes the individual a passive victim of the cultural cookie press world view" (in Jones 1972:92). In rejecting such conceptualization of world view, most researchers have accepted Redfield's concept (1953:85) that world view is "the way a people characteristically look outward upon the universe." Redfield's definition makes man more active (as opposed to Malinowski's 1922) and shows distinction between what the anthropologist used to call "civilized" world view from the "Primitive" world view. Thus, world view theory is seen as a framework of basic beliefs through which we view the world and our calling and our future in it (Olthius 1985:154) which involves the cognitive and affective values (Jones 1972), and time, space, causality and self (Kearney 1975).

Furthermore, as to the question of extrapolation of world view, studies have shown that world view could be extrapolated or determined through ethnoscience (Hunter and Foley 1976). This method, which is concerned with discovering the cognitive categories of people through the study of their language (Hunter and Foley 1976), is also used to arrive at an emic view of cultures (Hiebert 1976:129). This method, which should be distinguished from anthropological observation (Perchonock and Werner 1969), provides anthropologists with a precise method for studying the semantic and cognitive structures of a language (Hiebert 1976). Ethnoscience is based on

Whorfian hypothesis (Whorf 1956) and this method was used by Marguerite G. Kraft (1978) in her study of Kamwe world view.

In determining world view, another method is through observation of customs and behaviors. This method was used by Clyde Kluckhohn (1955) in his study of Navaho Indian culture and by Opler (1945) as he studied the Chiricahua Apache Indian culture. According to Haleblan (1979), they both studied and examined the Indian customs and beliefs in relation to their social, religious, and political aspects of the people. This method will focus on cultural themes through a combination of emic and etic method of research (1970:160). The method was used by most missiological researchers including M. Kraft (1978), Hohensee (1980) and Iroezi (1981).

Finally, world view could be extrapolated through the structural analysis method by which human thought is analyzed. A proponent of this method is Claude Levi-Strauss (1973) who analyzes myths structurally and in binary opposition. Haleblan says, in human thinking, this principle of binary opposition is another valid method for the uncovering and discovering of people's world view (Haleblan 1979:28). Binary opposition helps us to know what people like and also not like and may further probe into what makes the distinction and why.

WORLD VIEW IN MISSIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Some missiological studies have been done addressing world views, contextualization in relation to the communication of the gospel and the issue of indigenous theology. The studies which specifically asked questions that are crucial to the subject of world view, contextualization and

communication are Marguerite Kraft (1978), Hohensee (1980), Iroezi (1981), Murikwa (1984) and, Tienou (1984).

These studies are of five different African cultures. M. Kraft's (1978) studies was of the Kamwe people of Northeast Nigeria, while Iroezi (1981) studied the world view of the Igbo people of Southeast Nigeria. The Bobo people of Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) were the subject of Tienou's (1984) studies. On the other hand, Hohensee (1980) studied the Rundi people of Burundi and Murikwa (1984), the world view of the Kikuyu people of Kenya.

Even though the theoretical approaches in these studies are different, these researchers have made significant contributions to the study of world view, contextualization and ethnotheology.

M. Kraft's (1978) contribution is in the area of ethnoscience methodology to determine significant attributes of world view, and the application of those attributes for communication. In her study of the Kamwe people of Northeast Nigeria, she stressed the importance of using the receptor's world view and frame of reference. She showed the different aspects of Kamwe world view and how communication can be effected through them. Thus, communication using the receptor's frame of reference has been shown by M. Kraft to be crucial to the process of evangelizing and theologizing.

In the study of the Rundi world view, Hohensee (1980) raised the issues of felt needs which are of significant interest to the Rundi people. Hohensee demonstrated that the felt needs which include the issues

pertaining to the ancestors, spirit world, healing, supernaturalism and polygamy are issues to which the church must address itself in this study of world view themes. By identifying possible areas to which indigenous theology must relate, he contributes to the study of world view and contextualization.

Iroezi's (1981) contribution in the area of the spirit world and their activities in the Igbo world is especially revealing. Iroezi's analysis of the changes taking place in Igbo society is also a great help. By stressing the importance and reality of modernity, secularism, education and urbanization in social changes, he succeeded in demonstrating that world views are not static. Thus, Iroezi contributes to the science of missiology by showing the phenomenology of change which earlier studies minimize, both because of synchronic research methods and functionalist assumptions regarding world view.

Though Murikwa's study was also synchronic, he combined the etic and emic methods in his comparative analysis of the American and Kikuyu world views. Thus, in Murikwa (1984), what should have been a microscopic study of the Kikuyu world view was avoided in that through comparison, he was able to see more than he could have otherwise observed in one culture. The contribution of Murikwa to missiological studies and, especially to contextualization and theology can be seen in the fact that his comparative analysis showed the diversity of human cultures. Furthermore, this study would help missiologists to see differences as they are and, not in terms of inferiority and superiority. This type of study can also minimize the problem of ethnocentrism, because through it, people may see others the way they are

and, not necessarily in the light of their own understanding and background. It showed that people do not have to become "us" in order for them to be accepted. Moreover, since no culture is perfect, through comparative studies, people can learn and borrow ideas of good principles from one another.

In Tienou (1984), the writer took a different theoretical approach in studying the problem of methodology in African Christian theologies. His extensive review of anthropological and missiological literature helped to reveal the lack of methodology in some African theologians who want to develop what they call "African theology." Tienou rejected the idea of seeing or looking at Africans as one people. He contends that Africa is a continent with different people and cultures and, that any reference to a theological system should be in plural form (theologies) and not singularly (theology).

Furthermore, Tienou critiqued the British Social Anthropologists of the nineteenth century for their commitment to functionalism and its use for ethnographic interpretation in Africa, which he thought was a calculated and deliberate attempt to subjugate Africans perpetually. By their functionalist approach, they could justify the underdevelopment of their colonies.

His contribution to the study of world view and contextualization is what he called a "diachronic perspective" in his study of the Bobo world view. He also demonstrated total commitment to the absolute authority of Scriptures in the formulation of indigenous theology. Following Kraas (1980), he challenged the commitment of missiologists to functionalist approaches in world view studies.

The contribution of these works far out weigh their shortcomings. Nevertheless, this writer finds several areas in which he takes exception. One major area of exception is that this work takes a conflict theoretical perspective. With the exception of Tienou (1984) all the rest — M. Kraft (1978), Hohensee (1980), Iroezi (1981) and, Murikwa (1984) — take a synchronic and functionalist perspective in the treatment of world view. Tienou claimed that the diachronic method was the model used in his studies. Among the four who used the functionalist approach, only M. Kraft (1978:4-5) states the theory used explicitly.

The functionalist approach posits equilibrium as normal, and therefore good; conflict and change are abnormal and de-stabilizing, which is bad. For example, M. Kraft (1978) stated that world views "live on and are the building blocks for maintaining equilibrium in a society" (M. Kraft 1978:73). She recognized the social changes taking place among the Kamwe people but minimizes the impact that these changes have for world view change. She further argued that "in spite of the considerable change going on, many values are quite stable, though they manifest themselves in new ways. The world view lives on acting as a governor of change" (M. Kraft 1978:73). This apparent inconsistency of a changing society, but a static world view, derives from the inability of the synchronic approach to see the past in relation to the present.

Functionalism also leads M. Kraft (1978) to what this author believes is an uncritical approach in which she advocates the introduction of traditional forms and practices into the church. In calling for the introduction of indigenous form of worship, indigenous form of communication and

indigenous theology based on the Kamwe world views (1978:130ff), she fails to make explicit the process through which these practices could be accepted into Christian worship. Although M. Kraft realizes the importance of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit to the Kamwe Church in her search for answers (1978:167), this writer strongly believes that there is need for a more thorough exploration of the tension between biblical teaching and Kamwe cultural practices.

Iroezi (1981) follows in M. Kraft's footsteps. In his analysis of Igbo world view, Iroezi fails to highlight conflicts arising out of the changes taking place and changes he has proposed. By accepting M. Kraft's theory of communication based on the receptor's frame of reference and, proposing that such is needed for communicating the Gospel to the Igbo people, one would expect tension and conflict between the old system and the new. In failing to see the inevitability of such conflicts between those who favor changes and those who do not, he failed to propose how the church should handle potential conflicts arising thereof. For the Igbo people who are egalitarian (Uchendu:1965), the need to work out the procedure for dealing with the problems and conflicts which may arise out of the new method of communication introduced by Iroezi can not be over emphasized. To assume that people will be wide open to this new method without any opposition is a mere simplification of a complex situation.

Like many other scholars before him, Murikwa (1984) contends that the communication of the gospel to the Kikuyus should relate to their cultural orientations such as friendship, competition, concepts of time and community and, respect for age among others. He suggested that Americans

can be trained to effectively communicate to the Kikuyus through their world view. Thus, following M. Kraft, Murikwà shows the significance of the receptor's frame of reference. However, this excellent comparative study was weakened by the writer's unsubstantiated assertions about Kikuyu practice and the Bible. To argue that African practices are closely related to the Old Testament or Hebrew culture is not sufficient. There is need to go beyond such mere assumptions and arguments to demonstrate that relationship.

In presenting the Rundi world view themes for contextualization, Hohensee (1980) provided some useful models of contextualization. However, this study also fails to address the tensions existing and those that might arise out of his proposal. To assume that contextualization will be accepted and adopted as proposed in this study is without resistance from Christians and non-Christians due to his functionalist assumption about the nature of traditional society and the church. The procedure by which the Church should have these changes and potential conflicts ought to have been addressed.

In summary, these earlier studies have all raised issues crucial to contextualization of the gospel and theology, which are essential to the formulation of indigenous theology in Africa. Even with those caveats expressed earlier, their contributions have direct impact on the content, context and communication principles which are three essential elements in the formulation of an indigenous theology.

M. Kraft's commitment to communication based on the receptor's frame of reference influenced this study, as well as the earlier works of

Hohensee (1980) and Iroezi (1981). This theory is important to communication methodology needed for theologizing. It also shows the importance of context (receptors) or recipients of systematic theology.

Another issue raised in these studies which has a great value for theologizing is the identification of felt needs (M. Kraft 1978; Iroezi 1981), and world view themes (Hohensee 1981; Tienou 1984; Murikwa 1984) which are significant to the issue of contents of an indigenous theology.

Finally, this author finds a kindred spirit in Tienou, who has raised the issues pertinent to the authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures. His concerns serve as checks on the excesses of liberal theologians who try to put culture above the Bible. While this is not an endorsement of all that Tienou has to say in his study, his constant desire for correct hermeneutics and balanced view of human culture should be the guide of all those involved in the formulation of indigenous theology.

OBJECTIVES AND THESIS STATEMENT

The main purpose of this dissertation is to respond to secular critics who accuse the Christians of preaching a foreign gospel and the old people who refuse to see the necessity for changes through de-Westernization of the gospel; and to reach the pagans and traditionalist through a contextualized gospel as established leaders have rejected tradition.

Previous studies are inadequate, neglect factions, and promote uncritical traditionalism. The author intends to challenge what Giddens (1982:3) calls the "Orthodox Consensus" in social science. Although the data of the dissertation shared in common with other research, the present study

is different in that it asks new questions about diverse groups in conflict/tension within the Igala setting. The study recognizes the many conflicting expressions of culture as there is no one Igala world view and that historical practice is the bench mark for understanding tensions.

Furthermore, this author proposes a theoretical orientation through which potential tensions and conflicts arising from the implementation of this dissertation should be handled. In identifying the importance of cultural themes for evangelism and theology, he seeks to show the relevance of these themes to evangelism and theology and the need to rely completely on the inspired and inerrant Word of God in contextualization.

Other purposes and objectives are as follows:

First, the need to find an answer to the question: what are the central features of Igala world views and felt needs? Finding out what Igala world views and felt needs are will enable us to de-Westernize the Igala church and gospel message.

Secondly, the need to find an answer to the question: how are Igala culture and historical practices changing? What forces are responsible for these changes over time? This will enable us to look at the conflict over the forms of worship and the accusations and the counteraccusations of the pioneer missionaries, who came with the gospel wrapped in Western forms of worship, and the Igala. The author uses world views to define the core of Igala elements shared by some Igala and rejected by others.

Thirdly and finally, the need to seek to answer the question: Can the gospel be contextualized using Igala world views as frames of reference with the aim of making the gospel palatable without becoming syncretistic?

The thesis of this dissertation is that Igala world views, when used as frames of reference in the contextualization of the gospel, will enhance the communication of the gospel message.

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION FOR THE RESEARCH

In this dissertation, the writer is employing the diachronic approach in analyzing Igala world views.

Diachronic theory is a method that studies culture, and the changes occurring over time in its history and development. This method is interested in the "story" of reality, which is holistic. According to Hiebert, meaning ultimately lies in diachronic studies and analysis (Hiebert 1985:205). It is progressive, unstructuralized and changing in nature.

In relation to the study of culture and conceptual world of a people, diachronism is helpful in giving explanations to the dynamics of practice and theory.

Sahlins (1981) illustrates this approach in a study of Hawaiian society and myth. He shows that the Hawaiians chose to change their culture (structure) over time and that these changes were motivated and guided by interest (Sahlins 1981:72). Sahlins demonstrates that the very foundation of the structure of society will change if the people want to change for the sake of

interest and value, without "necessary" violence as believed by the dialectical materialists.

Giddens (1979) also rejects the idea of contingent, systematic, structure, and statism in the functionalists which is based on structural linguistic principles. He sees the functionalist lack of distinction between structure and system and thereby made clear the distinction, which he describes as highly important to social theory. He sees potential conflict and contradiction which is basic to the social theory, but attributes these conflicts occurring on the level of social practices to the result of division of interest. He uses examples of struggles between actors or groups, or between means or owners of production. In these relationships, he contrasts autonomy to dependence; domination to the dominated; private ownership/appropriation to socialized production/laborers. He thus sees social change as "the progressive emergence of traits that a particular type of society is presumed to have within itself from its inception (Giddens 1979:191).

A diachronic analysis of culture puts the dissembled social and cultural distinctiveness and static and disconnected bits into a dynamic interconnected relationship and holism. Eric Wolf observes that the functionalist's position which is based on microscopic study of the culture advocate the severance of social relations from economic, political and ideological contexts and connections (Wolf 1982:8). The implications are great. They undermine the connections which indicate contact, linkages and interrelationship. According to Wolf, this is misleading, threatening, abstract, and will thus turn the world of human kind into bits (Wolf 1982:10).

Tite Tienou (1984) identifies the importance of the diachronic approach to the study of world view and religion. In his study of the Bobo world view, he observes that social change is constant and that a synchronic study of such structure is, of itself, an abstraction (1984:55). He further observes that, "Bobo society, as it exists, is not purely traditional. With the impact of modernity, Bobo life is actually in transition (Tienou 1984:168).

The nature of tension and conflict and its historical development in Igala church necessitates the adoption of the diachronic method over other anthropological methods of analysis. It is elastic and can comprehend the time span of the conflict and is thus appropriate to the proposals made in this study for conflict resolution.

TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

This researcher adopted the etic and emic view-points and approach to the description and analysis of the Igala culture and cognitive world. According to Pike (1971) who coined the words etic and emic from the words phonetic and phonemic, the etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system and an essential initial approach to an alien system while the emic viewpoint results from studying behavior as from inside the system (Pike 1971:37).

Two main techniques were used in the collection of relevant data. They were the participant-observation and ethnographic interview methods. Key informants were secured, and in addition, those interviewed were individuals who possessed special knowledge about their culture, and had the

authority to speak on cultural matters. Deep structured questions were administered orally along with descriptive questions.

The sampling methodology was not ideal for this research because it was impossible to obtain a list of all members of the population due to the unavailability of census records. It was also inappropriate to ask women and young people certain deeply structural cultural questions because of the cultural expectations in regard to the positions and role of women and non-adults in Igala society.

The writer relied on his own background and knowledge of the Igala people and culture since he is an Igala, born and reared in the same cultural environment. His understanding of the language and practices was a great asset in his observation, recording and constructing of questions as he elicited important and relevant information pertinent to this research.

The author employed five college students and five adults as research assistants to assist him in the field work. These research assistants were familiar with the Igala culture and speak the language because they belong to the Igala tribe. They also come from the Igala divisions of Ankpa, Dekina and Idah. The author spent one week training them how to ask questions in order to obtain reliable and objective information in the course of their interview. The researcher's expectations were not discussed with the interviewers.

Researchers went to Bassa Komo, Dekina, Biraidu, Okura, Igalogwa, Gwolawo, Igala mela and Enjema districts. Other districts visited in the course of this research were Ankpa, Adoru and Ife. Many villages were

visited in these respective districts (see Figure 2 for distribution of these districts on map showing Igala area).

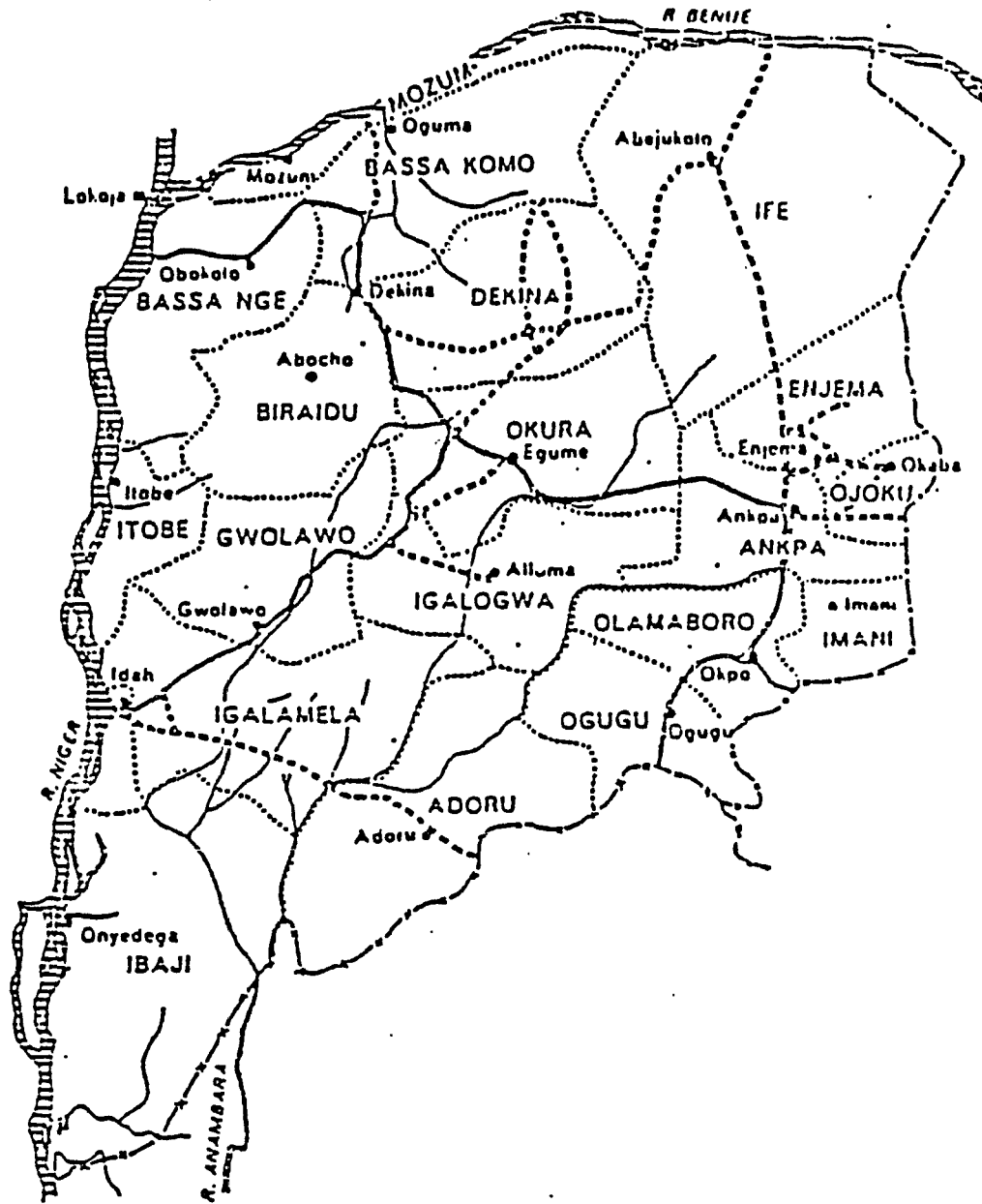
Most of the data collected came from Dekina, Biraidu, Okura, Gwolawo, Enjema, Ankpa and Idah districts. While data was collected from protestant Christians in their respective districts, about seventy percent of the Christians interviewed and cases recorded were from the Igala Plymouth Brethren denomination.

Data was collected from traditional rulers, chiefs, village heads and common people. The elite class, consisting of educated and highly placed people were also interviewed. This was to ensure a fair representation of ideas and opinion and to avoid over-generalization of a myopic opinion.

Finally, the researcher had the privilege of meeting with His Highness, the Attah Igala, Alhaji Aliyu Obaje (CBE, CON, DFR) to cross-check data on Igala culture. His Highness Alhaji Aliyu Obaje called in his servants and members of the royal lineages who supplied more data and clarified some historical accounts. The data collected from His Highness also includes his recent addresses and speeches on traditional ceremonies and festivals. The author is greatly indebted to His Highness for his kindness in granting the interview.

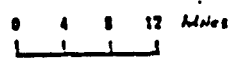
FIGURE 2

MAP OF IGALA AREA SHOWING THE DISTRICTS



(Boston, 1958)

- District boundary
- Provincial boundary
- - - - - Regional boundary
- District headquarters
- Main roads
- Secondary roads



DATA TO TEST THE PROPOSITIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the course of this research, the researcher and his assistants observed and collected the following specific data and related materials as evidence to examine the value of the following propositions:

Proposition #1

Building evangelism strategy on traditional religious practices and beliefs of the Igala people increases the possibility to reach them with the gospel.

Data collected: religious ritual and rites of passage.

Three different types of rituals were observed and analyzed. They are:

- 1) *Ibe'gwu* festival - Ancestors cult and worship**
- 2) Rites of passage - birth, marriage and death**
- 3) *Ichgbp* ritual - sacrifices to atone for sins .**

In rituals that had to do with religious practices of the Igala people we asked: What specific personal or spiritual issues provide the focus for Igala festivals? What are the dramatic events in each ritual? What problem or interest is addressed in the dramatic event? What explanations are given for these practices? What disagreements or contradictions are expressed among participants regarding purpose, explanation, and efficacy of these events? What alternative solutions or activities exist to serve the same or similar interests in Igala society? What reasons do people give for rejecting one or another of these purposes? Who are those who embrace the rituals and festivals? Who are those who question them? Upon what grounds? What are their disparate interests? How do the educated/non-educated,

Christian/un-Christian; and business/farmer react to rituals and festivals?

This data was also evidence to reject or modify hypothesis number 1.

Data collected: Myths, proverbs and stories.

Emphasis was on myths that shed more light on the origin of the universe, human race, God and the spirit beings. The data collected was used to answer questions such as: What is the origin of the universe? Who created it? Who is God? Where is God now? What was the relationship of God to man at the time of creation? What is the difference and why the difference in relationship? What are the purposes and meaning of proverbs? What do they teach? How are they used to teach values, morality and wisdom? Who used proverbs in teaching and when are they used? How can myths and proverbs be used in contextualization? Other questions for data analysis included whether or not people believe in myths and proverbs and, if so, who those people are—who are those who question them and on what grounds?

Proposition #2

Igala Christians resort to traditional religious practices when faced with life-threatening issues because the church is not meeting their felt needs.

Data collected: Festivals and ceremonies.

Three different festivals and ceremonies will be observed. They are:

- 1) *Ubi* (death), and *Ibegwu* (ancestor) ceremonies.**
- 2) Wedding ceremony - to include description of procedures of marriage institution.**

- 3) Traditional dances - to include description of types of dances, their occasion and types of instruments used with their meaning.

In this regard, efforts will be made to ask specific questions relating to their functional meaning for individual and social activities and the effects of social change and principles upon which the society exists and must continue to exist. Questions regarding the meaning of death, main functions of the *Ubi* festival, and the place of the deceased in relation to the ancestors and the living were asked. What was the specific spiritual and social meaning of the festival and the responsibility of the relatives of the deceased in the festival? Does the festival have any impact on the deceased? What is the social benefit or implication of this festival to the living?

Proposition #3

Igala world view is changing because of the threat of Western education, industrialization, urbanization and the influence of Christian religion.

Proposition #4

Economic factors increase the rapidity of social change in Igala society.

Data collected: The social organization of the Igala people.

In relation to the social organization, questions asked related to the institution of marriage, and the specific marriage practices among Igala today. Is it polygamy or monogamy, and what are the frequencies? What generations are practicing what? To what extent do Igala practice bride service? Bride price or dowry? What generations of people are interested in what practice? What specific beliefs and values are associated with polygamy?

What specific beliefs and values are associated with monogamy, bride price, and dowry? What explanations do Igala give for continuing these practices? What interests are served by accepting or rejecting these practices?

Questions raised in regard to the traditional dances are: What traditional forms of music and dances are practiced among the Igala today? What are the specific interests addressed in these events? What beliefs are given as rationale for their performance? What social and personal interests are served in their performance? To what extent do these events address spiritual problems of social and personal sin, of relationship to deities, God, ancestors and other human beings?

What are the most frequent or common messages communicated in music and dance? Which of these forms of communication have possibilities for adaption to communicate biblical messages? Which biblical messages are most appropriately contextualized in each form, after understanding the traditional usage of each form?

Proposition #5

The uncontextualized western theology has resulted in the practice of Christian syncretism as seen in polygamy, ancestral rituals, practice of traditional medicine and the introduction of traditional music.

Data to be collected: Cases of Christians facing traditional problems and of power encounter.

The nature of power encounter was explored or investigated through the rituals and religious festivals. In such investigation, we desired to find out what it was, its effect on Christians and Christian witness, and how to

deal with it. Thus, how can we confront it with the power of the risen Christ? How can the Christian faith meet this Igala felt need? How can our Christian God and Christ be superior if He is not able to counter the power of Satan? Who is behind this power encounter? Ancestor or Satan? To whom should the Igala Christians owe allegiance? Why do some Christians resort to traditional religion when faced with life threatening issues? Our main emphasis was to show how this power is believed, how it works and how it should be confronted with the gospel.

Data Analysis

In analyzing data collected, Frake's method of analyzing ethnographic materials (Frake 1964:111) and documentation was used. This method, according to Frake includes:

1. Discovering the major categories of events or scenes of the culture.
2. Defining scenes so that observed interactions, acts, objects, and places can be assigned to their proper scenes as roles, routines, paraphernalia, and settings.
3. Stating the distribution of scenes with respect to one another; that is, providing instructions for anticipating or planning for scenes (Frake 1964:112).

While this method was not employed in the detail exemplified by Frahe, these concepts guided data description into major categories of events or scenes of the culture with definitions of scenes and places, to show observable interactions. Other perspectives which have influenced the writer include functional analysis (Nida), structural analysis (Levi-Strauss), processual analysis (Turner) and diachronic analysis (Sahlins and Giddens).

CHAPTER 2

IGALA HOUSEHOLDS AND ECONOMICS

THE IGALA HOUSEHOLDS

Igala define relationships in the household in terms of three social statuses: the family head (husband), the wife, and the children. The specific role definitions for these statuses create the distinctive structure of Igala domestic life.

ẸNẸ'NYI "HEAD OF THE HOUSE"

In Igala culture the man is the head of the family. He is called the *Ẹnẹ'nyi*, the "owner of the house" literally. As the owner of the house, he is expected to be in charge and in total control. When the *Ẹnẹ'nyi* "head of the house" exercises control, he is judged to be a "real" man (*Ọnẹ'kẹlẹ dẹ*), but when he shows weakness, people refer to him as *Onobulẹ* (woman). If he wants to be respected as a man, he must remain in control and must not allow his wife to dominate or dictate to him.

The social role of *Ẹnẹ'nyi* includes the following obligations, rights, and privileges.

1. He is expected to provide for his family.
2. He is expected to make decisions for the family.
3. The wife or wives is/are responsible to him.
4. The children are directly responsible to him.
5. He is responsible for the acts of those in his family.
6. His decisions are never challenged.
7. The wife and children are his properties.

8. The wife and children do not have private properties, while under the authority of the head of the family.
9. He is the chief executive officer and the public relations officer.
10. He is the liason officer between the family and extended family members in the community; and as such cannot be represented by the wife or female children.

The head of the household holds power over the members and demands their respect. However, he is responsible to provide for his family in return for all that he receives.

As the head, he has the authority to decide on the number of wives and the number of children he wants to have. It is his responsibility to also establish a good extended family network upon which his family members relate to their extended family members (*amomaye kpai efu ma*).

In political matters the husband and father is the one that decides what is most proper and advantageous for his family. He decides who the family should vote for in an election and what party is appropriate. While the members serve his interests, he too serves their economic interests by supplying their daily and special needs.

The head of the household is the spiritual leader as well. It is his responsibility to organize and offer sacrifices on behalf of the family. In such religious matters, he delegates responsibilities to his wife (wives) and children with regard to the procurement of items or materials for sacrifices and rituals. For instance, during religious festivals, he calls upon the wife or wives to prepare locally brewed corn wine while the husband provides the corn or money needed for its preparation. While children may take part in this festival, they obey and take direction from their father.

Clearly, the Igala household and family structure is patriarchal. When the head of the family dies, he is buried by his own brothers or paternal cousins and relations. The children and wife have nothing to say about such burial arrangements. His widow could be taken in marriage by any of his relatives to perpetuate his name.

QYA "THE WIFE"

The wife is the woman of the house or *Qya (onobulę-unyi)* in Igala. As the woman of the house she is expected to obey the husband in all matters, bear and rear children, cook, participate in harvesting crops and entertain guests and be nice to extended family members. Igala men look upon women as weak and dependent people. In terms of physical maturity, they are a little more mature than children.

The social role of *Qya* "wife" includes the following obligations, rights and privileges.

1. Bears as many children as possible and rears them.
2. Listens to the husband in all matters.
3. Ensures that food is available on the table at the right time.
4. Harvests crops from the husband's farm.
5. Keeps a small garden where pepper and vegetables are grown.
6. Plants pepper and vegetables on the family farm in a specially designated area.
7. Provides all ingredients for food apart from the main food items (it's an insult for a woman if she relies on the husband for such ingredients as pepper, spices, salt and vegetables).
8. She controls the female children completely.
9. She controls or uses the male children in the evening or late afternoon (the day of the male children belongs to the head of the family).
10. Takes care of all cooking and washing of dishes (the female children could assist her).

11. She makes sure that water is always available in the pot for the children and the husband.

The predominant forms of women's roles in Igala culture are the household and domestic affairs. Her responsibilities are so great and burdensome that it is impossible to expect her to fulfill outside roles if she is to be an effective, consistent, and good housewife that the husband will trust and retain. In most cases, in social matters, she is to be seen, participate, cooperate and see that the family works as a unit for the glory of the husband. However, she must submit her own economic interests to her husband.

In political matters, Igala expect women to support their husband. Women may campaign among women folk only for the husband's candidates or political parties. Politically active women organize social festivals to support their husband's campaigning and fund raising toward the husband's political goals and objectives.

Igala expect a woman to have her own god and to be very religious, but she is not to be vocal in spiritual matters of the household. In the family, she is to cooperate with the husband in meeting the needs of the household gods or deities. She cannot lead in prayer or sacrifices (*ichẹbọ*) but she can prepare food needed for *ichẹbọ* and other offerings.

A man expects his wife to abstain from extramarital sexual affairs and she is not permitted to have men friends. The husband is, however, free to maintain concubines and take more wives with or without the wife's consent.

She has no say in the number of children she can have. The will of the husband is her own will. In most cases this will go for as long as she can reproduce (as long as God provides). The more children a woman bears, the greater her bargaining power or source of influence or favor from the husband.

Finally, a woman is always an "outsider" in her own household. The land, household, children and products of her labor are owned by her husband. When she dies, her body is taken by her own kinsmen. The husband and children have no business in the location of her burial.

AMQMA "THE CHILDREN"

Igala regard children as blessings and gifts of marriage. The more children a woman bears, the stronger her security in marriage with her husband.

Responsibilities and expectations for children vary on the basis of sex. While the father as the head of the house is the sole authority and he expects everyone to report to him, male children have a more direct relationship to him and as such, have unique responsibilities. Female children report directly to their mother but give indirect account to their father. Female children are called *amqma onobule* while male children are called *amqma enekelē*. However, it is necessary to point out that these distinctives in responsibilities and expectations work to harmonize the family structure as a single entity.

The role of male children (*amqma enekelē*) includes the following expectations and rights:

1. They are expected to work on the father's farm during the day until they reach marriageable age.
2. They are expected to work on their mother's farms in the evenings (late afternoon) until they reach marriageable age (*oko anẹ*).
3. They are to remain close to their father in order to observe, learn, and become familiar with their roles, their rights and responsibilities to other members of the family (mother, sisters, younger brothers).
4. They assist their father in social, political, and spiritual matters.
5. They alone have the right of inheritance which is patriarchal and patrilineal.
6. They are responsible to perpetuate the family line, i.e., bear as many children as possible to keep their father's line/name going. They can marry their late father's wife (not their mothers).
7. In the absence of the head of the home (father) they preside at family meetings (especially the first born) over the mother and elder sisters.
8. Even when they marry and have their own family, they are expected to live with or close to their parents.
9. They are to provide all needed security for their parents when they can no longer provide for themselves (parents are brought to live with them or they move to live with their parents). There is no nursing home and it is a shame and disgrace to the male children to even allow the female children the custody of their parents.
10. They are responsible to provide for all their younger brothers and sisters until they are old enough to fend for themselves. In the absence of the father, they work hand in hand with their father's brothers in giving away their sisters in marriage.
11. Though they have the right of inheritance, if they are underage when their father dies, the paternal relations would assume the administration of the deceased estate until the children are of age to inherit whatever is left.
12. When their widowed mother or step mother desires to remarry, their approval must be sought. This is especially true, if she is to remarry somebody who is not the deceased's kinsman.

The role of *amqma onobulẹ* (female children) defines responsibilities limited to supporting their mother and learning the essentials of the female

role. This is because whatever responsibilities are placed on them must be relinquished at marriage-when they formally become part of another (their husband's) family. Until the female children are married, they are required:

1. To help their mother in all domestic activities.
2. To help the family and especially to cooperate with her own brothers for the good name of their father.
3. To refrain from premarital sexual activity for the sake of bringing honor to the father's house.
4. To be industrious and have the ability to cook delicious meals so that she does not become an embarrassment to the mother when she is finally married.

Unlike the male children, she has nothing to inherit because of the fact that she is a potential wife moving into another person's family.

Although technically speaking, she is no longer part of her father's family at marriage, she has the right to return if her husband mistreats her and would not provide for her. Her parents and brothers would see to it that she does not regret or suffer at her husband's home.

Another way she can keep her relationship with her father's house is to give one of her children to her father or brother to raise. If she dies, it is the responsibility of her brothers to bury her. Her husband and children have no say in this arrangement.

Parents expect children to be in submission in all matters. Parents arrange marriage for them. Where they are not arranged, they must have the approval of the parents and their kinsmen. They are children and are thought to be too immature to face life.

It is the responsibility of the parents to provide for their children when old age has hindered such provision. It should be realized too that since children work for their parents their needs are provided through their joint efforts. But where children are lazy and stubborn, parents will refuse to cooperate to help them. Children who were brought up and considered immature by their parents later become the caretakers of their aged parents. This shows power exchange between parents and their children. At this point, the children will look at their aged parents as old people (*ogijo*) and as people to whom they have obligation. The children are to respect the elderly people. Parents expect their children not to disregard or show disrespect to those older than them.

THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY

The Igala people are involved in a number of different economic activities. However in all of these activities, the roles of men and women follow two predominant themes. Igala allocate most of the "production" labor to men, and the "processing" tasks to women and children. Because the men control both production and produce, they hold power over the women and children who are involved in the processing sector (see Table 1).

The men are involved in three main subsistence activities. These are farming, trading, and dressing and selling of fruits from economic trees. Farming involves land clearing, cultivation, sowing/planting, weeding, and dressing of economic trees. Trading involves the actual selling of cash crops such as maize, beans, melon, rice, corn, etc., while the business of taking

TABLE 1. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

TYPE OF LABOR	MALE	FEMALE	CHILDREN
Cooking		XXX	XX Female children
Harvesting of crops	X	XXX	XX
Land clearing	XXX		XX Male children
Cultivation	XXX	X	XX " "
Sowing/planting	XXX	X	XX " "
Weeding	XXX	X	XX " "
Dying	XXX	X	NIL
Load carrying	X	XXX	XXX
Fetching of water		XXX	XX
Construction of houses	XXX		X Male Children
Cutting/hauling of firewood		XXX	XX Female children
Buying and selling of groceries		XXX	XX " "
Selling of cash crops	XXX	X	
Cutting of palm fruits	XXX		X Male children
Brewing of corn wine		XXX	
Tapping of palm wine	XXX		X Male children
Palm oil processing		XXX	X Female children
Palm kernel processing		XXX	X " "
Plaiting of hair		XXX	XX " "
Hair oil processing		XXX	XX " "
Hunting	XXX		XX Male children
Grave digging	XXX		X " "
Soap making		XXX	X Female children
Driving	XXX		
Mechanic/repairs	XXX		XX Male children
Government jobs	XXX	XX	XX all
Hawking	XXX	XXX	XX

XXX - Refers to full and active participation

XX - Refers to marginal participation

X - Refers to occasional participation

care of palm trees, okra trees, cocoa, coffee, cola nuts, and locust beans are the exclusive responsibilities of the men. The women's role in relation to these activities is to process whatever is produced by the men through their various subsistence activities. This is because the Igala look at women as weak people who cannot be involved in strenuous activities such as is common in production processes.

ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF FAMILY

The Igala people have a great economic interest in their land (*ane*), economic trees (*oli ero*), and their cash crops (*oje kitoko*). It should be realized that lands and economic trees are inherited from the ancestors. This is very crucial to the way the Igala venerate their ancestors because their very existence depends on things inherited from them. To continue to hold onto the ancestors' inheritance, they must continually venerate them. They believe that the ancestors will inflict sickness on them if they do not do so. This can be illustrated in the case of Iye.

Iye was a poor man who lived on subsistence farming. Although his grandfathers were landowners and had a good supply of economic trees on their farm land, Iye had nothing to claim because another powerful clan had taken over his inheritance. One day, he decided that he must fight for the land. He had seen how much money those who took over his grandfather's lands were making from palm trees and okra trees.

After venerating his ancestors and consultations through the *Ifa Oracle*, he claimed that he was assured by his ancestors that the land would be given back to him. On this assurance he instituted a civil action in a court of law. He took a loan to pay for legal fees and other expenses. He was to repay the loan after the case was won and the economic trees were harvested and sold. Fortunately for Iye, he won the case and became the rightful owner of the land with all the economic trees. However, the land customarily belonged to Iye's family since he is not the only grandson.

After the end of the court case, he forgot to venerate his ancestors and to thank them for giving him victory and protection from the attacks of the defendants. He became seriously ill. The opponents (defendants) had threatened that he will be killed for taking away the land from them. He consulted his relatives and extended family members and they in turn consulted the *Ifa Oracle*. Then it was determined that the illness was caused by his own ancestors for failing to offer them a blood sacrifice. On realizing that, Iye's family organized a blood sacrifice and ritual ceremony to venerate his ancestors. After this ritual, he became well and his ancestors pledged continued protection from the defendants.

In this case, it can be seen that people fight for economic interests.

They are constantly defending themselves from the attacks of their enemies who are jealous of their success and possessions. In the same way, they promote good health for themselves and their families as they venerate their ancestors. These dynamics are basic for economic interests and survival. In Iye's lineage, there continued to be a family feud on who should control what and how to share the inheritance of their common ancestors.

IGALA TECHNOLOGY

The Igala employs cultural knowledge in producing certain needed goods. Participation in these economic activities is also on age and sex basis. These goods are for both domestic and commercial purposes. In Igala technologies, the men are involved in most of the commercial activities while the domestic needs are produced by women. The following are different types of indigenous technologies in which the men, women and children are involved respectively.

The Men

The men are involved in producing baskets, wood carving, black smithing, weaving of mats, granary and fans. They are also involved in the

weaving of grass roofing sheets and the preparation of herbal medicine. These activities are important because they bring in more income and as well as help in meeting the needs of people. For instance:

Agba, "baskets," are used in carrying loads from the farm

Uloko, "mats," are used as blankets or outdoor sleeping bags

Aka, "granaries," are used to store crops harvested

Upepe "fans," are used to fan fresh air during the hot weather

Alọ "black smithing," produce agricultural tools and implements

Ojokunyi, "grass roofing sheets," are used to roof houses

Ogwu, "herbal medicine," is used for prevention and treatment of diseases.

The Women

Igala women are involved in producing at least three main items: corn wine brewing for drinking at social meetings, soap making (for washing), and hair oil making for hair dressing.

Women are allowed by men to engage in these three areas of production because of the fact that they do not involve any real physical activity which is regarded by men as strenuous. It should be realized too that corn wine is a product of corn which is planted and cultivated by the men. Table 1 shows that women are responsible for the harvesting of crops including corn. While corn wine production may be believed by women to be in the production sector, the men are rightly the ones involved in the actual production of the raw materials. The same thing can be said of the soap and hair oil production which uses palm branches and pods as raw materials, since palm branches are cut down by the men.

Thus, women can be seen to be very active in subsistence and cash economics. However, their roles are limited and restricted to those activities that the men consider to be less hectic and strenuous.

The Children

The children are primarily involved in helping their parents in whatever activities they are involved. The male children are especially fond of weaving of baskets, fans, and mats, while the female children are extremely fond of corn wine brewing.

CHANGES NOTICED IN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Before the coming of western education, about 95% of the Igala were involved in agriculture as their main occupational activity. With the coming of Western education and industrialization, a number of changes occurred. As many industries were being established in the cities, many went out in search of factory jobs. Those who remained went into some other occupational activities rather than traditional farming.

However, most Igala farmers remained very orthodox and were skeptical of the modern system of mechanized agriculture. The government tried (pre 1974) unsuccessfully to introduce mechanized farming and the use of fertilizer. The decline in agricultural produce and the high cost of food and mass importation of food items led the government to rethink its method. The Igala people believe in their own system. It is the only way they knew. Although most people could not even afford the economic or financial implications of mechanized farming, it was very hard for them to believe that the new system will be able to serve their interest.

The introduction of public cooperative farms by the government went contrary to the traditional society in which land is vested in families and lineages. Cooperative societies which deprive people of their individual rights to their own land were a change from the traditional system.

Though the government did not study the implications of the new system, instead of forcing the people to consider the more effective and alternative method of farming, officials bought tractors and fertilizers and established demonstration farms in many communities (between 1974-1977). This was done to show the people the difference between their own traditional method and the new method. The government also subsidized the cost of fertilizer and fixed the rate at which tractors could be hired so low so that many farmers could be attracted. Gradually, officials succeeded in convincing the farmers that while the new method was different from the previous method, the new is more effective and profitable.

In Igala society today, most farmers use tractors and fertilizers because they can produce much more than the normal subsistence farm (since 1978). Though the government has stopped subsidizing the cost of tractors and fertilizers, many farmers struggle to patronize the new system because it is fast, reliable and helps them to maintain a sizeable farm. They were willing to change because of the economic interest or advantages found in the new system.

The demonstration farms helped people to believe that the new system can improve food production. This belief changed the people's traditional world view, having experienced the advantages of the new system.

ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

There are at least six crucial issues which are of significant relevance to the church in Igala family structure and its domestic economy. These crucial issues relate to the authority, leadership, interpersonal relationship, and stewardship in the church.

Authority, Power and Control

The head of the family (*ene nyi*) as the head has the power to control his household and in return for his absolute authority, he must be responsible and able to provide for his house. The Igala church should be sensitive to this world view when dealing with selection and appointment of leaders for the church.

The Igala household set up is crucial to the way the church is built and organized. The authority of the head of the family may determine the growth or decline of the church. It is important for the church to know that by combining different households in a church, the authority and power factors are bound to create tension. Furthermore, where the church cuts across family, lineage and clan barriers, every effort should be made by the church to ensure that there is a balance of power and authority through the appointment of leaders which should reflect the diversity.

In relation to contextualization, it is obvious that following the qualifications recognized by biblical data in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 would contradict the cultural leadership pattern. This tension and conflict must be recognized and kept in focus by the church.

Sex Roles

Roles are well stratified between the men, women, and children. In assigning responsibilities in the church it is very important to recognize that one's sex determines the type of responsibilities to be assigned. In ministering, sexual stratification should be respected by the church. The egalitarian teaching of the liberal theologians must be evaluated in the light of the Bible and Igala culture. The present debate as to the role of women in the theological circles must be considered with the Bible and Igala world view in focus.

Age Stratification

The special emphasis on age differentiations needs to be put into consideration by the church in relation to leadership and as well as outreach ministry. The young people are considered unwise and as such could not lead the older people. In the same way, in outreach ministries care should be taken to ensure that the young people reach their own age group while the older people should be encouraged to reach their own group. The Bible recognizes the potential conflict between the old and young, especially when it comes to matters of leadership.

Relationship

The relationship existing among family members is very intimate and strong. The church should capitalize on this when reaching the Igala with the gospel. Instead of the emphasis on person to person evangelism, it is advisable to evangelize the Igala families as the head of the family can greatly influence the decision of members. Even where young people are specifically

targeted, it should be realized that they more than often seek the permission and approval of their family authority.

It is important to realize that the Igala family structure is strong on unity, corporateness and obligations. This must be understood by the church in dealing with the subject of stewardship and Christian service. In teaching stewardship and giving, it should be recognized that the Igala people have a lot of extended family and family obligations. These obligations to other people by Igala Christians should be recognized as part of giving or stewardship. It will also help the church to fully understand its members especially if they do not give satisfactorily.

In relation to full time Christian service, the Igala Christian who is considering such service faces the pressures of family members and relatives because of his social obligations to them. By going into full time service, he might not be able to fulfill these obligations. While everything should be done to encourage the Igala Christian for the Lord's work, the church should not put undue pressures on people. Alternately, the church must stress the importance of supporting Christian workers so that they can still fulfill their obligations to their people. Because people are serving the Lord does not remove them from honoring or discharging their obligations.

The Importance of the Ancestors

The Igala family is involved in a number of economic activities. Because most people are farmers and depend on farm lands and economic trees thereon, their ancestors who passed those property rights to them remain very important to them. The fact that people venerate their ancestors

or support those who venerate them does not constitute interest in veneration. Many people do so because of their economic interest in farmlands and economic trees on such farmlands.

Those involved in economic activities not directly tied to farmlands and economic trees rely on the ancestors for protection, good health and prosperity. Their membership in a family and lineage depends on a common ancestor and such memberships are crucial to inheritance, kingship and social acceptance.

The church should understand the link between the ancestors and economic interest therein. If the church must succeed in getting people to think less of their ancestors, she must work out alternative ways for meeting people's economic interests. Perhaps, the church might be able to help by getting involved in a holistic ministry with the view of helping the people to develop their skills and increase their productivity.

Responsibility

It is important that the church develops a theology to address the Igala household in the area of relationships, respect for the elders, and as well as the role of individuals in his or her family. Such theology will enable the church to influence the Igala family and possibly utilize gains from such teachings in evangelism and discipleship.

CHAPTER 3

VILLAGE, CLAN AND LINEAGE STRUCTURES

STRUCTURE OF RELATIONSHIP

Certain Igala terms, central to Igala social organization, provide the framework for description and analysis in this chapter. The terms *amichi-one* "tribes people", *abo ewo-one* "one's village people", *efu-qlɔpu* "clan relatives", *amɔmaye-one* "one's extended family", and *unyi-one* "one's family" describe the structure of relationships in Igala society (see Figure 3). These forms are also used by the Igala in defining relationships between people on tribal, village, clan, lineage and family lines. Furthermore, they are factors determining the use of Igala kinship terms and the administration of social security obligation.

It is significant to realize that village, clan and lineage structures depend on the nature of relationships for survival and harmony in Igala society. In urban areas where Igala people are unable to trace relationships, unity, cooperation and interrelationships are hard to forge (see Chapter 6 for more details).

***ICHI* "TRIBE"**

The term *Ichi* refers to members of the same language group. Bilingual Igala translate this concept as "tribe". However, tribe to the Igala does not

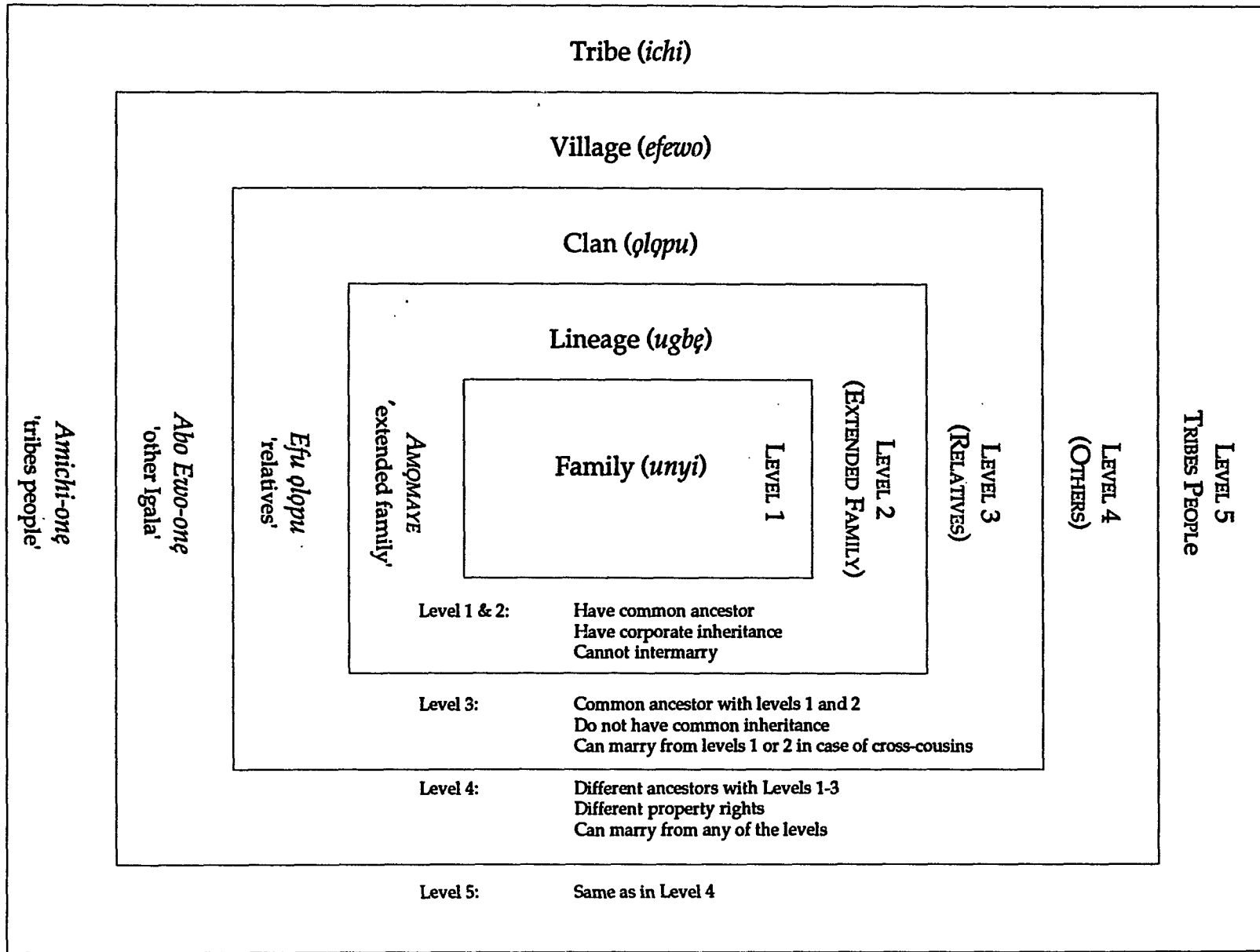


FIGURE 3:

STRUCTURE OF RELATIONSHIP

mean one culture, as people hold different beliefs and practices within the same tribe (*ichi*). Igala look at other Igala as *enę-omunę* "a different person".

To this category of people, the usual Igala hospitality is extended. The Igala concept of hospitality may be seen in the proverb, "*eju ononojo majome, ubiwñ mara*" which means that the Igala will extend himself to make visitors/strangers feel at home even if it means taking a loan to do that.

Before other non-Igala people, an Igala person would introduce another Igala person as his own kinsman even though they may not be related. This is especially true of Igala people working in cities and towns outside the Igala area.

However, this *abo-omunę* "other Igala people" who are either from the same or different village may be looked down upon. They may be suspected or regarded as inferior non-relatives. In making this distinction between one's family members and other Igala non-relatives, the Igala would ask questions in relation to:

1. Lineage
 - what is his ancestral background? (*abo ugbo de*)?
 - who is the father and grandfather? (*enę chata wñ*)?
 - Where did they come from? (*ugbo ma kwo wa*)?
 - What was their occupation? (*ewñ chichanama*)?
2. Status
 - In relation to others, people often ask
 - Who is he (*enę iche*)?
 - What does he do (*ewñ yache*)?
 - Is he and his family from a royal family (*amq ma ofę mache*)?

- Were his grandparents brought here as slaves
(*adu ma che*)?

3. Personal Conduct - What type of people are in his family? Are they very industrious? Are there thieves in their family? Have they suffered from God's judgment (in the form of thunder and lightning)? Have they suffered from contagious disease(s) in the past? Special reference will be made to leprosy, epilepsy and mental illness. Further questions will be in the area of personal habits. How about food? Does he feed his family well? Are they clean people? Are their children under control? Are their women faithful?

This type of attitude towards other people tend to cause disunity among the same people.

The Igala attitude and relationship to a non-Igala person is different and varies from people to people.

The Igala people may be very hospitable. One thing that can be definitely said about them is that their attitude towards other non-Igala people is characterized by ethnocentrism. Even though they realize their own short comings, it was observed that other people's practices are looked upon as incompatible with Igala practices and beliefs. The following are examples:

<u>Tribe/Group</u>	<u>How Igala See Them</u>
1. <i>Bassa-Nkomo</i>	Inferior and primitive (<i>amene efoko</i>)
2. <i>Bass-Nge</i>	Lazy, superstitious (<i>amekpabi</i>)
3. <i>Yoruba</i>	Dirty (wrong ways for disposing of feces), Snail-eaters - (<i>ajigbii, amachechu nyugba</i>)
4. <i>Igbq</i>	<i>Oli</i> (stick) - very stingy - will not spend their money
5. <i>Akpqtq</i>	Killers - always fighting with knives, (<i>ama kpon</i>)

- | | | |
|----|--------------|--|
| 6. | <i>Tiv</i> | Meat-eaters - <i>ajela</i> |
| 7. | white people | Lazy and promiscuous - always kissing and involved in intersexual relationships. Pity white men who are always cooking and washing dishes. They are also called wizards (<i>ochu</i>) because of their technological know-how. |

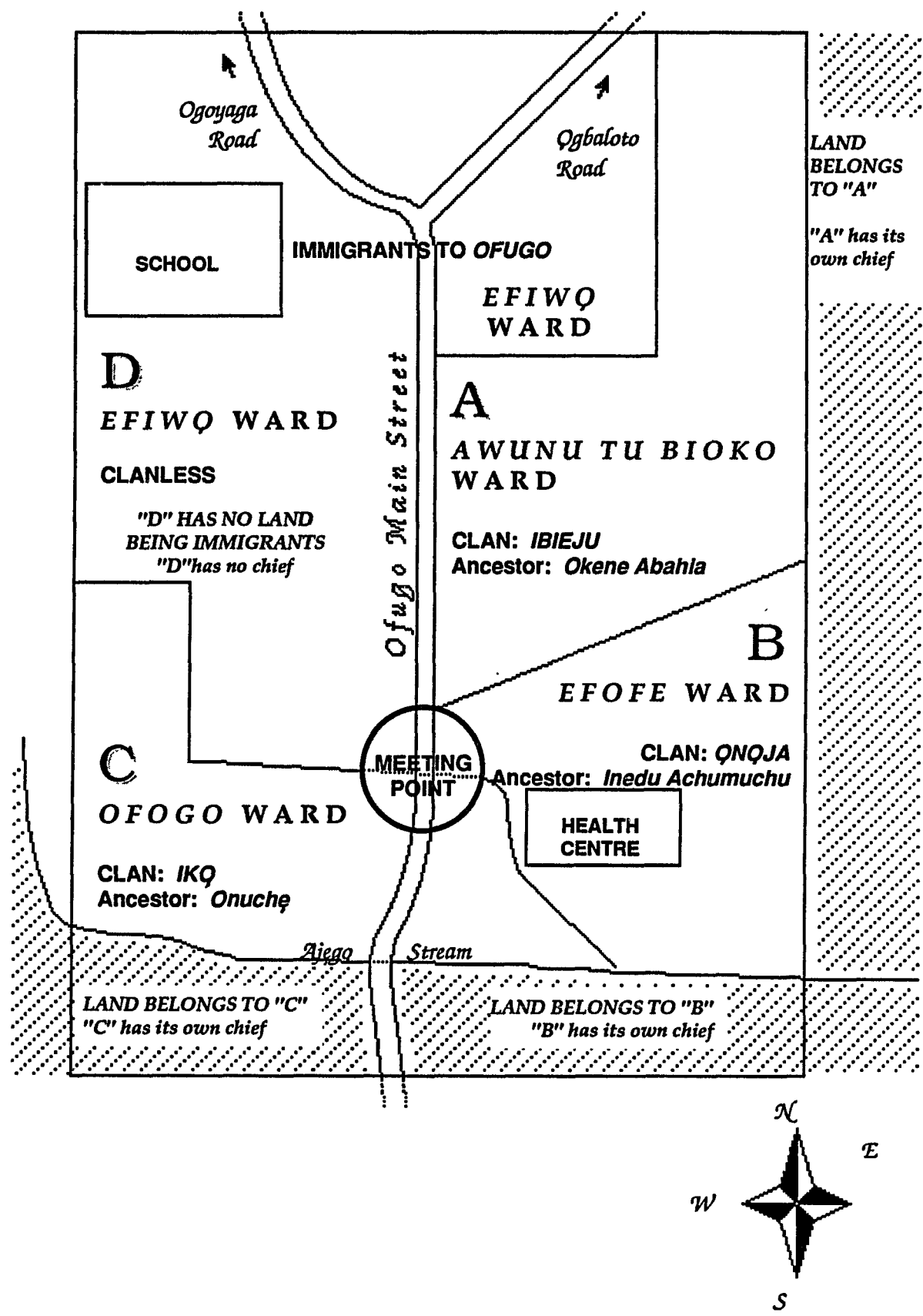
It is important to emphasize that urbanization and secularization has exposed the Igala to all kinds of people in the past thirty years. This exposure is gradually changing the Igala ethnocentric attitude towards other people.

EFEWO "VILLAGE" AND IGALA SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

An Igala village may contain several clans. Figure 4 illustrates the village of *Ofugo* in which the Igala people settle together as a clan with well-defined territorial and geographical lines. Within a clan (*olqpu*) are several extended family members who are members of the same lineage (*ugbe*).

The sketch of *Ofugo* shows four clan areas known as wards. Different lineages occupy their respective clan areas or wards. In the same way, different families occupy the portion that belongs to their lineages. The main determining factor in the allocation of land portions to lineages and families are the location of where one's ancestors lived, had his shrine, farmed, and/or buried. These four factors are very crucial in determining the location and size of land that can be allocated to lineages and families. Thus, in a clan area or ward, proximity of one to the other is first on family, second on lineage, and third on clan basis. The closer one's relationship, the closer the settlement location and vice versa.

FIGURE 4: A SKETCH OF OFUGO VILLAGE SHOWING CLAN AREAS



The immigrants to *Ofugo* (Ward D) are considered by the original settlers (Wards A, B and C) as clanless because they came from different clans not indigenous to *Ofugo*. This means that they have no title to landed property within the *Ofugo* village and have no right to rule.

This pattern of living arrangement enables them to hold onto their inheritance tightly. It brings the family households together and forges unity as their corporate interests are protected.

QLQPU "CLAN"

Qlqpu "clan" means a group of people with a common ancestor. Clan members live in a common village or occupy the same community. However, it should be understood that people of the same clan do not necessarily live together in one village, but where they do, they share common territory. The Igala clans and lineages are patrilineal descent groups. The rule of agnatic descent recognizes a man's sister as one in his descent group but her children do not belong where their mother is.

Although clan members have a common ancestor and may live together in the same community, they do not have a common inheritance. They, however, cooperate in religious, political, and economic activities. Usually, relationships on clan lines are stronger than those of tribal or village affinities.

UGBE "LINEAGE" AND OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

Ugbẹ "lineage" literally means seed. Members of a lineage stem from one common male "seed." While in a clan, there are many lineages, in a lineage there are many families. The number of families in a lineage depends

on the number of children of the founder of a particular lineage. Igala classify members of a lineage who are not family as *efu*, "far relatives." The concept of *efu* classifies the relationship existing between different families from the third generation members of a lineage and beyond.

Property rights are vested in lineages. These rights are mainly over lands and economic trees such as palm trees, okro trees, coffer or cocoa plantation. Because families make up a lineage, properties are shared among different families on patrilineal and seniority basis. Such properties are corporately owned. This right to property is called *ewh̄n ogwu*. Whenever a relative or family member dies, his properties will be inherited by his brothers.

Inheritance is based on lineage and this is patrilineal and based on the adelphic principle. Only the Ego's sons can inherit their father's property and Ego's daughter's are automatically excluded. Though Ego's sons are qualified, Ego's brothers are next of kin and Ego's children can only come in after the Ego's brothers have either taken their own share or voluntarily allow Ego's son to inherit. Similarly, while Ego's brothers only can inherit Ego's property, Ego's fathers or father's brothers cannot descend so low to inherit their son's property. This is prohibited. The son can only inherit his father's property in the absence of his father's brothers. In the same way, Ego's wife cannot inherit her husbands property unless Ego's brothers specifically designate them. Ego's children are the property of Ego's family and Ego's wife has no say whatsoever. The concept of private ownership is foreign as most things are jointly owned. Land is corporately owned being vested in the lineage. Lands are inherited from one's past ancestors. The economic

interest in inheritance is so great that it usually undermines the loving care that the family of the deceased requires. The compelling economic interest in inheritance often threatens cooperation and corporate identity existing in families and lineages.

Igala believe that ancestors confer inheritance and property rights unto the living, and remain a vital force to be reckoned with in daily life. The living must esteem and respect ancestors from whom land and prosperity come. The power of the ancestors is great and it is possible for people to lose their property rights if anything stupid is done to bring ridicule to the ancestor's lineage or family.

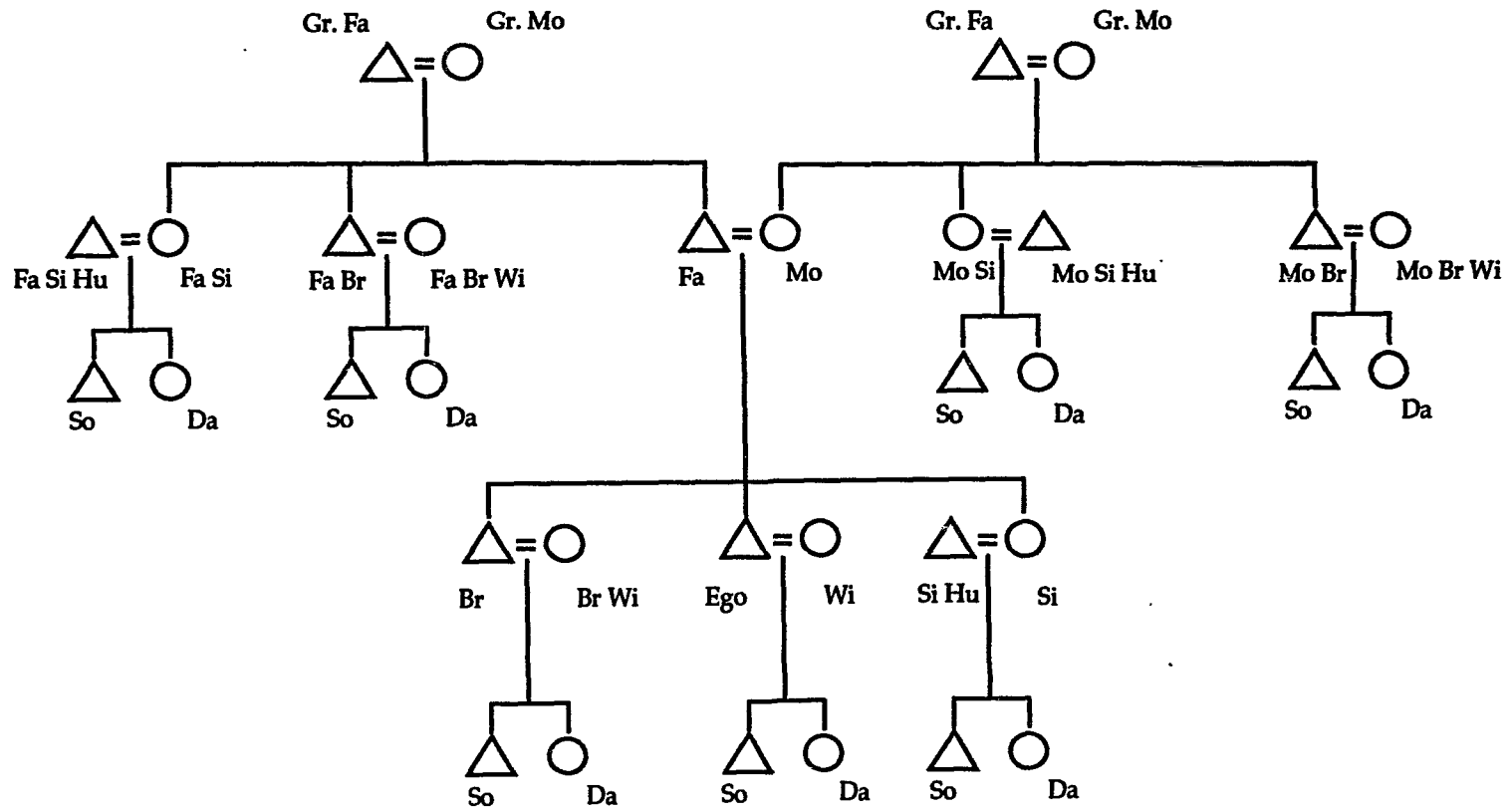
AMQMAYE "EXTENDED FAMILY"

Amqmaye "close relatives" includes members of the same family and of different families of the first and second generations. We will gloss this concept as *Amqmaye* "extended family". Thus, one's parents, brothers, sisters, parent's brothers and sisters, one's grandparents and their own brothers and sisters; and all the children in the above mentioned families are considered extended family members.

These Igala concepts define social identities which are central to the daily life of Igala people. The village is the primary residential unit. Within villages, people relate one to another according to distinctions of clan, lineage or family identity. The details of these arrangements are the subjects of this chapter. The total pattern is summed up in Figure 5.

It is the practice of the Igala people to extend mutual support to members of the extended family and help them in time of need. The

FIGURE 5: IGALA EXTENDED FAMILY



obligation of taking care of the immediate members of the husband's family falls on the wives, who are under instruction from their husbands to fulfill that which is their legitimate responsibilities.

In the same way, a man also has obligations to provide economic assistance to his parents-in-law and their families. Even if he does not do what is expected of him, his parents-in-law will inform him of what is expected.

Igala society judges those who refuse to take such responsibilities as irresponsible and bastard; and an infidel and an outcast who will be looked down upon (vagabond). Such people would have no impact or influence and are not regarded to be anything in the community. To be regarded as such in the Igala society is equal to one who is deceased—dead, worthless or of no earthly value.

Extended family groups are significant in economic cooperation in the society. The main area of this is seen in the exchange of children to help in some economic activities. For example, the son sends his daughter or son to his grandparents or parents to be raised and to provide help for them. Similarly a sister can send her son or daughter to either brother, cross-cousins or her own parents and grandparents in order that they might be helped. These children may or may not be involved in economic activities.

Loans are also obtained from wealthy or rich relatives for any chosen economic activity. This is very common as it is believed that it is better for a member of one's family to enjoy his riches than a complete outsider.

In Igala society, extended family play an important role in community politics and decision-making. It is the practice of the clan, lineage and family leaders, who are also the elders, to call all members of the clan to discuss who to vote for and what political party to join. Similarly, if a candidate happens to be from their clan or lineage, a decision to support such a candidate will be taken. In this way, support and legitimacy are acquired and maintained. Quest for political support can result in a possible rejection of the Gospel by those seeking political support. Their strong desire to hold political office becomes their interest.

In the same vein, decisions not to support a particular candidate by kin groups are on the basis of the relationship existing between their own clan and the candidate's clan. Where there is a cordial relationship, there will be solid support. In the absence of a cordial relationship, the reverse will be the case.

Extended family is also a factor in any dispute. In the event of a dispute involving two or more clans, settlement or support for legal action necessary for a redress is based on kinship ties. Anyone who fails to support his own extended family will be ostracized or declared a traitor and may lose his inheritance rights in his lineage.

This is perhaps an area where extended family members are very strong. In most kin groups, there are divinities that are thought to be the god of that family, lineage or clan and to which all members in that kin group owe allegiance. This is especially true of the Ancestors' Cult. They are kin groups that are known as the "Sons of the Ancestors' Cult" (*Amqma Egwu*

Afia) and are expected to be responsible for *Ibegwu* rituals and the upkeep of the *Okula* Shrine. The leader of the "*Amoma Egwu Afia*" is the eldest in the clan who keeps all the fetishes and utensils used in the Shrine.

It is difficult for a member of this type of clan to be converted as he has a strong kinship tie to the group to which he belongs. Very often pressures are put on potential converts and they are thereby inhibited from accepting a particular religious system other than their own. This religious affiliation is crucial because of the compelling interest of people. Because people need kin support, protection, good health, and credibility for inheritance, they will cooperate and behave responsibly in this regard; and will resist the gospel.

KINSHIP TERMS

In defining rules for relationship and expectations and obligations in such relationships, the Igala kinship terms must be understood. These terms give specific and significant meaning to the nature of relationships of individuals one to another. These Igala kinship terminologies are seen in Table 2.

Kinship ties are a major source of support in Igala. It is normal for one to get the backing and support of his own kin and those of affinal relatives. However, economic and political support depend largely on one's age, sex, and type of relationship.

On the other hand, one is likely to face opposition from his kinsmen and women when he violates the rules or norms of the clan. This is especially true of people who act like vagabonds or hooligans and are a source of shame and disgrace to the whole clan.

TABLE 2

IGALA KINSHIP TERMINOLOGIES

REFERENCE	ADDRESS	CATEGORY OF RELATIONSHIP
<i>Okwọ</i>	<i>Atai</i>	FF, MF
<i>Okwọ</i>	<i>Iyei</i>	FM, MM
<i>Ata</i>	<i>Baba</i>	F
<i>Qmaye Ata</i>	<i>Baba</i>	FB
<i>Iye</i>	<i>Oja, Mama</i>	M
<i>Qmaye Iye</i>	<i>Oja, Mama</i>	MS
<i>Achọgba-ẹnẹkẹlẹ</i>	<i>Ẹnẹgbani</i>	B (one's elder brother)
<i>Okekele</i>	<i>Oduwñ</i>	B,Z (one's younger brother/sister)
<i>Achọgba-Onobulẹ</i>	<i>Iya</i>	Z (one's elder sister)
<i>Omehi</i>	<i>Omehi</i>	FZ (Father's sister)
<i>Qmẹnyi</i>	<i>Baba</i>	MB (Mother's brother)
<i>Qma (children)</i>	They are all addressed by the personal names	S, D, BS, BD, ZS, ZD, FBS, FBD, FZS, FZD, MBS, MBD, MZS, MZD
<i>Qkọ</i>	<i>Ẹnẹnyi</i>	H
<i>Qya</i>	<i>Onobulẹ</i>	W
<i>Aju</i>	Personal name	Grand S and D, SS, SD, DS, DD
<i>Ẹmaji</i>	Personal name	Great Grand S and D SSS/D, SDS/D, DSS/D, DDS/D
<i>Qmọra</i>	<i>Qmaye</i>	Half sibling
<i>Ana Qnẹkẹlẹ</i>	<i>Baba</i>	WF, WFB
<i>Qra-Qkọ</i>	<i>Baba</i>	HF, HFB
<i>Ana Onobulẹ</i>	<i>Oja</i>	WM, WMZ, WFZ
<i>Iye-Qkọ</i>	<i>Oja</i>	HM, HMZ, HFZ
<i>Onigbọ</i>	<i>Onigbọ</i>	HB, HZ, HZS, HZD
<i>Qmaye qya</i>	Personal names	WB, WZ

Respect for elders can be seen in the way the young are expected to address the elders. Children are called by their names and one is also free to call all those younger than them by their names. The young, however,

cannot call their elders by their names. They must use the appropriate terms given in the above table.

Igala kinship terminology is characterized by bifurcate merging (Murdock 1949:104) in parent's generation. For instance, mother's sisters are classified as one's mothers. Similarly, one's father's brothers are considered one's fathers, and obligations of relationship in such cases must be in terms of child-parent expectations. The consequence of this is that an Igala child has several adults who may provide care and discipline as a parent.

SOCIAL SECURITY "*OGWU UDU-OMUNE*"

In Igala culture, what is referred to as social security is looked upon as a family obligation or *adukidukpe kone ane*. This social obligation which rests upon families and members of each families are in relation to the following people:

1. the widow (*oya ukwu oko*)
2. children of the deceased (*amoma yiokwu*)
3. the elderly or aged (*abogijo*)
4. the handicapped (physical and mental) — (*abo kuma choga*)

Oya-ukwoko — "the widow" — The responsibility of providing for the needs of the widows rests with the family members of the widows' deceased husband. These family members are those in his immediate family and extended family (*amomaye eneyioku*). Other relatives (*efu*) in the lineage and clan usually provide some support but they are not required to because of the distance of their relationship to the deceased. Igala also practice the levirate system in which the widow becomes the wife of a surviving male family member. If she refuses to marry one of the family members, she must

not remarry. If she remarrys, she must leave the deceased's house completely.

Amoma Yiokwu — the brothers of the deceased by custom inherit the children of the deceased. Because the widow has no right over the children, it is the responsibility of those who inherit the children to raise and provide for them. If the deceased children are matured, they remain in their father's house to take care of his house and family members. They also must provide for their mother. However, the fact that sons provide for their mother does not free their father's brothers from their own obligations. They are only free when the widow decides to remarry outside the deceased's family.

Abogijo "the aged or elderly" are well-respected and provided for. It is the responsibility of the children to take care of their aged parents. It is the Igala practice for the first male child to live with his parents in the same compound. This arrangement helps him to assume automatic responsibility and leadership as soon as the parents become old and inactive to lead or to provide for themselves. Other children, male or female, are expected to assist their elder brother in caring for their aged parents.

Where the male children have separate homes or live in different locations, they either relocate to be very close to their parents or move their parents to live with them. The female children are not allowed to take ultimate responsibility as long as the male children are alive.

In the case of a family where the male children have all died or where there are no male children, the female children will arrange to take care of their parents. Usually their husbands will allow them to bring them to their

house. However, this practice assumes that their own brothers and sisters are all dead. It is a shameful practice for one to live with his or her son-in-law when he or she has a family who could assist.

The handicapped people who are either sick physically (*abo kuma choga*) or mentally ill (*ama himu*) are taken care of by their parents, brothers and sisters and other family members. This is an obligation and no one should be left to die by himself or herself. In the case of mentally ill people, efforts are normally made to confine them to their compounds. However, when they become uncontrollable and nothing else could be done to help them, they are allowed to wander in the streets.

It should be realized that these social security measures are part of the extended family obligations. This same obligation is placed on the elder or eldest members of every family by their younger siblings. In the same way, the care of the wife of any of the family members in the absence of the husband is the responsibility of those left behind.

Elder men in a lineage gain power through the survivor rights to widows and children. It is economical to have one's deceased brother's children to help on the farm. The power to control the labor of a widow is another interest. The surviving brother gains prestige or honor for fulfilling their obligations to the deceased; it shows his credibility. In the same way, the power of the men to control women can be seen in the care for the elderly. Male children usually do not allow their sisters to remove their parents to their sister's matrimonial homes. It is an insult on the male children and on the brothers and sisters of the parents. Therefore, it is these interests of

"respect," prestige," "credibility," and "desire to show one's responsibility" that often lead to the desire to control and maintain tradition.

ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

The Igala village, clan and lineage structures are very important and ought to be taken seriously by the church. Some of the issues the church must look at carefully include the following:

Inheritance and Right of Ownership

The concept of private ownership is new in Igala society. Whatever a man inherits does not belong to him and his children alone. It will surely be passed on to another member of his family when he dies. In fact, his very wife belongs to his family and any interested member of the deceased family can marry the widow. This also applies to the deceased children. The church should use this practice to teach the Igala Christians how what they possess or own belongs to God; and that they are responsible to the Lord for how the resources are used.

The fact that corporate or group ownership is practiced should be an encouragement for the church to teach the importance of sharing liberally among the brethren. It should be emphasized that in Christ, we belong to the same family or lineage so that the mentality of private ownership or division should not be allowed to cripple the needed unity and fellowship in the church.

Landed property is very important to the Igala people. Everyone living in his own village has a piece of farm land in his possession. Land owners are highly respected since it is a symbol of power, control, respect and wealth.

It is also a symbol of right to a particular village and its authority structure. The church should bear this in mind when pastors or full-time evangelists are posted to villages or towns other than their own. Such church workers will not be respected and may not influence people because as strangers they have nothing to symbolize power and authority.

Social Security System

The care for the widow, orphan, elderly and the handicapped are obligations imposed by tradition. The church should encourage the believers to be faithful to this tradition. This is especially important because of the principle of inheritance which seems to favor the brothers of the deceased instead of the children and the widow. Since the church is not in the position to change the law of inheritance, she must teach the Igala Christians the importance of their social security system if they want to maintain a credible Christian testimony to the unsaved.

Respect for Elders

Respect for elders, as seen in the form of address by the young people, should serve as an eye opener to the church to consider the place of the young people in the ministry. It is obvious that young people may not function well in a society that does not respect their age, wisdom, and ability. While the church should be meticulous about spiritual qualifications, nothing stops her from being sensitive and considerate in this area.

Extended Family and Full Time Ministry

The Igala church should realize the importance of sociological factors inhibiting the growth of missions which must not be taken lightly. These

sociological factors are in relation to one's extended family members. For instance, when an Igala Christian is called into full time service of the church, the decision to honor the Lord's call is not left exclusively to the individual or his nuclear family. The one who is called must also discuss his call to full time ministry with his extended family members, and the impact of one's call to ministry on his extended family members is great. Because he is expected to provide for his own family as well as those in his extended family, the decision to quit his job (where support comes from) and to take on a church ministry (which has little or no strong support base) is bound to create tension, anxiety and conflict.

This is especially crucial in a situation where one's extended family kinsmen are not Christians. Even where one's kinsmen are mostly Christians, there is often conflict arising out of their own concept of commitment to Christ and its experience. Tension also exists among Bible school students who face opposition from parents, friends and extended family members because they have chosen a ministry vocation which may not bring in economic benefits. This type of attitude towards the ministry is because of the stereotype of church workers who are always seen to be poor and among the lowest paid workers in Igala society.

The church has a responsibility to change this perception and belief. Igala Christians must be well taught to support God's servants who labour among them. The fact that one answers the call to full time ministry does not constitute an oath of poverty. Furthermore, in view of the economic problems facing the Igala church, it is important that the church introduce an integrated training program to provide adequate theological and vocational

education to those called into the ministry of the church. Such an integrated training would help provide the support church workers need as they are equipped with trade skills and can therefore be self-supporting in their respective ministries. The strict traditional theological education in which ministers are trained for the church may be ideal, but it is inconsistent and irrelevant to the sociological problems that the Igala church and Christians face and to which they must relate.

Similarly, the belief or understanding of some Igala Christians that theological studies necessarily constitute call to full time service; that such theological school graduates must be automatically absorbed into service by the church; and that salary must be paid ought to be addressed adequately by the church. While it is biblical to support all those in the Lord's work, there is nothing in the Bible which says that the church must hire all theological graduates. Furthermore, nothing stops theological school graduates from engaging themselves in a self-supporting vocation. Full time service is a privilege for believers and support for such service is the responsibility of believers. However, both the serving and supporting brethren must see their respective roles as a privilege that should never be allowed to resort to servant — master relationship. The church must not see full time workers as a burden on them and full time workers must not present themselves as the church's liabilities.

CHAPTER 4

THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

Marriage is referred to as *udama ɔkɔ kpai ɔya*, "the joining of the male and female". There are at least three main purposes of marriage. These are listed in order of importance:

- 1) Procreation in order to keep the family or lineage name going
- 2) The need for a man to have somebody to cook for him
- 3) To enhance one's social status. Marriage brings responsibility and, in Igala society, one needs to have a family before he is said to be a responsible person.

Igala have no written rules governing marriage; however, most follow unwritten customary rules which may vary from clan to clan. Three main practices, found in all clans within the Igala society, are central for Igala traditional marriage.

- 1) Arrangements are negotiated by a go-between (*utogba ɔya*)
- 2) The bride price (*ɔmeɛ-ɔya*)
- 3) Families must be satisfied about family background (*ɛnɛ-konɛ 'che*).

The go-between, who is usually a relative of the bridegroom or a family friend of either the bride or the groom, must satisfy the bride's parents with relevant background information on the bridegroom's family. They are particularly interested to learn about the public reputation of the groom's family, their ability to feed themselves, and whether or not they are

hospitable. They are concerned about their attitude toward women, whether cruel or cheerful.

The groom's family seeks to discover whether there are cases of infertility/impotency; whether there are cases of diseases which are contagious and hereditary; and whether there are cases of immorality such as adultery, or fornication. Both families are concerned about questionable character; whether there is a thief, lazy person, or other disreputable character traits in that family.

While the bride's family will try very hard to get the above details about the groom's family, the groom's family will be doing the same on the bride's family.

The concept of bride wealth system is not primarily for economic interests although that cannot be completely ruled out. It is more of a practice built into the system to help the men to love and appreciate their wives. If the women are given to the men free without charges, they will be looked upon as useless and worthless people. But they are more precious when one considers the discipline, time, and resources it takes to get a wife customarily. This explains why the rule is very much alive.

MARRIAGE RULES

The Igala people have a rigid tradition which defines who one can marry and who one could not marry. Thus marriage is prohibited between:

- 1) A brother and his sister (*amqmaye*) in the lineage and extended family.

- 2) Cross-cousins, including second and third generations (*amoma qmaye*) MBD, FZD, etc.
- 3) A man and his niece (*one kpai qma qmayewñ*)
- 4) A woman and her nephew (*one kpai qma qmayewñ*)

Marriage is allowed between those who have no blood relationship and on cases such as:

- 1) Levirate (*qya ogwu*)
- 2) Filial widow inheritance (*qya ata one*) This is very rare today.
- 3) Fourth generation uterine kins (*ebita* and *qma onobule*)

It should be emphasized that incest is forbidden, while marriage rules require that one must marry from outside his or her family, extended family and lineages. Marriage is allowed between lineages within the same clan if no known patrilineal links can be established.

MODE OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

The mode of traditional marriage is as complex as the practice of marriage itself. There are at least seven major steps to be taken in the marriage process and all these must be within the contract period of seven years. The seven steps are:

- Step 1: The groom's father goes to the bride's father to ask the latter to assist him in raising his boy. If the bride's father agrees, that sets the contract rolling and this period is called *alekago* which means "going to see" or "going to observe."
- Step 2: The groom goes to visit the bride's father and stays for a period of three days. He returns to his own house after that to stay for five days. During this visit, the groom gives two shillings to his prospective bride through the girl's mother. It

should be noted that there should be no direct contact between the bride and the groom at all.

Step 3: After spending five days at his own house, the boy goes back to visit his would-be in-laws for seven days. During this visit, he comes with five shillings for his bride and three balls of salt to be given to the mother-in-law through the go-between. After this, he returns to his own house for thirteen days. Processed salt was significant because it was brought by the white people and was a scarce commodity. Prior to this, people were using natural salt dug from the ground.

Step 4: The boy goes back to visit his parents-in-law for two months with five balls of salt to be given to the mother-in-law through the go-between. At the end of two months, he returns to his own house to stay for one month. He gives seven shillings to his bride during this visit.

At this stage, should the boy become uninterested in the girl, he will stop any further contacts and inform the go-between immediately and refunds will be made. This period covering steps one through four is called a period of observation (*alekago*).

Step 5: After spending one month at his own house, he goes back to his in-laws to stay indefinitely. This time, he will present seven balls of salt and one tin of palm oil. Note that the mother-in-law will keep all these things presented by the groom for as long as two years. It is only after the marriage proposal is well

established, firm and grounded that she will make use of the presents.

Step 6: The sixth step comes during the period of tax paying. The groom obtains permission from his parents-in-law to proceed home to work to earn enough money for the payment of poll tax for himself and his bride. If consent is given, he leaves for three months.

Step 7: This is perhaps the most important aspect of the seven year period. As the girl reaches maturation (puberty), arrangements will be made for the marriage ritual called *Ẹbq-oji*. The go-between will be called to arrange for this ritual. The groom will be required to provide a he-goat, a hen, and a cock for the feast. At the end of the ritual, the mother-in-law will allow for the first-time physical and sexual contact (*oya edutuñyi*) between the two. It should be realized that sexual contacts must be initiated through the mother-in-law.

The purpose of the marriage ritual (*ẹbq-oji*) is to ensure that spiritual forces that could hinder good health, fertility and child production are appeased. The *Ẹbq-oji* ritual is for both the groom and his bride. It is believed that without this ritual, if they got involved in sexual relationship, the girl will fall sick and the boy will become impotent.

After the first sexual contact, the boy is expected to kneel and thank the mother-in-law in appreciation. At this time also, the mother-in-law will demand to know from the groom if her daughter was a virgin and whether he was able to discharge his own responsibility (reference to potency).

If the girl is determined to be a virgin by the husband (groom), the groom must pay five shillings in appreciation to the mother-in-law for raising her daughter well. Although the bride from this point is considered the legal wife of the groom, marriage has not been customarily consummated. The man must complete his bride price rites and this takes seven years to complete. The husband remains under the authority of his in-laws and has no authority over his wife. He may talk to her only through his mother-in-law. There is no exception to this rule.

Finally, if after the *Ẹbọ-oji* ritual the girl does not become pregnant, another ritual called *Ikpakachi* must be performed; in this, the groom provides a goat, cock, and a piece of white cloth to be offered to the spirits of fertility to enable the bride to conceive. When she becomes pregnant, another ritual, called *Amude-oma*, must be performed for the protection of the baby.

After a seven year period, the marriage rites are completed. The groom is free and can therefore choose where he wants to live and what he wants to do.

FEATURES OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

After the seven year marriage process, the couple usually establish residence patrilocally in the lineage of the groom's father. However, some people choose to live matrilocally for one of two reasons: either the groom's house or home is not in good order (presence of spiritual problem which may be very harmful), or the man needs to take care of his parents-in-law, especially where they do not have male children in the family. It is, however, at the discretion of the husband.

People have preference in choosing a mate. This is especially true of the men. They have to choose who they should marry and consider what qualities are needed. However, women are rarely given the opportunity to choose. This practice is, however, changing today as some believe that lack of choices and preferences have led to polygamy and divorces.

Igala prefer large families and strongly emphasize an extended family network. This desire to maintain a large family in the traditional system often leads to polygamy. The number of wives in Igala society is determined by the nature of each family. However, many people believe that the desire for children, preferred sex of children, and sexual desire have increased the frequency of polygamy.

Sex in traditional marriage is regarded as a sacred thing. Partners do not talk about it openly and children are normally kept out of any discussion involving sexual matters. Igala avoid physical contacts between the husband and wife in public or before their children. Further, they do not sleep in the same room, and may not have sex during the day.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS OF POLYGAMY

Polygamy is prominent among the Igala people. It is a practice where a man marries more than one wife legally. Although it is prominent and is widely practiced, many do not agree that it is desirable.

There are many reasons why men practice polygamy. Some men take many wives because they want to be respected; managing a family with many wives signifies that the man is wealthy. It is also practiced because of the intensive sexual desire of the men, and especially those whose wives are

breast-feeding. It is a taboo for a man to have sexual relations with a woman breast-feeding. It is believed that the child will die if such sexual relations exist.

There are many advantages of polygamy. Because most Igala people are farmers, the need for labor is very crucial. Men marry many wives because of the labor provided by the wives, and in turn their children. Polygamy helps the man to put his wives under control as the wives will be busy competing among themselves. With many wives, the men have somebody to take care of their children when one of the wives dies, and they will not have to go to look for wives afresh. Other advantages have to do with the desire for many children, sex, and the fact that the man will not need to fulfill his sexual desires by visiting prostitutes whenever the wives are breast-feeding.

Polygamy has its disadvantages. It causes the wives to compete for their husband's attention thereby impeding the family unity. The competitive spirit of their wives often is reflected in the children showing little affection for one another; the net result is a lack of family unity. The father in a polygamous family which produces many children may be too busy and not have sufficient time to invest in raising the children well. Satisfying the sexual desire of many wives takes a lot of physical energy which may affect a man's health. Furthermore, the inability of the man to meet the sexual needs of his wives may cause them to develop interest in other men. This development demoralizes the whole family and endangers the life of the husband.

CONTEMPORARY IGALA MARRIAGE

There have been a number of changes in the Igala traditional marriage system. These changes, which came mainly as a result of the contacts Igala had with other people, could also be attributed to other factors. Some of these are:

- 1) Non-traditional religions (Islam and Christianity)
- 2) Modernity (education and urbanization)
- 3) Economic issues
- 4) Nature of human culture (changefulness) and desire to imitate.

With the influence and pressure of these factors, the nature of Igala traditional marriage has greatly been altered. At present, there are three ways by which marriages are contracted in the contemporary Igala society. These three ways are the methods of the three main religious groups of the Igala: traditional religion, Christianity, and Islam.

CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

The present day Igala traditional marriage is one that is totally different than the former. In the contemporary traditional marriage, there are three essential features: courtship, engagement and consummation of marriage.

The first is the dating/courtship period. This time a go-between is appointed by the groom's parents to negotiate with the bride's family. This dating and courtship period is a time within which potential problems that are likely to arise from either the boy or the girl might be resolved. During the second period, the appointed go-between arranges for the engagement ceremony after the girl's family gives their consent. The third and final step

or period comes after the bride price is paid at the engagement ceremony. This period is when all necessary rituals such as *Ẹbọ-oji* and/or *Ikpakachi* are performed. Once the rituals are performed satisfactorily, the bride is ready to join her husband.

The process is short, less complicated and swift. It is, however, conditioned by one important thing. When some would-be in-laws see that their would-be son-in-law is wealthy, some traditional formalities are waived. Money solves the problems and issues that may hinder the progress of the present day marriage process.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Before the introduction of Christian marriage, Igala Christians were subjected to the traditional method of marrying. However, the introduction of Christianity was followed by a new system of marriage (see Table 34). This new system brought untold hardship on the early Igala Christians who had no converts to marry. With time, evangelistic activities of the missionaries yielded fruit and many Igala people became Christians and so could find life partners.

Christian marriage at the initial stage was similar to the traditional method with a few exceptions. The exceptions were on the issue of the bride price introduced into Christian marriage against the traditional method of bride service. Others had to do with fertility rituals such as *Ebo-oji* or *Ikpakachi* with which the Christians were not comfortable and had to reject.

As time went on, Christian marriage led to the introduction or acceptance of dating and courtship. Arranged marriages were no longer

acceptable as the "will of God" replaced the "will of the parents". As people began to decide for themselves, they had the opportunity to get together to know themselves better. Western education also influenced the rejection of arranged marriages.

Another change involves the practice of engagement at which period dowries are paid. Contemporary Christian marriage has made this feast or ceremony a big issue where much money is spent on feasting. The former practice which involved a plate of cola-nuts and the payment of the agreed bride price became side issues. And whereas, engagement was formerly followed by a wedding ceremony, it has now been observed that engagement is followed, in most cases by a period of necking and fondling, until the groom recuperates from the engagement expenses.

When the engagement is not broken, it ends in a formal wedding in the church. Where sexual intercourse was found to be involved after the engagement, pregnancy cancels their dream for a church wedding, because the church does not wed those found to have engaged in premarital sexual relations.

It is important to point out that where a church wedding is performed, the entire program and activities, dresses and addresses are a replica of Western weddings. And in spite of the anti-Western attitude and spirit in most church teachings and practices, most young people will prefer to go into debt just to make sure the formalities of Western Christian weddings are performed. This is perhaps an area involving Western patterns or ways of

doing things in the Igala church which has never been challenged even though the wedding formalities have no direct bearing to Igala culture.

IGALA MUSLIM MARRIAGE

The Muslim marriage has also taken the same course Christian marriage has taken with only a few distinctions. The concept of courtship (which is new) is accepted by most people. Many just tolerate it since they have no absolute control over their sons or daughters.

Similarly, while parental consent is always a key factor, many will go ahead into marriage even without the consent of their parents. The issue of complete autonomy for the girls is still an illusion. In Igala society, Muslim parents still have very much control over who their daughters marry.

In Muslim marriage, engagement involving the payment of dowries is practiced and this is followed by a wedding ceremony. There are two types of wedding ceremonies and the basic difference is in the scope. While *Awele* is small, *Iyawo* is a big ceremony. Another difference is that *Iyawo* is only for the first time brides. Those who are remarrying and small scale first timers will usually go for the *Awele* ceremony.

EDARU-OKO NWOYA "DIVORCE"

When a marriage fails and the partners split up, this is referred to as "*edaru-ɔkɔ nwoya*." When the husband initiates the divorce proceedings, he is said to have left or rejected his wife (*Ekɔya*) and if the wife leaves or rejects her husband, that act is called *ekɔkɔ*. Separation (*Edaru*) does occur at the preliminary (*ababa*) stages of marital problems. The wife may decide to leave

the husband temporarily or the husband may decide to send the wife away to her family. In matters of divorce, in addition to leaving her matrimonial home, the husband may claim the bride price paid and all personal belongings of the wife which he bought for her. This is, however, optional as individual husbands decide what is best for them.

CAUSES OF SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

The husband may separate or divorce his wife (*okọ-ekọya*) on the following grounds or reasons:

1. If the wife is barren (*agaji*)
2. If the wife bears only female children (*oma onobule*)
3. If the wife is suspected to be a witch (*ochu*)
4. If the wife has bad conduct and adultery (*abi biene/okọ eje*)
5. If the wife does not know how to cook or take care of her domestic work (*qbq*)
6. If the wife does not respect and honor her husband and the husband's family members (*imo jima onen*)
7. If she is not sexually responsive (*ije bokọ dachin*)
8. If she opposes her husband's desire to marry additional wives (*itene obugwun*)
9. If she quarrels or fights with her partners (her husband's wives or concubines —*ogwu-eja*)
10. If the husband's family does not like her
11. If the wife becomes ill and the husband does not like to continue to care for her

The wife may initiate divorce or separation (*qya ekokq*) proceedings for the following reasons:

1. If the husband cannot provide for her (*okq wñ dujẹwñ nun*)
2. If the husband refuses to have sex with her (*okq kọbọdachi*)
3. If the husband become impotent (*akpino*)
4. If the husband is wicked (*alibiņe*)
5. If the husband's family hates her (*amomaye okowñ achulaka*)
6. If the husband wants to marry more wives
7. If the husband will not marry another wife to help her
8. If she finds another man that she prefers (*onẹkẹlẹ omunẹ*)
9. If she would not conceive (*iñye fun*)
10. If her children continue to die at birth (*abikwu*)
11. If the husband is sick or facing a serious physical handicap.

It should be realized the wife though married is still close to her own family, and the husband is also close to his own family. Both of them listen to advice from their respective families. The advice they get could either lead them into separation and divorce or save their marriage. This pressure from extended family members of both parties should never be undermined.

The issue of interest and power can be clearly seen in the matter of separation or divorce. The husband has interest he needs to protect. As long as his interests are not met by his wife, his powers are challenged and threatened, and he will be looked down upon by the society as a weak man.

Similarly, the wife has her own interests and although she does not have ultimate power, she will pull her own strings as soon as she sees the

weak points of the husband. This can be seen in cases where the husband has physical problems (deformity, impotency, handicaps, poverty). She will make sure that her interests are served if she finds such areas for power negotiation.

EDABINŌKŌ ABĒ KŌYA "REMARRIAGE"

Re-marriage (*edabi nŋkŋ abĒ kŋya*) occurs frequently. There are two basic types of re-marriages in Igala society. The first one may be between a man who is remarrying a woman he has divorced, while the second type is a marriage between divorced persons or widows (*ŋya-ukuŋkŋ*) and widowers (*ĕnĕ kŋya wñ lekŋu*).

This concept of re-marriage should be distinguished from Igala filial widow inheritance (*ŋya-ata wñ*) and levirate system (*ŋya-ogŋu*). The filial widow inheritance or levirate marriage are not considered re-marriages since these marriages are within the same family.

HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE REMARRIAGE

Although this has become a frequent practice, it is not usually looked upon as a honorable practice. This is especially true when a woman involved in a re-marriage was divorce on grounds of adultery and bad conduct. However, if she was divorced on the ground of the husband's wicked attitude or inability to provide for her, she will stand a better chance of enjoying her new marriage relationship.

In the same way, men who constantly divorce and remarry are not looked at as responsible people. Even where they may have genuine cases, the fact that they have gone through many marriages discredit their characters.

The story is different for widows and widowers. They are looked upon with sympathy and are so treated. In some cases, however, some widows are looked upon with suspicion and ignominy if they are suspected to be either witches or behind their husband's death.

It should be pointed out too that second marriages (*qyaonukeji* and *qkqenukeji*) are looked at generally as second-class marriages. Although remarriages are accepted in the society, women who have many cases of divorce are looked upon either as trouble-makers or sexy (*ajqkq*). They may have to live with this insult and degradation all their lives.

ISSUES OF REVELANCE FOR THE CHURCH

There are four main issues in the institution of marriage which are significant and should be addressed by the church. These issues are the importance of children, polygamy, divorce and remarriage, and change in tradition.

One of the purposes of marriage is procreation in order to keep the lineage or family name going. In fact, male children are preferred over female children for the sake of perpetuating the family name. This explains the desire to marry one who can bear children. It also explains why the Igala goes to perform rituals for fertility. The church needs to know the pressure young couples go through in their quests for children. Divorce and remarriage is not allowed for any reason by the Igala church. While this is not an attempt to suggest to the church to sanction such, there is need for the church to come to grips with the pressures people go through and learn to

deal with such problems especially as childlessness often results in divorce or polygamy.

The practice of polygamy is an issue the church has had to deal with since the coming of Christianity to the Igala people. It is also an issue which the church must look at objectively, study its causes and circumstances so that polygamous problems can be dealt with Scripturally and sympathetically. The church needs a thorough discernment which comes with objectivity in analyzing polygamous cases with the utmost desire to help and show people how to help themselves.

Marital problems often lead to separation and, consequently, divorce. The responsibility of the church to married couples should not stop on their wedding day. The church should see the need to introduce a counseling and teaching program for married couples with the sole aim of helping in healing marital problems.

The church must also study each case of divorce carefully in dealing with the matter of remarriages. Furthermore, the church should recognize the impact of separation, divorce and re-marriage and the effects on children and make provision to minister to them as well.

There is need for the church to be alert and be aware of changes taking place in marriage practice today. The contemporary marriage practice in Igala society needs to be scrutinized with the Bible and the church has a responsibility to see that changes are Scriptural and healthy to the institution of marriage in the society.

CHAPTER 5

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

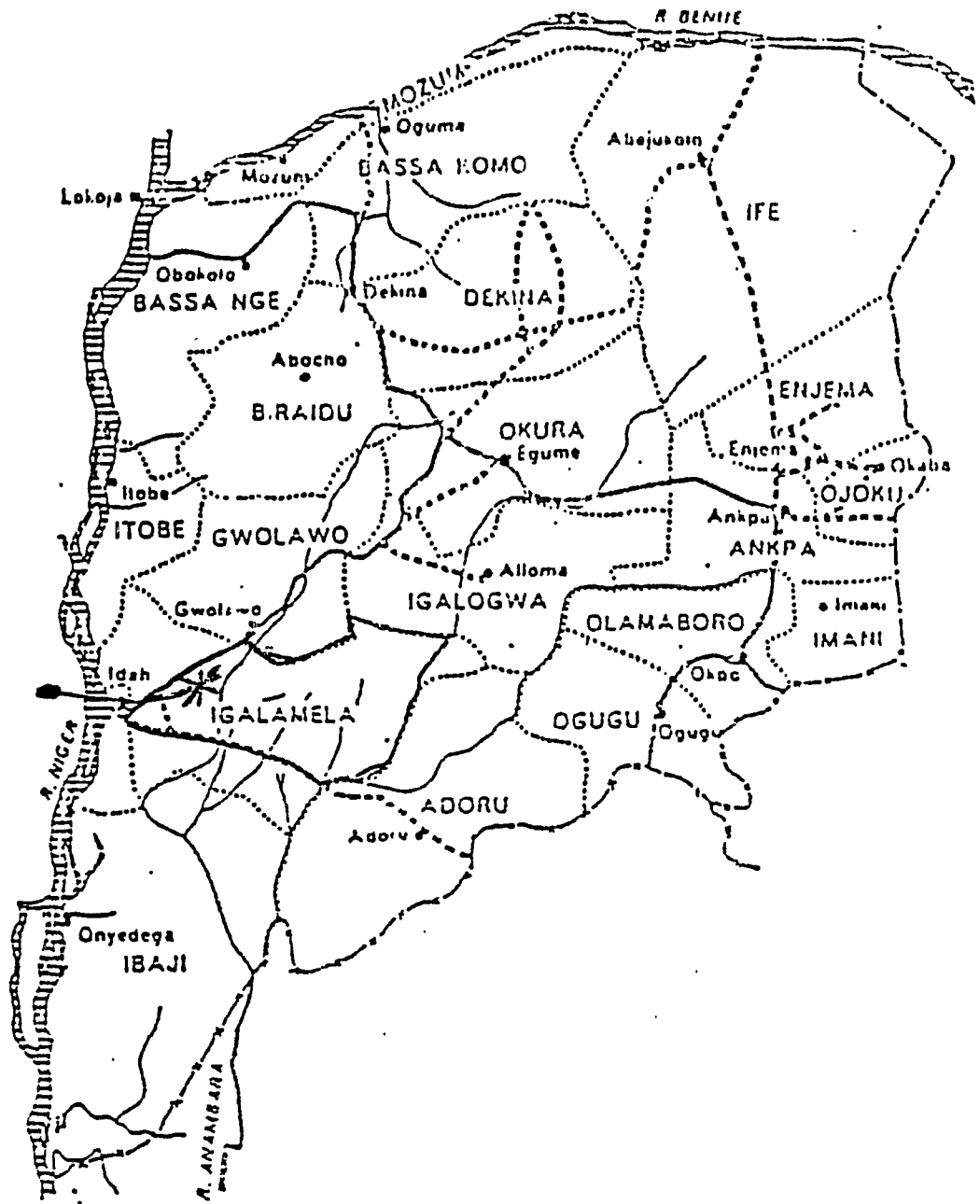
DIVINE KINGSHIP

The Igala Kingship is headed by the Attah Igala who is assisted by the Attah's Council consisting of the heads of lineages in the Igala Mela district (see Figure 6). The power to select the King is vested in this council which is headed by the *Achadu*. *Achadu* is the aristocratic clan head who is the leader of the Kingmakers and being the head of the Kingmakers, he is a very powerful authority figure.

According to Boston (1969), though the Igala King is not as strong a ruler as the Oba of Benin, like the Yoruba Oba, the Ata ruled over a loosely federated Kingdom in which the major provinces were organized and behaved like petty Kingdoms (1969:30).

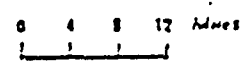
Succession to the throne is hereditary and patrilineal and between three royal houses (lineages) who are direct descendants of the Ayegba Om'ldoko. The Igala kingship is believed to be divine. According to Armstrong, the Atta himself attested to his divine kingship to the Trotter expedition. He said, "the river belongs to me a long way up and down on both sides, and I am king... God gave me after His own image: I am

FIGURE 6 IGALA MELA DISTRICT IN RELATION TO OTHER DISTRICTS



(Boston, 1968)

- District boundary
- Provincial boundary
- Regional boundary
- District headquarters
- Main roads
- Secondary roads



all the same as God and He appointed me a king (Armstrong 1955:87). However, the divine nature of the Igala kingship was rejected by Boston on the grounds that the Atta is not regarded by the Igala as being divine in the sense of incarnating a god or deity in his own person; and that Attah himself does not make any ritual offerings or perform sacrifices in public (1968:195). The present author agrees with Boston, rejecting Armstrong's assertion of the divine nature of Igala kingship.

The Igala Empire flourished in its golden age in the 18th and early 19th century (Ukpabi 1965:29). However, the Fulani Jihad was a serious threat to Igala. The Fulani, with active support of Europeans, forced the secession of the Igbirras at Panda and subsequently drove the Igala from Adakudu, the Igala colony south of Lokoja (at the Niger-Benue Confluence), it caused the Agatu, Idoma, Bassa-Komo, and Bassa Nge (neighboring tribes) to over-run and seek refuge in Igala which ultimately weakened the unity of the kingdom. Shelton rightly points out that the Igala King, Ata was hard pressed for means to continue this constant warfare and, in return for their services, gave fifty titles to small chiefs, together with complete independence (Shelton 1971:25-26). According to Temple, this contributed to the break-up of the Kingdom, and when the British occupied the country they found that King Oboni had lost central control, and the kingdom was fragmented among a series of small chiefs, who possessed little authority (Temple 1965:150). As to the contribution to the break-up of the Igala kingdom by the British, it is clear from Shelton's account that Lord Lugard engineered the British soldiers who came with Fulani, Hausa, Yoruba, and some Nupe soldiers to make war against the Igala and even went as far as Ankpa and Ayangba (Shelton

1971:26). Figure 7 shows the Igala kingdom and the location of different tribes who had come in contact with Igala.

VILLAGE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

DESCRIPTION OF OFUGO VILLAGE

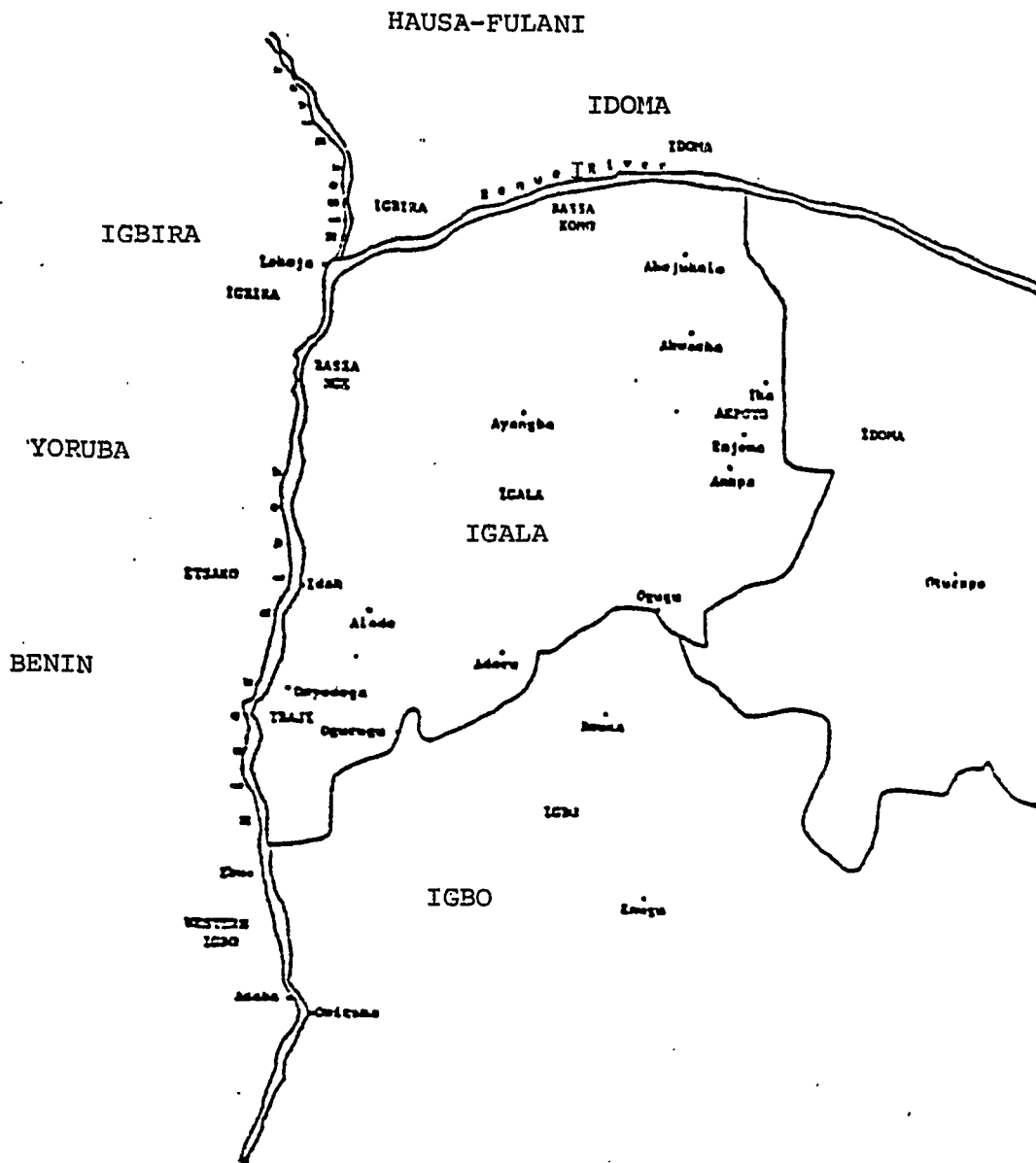
Ofugo village is situated in the Dekina Local Government Area of Benue State. Dekina Local Government Area is one of the four divisions into which the former Igala kingdom has been split. The other three divisions of local government areas are Idah, Ankpa and Bassa (see Figure 7).

Ofugo village lies between Dekina town to the east and Anyangba town to the north. The distance between Lokoja (Niger-Benue Confluence) and Ofugo is about 50 miles. It is one of the Odu Greater Area villages which constitute about 1/4 of the Dekina Local Government Area.

Being a small village with about one thousand people, it has three clans and four wards. The three clans are the Ibieju, Onoja and Iko. Each of these clans has a *madaki* "chief" and an *ogijo ɔlopu* "clan head". The ward chiefs perform administrative roles while the ward heads are responsible for customary matters. The village chiefs are nominated by their clan members and are appointed by the government while clan heads are positions held by the oldest member of a clan.

The four wards represent the three clans, and the immigrant residents. The original settlers regard the new residents as clanless people because they have no title to land within the village. The new residents are also zoned, each to one of the three ward chiefs.

FIGURE 7 MAP OF IGALA AREA SHOWING NEIGHBOURING TRIBES



(Silverstein 1973;5)

There are many lineages in each ward. It is difficult to be exact as most clan ancestors had many children due to polygamous marriages which increased the number of their lineages. At least, four lineages are found in each clan.

Ofugo village has a number of meeting points which are centers of social activities. These include the shrine, mosque, church, market place, stream, elementary school, and the health clinic. These meeting points are well scattered throughout the village. However, the market place which is also the location for all village meetings, is centrally located within the three clans that represent the original settlers.

This structure of Ofugo is typical of Igala villages. The Igala people congregate on clan, lineage and family lines, while those in the immigrant category tend to live in a new settlement area allocated to them by the original settlers. Usually, these settlement areas are outside the clan's bounded residential area.

Four reasons are given for immigration to Ofugo village. A traditional reason is that of intra-tribal war; contemporary reasons are relative to quests for fertile farmland, source of water and extinction of one's village due to mysterious and frequent deaths.

There are many points of similarities with other villages. Apart from the living patterns, the location of important meeting places are well scattered while the village market is always centrally located. It is also important to stress that each village has a ward chief and clan head.

Most Igala people live in rural settings. Only three towns, each with a population between twenty- and forty-thousand people, may be considered to be semi-urban (Ankpa, Dekina and Idah). In these towns, there is a pipe-borne water supply and electricity is supplied to Ankpa and Idah towns.

Pipe-borne water and electricity are perhaps two of the three distinctions that can be made between a typical Igala village and town; the third is population size.

THE VILLAGE CHIEFS

The British colonial government in Nigeria introduced a system of indirect rule which reduced the influence and power of Attah the Igala king. As the Igala Kingdom was divided into districts, district heads were appointed by the Attah. The Attah also retained his own traditional rulers who were in charge of groups of villages or clans. Administrative power was in the hands of the district heads, Gagos and Madakis. The system of indirect rule was used by the colonial administration so that the King and chiefs who know their own people very well would be used to help the colonial administration achieve their aims and objectives. Where there was no centralized leadership, the colonial administration imposed a direct rule.

At the village level, Madakis "ward chiefs" were appointed to lead each clan or ward. The number of Madakis to a village depends on how large and densely populated a village is. In some densely populated villages, a Gago "village chief" was appointed to lead the Madakis. To assist the Madakis to pass on information to their constituencies, Achokolobias "messengers" were

appointed. These three political statuses governed the administration of their village. Their appointment and authority is summed up as follows:

1. *Gago*: "village chief" is appointed by the *Ata Igala* and was usually a beaded chief. He has authority for a large village or a group of small villages.

2. *Madaki*: "ward chief" is appointed by the colonial district head to represent the clan or ward from which he comes. He has authority and responsibility to assist the *Gago* in the collection of taxes and other dues.

3. *Achokolobia*: "messenger" is appointed by the colonial district head on the advice of the village chief to help each ward chief disseminate information to the villagers.

It must be mentioned that the powers of these village leaders have been greatly limited by the present system of government which gives ultimate supervisory authority to the local elected governments.

THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

Until recently, the chiefs were the sole authority in the village. Their powers and authority was not challenged since they were employees of the *Igala* native authority under colonial rule. Since Independence, village councils were constituted to assist the chiefs in the running of the affairs of their domain. The present local government is more democratic than the former *Igala* native authority which was centralized with wider powers and control.

The village council, or village central committee as they are known, has many members who are mainly leaders from each ward. About two or

three persons are appointed to represent each ward. They are appointed by the ward chief on the advice and nomination of the members of that ward.

The need for development and government presence led the people to revolt against the traditional method whereby the village chief or ward chief speak for their various communities. With the formation of the Councils or Committees, the chiefs are mandated to address specific things needed by a community instead of what he wants. They assist the chiefs in the decision-making process. Some of the specific roles of these Committees or Councils are:

- 1) To organize community development projects
- 2) To mobilize the community for self-improvement projects.
- 3) To organize vigilante groups to watch the activities of the men of the underworld.
- 4) To help the chiefs to collect levies and enforce certain by-laws.
- 5) To encourage socialization and ensure that people do not wander about without responsibilities. Such idle people are punished because idleness may lead them into evil or bad practices in the village. It is the responsibility of every bona-fide resident to see to it that order, discipline and security are maintained.

People appointed to serve on the committee are not paid. They enjoy being there because of their desire to help the village develop. Such developments are for the good of everyone. It is also seen as a responsible and prestigious position because of the advantage of being associated with good projects in the village. Since they are appointed by the ward chief on the recommendation of their wards, dissolution is left in the hands of the villagers.

While appointed members are male adults, women are normally represented by a member who is perhaps a leader in the women's meeting. The young people are also allowed to take part by sending a representative to the committee or council meetings.

The Council or Committee has the power to plan and execute projects on behalf of the villagers. This must be done, however, in consultation with the village chiefs. The village chiefs also must consult the Committee or Council on important matters and decision must be by consensus. Majority vote is seldom followed.

The final authority to remove either the Committee members or the village chiefs depends on the villagers. They have the final say and decisions on such cases are reached from each ward or clan. This new process has curtailed the excesses of the village chiefs who in times past were the supreme authorities in their respective domains.

People look for many good qualities in a person they wish to appoint as their leader. There is a special emphasis on conduct and character. People are concerned about their reliability and trustworthiness. Another quality is his "sociableness" or how the leader gets along with people and whether or not he is outspoken or timid. In addition to these, three important issues or questions are usually raised. These are:

- a) Is he a son of the soil? Where are his parents from? What is their background? Were they free men or slaves?
- b) Is he married? Is he responsible or is he one who is running here and there? Is he stable? What type of friends does he keep?

- c) Does he have a house in his father's compound? People are interested in the individual's commitment to his own family and his village. Is he a responsible person in his own family? If one is not, it is likely that he will be looked down upon.

Although people occasionally use money to influence political appointments, it is unlikely that money would give credibility to one whose personal character was questionable or objectionable. These qualities are crucial when appointments to positions of authority are being considered.

Once a leader is appointed, further support depends on his effectiveness as a leader and how much he is able to do and bring into his village. One's commitment to his constituency and to the needs of his people are the main sources of his support.

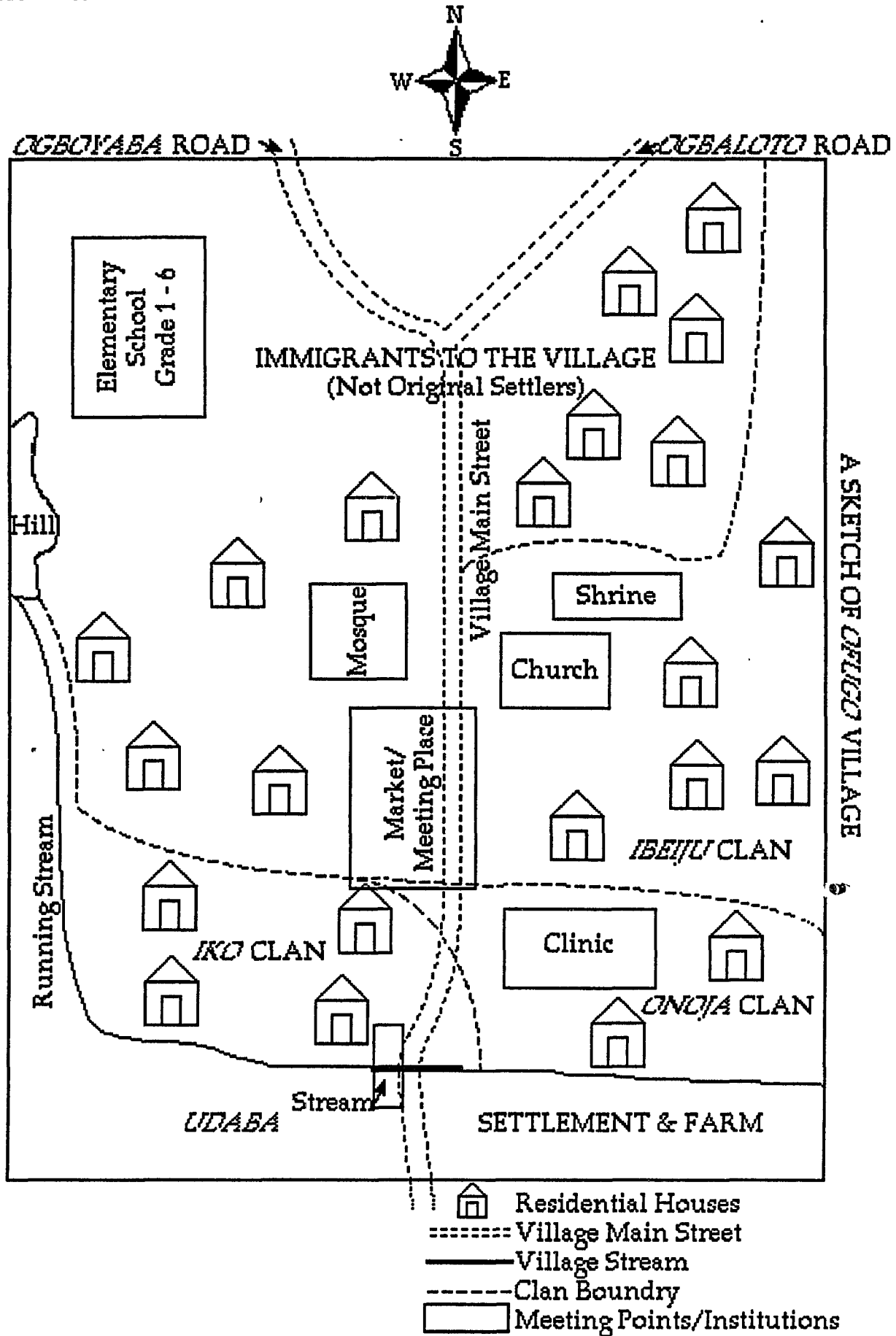
Cases: Decision-making process

Decision-making processes could be very critical and yet different. The nature of it depends on the nature of business at hand. The following are examples of decision-making processes at the clan and village levels at Ofugo village. (For the map of Igala area showing the location of Ofugo village and a sketch of the village showing what a typical village looks like - see Figures 8).

Case #1: Decision-Making at the Clan Level

In 1985, there was a land dispute at Ofugo between Owunutubioko clan and another clan not indigenous to Ofugo. The clan head (the eldest male member of the clan) called all the family elders together to discuss how the dispute could be resolved. The family elders brought their male children so that they could listen to the proverbs and stories which

FIGURE 8:



the elders told as they tried to map out strategies. This time, the elders told the oral tradition as to how they came to settle and own the disputed land. The elders agreed unanimously that it was necessary to take the case to the law court for adjudication. Before this decision was reached, they had to deal with the following issues:

- Agree among themselves that it was viable
- That the male children of the families should be consulted and be made to contribute towards this case
- That those in the family who are not in support of this case be ostracized or be denied their share or inheritance

The meeting was called or arranged by the clan elders. The various families and lineages in the clan were represented by their elders and male children. The eldest member in the clan presided over the clan meeting and as he led the meeting, he made sure that the decision was unanimous.

Adult members who refused to support with their presence at the meeting were declared enemies of the clan. This declaration means that their right to inheritance in the clan has been restricted.

Male children who were allowed to the meeting as observers were only made to listen to the proceedings of the meeting for the purpose of learning and listening to oral histories and tradition concerning the land under dispute. However, some children in the clan who were from a higher socio-economic class were allowed to speak and participate in the decision-making process.

This method of decision-making is based on family and lineage representations. The criteria for selecting representatives were sex and age. Another criterion which was followed in determining who should speak and participate was the socio-economic status. Regardless of the will of individuals and strong influence from some prominent members of the clan, the decision was unanimous and dissenters were punished for their unbecoming behavior.

Case #2: Decision-making at the Village Level

Setting: General meeting of the village

Occasion: Construction of the main Ofugo street: A decision on fund raising procedures

Present: The Villagers
 The Executive Committee members
 The Madaki's and their representatives
 The working class representatives

Presiding: The chairman, Executive Committee

Issue:

The issue or matter to be discussed was the construction of the main Ofugo village street beginning from Afe-Ofagwu Junction through Udaba. It is about 2 kilometers long. Other projects associated with this are the construction of a staff quarters for the Health Center staff and a bridge over Ajego stream to facilitate easy transportation services.

Procedure:

- 1) Opening prayer while all those present stood up.
- 2) The reading of the previous minutes of the general meeting. The assistant secretary read out the minutes of the last general meeting and requested members to adopt the minutes. It was so adopted by a member, and seconded by two other men. The Chairman was then asked to sign the minutes. This process was so new to the people and they had to wait for the secretary to go through the formalities, which were unfamiliar.

Matters arising:

The Secretary explained to those present the reason the meeting was convened and the need for members to organize and conduct themselves wisely as the meeting progresses. He went further to request the Chairman to take full charge of the meeting.

The Chairman greeted members present and explained his disappointment at the low attendance and the conspicuous absence of women at this meeting. Having finished his own admonitory statements, he called on the Secretary to brief the villagers on the permit obtained from the State Government for the imposition of levies for the community projects. Members were happy that the government had given formal approval without which levies could not be imposed and collected.

Project description:

The projects before the Ofugo Community are three:

- 1) The construction of the main street including the dredging of the stream.

- 2) The construction of a staff quarter for the Ofugo Community Health Clinic.
- 3) The construction of a bridge over the Ajego stream.

The State government however gave approval for the fort project, i.e. the construction of the village main street.

Villagers were asked to prioritize the projects. The decision to proceed with the said street construction was unanimous. The project is so important because the rains had washed all the dirt, sand and debris from the street and it flowed into the stream which is the only source of water for the villagers.

The construction of the street will lead to construction of gutters and culverts to divert the water flowing into the stream. If the stream is dredged, it will flow well and more clean and drinkable water will be available for all.

Imposition of the levy:

In imposing levy on the villagers and community residents at home and abroad, it was decided that three categories or classes of people be created.

They are:

- 1) Male Adults (of marriageable age)
- 2) Female (of marriageable age)
- 3) Working class (at home and abroad)

After arguments and debates on how much should be paid by different classes of people as above categorized, it was finally decided that:

- 1) The men should pay N40
- 2) The women should pay N10
- 3) The working class should pay at least N60 for the least paid, and details of exact amount will be worked out depending on individuals income.

The decision to determine the amount to be paid by each class of people was on majority vote principle. It was difficult to reach any consensus because of the different economic status and background of most members. However, everyone seemed to be satisfied by the imposition.

ANALYSIS OF CASES

These two cases differed significantly in the type of people invited, people allowed to talk, how the decision was reached, and in the entire procedure. The first case was one in which family or clan interest was an issue. The purpose was to reclaim a piece of land which was disputed. However the second case has to do with the development of the village and this concerns everybody. Therefore, it can be seen that the purpose of a meeting determines who should attend it.

In the first case, only elders of the clan and family elders were invited with their male children. Women and those non-clan members were not invited. The second case involved all members regardless of age and gender.

The second meeting was formally organized. There was a chairman, and assistant secretary who kept record of proceedings. There were village chiefs and committee members. In addition, some representatives of the local government were invited. At this meeting agenda was formal and systematic. The procedure was democratic and egalitarian as everyone had the opportunity to speak out. In the first case, the eldest man in the clan was the sole power and people were allowed to speak in turns on age and family basis. The young people were allowed to ask questions but could not readily express an opinion. There was no program, no written agenda, no outsiders, and no minutes of proceedings. The procedure was more of an autocratic or centralized form of authority.

In the first case, the decision was unanimous and a consensus was reached while in the second case it was based on a majority vote. The process

for reaching the decision was lengthy and time consuming in the second case. In the first case, it was short, timely and swift.

These two cases show how people change from one extreme to another. In the first meeting we have a traditional decision-making situation while in the second case, we have a modern form of decision-making. The basic reason for this difference is the nature and purpose of the meetings. As long as people's needs are being met, no one will complain about social changes. In the first case a decision was reached with which they were satisfied and the same happened in the second case. It should be realized too that the chairman of the second meeting was one of those involved in the first meeting. He was willing to make changes and adjust for the sake of his own interests. This is the type of change that can be witnessed today in Igala society.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Igala divide the world of social relations into two categories, *abogijo* "patron" and *otalada* "clients". This classification is based on socio-economic status in the Igala society.

In Igala concept, the idea of a middle group is not considered at all. The above classification has no bearing to gender or age. At the village level where most people are poor, people use different terms in describing people's positions. The following are the Igala identities which structure social hierarchy:

Patron identities (*abogijo*)

Ènèlile (big person)
Anana (rich person)
Anòkò (wealthy person)
Ènojima (respectable person)

Client identities (*q̄talaka*)

Ènèkèkèle (small person)
Anale (empty handed person)
Ènòbata (poor person)
Ogwuchèkwò (ordinary person)

The relationship between the patron and client is that of service. The clients often seek to serve or help the patrons with the aim of obtaining a reward or gift in return. Patrons offer to prospective clients money, position, or influence and power.

Ènèlile "big men" are usually political and government functionaries or educated and highly placed officials, whereas the wealthy businessmen are usually successful businessmen. These categories of people are many in the towns or cities and are not as influential and powerful.

Some Igala are neither very rich nor very poor; others are respected and have successful businesses but could not be considered wealthy people. Igala have no term to describe these types of people who are an emerging middle group. This social cadre includes school teachers, intermediate civil servants, self-employed persons and businessmen, village chiefs, and local politicians. People having these identities are in a position of ambiguity and conflict; the poorer segment of society view them as patrons, while the patron elite see them as inferior prospective clients. These "middle" people express great frustration at the demands of the client sector, which are based upon assumptions of wealth that these people cannot sustain.

SYMBOLS OF IDENTITY

To determine what identity a person holds, people cue from certain practices, behaviors and life-styles. Some of these are:

1. The quality of food that one eats (*qla ujewñ kiajẹ*)
2. The quality of clothes that one wears (*ukpo lia lo*)
3. The number of people in one's household (*lkonowñ*)
4. The type of house one owns (*qla uñyi kinẹ*)
5. The properties that one owns (*ẹwñ anẹ kinẹ*)
6. The type of friends that one keeps (*amonuku kinẹ*)
7. The manner and nature of one's utterances (*qla aluwñ*)
8. How one relates to people (*udagowñ ugbo amonẹ*)
9. One's involvement in social activities (*ichqla wñ efọja*)
10. The geographical location of one's residence (*ugbo kidodo*)

In Igala society, expectations and obligations of people depend on their social status and positions. The patron sector are expected to help those of the client sector. However, the type of help often provided are either inadequate to make any significant difference in people. They often keep the poor under subjection to the rich.

In receiving help from the rich, the poor always remember an Igala proverb which says *Alu fẹwñ jẹ, ańyọ feju mu,*" if the mouth has eaten something, the face or eyes become shy." This proverb expresses the fact that people do not want to be bought over or be controlled because they are being helped. They prefer to suffer rather than to become slaves or servants of the rich.

SOCIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Village social activities and events widen the social sphere in which the Igala interact with people other than kin and clan. Unlike the close relationship existing on kinship lines, social relationships are based on individual and corporate interests in the areas of economic, political, social, religion and cultural matters and are built around gender and age stratifications.

There are at least four different types of forms of voluntary association in which people interact outside of their lineage and clan affiliation. These social activities serve specific purposes and interests. The participants in each activity are also well defined.

These associations which promote interpersonal relationships are significant in that they serve economic and political needs. For instance, several activities planned are socially beneficial to children and women who will use these avenues to express themselves publicly since age and gender differentiations have limited their public role in the society. In these meetings, also, the poor and lower class tend to have fun and great time in that some psychological and emotional needs are being met.

Qja

It is a voluntary society or club which is open to both sexes. Although the young people are allowed to be members, they usually form their own *Qja* club in which their own interests are served. The main purpose of this society is to serve as a financial institution for members. Usually members

contribute a certain fixed amount either weekly, fortnightly or monthly to the society. These contributions are collected from all registered members and loaned to one of the members. This is done each time dues are collected until all members have collected their own contribution.

Meetings are held on each day contributions are due. Members socialize on each meeting day. In addition to their financial services, they set code of conduct for members with regard to conduct in the village. Questionable characters who are members are disciplined. Thus, they help their community in trying to shape behavior.

The economic interests served here is that members are helped to save their money to meet future obligations in the absence of banking services. Members get help from society members in times of emergencies.

Ajuma

This is another voluntary society for adults of both sexes which functions like *Qja*. In addition, this society provides assistance to bereaved members and to those involved in social festivals and ceremonies. The economic interest served is the same as in *Qja* society. Meetings are held on Friday of each week. Socialization includes the drinking of alcoholic beverages. *Ajuma* is a society for adults but is not bisexual. Meetings are organized and held independently.

Qwe, Adakpo

Qwe is the mature men's organization, and *adakpo* is the young men's organization.

These are agricultural cooperative societies or clubs. Members come together collectively to provide labor needed on the farm on a rotational basis. The economic interests served in this society are great. More farm acreage leads to more production which, in turn, yields more food. As more people get together to pool human resources, they do not serve economic needs alone, but also psychological and physiological needs. This organization is for male adults only.

Abolojo and Amabakpa

Abolojo (Christians) and *Amabakpa* (Muslims) have their own voluntary associations in which they worship their God. Each one of these two associations has a number of religious, social, and economic activities in which members are involved and through their spiritual, material, economic, and physical needs are met. These organizations are open to all sexes and ages. While the Christians meet in their churches on Sundays and every morning for worship and devotion, the Muslims meet on Fridays and every morning and evening for worship and prayers.

IGALA TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE

Music and dance are associated with the Igala social and religious festivals. They form an important aspect of the village life. Like in most Igala practices, music and dance have different types with different participants and functions. It is important to point out too that while most of the music and dances are indigenous, some have been brought in by other tribes or borrowed by Igala people.

Most of Igala songs and dances have certain characteristics. They communicate diverse messages. Some of the characteristics are:

- 1) It is fast and usually with high pitch
- 2) The dance requires the use of power and full concentration as it could involve rotating in a circle and with acrobatic displays
- 3) Some of the dances and songs communicate promiscuous messages
- 4) The dances are both individualistic and group show
- 5) Singers and dancers do so to attract donations
- 6) Songs are directed at people and they are either singing the praises of men or raining insults on people
- 7) Some songs are directed at social issues which people need to be aware of.

There are at least fifteen different types of music and dances which may be classified into three functional divisions (see Table 3). Eight of these plays, music and dances are for social occasions. Men and women regardless of age are involved in most of these dances. Instruments used are drums of different kinds and tambourines. Messages usually conveyed are of social issues and sexy interests. The second type (four categories) are plays in respect of the deceased. The songs are funeral songs and songs of lamentation. Drums are the important instruments and the message conveyed is one of veneration and lamentation. The final two types are usually in worship of some deities.

Igala traditional music and dances have some distinct features. Roles for participants are well defined. Although age is not a barrier, women have different roles to play than men. In religious dances or song, men and women have separate roles and they are not mixed.

TABLE 3 TYPES OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCES

Type of Music/Dances	Function	Participants	Origin	Instruments Used
1. <i>Qgba</i>	Funeral (<i>Ubi</i>) ceremony	Women sing while men dance	Indigenous	Drums
2. <i>Iyoye</i>	Funeral (<i>Ubi</i>) ceremony	Women sing; men beat the drums	Indigenous	Drums, cymbals
3. <i>Iyogwu</i>	Funeral (<i>Ubi</i>) ceremony	Women sing; men dance/play	Indigenous	Drums
4. <i>Ichabada</i>	Social occasions	Male and Female	<i>Yoruba</i>	Assorted drums
5. <i>Olele</i>	Social occasions	Girls only	Indigenous	Drums
6. <i>Agwom</i>	Social occasions	Women sing; men beat the drums	Indigenous	Drums
7. <i>Alime</i>	Social occasions	Male and Female	<i>Akpoto</i>	Drums
8. <i>Gwobe</i>	Social occasions	Male and Female	<i>Yoruba</i>	Drums
9. <i>Ibele</i>	Funeral song	Men only	Indigenous	Drums
10. <i>Agale</i>	Funeral/social	Men only	Indigenous	Flutes
11. <i>Afomi</i>	Funeral/social	Only women allowed to dance	Indigenous	Drums
12. <i>Qgani</i>	Social occasion	Male	<i>Hausa</i>	Drums
13. <i>Igba</i>	Social occasion	Women sing; the men dance	Indigenous	Drums
14. <i>Ajenuu/iye</i>	Religious occasion	Women only	Indigenous	Drums
15. <i>Idologo</i>	Religious occasion	Men only	Indigenous	Bells & Drums

A thorough analysis of the nature and function of Igala music and dances shows that most have to do with their social festivals. Specifically, it should be noted that of about fifteen different types of play involving music and dances, only two can be directly linked to a religious festival (see Table 3). They serve the social interests of the people. People desire to get together to interact and socialize.

Secondly, they serve the economic interests of some people. There are professional singers and dancers whose livelihood depends on music and dancing. To this people, it is a way of life. Thirdly, some songs and dances are associated with religious rituals. People express their devotion and worship of the different deities through songs and dances. It is believed that the ancestors are made happy by the joy and happiness which typically characterizes such singing and dancing. People believe that music and dance are essential for prosperity and for receiving blessings from the ancestors.

Apart from the participant's needs that are met, people who listen also derive satisfaction from music and dances. That is why many donate money to singers and dancers. Politicians use them to boost his popularity as they sing his praises after money is donated to them.

ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

As to how these leadership patterns may be adapted to and applied to missionary endeavors and cross-cultural ministries the following suggestions are offered.

There is need for the church to be sensitive to existing leadership structures. It should be realized that even if the church succeeded in dismantling the structure on the surface, it is impossible to remove it from the cognitive domain. To this end, sensitivity towards structures will help people to adapt to, with the view of applying such in church planting and leadership development. Keeping to the existing structure helps people to relate to the customs and practices of their host. Leadership built along such

structures will help the nationals to relate to themselves and to accept what people have to present as a non-foreign package.

It must be realized that the dynamics of social changes affect leadership structures. While it is important that people are sensitive to existing structures and even respect such institutions, it is equally important that they are not blinded by their own theoretical biases to insist on traditional methods which are giving way to modernism. Thus, the church is to be sensitive enough to be open to the phenomenon of changes in the society in which the gospel is ministered. For instance, while it is true that the Igala had a centralized government system, Igala chiefs do not have much administrative and political powers today with the present political set-up in Nigeria. In the same way, education and socio-economic factors have greatly influenced the descent rule. People can now set aside kinship interests and solidarity for profit and material gains. Economic status is fast replacing the former royal dignity. In missionary activities, people must begin to see economic factors as sensitive issues instead of the emphasis on the royal background of potential leaders.

There are a number of significant issues that the church and missions should also be sensitive to in spite of the fact that modernism has weakened tradition and the power of traditional rulers. The age factor is crucial and should be taken into consideration as people seek to train and appoint leaders. Social status on the basis of family background (royalty) and socio-economic ability are crucial to leadership selection. The church should not insist that because one has become a Christian, he should not maintain his former status. Instead, such person should be encouraged to use his status for

the good of the church. Thus, the church should recognize existing hierarchy in spite of seeming egalitarianism and equalitarianism in modern society. Christians should not be blinded by their democratic orientation of Christian liberty to undermine the impact of social distinctions. Missionaries should not try to isolate the elite or royal clans from their outreach programmes because they are difficult to reach or less prone to be open to the gospel. The use of indigenous leadership is important. The lessons of the indirect rule of the British colonial administration should be a guide to missions, that people will in most cases feel at home with indigenous leadership instead of the one imposed on them.

The Igala church must study the issue of worship, music and dance carefully with the view of relating more to the indigenous form rather than the present Western form of worship and music.

CHAPTER 6

CONTEMPORARY IGALA SOCIETY AND CULTURAL CHANGE

The contemporary Igala society has undergone many changes. It is not difficult to find how far these changes have affected the foundation of the structure of the society. The changes taking place are mainly in the family, social, and political structures. It should be realized that the changes are caused by education, urbanization, industrialization and Christianity factors. Although the main compulsive factor is economic, Christianity paved the way for the factors.

A thorough analysis of contemporary changes reveals that people are more than willing to accept changes as long as their economic interest are served. They also accept changes because their economic resources are producing an incredible amount of power with which to control people. These changes affect the traditional beliefs and practices of the Igala people.

TYPES OF CHANGES IN FAMILY STRUCTURE

Structural changes are taking place in Igala society today. These changes in the Igala family structure has been caused by economic problems and interests. In order to support the view that structural changes are taking place, it is necessary to study cases of such events. The following are areas where such changes have occurred in the family structure. The cases illustrate the particular changes taking place.

Case #1: AUTHORITY AND CONFLICT IN FATHER-SON RELATIONS

Sule left his village in search of a factory job in a city after finishing his primary education. In the city, he lived with his parallel cousin Ida. Ida has a family of four and was not making enough money. When Sule came, his problem increased as he would be responsible for his food, board and helping him get a job.

Ida succeeded in getting a factory job for Sule and Sule rented an apartment for himself. Having become independent and with a job, he began to support his poor parents in the village monthly. He also was financing the education of his younger brothers. His parents were proud of him because of the manner in which he was helping the family.

However, not long after that, Sule fell in love with a girl he met in the city who was from a different tribe. Without consulting his own parents or the girl's, he married this girl and they lived together as husband and wife.

Soon after their marriage, his relationship to his family began to change. He could not send money home regularly and was not able to provide for his brothers' education. When the parents demanded to know what was wrong, Sule explained that he had a wife and a small baby to take care of. His parents were very upset about this development. They were surprised and unhappy that Sule would marry a girl from an entirely different tribe.

Sule's wife works too and this affected her own relationship with her own family. Because of the nature of her job, Sule helps to look after the babe when he is off duty. In addition, he cooks whenever she is away to work. These practices were perfectly acceptable to both of them since they are looking for the best for their own family.

One day, Sule's father decided to visit his son to see things for himself. On arrival, he met Sule's wife and having introduced himself, he was asked to sit down and feel at home. But Sule's father could not speak English and so was unable to communicate to his son's wife without a translator. As Sule and his father sat to discuss family matters, Sule discovered that his family was upset and not in support of his marriage. He too was unhappy that his family would not sympathize with him.

During this visit, Sule's father took note of a number of issues. Apart from the main issue of a non-Igala wife, Sule would call his wife

"dear" and will always seek his wife's opinion on most issues. To complicate the matter, Sule was seen caring for the baby and cooking the food whenever she went away to work. And whenever she was home, all the family members, including the wife and Sule's father would eat at the same table. These changes were too much for the old man to stomach.

Before leaving for the village, he explained to Sule that he was not considered to be their son anymore because of the betrayal of his family. Sule's father explained further that his act has brought shame and dispute on his own family. Sule was so sad and afraid of these statements, but he could not make any response. His father left with sadness and disappointment.

This case shows the nature of conflict existing between parents and their children. Sule should have been under the control of his father. He should not have married without his father's consent. Neither should he dream of marrying from another tribe entirely. The same thing applies to Sule's wife. She went the way of modernity. Sule's father observed a number of dynamics. First of all, he saw the change in his authority and the role of his child.

In the past, Igala culture defines children as properties of the father. Children are therefore provided for and used on the farm by their parents. In old age, they provide security for their parents. Children are expected to live with their aging parents or at least take them to live with themselves. Aging parents are not to live by themselves. This is changing rapidly. It is now common for parents to expect their children to provide for them. Because of education, children no longer work on the farm as was the case. They are not expected to live with their parents any more because of their desire to raise a separate family, to live in the cities, and to provide money instead of personal labour. Children no longer want to be told what to do but want to run their

own lives. This development has not only affected the parent-child relationship but also the morality of children. Brown (1983) shows sexual promiscuity in children and the existence of single women with illegitimate children. Parents no longer could have direct control over their children due to urbanization and industrialization (Uzoka 1980) as a result of economic changes. Children also make decisions as to when to marry, who to marry and how to marry (Culinovic 1983), (Ngwisha 1978) and dictate the type of parent-children relationship (Flanagan 1977), (Vellenga 1975).

It can be seen, therefore, that the changing role of children in Igala family structure over time has been caused by urbanization, education, influence of western culture, migration and quest for egalitarianism. These causes have been triggered by economic interests and desires.

Secondly, he observed the role of his daughter-in-law in relation to domestic activities. He discovered that Sule was sharing her domestic work. The change was so different.

In a traditional Igala family structure, women are to be seen and not heard. Women's roles are limited to child bearing and rearing and domestic responsibilities like cooking, washing and working on the farm. In most cases they are regarded as the husband's personal property. As long as she is alive she belongs to her husband and, at the death of the husband, the husband's family. It was the responsibility of the husband to provide everything the wife needed in return.

However, this arrangement does not seem to hold any more due to economic changes. The husband with his many wives and children and

extended family members and their responsibilities is beginning to face the challenges of modernity and can no longer provide the former traditional security for the woman. The inability of the man to provide for the family sufficiently has led many women to find alternative ways to fend for themselves and their children.

The influence of western culture and education has contributed immensely to the changing role of women in Igala society. Today, women are seen, are heard, and are providing for their families. This is common in modern societies today. It cannot be denied that economic implications convinced Igala men that women have more to offer than child bearing, rearing and cooking. Callaway (1984) shows the traditional role of women in Islamic societies is in no way representative of the dynamic changes occurring in most Nigerian cultures today. For instance, Okonjo (1976) shows in his study of Igbo women in Nigeria that migration, education and religion have affected family life through changes in the roles of women and that changes will be accepted if they are economically and socially rewarding. Bellenga (1975) shows the changing sex roles in Ghana and how women are becoming more independent with their children because they (women) are able to provide the economic power. Similarly, Amobi (1980) observes that education of the wife has a negative effect on her fertility as she begins to work and contribute to the family income, her primary traditional role of child bearing will change and her husband will have to look at her differently. Sacks (1971) found that women's participation in collective social labor is the economic base for an adult social status for women (that is their ability to engage in egalitarian relations with other adults in the society). She

also observes that in Ghana, a class society where women are domestic producers only, they lack rights which women at Mbuti, Louedu, and Pondo had because they engage in collective social production.

Women's new roles include the right to determine the family size (Benoit, Levi and Vimard 1986), the right to be involved in economic activities (Davis 1983), (Sudarkasa 1982), (Due and Summary 1982) and the right to be themselves and act independently. Many other studies have shown that changes may be slow (Mikell 1984), (Rizika; Sleady; Chiepe; Rogombe 1985), that sexism still pervades (Ferrier 1983) (McCrea 1983), (Due 1982) but will definitely argue for dynamic changes over time (Oke 1986).

In Igala culture, gender and age play major roles and are factors guiding social behavior, interactions and activities. Men and women have specific, distinct roles and responsibilities. Children and adults have their own roles and responsibilities as well. These distinctions are giving way to changing roles of women and children in many African societies as shown in studies done by Rizika (1985), Sleady (1985), Rogombe (1985), Chiepe (1985), Amobi (1980), Benoit, Levi and Vimard (1986), and Okonjo (1976), Vellenga (1975).

In Igala society, children and women are becoming very powerful and, important because of their economic power and support for the family. Education has provided young women and men opportunities to do what was traditionally the responsibilities of males and adults. Since such assumption of responsibilities means economic relief for the males and adults, it is acceptable — and thus removes the age-long gender and age distinction traditions.

Other aspects of change in family structure are the issues of early marriages, polygamy and family planning. The case below illustrates the problems that people are facing in today's society in relation to the issues involved.

Case #2: MONOGAMY AND FAMILY PLANNING

Mudi was a well educated man and was thought to be very responsible and smart. He also had a good job. When he decided to marry his family was so happy. With his family's backing and support, he married a young educated lady from his tribe. This also pleased his parents.

However, soon after their marriage, she went back to her former job in a town which was about two hundred miles away. This was a temporary arrangement until she was able to get a local job near Mudi. The parents of Mudi were not happy with this arrangement. In the end, they got together and lived together to the relief of Mudi's parents.

About six months after their wedding, Mudi's wife was not pregnant. His family was concerned and worried. They enquired from their son what was happening. To their astonishment, they were told that Mudi and his wife were practicing family planning. This means that they would have children when they were able to raise them well and that they planned to have only three children. These facts did not go well with the parents of the bride and groom.

Mudi's parents thought that Mudi could afford a second wife and so were going to talk him into it, but could not when they were told of their son's plan to have only one wife and three children. In spite of the pressures from his peers, family members and parents-in-law, Mudi and his wife refused to oblige.

Mudi's decision not to marry earlier was his desire for economic security. After acquiring his education, with his family's support, he married a young educated girl. However, they had to make decisions which were economic in nature. The wife must return to work; there was a plan to have only three children and a firm commitment to monogamy. In spite of the

pressures from many quarters, Mudi and his wife refused to change their decisions.

In 1983, there was a severe drought for a year in Northern Nigeria, and it was reported that many polygamists got divorced because they could no longer provide food for every member of the family. Studies have also shown that western education has influenced people to set some new and different value standards. With these set of new value standards, including the education of children to the highest possible level, people are beginning to question the economic possibilities of polygamy and the need to provide for the children's education. It can be seen that the deciding factor is economic power. According to Ugwuegbu, western educated Nigerian men and women tend to develop close-mindedness to polygamy (Ugwuegbu 1982:151). Researchers have also shown the impact of the transformation of family structure over time (Demos 1970) and the serious effects of urbanization and industrialization on family functions (Uzoka 1980). Laslett and Wall (1972) have also noticed transformation in family structure.

For the average Igala man of Nigeria, his appetite for many children, for sex, and male children are being curbed. The oil revenue from which everyone amasses wealth is dwindling (Barbar 1982) and polygamy can only thrive on sound economic base (Amobi 1980). Brown's studies of Botswana people (1983) reveals that economic problems which have led people to migrate have discouraged polygamy and encouraged spacing of children.

It has been the practice of the Igala people to marry early in life. While marriageable ages are not fixed, it is observed that female children are given in marriage at puberty and male children expected to marry when they become sexually productive. The only exception has been the quest of western education which is delaying many early marriages.

However, it has been observed that early marriages among the Igala people are no longer ideal. This is because of the financial obligations involved. Young people are craving for education which will enhance their economic power or status. This development, coupled with the new value systems, has led many young people to put off early marriages. This postponement has led to many problems such as premarital sexual relations, migration, abortion and sometimes the birth of illegitimate children. Brown (1983) observes in her research in Botswana, South Africa, that evidence shows that high male out-migration has led to a modification in the structure of family life and has transformed women's social and economic positions to their detriment (Brown 1983:367). Studies show that economic problems led to migration and thereby cause significant changes such as:

Delayed marriage until a later age - about 30 or over, early marriage is no longer possible, and courting relations and love affairs now flourish. Men marry at 30 and above instead of at 20 years. Sexual promiscuity and children out of the bond of marriage are common. This study by Barbara Brown of the people of Botswana reveals the very problem of Igala people today. Changes in household structure have occurred as a result of new patterns of marriage. A significant number of women never marry. In addition, the existence of

households headed by single women represents a major change in the social and economic structure of rural Botswana (Brown 1983:375).

The Igala family structure is fast changing because of the absence of early marriages which have triggered a number of other economic and social maladies. Uzoka shows that it leads to lack of control over children (Uzoka 1980) and changes in family structure in relation to relationships, wedding customs and social customs (Culinovic 1983). In his research in Zambia, Ngwisha observes too, that economic problems resulting in urbanization have created a tendency towards permissiveness in the parent-child relationship (Ngwisha 1978) and this permissiveness goes even to the issue of early marriages (Vellenga 1975).

The concept of birth control and family size is unfamiliar in Igala culture. To the Igala, the primary purpose of marriage is procreation or reproduction of children. This belief means that no limit should be set. It is whatever God chooses and when God decides to stop. It implies, then, that wives are to bear or produce as many children as they are given by God, and when the number given by God is not satisfactory, the man goes into polygamous marriages to increase the family size. Over the years, economic problems have been altering this world view. Food shortages as a result of prolonged drought, the demand for western education for children, and the demand for material things for family members have adversely affected the Igala traditional belief in a large family.

These economic factors led the government to issue a strong appeal to the Igala people to control their family size. The people have also seen their

economic inadequacies, the changing roles of women and children, and the ecological factors that have changed their occupational activities and production of food. The Igala is forced by his dilemmas to look at the economics of child bearing. This is true of many other third world nations. Tuladhar (1981) observes in studies from Nepal that economic problems pushed the government to introduce family planning. This government program was observed to be effective though urban women who are educated and are working tend to have been more open to it. This is supported by Brown (1983) whose studies of rural Botswana people have shown that economic problems resulting into out migration has led to spacing of children among Tswana tribe.

It is also interesting to note that economic problems dictate family size (Liker and Elder 1983) and also determine the quality of food consumed by families (Morgan, Johnson and Burt 1983).

While in India, some people are still opposed to family planning (Verna 1984), it cannot be denied that economic problems are the primary concern of proponents of family planning. According to Fosu (1986) family planning as a challenge to economic problems is well received and in practice in Accra, Ghana. Studies of the developing economies of Kenya and Nigeria (Amobi 1980) reveal that family income exhibits or influences family size. This study was supported by Dmerekwaonu (1977) who shows that family planning can limit the size of fertility and family because of economic crisis.

The concept of extended family relationship is fast changing. In the case below, Musa who resides in an urban setting decided when he was

getting married not to allow any of his family and extended family members to live with them.

Case #3: NUCLEAR FAMILY CONCEPT

Musa was a soldier who was stationed about 500 kilometers away from home. After all arrangements for his wedding were completed, he came home to take his wife away to live with him. Prior to his time, Musa was home twice and that was when he was about to prepare for the appointment of a go-between and during the engagement.

When Musa came home to take his wife, nobody quarreled with him about patrilocal residence since he was a member of the working class and did not live at home (his village). However, two things happened. First, his mother-in-law told him to take one of the bride's sisters along as was the Igala practice. They would raise the girl and this was customary. Musa said that he would not be able to raise anybody else. This provoked his in-laws and the matter was reported to the go-between. Secondly, after settling with his wife, his own father came with Musa's younger brother. His father told him of the need for him, being the first born, to look after the younger children. Musa was also reminded of the fact that they (the parents) were getting old and would soon become inactive.

Having listened to his father, he responded gently that he realized that it was his responsibility to take care of the family members. He, however, went on to explain to his father that he could not offer to help his brother now because he was facing serious economic problems and that the boy might not get along with his wife. In the end his father returned to the village with his son.

Musa's economic problems and his interest in his wife have led him to decide not to open his house to his extended family members.

As strong and as important as the Igala extended family structure was, changes have taken place. These changes have given different definitions to the concept to extended family.

The extended family relationship has been narrowed so that very close kinsmen are recognized. In addition while relationship is maintained, economic help is no longer required but desired. Another change is in its relationship to urbanization. It has been widely believed that urbanization has been detrimental to extended family structure. However, studies have shown the contrary. Ngwisha (1978) has shown that urbanization has not outmoded extended family structure. In fact, Flanagan (1977) observes that the extended family unit promotes urbanization. Urbanization itself changes the formal or traditional family structure in that family members are no longer together but scattered. It is important to point out here that the changes initiated as a result of urbanization is the new definition given to the extended family unity. It is this belief that prompts Ngwisha (1978) to conclude that urbanization has not outmoded extended family structure.

To be more precise, it is essential to say that while the extended family has been scattered due to urbanization (Flanagan 1977), new relationships have been developed as a result of urbanization. Relatives living in urban areas are still responsible to provide economic help in the form of monthly living allowances and sponsorship of relatives at schools in the rural areas. This keeps the relationship intact and on-going. In addition, it can be seen too that young high school graduates go to cities to live with extended family members in search for factory or industry jobs (Ngwisha 1978).

Thus, it can be said that economic changes have greatly influenced the Igala extended family structure. It has given it a new scope, definition, purpose, and direction. Who knows what these changes might lead to? Perhaps, it may culminate into a nuclear family system? (Benoit, Levi &

Vimard 1986). Perhaps the extended family structure will continue to play a dynamic role in Nigeria's urbanizing society (Oke 1986).

The problem of sexual promiscuity among teenagers is becoming a serious one. Because the authority of the parents has eroded, children take decisions on their own and do not feel accountable to anyone else. This case illustrates the pitiful situation of the Igala youths.

Case #4:

SEXUAL PROMISCUITY

Joy was a young lady whose parents were Christians. She also professes to be a Christian. When she went to a government high school in a town about 18 miles away from home, she became free and went in the company of bad girls. She became promiscuous and was pregnant. Her desire not to drop out of school led her to abort the baby and she was excommunicated by her church.

Two years later, she began to flirt and became pregnant again. In her bid to abort this pregnancy she almost lost her life. They succeeded, however, in aborting the baby. Up till this time, she was still out of fellowship and did not show any sign of repentance.

A few months after the second abortion, she brought a young man to her parents' home and introduced him as her boyfriend. She also told the parents that she intended to marry that young man. Later the parents discovered that the young man was a married man and had children. When Joy's parents confronted her with the issue of marrying a family man, she told them that she would go ahead and marry this man whether or not the parents gave their consent.

Although she has not yet married this man, her own decision is the key issue here since she has refused to allow the parents to decide for her in this matter.

The Igala people are very religious. The head of the family is the head of the family spiritual worship. In Igala family structure, children are led in worship and are to be chaste and to refrain from obscenity and sexual promiscuity. These values have significantly eroded.

Economic problems have led adults and children alike into certain practices that were frowned upon many years ago. Family worship is neglected. Sacrifices have to be offered and this involves economic means to meet such religious obligations and demands. Unemployment has also compounded the problem.

Young people are involved in sexually promiscuous behavior because of the economic gains - the money it offers girls. It is sad to see students whose lives have been wrecked because of the economic hardship which drive them into prostitution. These students could not proceed to higher institutions either because they could not make it academically or do not have the means to pay or bribe their way in.

It may be important to also point out that economic problems which led to migration and urbanization affect the morality and moral life of family members (Schapera 1971; Brown 1983).

CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The changes occurring in Igala social structure is phenomenal. However, these changes are either accepted or tolerated for the economic benefits or interests they bring to the people. The following changes are typical in the Igala contemporary society.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Before the coming of the Europeans, Igala people were ruled and controlled by their kings. Their kingship was believed to be divine and people are to submit to the authority of the king. However, colonialism introduced the system of indirect rule in which subordinate officers were

appointed to help the King or Attah Igala. Attah Igala is the title of the King of Igala and this title implies that he is the "Father" of the Igala people. In Igala contemporary society, there is a constitutional government which is democratic and egalitarian.

The traditional emphasis on royalty, family background, age and gender for political leadership has given way to the new democratic system of government. In the present system, economic power now determines who controls and assumes political leadership.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY

These were formally based on feudalism or slavery. The divine nature of Igala Kingship perpetuated the social hierarchy in which some people were looked upon as the superior while the rest were inferior. The emphasis was on whether one is *Qma Qjata* or *Qma Qfɛ* (royal background). This practice has given way to the present where there are two classes of the upper and lower groups based essentially on the socio-economic status of individuals. As economic and political power now leads to political control, social stratification solely on the basis of aristocracy has become a thing of the past.

The process of social interaction has also changed with contemporary social hierarchy. Igala social activities in voluntary associations which were formally not open to all sexes and ages are changing. As people use their economic power to control, social involvement in voluntary organizations have been integrated to accommodate women and young people who have the means to influence opinions and power exchange.

INHERITANCE AND KINSHIP RELATIONS

In the traditional Igala society, children cannot inherit directly from their parents. They are allowed to enjoy the right to use their parents' or grandparents' properties by the elders who are either their parents or grandparents' siblings. Thus, inheritance among the Igala is on adelphic principle.

The customary law of inheritance is changing because kin allegiance is no longer respected as people become financially sound and independent, . It is the practice for children to fight for the right to inherit their parents' or grandparents' properties today—that which was formerly unheard of.

In the same way, the pattern of living is changing. People make their homes anywhere they choose or prefer as long as their interests are served. They care less about the feeling of their ancestors in this matter of inheritance and place of residence.

The traditional emphasis on group interest has been replaced with the interest of individuals . Because people have the economic means to influence others, they will often get the cooperation and loyalty of people to sympathize with them.

ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

The changes occurring in Igala society is affecting the family and the church must prepare to face the problems that these changes are creating. The church must not continue to remain indifferent to non-spiritual issues. She

must stop ignoring major social and cultural problems that modernity has brought.

The cases recorded here show the transitional nature of contemporary Igala society. A holistic analysis of Igala family structure in these cases reveals that the Igala is experiencing cultural changes. Changes are constant and the people live with them. These are indications that the Igala people must be studied well in determining appropriate forms by which to reach them with the gospel.

In presenting the gospel to the Igala, close attention should be paid to the rapidity of changes in their society today. These changes may be frowned upon by the society but they are accepted and accommodated. Similarly, the gospel is bound to bring about changes in the lives of people. Instead of trying to confine people to their past practices, the gospel should be used to address their present, and guide them into the future. The missionaries cannot be held exclusively responsible for such changes, even though they are agents of change and are part of them.

SECTION TWO

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

CHAPTER 7

THE SPIRIT WORLD IN IGALA WORLD VIEW

To the Igala mind, the spirit world is the center of all spiritual activities which control the people and events in the world of the living. It is a world of unseen beings. The spirit world is the domain of the Supreme Being (*ojo chama chala*). To the Igala, *efojegwu* is the domain of the ancestors (*afu-amibegwu*) and the evil spirits (*amebili*). There is no concept of angelic beings (*amo-nuchę-ojo*). God (*ojo chama chala*) almighty who is the good equivalent of the evil spirits, and also believed to be in total control of all spirits (including the evil spirits) is the ultimate authority in the spirit world.

This difficulty in explaining the nature of Igala world view concerning the spirit world is not of perspective but of definition in view of the different meanings given to the word "supernatural" and its typical connotation in the Western world view. According to Hiebert,

Most Christian in the West tend to lump together "God," "angels," and "demons" as supernatural beings and distinguish them from natural beings such as humans and animals . . . In the Hebrew world view, God is by Himself. All else is dependent upon His on-going act of creation . . . In the Greek world view, however, the gods (*theoi*) are part of a supernatural realm inhabited by spirits of many kinds. This natural world, on the other hand, includes humans, animals, plants, and matter. As the West adopted this Greek world view, Western Christians absorbed its implicit meanings into their theologies. The result is a two-tier universe in which we use religion to describe supernatural realities and a secularized science to explain the natural order (1985:157-158).

The naturalist world view regards the supernatural as the vestigial notion of some less developed stage in man's evolution (Hesselgrave 1978:142) because it can not be scientifically explained. However, non-Western peoples think differently. This can be seen in the comparison of American and Indian views of life (Hiebert 1983:358) and the world view of tribal peoples (Hesselgrave 1978:148). The distinction between the naturalist world view and tribal world view in relation to supernatural beings is clear. According to Hiebert, the American world view sees a sharp distinction between the natural and the supernatural worlds while in the Indian world view there is no sharp distinction (1983:358). Agreeing that there is a distinction in world views in relation to supernaturalism, Hesselgrave says,

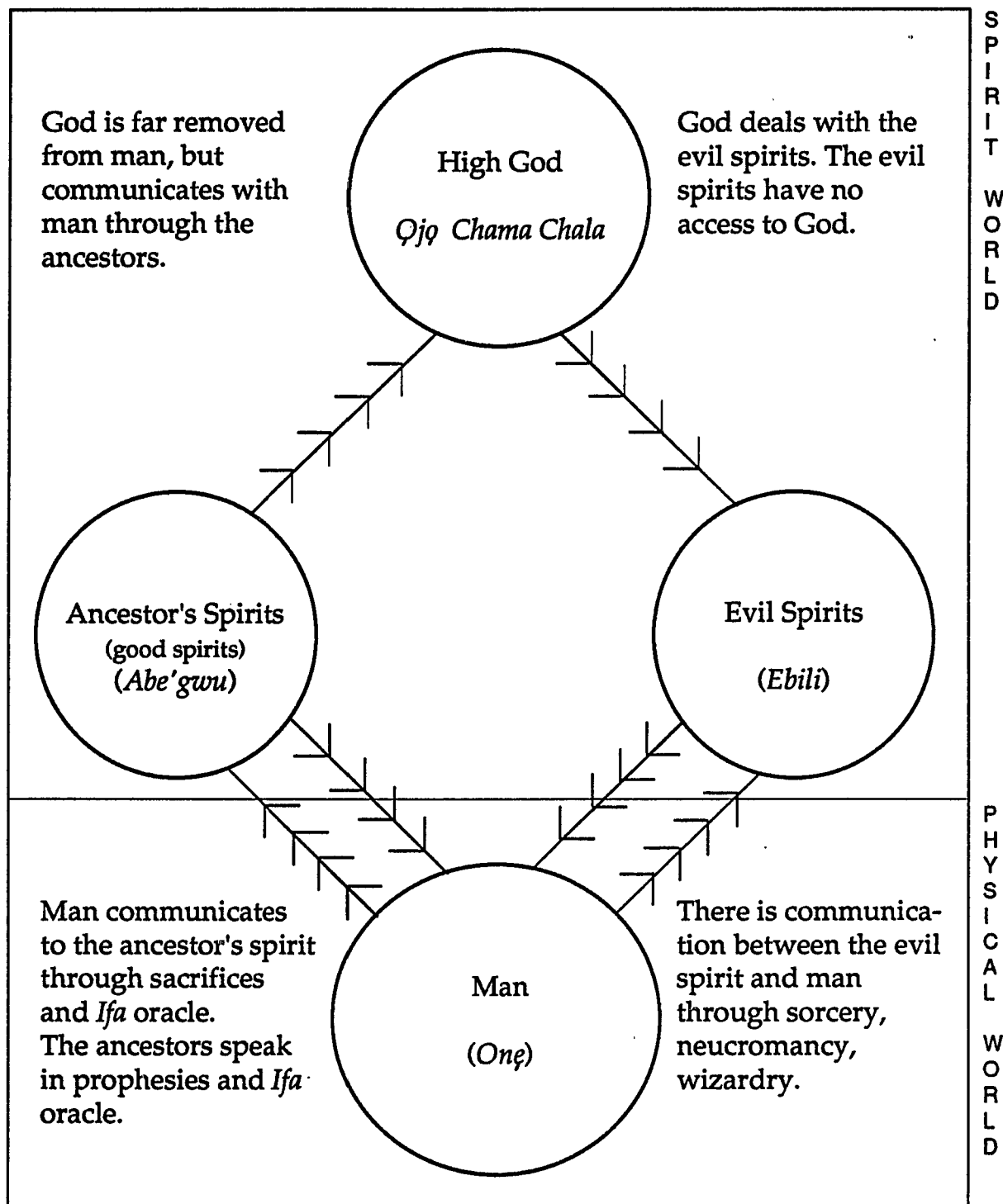
the tribalist lives in a world in which supernatural beings and powers are very near. Often, however, there is some recognition of a high god who is far away and relatively unconcerned about mankind (1978:149).

This statement by Hesselgrave best illustrates the Igala belief in the supernatural world. It is the world of spirit beings (ancestors and evil spirits) who are under the control of the supreme spirit being (God — *ojo chama chala*). However, God is not within or limited to the Spirit's world and human beings have access through the powers of the ancestor's spirits (*ewi abogijo*) to interact with the spiritual forces and use their powers for his own end. The nature of this world view and relationship is shown in Figure 9. The figure shows clearly the Igala view of life.

The spirit world in Igala concept is that which involves the demonstration of power to cause, for example: promotion, successful business or examinations, protection from any harm, destruction of

FIGURE 9:

IGALA VIEW OF LIFE



enemies or evil wishes and concealment of evil deeds amongst others. In the activity of the spirits, it is the practical outworking of human impossibilities for the benefit of those in need. The Igala sees three powers with distinct functions behind any superhuman event. These three powers are:

1. God (*Ojọ*) who is believed to be the ultimate source of all powers
2. Evil Spirits (*Ebili*) who are believed to be ones who use God's powers to destroy. They have no access to God, but are under God's control.
3. Ancestors (*Abegwu*) who are believed to be intercessors and have intercessory ministry to the living. They have access to God.

Because spiritual activity involves the material (what is physical or visible) and the spiritual (what is invisible), two main characters can be seen and are believed to be the main principal actors. They are human actors and spirit actors.

Human Actors: These are medicine men or native doctors who combine herbal medicine with witchcraft; sorcerers and diviners who have the power to communicate with the spirit world and foretell events; and the witches or wizards who possess incredible amounts of power to bewitch, destroy, kill or cause physical harm by spiritual means and have the power to transform into anything they choose.

Spirit Actors: They are the spirit of the ancestors who are believed to be the intercessors for the living; evil spirits who cause mischief, sickness, accidents and other bad or evil events; and the Spirit from God who has the

power to neutralize all the evil powers and offers justice to those in need of vengeance.

EVIL AND ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

The use of medicine in the form of fetishes and charms (*ode*) are common and there are different types of these. To the Igala, certain things which are regarded as human impossibilities are spiritually possible. Therefore, with the use of herbal medicine and *Ode* (fetishes and charms), the evil spirits can release supernatural powers to manifest in various ways (see Table 4). The Igala call these powers *gwiñ abogijo* (the power of the ancestors), and are used for solving such problems as prevention of accidents, premature deaths, power to seduce as well as curse enemies.

Others use fetishes to cause rain to fall or stop, to catch thieves and adulterers, while for some, fetishes are used to secure promotion, good luck and success in all endeavors.

People employ these and other means to get what they want. These needs are the life-threatening, economic, social and personal in nature. It is important to realize that the fact of these fetishes pose a serious problem and significant missiological question. If people have a way of meeting their needs without divine help, how can they be possibly convinced to consider an alternative way in Christ? For the Igala Christians, the church may not be able to provide quick solutions to his problem, but there are other options open to him in his desire to meet his needs. Thus, it is crucial that the church

TABLE 4:

TYPES OF FETISHES

NAME OF FETISH (ode)	PURPOSE OF USE OF FETISH (ukqlqwñ)	FOR WHOM (Toðu eñe)
ETUBI	To cause one to dematerialize or disappear so that no one can see him	Soldiers at war, drivers during accidents; thieves to escape arrest
EFULĚFU	To cause one or seduce one to deception without force	Those who need to get things from others fraudulently
ETU	To stop bullets from penetrating into the body and knives from cutting through the flesh	Soldiers at war and hunters who face dangers from wild animals constantly
ABQ	To stop any case or investigation against suspects or the guilty. <i>Abq ch alu maka</i> can also be used to effect adjournments or forgetfulness.	Criminals, Employees, Servants, or Others (Involved in any case that may lead to serious disciplinary action)
ĚLQ	Preventive medicine - Neutralizes all spiritual and non-spiritual poisons. It is purely herbal medicine	Sick people and those in need of protection from harm
QWQ-EJI	To seduce the husband to love his wife - no matter how bad she is by putting the husband under a spell	Housewives
ICHĚ	To curse enemies and invoke some bad omen against an enemy	Elders of households who face life-threatening issues
QLA FĚ	For promotion, success and good luck	Workers/Employees, Businessmen & students
IGEDE	To catch male adulterers (Those who have sex with married women)	The adulterous wife - kept in a box under the wife's bed
ĚBQ-AKPABANA	To detect or find thieves by the striking of the thunder which instantly kills the suspect/thief	For those whose things are stolen
ĚGAHI	To conjure reverence and fear from the common people	Traditional rulers and community leaders or those interested in power and politics
AMUDE-OJI	To stop premature death of infants	For parents/couples
ĚBQ - OJI	Fertility and reproductive power in marriage	Husband & wife
ECHANĚ	Rain-making	For farmers who need rain to cultivate

understand the implications of such options to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Igala do not engage themselves in fetishism for the fun of it, but for some felt needs which are significant to them. The felt needs which are addressed with fetishes are security, prosperity, success and social power and control.

The need for security is perhaps the most crucial to the Igala. This is because human life is involved. The fetishes used for the protection of one's life from the attack of his enemies are *elọ*, *etubi*, and *etuh*. *Elo* is a preventive medicine which neutralizes the deadly poisons and the power of *Iche* charms (magical spells). Combined with the power to disappear (*etubi*) and prevent knife cut or bullet from penetrating into someone's body (*Etuh*), one's need for protection is met.

Igala need for prosperity and success are met by the use of *qlafe*, *echane*, *efulefy* and *abọ* fetishes. These fetishes help people to seduce others for their own success and individual interests. People who are in need of promotion, successful business and success at examination often use *qlafe* charms to achieve their objections. Others use *efulefu* to seduce people to get what they want from them fraudulently to meet their need for prosperity. On the other hand, women use *qwọ-eji* to seduce their husband to love them or by putting the husband under a spell. This fetish (*qwọ-eji*) which is also used by men is one of the ways people control others or use means to control the minds of people.

Social power and control is a felt need of some people. In their desire to gain such power and control over others, they resort to the use of *egahi* which helps them to conjure reverence and fear from the common people.

The final felt need which fetishes and charms are used to address is family interest. The *ebq-oji*, and *amude-oji* fetishes are for fertility in marriage and prevention of infant mortality respectively. The need for children to perpetuate a family name leads people to patronize these rituals and fetishes. Another family need which fetishism meets is the issue of fidelity. The Igala men use the *Igede* fetish to keep their wives away from adultery. The *Igede* fetish is used by the men to control their wives' appetite for extra-marital sexual affairs. It also checks the men's sexual desire for married women.

These fetishes used in meeting genuine felt needs can also be abused as well. Fetishes are used to seduce men and women into love making and also by using means to steal from people (*qlafe*, *qwq-eji* and *efulefu*). Similarly, the power to disappear, render weapons inactive (*etuh* and *etubi*) and the power to control people's minds (*abq*, *egahi* and *iche*). While fetishes can be misused, the elders who have the cultural knowledge to prepare these fetishes and charms do not pass on this cultural knowledge and expertise outright to young people and those who are proven to misuse them. The way to acquire this knowledge is complex and so helps to prevent its active abuse and misuse.

This Igala belief in the power of the spirit world has always been looked upon by missionaries as superstitions. Harold Dollar commented,

the evangelical missionary force has gone out to the non-Western world with a worldview that sees all reality in terms of the natural-supernatural category. His view of the world differs little from the scientific mentality except for the Bible. But even in this view of reality all elements of the Bible that would infringe on the world of cause and effect must be abandoned . . . This view has led us to see the other culture only in terms of our view of reality. When their view of reality conflicted with our view this was usually put down as superstition or paganism. (Dollar 1981:95)

While "white people" and some Igala Christians have refused to recognize these powers, the belief in them is firm and strong. According to Boston, "belief in the power of medicine is fundamental to Igala thought and this attribute is recognized not only by the Igala themselves but by their neighbors, such as the *Ibo* who send men to Igala country to be trained in the use of this power" (1971:200). The efficacy of the fetishes and medicines depends largely on the professional abilities of the native doctors, sorcerers, and the witch doctors. Boston observes that "the power of medicines lies mainly in combining the right ingredients. Invocation also plays a part in the release of power. But the procedure of invocation is a simple one, known to all Igala. It consists of chewing *ata*, (alligator pepper), a seed containing hot peppery oils, and of ritually spraying the medicines with this mixture while reciting an invocation" (1971-201).

With regard to the question as to how the medicinal knowledge is acquired by the Igala, two main answers given are: first, that God revealed this knowledge to the ancestors - a reference to the first human beings created who passed on this knowledge; and the second is attributed to *Ichekpa*. Boston also identified this in his *Study of Medicines and Fetishes in Igala* (1971). He says "...the Igala believe that real expertise in this field (medicinal

knowledge) derives from a mythical creature called Ichekpa. These creatives are hairy anthropoids believed to inhabit pits deep in the forest. From time to time they abduct human children and bring them up as their own offspring. They pass on to the children their own knowledge of medicines which far exceeds any skill that a man could acquire by normal means" (1971:200). These two answers point the source of powers to God and the Spirits. It can be said that while human beings are involved in these supernatural processes, they are dormant and inactive partners as opposed to the dynamic and swift activity of the spirit beings. In support of Boston's statement concerning the power and influence of Ichekpa on Igala thought, it is necessary to relate the case of Isa who was abducted by Ichekpa.

Isa was a Christian and was active in his church. One day, he went to his farm and on his way to the farm he crossed the path of Ichekpa spirits. Ichekpa is also called Bush Baby. Ichekpa is a human/spirit creature. It has a disfigured human face, huge and with two legs facing backwards. The heels are facing the front while his toes face the back. In his spirit form, he dematerializes and causes people to become deaf and dumb.

After crossing the Bush Baby's path, he lost his way and wandered the rest of the day and was picked up by one Ichekpa to their house. There he was for seven days. During this period, Isa was fed from the food cooked by his own mother. Ichekpa goes to his home in his spirit form and takes food from the mother at the time everyone is eating. This is one of the ways people in the village knows that the lost or missing person is with Ichekpa. On the seventh day he was released and shown his way out of the bush but could not speak nor hear.

When he arrived home, seeing his condition, it became known that Ichekpa spirit had come upon him. Because he was a Christian, he would not allow the native doctors to perform the Ichekpa ritual. The Christians prayed for him but he would not speak. Later, the native doctors were invited and after performing their rituals, Isa began to speak and hear. He continued, however, to attend church services.

After a short while (a few months), while on his way to his farm, Isa crossed *Ichekpa* paths. *Ichekpa* paths are paths (unseen) that they had passed through the previous night. This time Isa was kept for 14 days. He was fed with food cooked at home brought from the village by the *Ichekpa* mysteriously. He also became deaf and dumb. He was released on the 14th day and was shown his way home.

On arriving home, this time he did not allow the Christians to pray for his condition. The native doctors were invited to administer herbs and he was healed. However, it became obvious to him that from this point on, he must worship the *Ichekpa* spirit. Today Isa is far removed from his people and is a strong believer in *Ichekpa* spirits and their worshipper. He has seen the power of Satan or *Ichekpa* spirits triumph over prayers of the Christians.

He possesses supernatural powers and works as a traditional doctor in his own village today. This case shows how the spirit world is active in Igala society, and the type of forces the Christians face daily. Furthermore, it shows how people are controlled by the Spirit world and how supernatural power is obtained.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SPIRIT WORLD

In Igala concept, the world of spirits consists of two categories. The good and evil spirits.

The spirit world is held responsible for almost all supernatural events. Even where some natural events such as death occurs, it is quickly attributed to *Ochu*, evil spirit in the form of witches or wizards. There are at least seven different types of spiritism in which people are involved (see Table 5). People are involved in these types of spiritism for the sake of meeting their needs of security, prosperity, good health and economic interests.

Of these seven types of spiritism, *Akema* (necromancy) is the only activity that is less common. The reason why it is not a common practice is

TABLE 5:

CLASSIFICATION OF THOSE INVOLVED IN SPIRITISM

SEX	NAME OF TYPE OF ACTIVITY	CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTIVITY	REMARKS
M and F	<i>Ochu</i> (witchcraft/ wizardy)	Telepathic activities. Transforms into anything they wish to use. Eats human flesh. Kills and causes diseases. Very harmful and destructive. Generally are undesirable elements in society.	Mostly women
M and F	<i>Obochi</i> (Traditional doctor) sorcery	Have general knowledge of traditional or herbal medicine. Combines same with ability of divination.	Mostly men with a handful or women.
M and F	<i>Abifa</i> (Diviner)	Engages in divination of all kinds—but cannot do any medicinal prescriptions.	Mostly men with very few women.
M and F	<i>Akema</i> (Necromancy)	Powers of telepathy. Communicates with the dead and the spirit world.	Mostly women and few men.
M and F	<i>Achogwu</i> (Medicine men)	Knowledge of general herbal medicine. Mostly do not engage in sorcery or divination.	Mostly men with few women.
M	<i>Otubu/Akpa</i> (Muslim- Sorcerers or Malams)	Possesses general knowledge of herbal medicine, divination, and always accompanies with some religious practices or rituals.	Restricted to males only.
M and F	<i>Ichekpa</i> (Anthropoid's practice)	Practices <i>Ichekpa</i> medicine, worship and rituals. Generally helps those abducted by <i>Ichekpa</i> , and children born who are regarded as <i>Ichekpa</i> offspring.	Mostly men with a few women.

because of the fact that the diviners and witches have the power of telepathy. Another reason is that those involved in necromancy usually do not practice traditional medicine. They can communicate with the dead and the spirit world but do not know how to deal with spiritual problems arising out of the telepathic activities.

Most people patronizing the activities of the spirit world are involved with the *oboichi* (sorcerers), *achogwu* (medicine men), *abifa* (diviners) and *otubu/akpa* (muslim sorcerers). These three types of spiritism are mostly engaged in by men and they involve the power to communicate with the spirit world, preparation of traditional medicine, and the ability to use fetishes and herbal medicine to solve problems brought by the clients.

Ichẹkpa (anthropoid's practice) is a common type of spiritism mostly practiced by men. There are two types of *Ichẹkpa* practice. The first is the practice by parents of a child whose mother saw or crossed *Ichẹkpa* paths during her pregnancy. Such children are dedicated to *Ichẹkpa* and it is the responsibility of the parents to perform *Ichẹkpa* rituals on behalf of their child until he is old enough to decide for himself whether or not he wants to continue to practice the *Ichẹkpa* ritual. Usually, children stop their parents as soon as they are old enough to know what is happening.

The second type of *Ichẹkpa* practice is that involving adults who were abducted by *Ichẹkpa* spirits and specifically told to practice their rituals. In such cases, people involved are given incredible amount of extraordinary spiritual and medicinal powers by *Ichẹkpa* spirits. These practices have

economic implications. The practitioners have economic interests as well as the need to control or lead people. In these practices, these needs are met.

To the Igala, *Ochu* is responsible for premature deaths through accidents, fire, drowning, snake bite, sickness and poisoning. In this regard, death is seen as the end of one's physical-bodily presence on earth. And while death is seen as the worst thing that could happen to man, it is rarely divinely appointed. Most deaths are believed to be premature, especially when the deceased is young.

In the course of this research, two deaths occurred involving young people. There was also a case of a young boy who fell sick. These events were studied and thoroughly observed and they reveal vividly what is the Igala concept of death and sickness in relation to the spirit world. Sometimes, Christians believe that accidental deaths are premature. In such situations, the cause of the death is attributed to the evil men who use spiritual means to harm people. The following case is an example of this belief.

Case #1: DEATH AS A RESULT OF A SNAKE BITE

One day a Christian young man went to work on his farm. While working on the field, he stepped on a snake and he was bitten. Immediately after this, he was rushed to the traditional doctor who began to treat him. As he was not responding well to herbal treatment, the family members decided to ask for medical help from a nearby Orthodox hospital. With all these treatments this young man died. While he was about to die, he sang Christian songs, prayed and admonished his family members not to worry as he was sure of victory in Christ. His words encouraged his believing brethren and friends.

Upon further investigation, it was revealed that this young man had a serious misunderstanding with some people who also threatened his life. Two weeks before the snake bite, the deceased

dreamed and in his dream he saw an old woman who threatened to take his life. At that same time, the wife of the deceased dreamed that her husband had been bit by a snake. They both prayed and asked the Lord for boldness and protection. To further complicate the issue, the elder brother of the deceased dreamed and in his dream, his brother died. To sum up, three weeks later the young man died and these dreams became a reality. But, while the flesh gave way to a natural cause, he was victorious spiritually in Christ.

After the death of this young man, there were several reactions. The unbelievers reacted naturally and accused the *Ochu* (witch) for being responsible for the death. They went further to castigate the believing brothers of the deceased for failing to take him (deceased) to the native doctor where there was hope of healing and survival. The deceased on his own was accused for leaving himself vulnerable to the attack of his enemies. To the unbelievers, he would have gone to get help from native doctors for protection when his life was threatened.

On the other hand, the believers mostly believed that the death was premature, and some went further to suspect that the deceased's enemies themselves were responsible. In the end, the believers consoled themselves that it was God's will and that was the reason such premature death was allowed.

By assuming that the death was premature, it is believed that even though it occurred through a snake bite, a spiritual means was used to take this man's life. In other words he was bewitched by his enemies.

Another area in which supernatural power is demonstrated is in the use of thunder to detect and punish thieves. The following is a case of a woman who was killed by lightning/thunder after the ritual was performed.

Case #2: A WOMAN STRUCK BY LIGHTENING/THUNDER

There was a woman in her late thirties who had been married at least thrice. She is known to be an undesirable lady having become

notorious for prostitution and theft. One day a farmer in their village complained that his palm fruits were stolen. Investigation concerning the missing palm fruits was not successful because no one was arrested with the stolen palm fruits. However, it was strongly believed in that village that it was the woman mentioned earlier who stole the palm fruits.

Since there was no way to prove that, the farmer decided to contact a native doctor who has a thunder divinity (*Ẹbọ Akpabana*) for the purpose of punishing the one who stole the palm fruits. After all the thunder rituals had been performed, the farmer went away to wait until thunder would strike whoever was responsible.

Shortly after the thunder ritual was performed, the clouds formed and it began to rain. The woman suspected happened to be in the field harvesting palm fruits. As the rain fell, lightening and thunder struck and the woman was killed. It then became public that she was the one who stole the farmer's palm fruits.

It should be mentioned that the thunder ritual was not invoked on anyone. For while she was a suspect because of her past activities, no one knew for sure she was the culprit. And sure enough, mysteriously she was killed by the thunder. This case shows how people can use means to control celestial bodies.

Illness is believed to have some spiritual causes. The following case illustrates this belief.

Case #3: THE SICK BOY WHO ALMOST DIED

Idrisu was a school boy, of about 13 years old. He became ill and when traditional herbal medicine could not cure him, his parents took him to a nearby health clinic. His case became serious and complicated. He could no longer talk nor hear. His heart was beating slowly. He was also convulsive. His parents lost all hope of his survival.

When Idrisu's grandfather saw his condition, he decided to take Idrisu away from the Health Clinic. He thought that native doctors could cure his grandson. He invited native doctors and sorcerers and they consulted their Oracle (*Ifa*) to find out the cause of the sickness.

The native doctors advised that unless the spiritual problems are solved, Idrisu will never respond to treatment. Idrisu's parents spent a lot of money buying chickens to be offered as sacrifices to appease the ancestors. The mother was put under pressure and was told to confess that she was a witch and was thus responsible for bewitching her son. She was told that her son would die if she did not. She declined to confess that she was responsible for her son's sickness.

About two weeks into this sickness, the traditional doctors failed to produce any help. Idrisu's teachers went to where he was kept and removed him forcefully (against the wish of his parents and grandfather) to a good Catholic Church hospital. There, for the first time, Idrisu was diagnosed to be suffering from meningitis. The doctors told them that Idrisu's case was a serious one and could not say whether he was going to live. However, he was admitted into the hospital and received treatment for about two weeks.

The third week, Idrisu became well and was discharged. Contrary to the predictions of the native doctors and Idrisu's grandfather, he survived the sickness.

In this case, four main issues were involved. These are:

- 1) That every sickness and disease has a cause other than the natural cause.
- 2) That either the patient is a witch or has been be-witched by others.
- 3) That such spiritual causes must be removed through certain prescribed rituals before medical treatment commences, and
- 4) That healing comes on the successful removal of the spiritual causes.

These three cases reveal how the spirit world operates. It also shows what people engage in to help bring about Satanic attack. Furthermore, the world views of the Igala in relation to sickness, death and witchcraft have been seen. It is important to see what people empowered by Satan can do to

in her room during the Ebo ritual. She did, however, remain in her own compound.

When the *Ẹbọ* priest was told that Ajimi would not hide but remained outside in her own compound, the priest decided that the appropriate thing to do was to curse her to death. The priest therefore went to Ajimi's compound and cursed her by the name of his divinities. By this curse, she was to be inflicted with a dangerous disease which would result in death and burial in the bush. This is perhaps the most serious of all ritual curses.

Ajimi responded that, in the name of Jesus Christ, nothing would happen to her. She explained that she had seen only people who disguised themselves and who pretended to be some divinities. She went further to explain that she would fear no human being associated with the *Ẹbọ* ritual. She concluded her response by saying that her God was able to deliver her from all the curses and vindicate His name. About two years later, this priest died of the dangerous disease he had invoked on Ajimi and was buried in the bush. Today the priest's house has been deserted as his family moved away to a new and different location to settle. Ajimi is still alive and active in the things of the Lord.

The case above shows how God can intervene in a spiritual conflict and vindicate His own name. This victory does not imply that the power of the Spirit world is a myth. It only shows that God has the power to overrule. The next case illustrates how people can use the power of the spirit world for their own interests.

Case #2: ATAMA (PRIEST) VERSUS ABU
(A CHRISTIAN LEADER)

Atama Ebo was a priest. He was well respected and feared by non-Igala Christians. This is because as an *Atama* (priest), he possesses powers and supernatural abilities which are not common to ordinary people. There came a time when a land dispute arose between this priest and a Christian leader called Abu in the same community. The matter was so serious that it could not be resolved traditionally at home. The priest threatened that Abu will not live to use the disputed land, having argued that the land was rightfully his.

Abu was so scared that he reported the dispute and threatenings to the police. The police therefore ordered the arrest of the priest, who was subsequently detained. However, the police sergeant who ordered the priest's arrest and detention was not familiar with Igala culture and so failed to understand the implications of treating a priest that way.

The priest, fully knowing that the police officer did not know him and was not familiar with Igala tradition, told the police officer that it was forbidden to arrest and detain a priest. The Igala police officers who were familiar with Igala priesthood warned their officer to release the priest to avoid losing his life. The police officer did not listen nor pay attention to the advice and warnings of his colleagues. The priest was put in the police cell and was locked up. He, however, to the amazement of the police officers, came out of the cell while the door was still well locked. The priest was very upset and unhappy about this development.

He realized that the police officer who ordered his detention would not listen to him. He told the police officer that his body had been defiled and warned that the police officer would suffer the consequences of his irrational decision. He cursed the police officer and vowed that the police officer would die within 14 (fourteen) days unless his priesthood was not after the order of his ancestors. Within that given period, that police officer died according to the words of the Atama.

When the complainant (Abu) went back to the police to report that the priest was still trespassing his land, no action could be taken against the priest. The police officers complained that they would not want to put their lives on the line. The complainant, as a result, failed in his bid to claim this land from the priest. Although thoroughly legal, customary or statutory rights of occupancy could not be established by both parties, the priest got the land because of his position and power. The complainant was intimidated and was no match for the priest. Today the priest is still living and Abu is dead.

This priest believed that it was his ancestors that fought for him.

Though it cannot be claimed that he was responsible for the death of Abu, it is feared that he might have been responsible. What has puzzled the Christians is the fact that Abu, being a Christian, had been humiliated. People wondered

why the power of darkness could out-play the power of God. This case reinforces the fear of some Igala Christians concerning the inability of the church to confront those using spiritual means to punish Christians.

The following cases are to show that God has His own way of delivering His people. Although the church did not come out in a power encounter with those using spiritual means to harm Christians, what matters is whether they were delivered or left unprotected.

Case #3: THE CONVERSION OF AN IFA PRIEST

Ogah was a young man who grew up to become a sorcerer and priest. He specialized in consulting the spirits through the Ifa Oracle. He was so successful that everyone in his family and extended family looked to him for answers to their spiritual problems.

Because he was very famous and powerful, the Christians were afraid to preach to him. He had the power to communicate with the spirits and was also a seer. However, one day he decided that he was going to give his life to Christ. When his people heard that, nobody believed him. As he persisted, his mother came to him to persuade him to change his mind. He refused to be persuaded. Sensing the danger facing her son if he should leave his priesthood, his mother threw herself on the ground and wept for her son.

Ogah's decision to accept Christ was made because he could not help himself even though he was meeting other people's needs.

When he accepted the Lord as His Savior, people told him the ancestors would kill him within 7 or 14 days. Seven days went by without any problem. He waited until the 14th day when he was told he would die but nothing happened to him. He survived the death threat. He is still alive and is the treasurer of his church. He was delivered from witchcraft and

idolatry and God manifested his protective power, so that the ancestors could not harm him.

This next case also shows the importance of implicit faith that God can bring about the deliverance that is often needed.

Case #4: **JOHN'S DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH**

John was a young man working in a company with a promising future. He was a Christian. Because he would not allow corruption and undisciplined attitudes, he was hated by his subordinate officers. His life was threatened. Traditional medicines, charms and fetishes were left in his office. John was advised by his friends to contact traditional doctors to get some protection for himself but he would not. He said that God was able to protect him.

One day, one of John's subordinate staff went to a witch to get some poisonous medicines with which to kill John. As he was preparing this medicine, another staff saw him and demanded to know what the medicines were for. The first staff explained that the medicine would be used to eliminate John in order that he might become the boss in the office. The other staff who heard that became upset about this diabolic plan to kill their boss. He did not see what wrong their boss John had done, and he advised his colleague to do away with his plans. When his advice was not heeded, he decided to prepare his own medicine to destroy the staff member who was preparing to kill John.

In the end, the staff that was preparing to kill John was defeated and his medicine was destroyed. As a result of his fear of being exposed, he left his job. All these things happened behind John. It was after all these that John was told of the attempts made to kill him and how he was saved.

When John left the company some years later, people came to tell him how many attempts were made to destroy him in the spiritual realm. John, who is a strong and committed Christian today, believes that it was God that delivered him. He explained that the man who replaced him when he

resigned was poisoned and killed in office. John explained that the power of Satan should never be underestimated. Rather, it should be confronted with the power of Christ who alone is capable of neutralizing Satanic powers.

The danger posed by those involved in spiritism is not limited to Christians. Even those who were once members of such spiritual activities face the same threat following their conversion. This case shows the pressures faced by a convert from such a background.

Case #5: THE CONVERSION OF A FORMER MASQUEURADE

Atah was a pagan who was involved in all different practices associated with paganism. He was also a man initiated into the ancestor's cult. Because he was a member of the cult, he became a masquerade (*Egwu*). Being a masquerade, he had his hands in native medicine and possessed incredible amounts of supernatural power.

In spite of his power and influence in his religion and community, he decided to become a Christian. When his friends and family members heard of his plans, they persuaded him to recant his decision. They warned him of the serious consequences of such a decision especially since he was an initiated member of the ancestor's cult. He received a lot of threats and was told that he was risking his life.

Atah ignored all the pressures and threats and turned to Christ. God spared his life despite attempts to kill him. He remains very faithful and is an elder in his church today.

Some times the whole church is threatened. In these following cases, the believers decided to trust God for victory in spite of the gravity and seriousness of the threat to their lives. God honors such determination, faith and the boldness to face the challenge of the spiritual forces.

Case #6: CHURCH ELDERS VERSUS AMUDA CULT

The Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML) planted a church in a small village in Abocho district. Soon after this, the church building was constructed. However, it was located near the Ancestor's Shrine and an Iroko (hardwood) tree, where sacrifices are offered to the spirits of the ancestors.

Not long after the construction of this church, the religious leaders of the ancestor's cult and their masquerade began to terrorize the Christians. They argued that women were not supposed to be outside or close to their shrine. They further argued that it was a taboo for women to see their masquerade. Their desire was the destruction of the church building and its possible relocation.

This argument generated into a serious problem. The unbelievers resorted to spiritual warfare. The Christians were also subjected to physical insults and humiliation. In addition, several means were employed to kill the leaders of this young church. Other churches prayed for this young church and God gave them boldness to stand firm in the face of threats and persecutions. The masquerade had supernatural powers to destroy and people far and near feared him. This did not affect the faith of the believers in this church.

One day, as it was his usual practice, the masquerade moved out of the shrine to terrorize and drive away the Christians. As he was coming out of the shrine, he fell flat on the ground. He stood up and attempted to chase the Christians and fell flat on his face to the ground. It was a mighty falling so disgraceful that he quickly rushed back to the Shrine.

Immediately following this incidence, the leaders and owners of the cult and masquerade began to die one after another. The rest of them came to the church elders to confess the evil plans and charms they had earlier used on the Christians. These men were amazed that their diabolic activities against the Christians backfired and destroyed their own people. In the end, the church became very strong and believers were respected in that community.

This case also shows the forces that Igala Christians are fighting. It demonstrates that God will respond when Christians are ready and prepared to sanctify Him.

Case #7: APEH VERSUS A TRIBAL CHIEF

Apeh was a man whose ancestors and family members practiced paganism. When he became a Christian, he became the first in his clan to do so and as such faced a difficult and hard experience. In his eagerness to evangelize, other people turned to Christ and he decided to build a church where believers would worship.

The plan to build the church met stiff opposition from the the Chief who had jurisdiction over the area. The Chief was opposed to the establishment of the church as he thought that that would cause believers to forsake their cultures and traditions. In his bid to stop the construction of the church building, he instituted a court action.

When the Christians heard of the development, they pooled their resources together to support Mr. Apeh in his attempt to get the court to grant him the permission to continue construction. The day arrived when the case was to be mentioned in court, and the courtroom was packed full. The chief saw the interest of Christians from other places and decided to withdraw his case. Therefore, on that day the case was withdrawn, for he said that he could not fight against God.

Soon after this, the Chief became insane and went about from place to place. Because of the seriousness of his mental illness, he spent most of this time wandering in the bush. A few months later, he died in the bush and was buried.

This incident brought much fear among his own people who were reluctant in receiving the Gospel message. The church grew and many came to know Christ as a result. This incident also helped Apeh in his witness and there was much less opposition to his preaching.

The case of Utaji is one that brought much fear to many Christians. The nature and type of opposition was serious and diverse.

Case #8: UTAJI VERSUS SOME NOMINAL CHRISTIANS

Mr. Utaji was a Christian worker sent by his mission, to shepherd a church that was struggling due to lack of proper biblical teaching. Because of the serious spiritual problem of the believers in this church, it was difficult for the previous pastor to tell them the implications of their new life in Christ. For while there were many believers in this church, most of them were nominal Christians who were involved practically in all activities of the natural man.

When Mr. Utaji came to this church, he prayerfully decided that the Bible must be the standard by which all professing believers must live. In his teachings and preachings, he established the unbiblicity of polygamy, fornication, the use of charms, fetishes and native medicine, the Christian marrying an unbeliever and drunkenness. The nominal Christians who took glory in these practices insisted that the church must officially allow these practices.

However, Mr. Utaji, assisted by other elders, stood his ground and trusted the Lord to protect them from the plans of the devil to split the church and weaken its teachings. In the meantime, some of the nominal members formed a clique in the church and engaged themselves in diabolic activities with the intent to kill Mr. Utaji through spiritual means.

Investigation revealed that they contacted several native doctors who produced deadly medicines and concoctions with which to kill Mr. Utaji. They engaged a lunatic to harrass and terrorize him and his family. Finally, they incited the village chief, who was a Muslim, to use his authority to declare Mr. Utaji a security risk in the village.

In all these plans and activities to kill Mr. Utaj and members of his family, he remained unshaken and faithful to the Lord. When they saw the futility of their actions, some of them left the church to become Muslims or pagans. Others remained and publicly confessed to Mr. Utaji of their evil deeds and their conviction that it was God who sent him to that church. They could not understand how Mr. Utaji stood the oppositions and their poisonings.

Mr. Utaji has left this church, but it remains a strong and growing church. It was a church that has witnessed a drama - the outworking of God's power.

In all these cases, it is clear that these Christians were facing difficult situations. They knew the type of powers they were confronting since they were all saved from paganism. However, they decided to rely upon the power of the risen Christ for deliverance and ultimate victory.

THE IGALA CONCEPTS OF GOD

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AS A SUPREME BEING

The concept of God in Igala culture is so pervasive that it is generally assumed that the whole world has similar beliefs. That God exists is expressed by the Igala words, "*Qjq dmq!*" This means "God is there." This concept is assumed. The existence of God is shown or assumed in several themes in Igala culture.

First, it is evidenced in some Igala myths (*Qhiaka*). For example:

Myth 1: GOD, DEATH AND HUMAN BEINGS

One day, God sent Death to the world to take one person. Death came to one young adult and said to him, "God said I should take you." The young adult told Death, "Please, leave me for sometime because I am still young and have not enjoyed my life in the world." Death left and returned to God. On getting there, God asked Death why he returned empty-handed. Death explained that the young man begged and pleaded because he had not lived long enough to enjoy his life.

God sent death for the second time to the world to bring one person to him. Death came into the world and saw a young boy. He told the young boy that God had sent him. The boy screamed and said to death, "You can see that I am a boy, not knowing good and evil. Please leave me yet." On hearing this, Death returned to God without

bringing anyone. When God asked him why he came empty-handed, he explained how the young boy persuaded him.

For a third time, God called Death and sent him to go and bring one person from the world. Death arrived in the world and met an old man and told him that God had instructed him to take him. The old man reacted, "Please Death, leave me for a while because I want to enjoy my life in the world. I do not want to leave this world yet." Death left him and returned to God without anyone.

After this third incidence, God was annoyed and in his annoyance, he cuts off one of Death's ears and plucks one of his eyes. He further directs Death to go back into the world and take somebody. This time, Death left God and met somebody in the world and explained to that man that God said he must be taken. The man pleaded with Death passionately. Death answered and said, "I won't leave you because it was my leniency in the past that led God to do me harm." Death further used two proverbs to justify his unpreparedness to listen to his pleadings.

Igala: *Igbeli jeta ucha achibun*
English: A three legged pot-holder prevents the pot from falling.

Meaning: After two mistakes, a person learns vital lessons to prevent a third similar mistake.

Igala: *Uneke modugba onę kuna gwukojo no*
English: One does not burn his lip for drinking boiling drink to satisfy someone else.

Meaning: In the quest to help somebody, a person does not assume total responsibility for that person.

These proverbs say that one should not kill himself because he wants to help other people.

Finally, death said, "Whether you agree or not, you'll go with me."

The end lesson is that death has no mercy and listens to no appeals. It shows God's absolute power over death.

The existence of God is assumed in several other expressions such as:

Qjq dee - which means "only God"

Qjq lẹ - which means "it is God"

Qjq cheyi - which means "God did it"

Qjq chenukpahiu - which means "God is powerful"

The existence of God is assumed in the following Igala stories:

Story 1: PROXIMITY OF THE SKY AND SUN TO THE PEOPLE

At the beginning, when God created the world, the sky was close to the ground (land). The people living in the world at that time were very short. One day, some people were pounding something with the pistle in the mortar (wooden). They were so careless that they hit the sky with their pistle. To prevent further incidence, the sky went up higher.

The same tradition says that fire told the sun to move out so that it would not be too close to mankind because of the sun's hot temper. Fire recognized that it too destroys, but saw that it has some advantages over the sun. That is why the sun is far from the world, and fire remains with the people.

This story shows what the Igala believe about the creation of the universe.

Story 2: HOW GOD MOVED AWAY FROM PEOPLE

In the beginning, the sky (*Ojale*) was so close to the ground. The ground was also very soft and tender. That was why Carmeleon walks or moves gently. Many other animals run to prevent the ground from sinking. At this time, there were very few people in the world. Two women pounding in the mortar had some domestic quarrels and those misunderstandings led them to hit the sky with their pistle. The sky (*Ojale*) was so annoyed that it went up to its present position or location.

These stories show that the world was created and that the person who created it was in control of it. They offer explanations for the natural world around the Igala people.

As to the existence of God in Igala culture, it goes beyond the concept of a Supreme Being to an idea of a Supreme Being who is active in the universe and in the affairs of mankind. God's activity is recognized by the above Igala expressions which are testimonies to His power and immanence. It is also necessary to point out that the Igala story of the beginnings (*Aba'kwanę*) portrays a highly transcendent God who left His original place because of His impatience and anger against man's flirt with sin.

THE DEFINITION OF GOD

Who or what is God? It is difficult to define God in abstract. The definition of God in Igala culture must be in the light of how He is perceived by the Igala.

1. The Igala knows God by different names:
 - a. *Ọjọ odoba ọgagwu* - God Almighty
 - b. *Ọjọ chama cha'la* - Eternal and powerful God
 - c. *Ọjọ olichoke* - Powerful God
 - d. *Ọjọ onu* - God is king
 - e. *Ọjọnu ọka* - God as wise king
 - f. *Ęna'tę* - One who is above
 - g. *Ọjọ gwalogwo* - God who chastens
 - h. *Ọjọ akpabana* - God of thunder
 - i. *Odu mi'onu* - My Lord who is King.
 - j. *Ọjọ arọme* - God of vengeance

2. God is called by description of his attributes:
 - a. *Ọjọ ejumoni* - God who is merciful
 - b. *Ọjọ enalachi* - God who is wicked

- c. *Qjq ufedq* - God who loves
- d. *Qlamamañya* - Awesome one
- e. *Qjq kima tewñ amę* - God who avenges
- f. *Qjq amęnę manikwu* - God who keeps records of or God of justice
- g. *Qjq ma* - God of knowledge

Igala refer to these different characteristics of God according to the circumstances, situation and the person who is using the term. From these names one also sees how Igala have reflected upon and formulated an indigenous theology of God.

3. God is defined by some human personal names.

Igala people have names which express the definition of God in their concept. These expressions could be said to be related to God's perceived attributes. They could communicate His definition in the minds of the parents as well who select these names for their children. Some of these personal names are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
<i>Adu-qjq</i>	The servant or slave of God
<i>Ajqgwu</i>	The God who wars
<i>Ęnę-qjq</i>	The man or person of God
<i>Ele-qjq</i>	The gift of God
<i>Ema-qjq</i>	The knowledge or wisdom of God
<i>Eiyi kojq nwa</i>	The plan or desire of God
<i>Ęnęmqna</i>	Who knows tomorrow, only God
<i>Ilęmqna</i>	The world does not know tomorrow
<i>Qjq-ma</i>	Only God knows
<i>Qjq-chogwu</i>	God is medicine
<i>Qjq-chide</i>	God is the protector
<i>Qjq-ago</i>	God sees or watches
<i>Qjq-nugwa</i>	To God be thanksgiving
<i>Qjq-nqka</i>	God is wisdom or perfection
<i>Qjq-nuba</i>	Boasting belongs to God
<i>Qjq-chęnemi</i>	God is mine
<i>Qjq-duñwęnę</i>	God is the one who gives
<i>Qjq-yode</i>	God is the helper

<i>Qjq-gbanę</i>	God is the one holding
<i>Ufędq-qjq</i>	Love of God
<i>Utęwń-qjq</i>	I am for God
<i>Unekwu-qjq</i>	The will of God
<i>Ugbede-qjq</i>	Thanks to God

In these names, God is clearly defined. These names and qualities convey only descriptives of the ultimate or high God. They do not refer to any of the Igala tangible deities or divinities.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

There are two categories of God's attributes. Those qualities of God in God's personal names are those incommunicable attributes. When the Igala says, God Almighty, God is King, Eternal God, and One who is above, he is calling God by names which are characteristic of His works and attributes.

However, some other attributes of God are those revealed in His interactions and dealings with or toward mankind, and are thus communicable. The following are examples of such communicable attributes of God:

<u>(Attributes)</u>	<u>(Igala expression)</u>
1. God is righteous	<i>Qjw ęnq' kpa kpa</i>
2. God is love	<i>Qjq ę'nufędq</i>
3. God is good	<i>ęn'yqjq</i>
4. God is merciful	<i>Qjq ęne'juomi</i>
5. God is truthful	<i>Qjq ęne'chochi</i>
6. God of thunder	<i>Qjq Akpabana</i>
7. God of vengeance	<i>Qjq Kimatewń amę/qjq Arqme</i>
8. God the creator	<i>Achq'na</i>
9. God of wisdom	<i>Qjq'ęnqka</i>
10. God of knowledge	<i>Qjq'ma</i>

These attributes show God in His immanent and transcendent position. They show that God is believed to be in control of His creation even

though He is far removed from mankind. However, these beliefs do not present a clear understanding of God's moral nature and sense of justice. Another important concept which is generally believed and recognized is the holiness of God (*elifo*). All rituals and sacrifices have some strict rules and observances which are intended to show purity and holiness. Some things that are considered unholy and should not be associated with offerings to God are:

1. Sexual contacts with women without purification.
2. Bringing oil before or to certain holy places and shrines.
3. Menstruating women in certain holy places.
4. Blackness - a symbol of evil.

God's attributes can also be understood in proverbs. The following are examples of proverbs in which God's attributes are clearly shown.

Igala: *Ẹla kimanotiyin, ojq anayichi ubi wñ.*
 English: God protects the animal without a tail from flies.

Meaning: It is God that provides for those who cannot help themselves and have no human help; that God is always available to help those without help.

Igala: *Ele ojq kima wilẹ eju.*
 English: The gift of God is never appreciated by the world.

Meaning: Free gifts are never valued like the ones bought, no matter how superior the free gifts are.

Igala: *Ojq arona wẹnẹ ki bitẹn (mabi onatẹ ñojọ a ren)*
 English: One does not leave his door open for God to close.

Meaning: God helps those who help themselves. This is used to teach that man must endeavor to be busy and to fight for his survival instead of sitting and waiting for an outside help or miracles of some sort.

THE WORKS OF GOD

There is a general belief that God (*Qjọ*) created everything. Specifically, it is believed that God is:

1. **The creator of the universe:** The universe comprises the physical and human creation. The earth and heaven; the animal and plant life; and the human race and all God's creation.

2. **Gives life and takes it away:** God is the giver of life and the cause of death. While God's love and mercy is exhibited in His creature act, death brings the negative concept of God to the Igala people. Though God may be looked upon as a good and bad God, there is no doubt about the fact that they refer to the same God who acts in different ways and forms.

3. **Cause of sickness and sufferings:** In times of difficulties and calamities, God is held responsible. While it is believed that bad spirits (*ebili*) or witches (*ochu*) are directly responsible, they are carriers or channels used by God to bring about the execution of evil. God is the ultimate source of these evils. This view of God is supported by two Igala proverbs.

Igala: *Qjọgbane, takile chogwu.*
English: It is God that protects before human medication.

Meaning: No matter how powerful a medicine is, its curative power is from God. It is used to show people that all human efforts are subject to God's approval and function.

Igala: *Qjọ adone chọka.*
English: It is God who makes one perfect.

Meaning: Wisdom and perfection in human beings are God-given.

4. Controller of the universe and events: God is seen as the principal world actor. He is the controller and determiner of all actions and events, be they good or evil. Though man is held responsible for his acts, it is generally held that everything happens as planned by God and ordained by Him. Man on his own, therefore, is helpless and cannot change divine will, except through certain prescribed sacrifices. The *Inikpi* story is one that shows how divine will can be changed through blood sacrifice.

Story 3: INIKPI, THE BELOVED DAUGHTER OF AYGEBBA

Traditions say that the Igala paid tribute to the Oba of Benin and the King of Jukun. It is also believed that there were wars between the Igala and Binis and the Jukun and Igala. The dates of these wars are not exact, but are said to be between 1449 A.D. and 1516 A.D.

In these wars, it is strongly believed that a human being was offered in sacrifice for the redemption of the Igala kingdom.

In connection with the offer of a human being for the salvation of the Igala people, it is strongly believed that there was a war between the Igala Jukun or Benin Empire and the existence of the Igala kingdom was seriously threatened. Consequently, the Igalas were a vassal to these two powers during that period. The impending war was the result of the Ayegba revolution in which the Igala refused to pay tributes to these kingdoms. As the Igala kingdom was facing an imminent danger, the priests consulted the gods through the Ifa oracle. The oracle revealed that the gods demanded the only daughter of Ayegba (the Attah) to be buried alive. Later on, the daughter willingly told her father of her decision to do the wish of the gods for the redemption of the Igala people as a kingdom. According to this tradition, Inikpi was thus buried alive with nine other slaves as the gods demanded. The Igala people went to war and defeated the invading Jukun army and the kingdom became independent and sovereign. Today, there is an annual remembrance ceremony in all Igala for this heroic act of Inikpi. She is well honored and respected by all Igala.

Facts to be Known of *Inikpi* Story:

1. She was the daughter of the Igala Supreme King.

2. She had all the royal advantages, protection, and power.
3. She willingly decided to offer her life being the one whose life was demanded.
4. The redemption of the Igala kingdom was her concern, and though her Father could not tell her, she decided on her own accord to do the will of her Father.
5. Her father's will was her own desire.
6. She died in honor - with nine slaves who never wanted to die.
7. She is still remembered today.

The story of *Inikpi* is a story that shows a way a kingdom was redeemed from total destruction. While there is a conflict as to which particular war *Inikpi* died, the actual historicity about her heroic act was never questioned. It is a household story among the Igala people.

The story gives a basis for Igala belief in God as the creator of all things and controller of all creatures. *Inikpi's* story may not be the first or only story portraying the belief in blood sacrifices for atonement and redemption. It is, however, the only comprehensive and well documented or preserved story which reinforces the Igala beliefs in sacrifices, rituals and their concept of salvation, propitiation and atonement.

THE DECREES OF GOD

The decrees of God is in reference to God's purpose and power in relation to determining all things. The Igala people believe in an all powerful God who decides to do whatever He pleases. The idea of the decrees of God present God in good and bad light.

In relation to good things, God is hailed when something supernatural happens. When God, in His divine will, punishes the wicked, He is called the God of vengeance (in the good sense). If God blesses people, He is called the powerful, omnipresent and all wise God. To the Igala, if God determines to do things, He will execute them and bring them to pass.

However, when it comes to bad things, God is accused of being the cause. It is believed that death, sickness, suffering, poverty, infertility, impotency, and all physical calamities are caused or allowed by God. This is often expressed in "*Qjq che'yi*" (God did it) or "*Qjq ena la chi*" (wicked God) or "*Qjq tqwɔnɔwñ yi*" (God is the one who allows it). In God's permissive will, people who have the knowledge of traditional medicine, (*ogwu*) use means (*uma*) to cause some bad things to happen to others. In such a situation, it is God who allows or gives the power. The direct exercise of such power is, however, credited to the evil spirits (*ebili*) and the traditional doctor (*acho'gwu*).

This idea and understanding of God's decrees leaves man very helpless in God's hands and thus portrays a fatalistic belief. Whatever happens, happens because it is either ordained by God or allowed by God and human beings have no control over. However, whatever is allowed by God is not directly caused by God and man can use his own knowledge of medicine (*uma*) to protect himself from calamities that such a permissive will might bring upon man.

THE ESSENCE OF GOD

The essence of God has to do with His basic nature or substance. From what can be known about God in Igala belief system, it would be right to say that God's essence may be characterized as follows:

1. He is invisible: God is believed to be invisible. He is capable of turning into anything at any time and anywhere. But while He can turn into anything at anytime His essence is still invisible.

2. He is masculine in nature: The only way this is expressed is in the way God's power is hailed and acknowledged. When God demonstrates some powers, he is called *en̄k̄el̄e'meji* (two men) which means that He exhibited too much power. Some personal names show that He is masculine (*Adu-oj̄o* and *En̄e-oj̄o* — being masculine names).

3. He has no wife and children: There is no idea at all about having a wife and children.

4. He is great: God is believed to be great in His essence. This is reflected in expressions such as "*oj̄o egb̄e'gb̄e*" (God you are great) and "*Oj̄o en̄awuwu*" (wonderful God).

5. He is self-existent: God is also believed to be self-existent. This is assumed and the Igala have no doubts about it. To them God controls himself, acts according to His own will and nature, and controls the affairs of the universe. While it is believed that he existed out of himself, how this is possible has never been questioned by the Igala people.

ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

The whole nature of the spirit world is so complex that it can be understood with case studies and a thorough understanding of the religious beliefs and practices of the Igala. Although it is difficult to make a clear distinction between Igala traditional religious practices and spiritism in Igala concept, it should be realized that the main distinction is in the main object of focus. Thus, while in spiritism, the spirit world is the main focus and emphasis, in Igala traditional religion, the ancestors and the Almighty God (*Qjọ chama chala*) are prominent and centre of focus.

The Igala venerate their ancestors and worship is offered to God through them. This act of worship through the ancestors is mostly carried out through rituals which the Igala refer to as *Ichẹbọ*. On the other hand, spiritism which involves the production and use of fetishes is an activity involving man and evil spirits. The Igala refer to this act of spiritism as *ogwu-eche*.

Every Igala pagan knows how to worship God and venerate his ancestors. *Ichẹbọ* (ritual) is the means through which God is worshipped. However, spiritism (*ogwu-eche*) is a spiritual activity which demands special ability that is not available to every Igala worshipper. To be pagan is not synonymous with being spiritualistic. While all those involved in spiritism have the need to offer or perform rituals to God through their ancestors, not all those who perform rituals as an act of worship of God and veneration of ancestors have the ability to engage in spiritism.

Spiritism is important and crucial to the survival of the Igala. There are at least three reasons for its importance. First, spiritism is meeting certain felt needs of the people. The Igala do not just engage in spiritualistic activity for the fun of it. It is a quest for a solution to life's crucial and critical problems. These felt needs could be either bad or good. It could be an individual, family or group need. People continue to engage in spiritism because they have fulfillment of their physical and spiritual needs. Secondly, spiritism is a network of economic activity. It is an economic system which provides job opportunities or employment to practitioners. It is also important to mention that discrimination on the basis of age and sex is very minimal. The female sex is as much active as the male sex. This is perhaps an area where women are not discriminated against. They are allowed and encouraged to participate. Thirdly, spiritism is important because it shows the human limitations as far as his ability to be completely independent is concerned. This extreme limitation of human factor also shows the crucial need for man to depend on the spirit world for solution to life-threatening issues.

On the reality of spiritualism, it will amount to a complete ignorance and naivety to refuse to see that it is real. The cases studied in this dissertation should be able to help us see the outworking of the spiritual forces. Furthermore, the Bible confirms the reality of spiritualism and it should be relied on when Igala spiritism is questioned or tested. The fact that spiritualism is real does not legitimize it. The Christian is hereby encouraged to come out of the western shadow of thought and reasoning to see for himself the dynamic activity of Satan in the spiritual world of the Igala.

It is pertinent to ask about whether or not Igala spiritism is efficacious. The simple answer is whether people do still patronize or engage in supernatural practices. This research shows that it is efficacious. Apart from the unsaved, whose way of life is spiritualistic, the Christians have now resorted to spiritism when faced with life-threatening situations. Can there be a better proof of efficacy? It is also important to show that while people are satisfied with spiritism, many have seen the deceit of it. The fact that Christians defy it and live shows that there is a greater power in Christ. They see that in spiritism, security and satisfaction are superficial. They are inconsistent and temporary. This is why people keep on patronizing them - to ensure perpetual security. There are numerous cases of people who have come out of Igala spiritism depressed, angry and disillusioned. Some of these have either come to embrace freedom in Christ or have become skeptical of religions.

The spirit world poses a challenge to Christianity and Christians. The Christian church must be dynamic if it should desire to convince the people that greater is He that is in her than He that is in the world. According to Dollar, "Most of the missionaries of the past two centuries have originated out of western cultures where a skepticism of anything miraculous has greatly influenced their way of thinking" (Dollar 1981:269).

Nevertheless, the Igala Christians must disabuse their minds of the Western mentality of looking at the concept of spiritism as a myth or fairytale. They must see the supernatural work as real and a threat to their own faith.

The Christians must endeavor to see or experience for themselves what the spirit world is all about. This does not mean that Christians should get involved in spiritist activities, but efforts should be made to fully understand operations of the spirits so that they can help those coming out of spiritism.

The spirit world is meeting both physical and spiritual needs. Christianity should be holistic and dynamic so that it should be capable of relating to the needs of people. The practice where the physical is distinguished from the spiritual and where the spiritual is addressed with utter disregard to the physical should be discouraged.

The church should be sensitive to the other needs that spiritism address and attend to. It provides job opportunities for practitioners, old and young, male and female. In this regard, Christians should emphasize a holistic ministry where these different groups can be used and encouraged to participate in ministry. In the same vein, the ministry of children and women should be well defined so that both do not conflict with tradition and the Bible.

The Christian can also learn from the fact that those who are involved in animistic activity tend to be more dependent on the Spirit. This should characterize the Christian life. There should be complete dependency on the Spirit of God. This, however, does not imply that we do not work with our hands. The activities of the spirits show the human limitations and the need for one to be well armed. In the Christian's struggle, he should realize that spiritual battles are spiritual and must be fought spiritually.

A thorough understanding of the spirit world in Igala world view will indeed help the Igala Christians to see the distinction between Biblical teachings on the activities of the spirits and Igala world view. This understanding and distinction will help the Christians to define the extent of their involvement in anything spiritualistic.

This study has shown and revealed many things about the the nature of the spirit world in Igala world view. It has also helped in giving the Christian what to compare biblical teachings on the spirits with. Christian syncretism will reduce as clear distinctions are made. Above all, as Christians become convinced that the power of God is greater than the power in the world, they will ultimately rely completely on the Spirit of God instead of on human or Satanic factors.

In the Igala view of life, God is seen as one who is highly transcendent, who waits to punish people and has no real interest in taking initiative to help mankind. Although the Igala believes in his existence, God's existence is remote. Igala also believe that God creates both good and evil. He is a good God when seen in the light of his good qualities and attributes. Similarly, God is also seen and called a wicked God who destroys, kills or brings evil, death, suffering, pain and vengeance.

However, this view of life in relation to God does not affect the acknowledgment of God's power in creation, in his works, decrees and essence. Igala strongly believes that human beings can communicate to God through the ancestors. The ancestors who are the Igala equivalent of good spirits have access to God. They intercede for man and are highly esteemed.

The evil spirits, on the other hand, have access to man in the physical world, and man has access to the spirit world. It should be noted, however, that the evil spirits do not have access to God. God talks to the evil spirits but the evil spirits do not talk to him nor are able to influence him.

This view of God's relationship to the spirits (good and evil) and to man in his own physical world needs to be corrected by the use of the Word of God. The church needs to teach the importance of transcendence and immanence. It is important to show that while God is holy and cannot behold sin, He is present in His creation.

The church also needs to teach the role of God in relation to good and evil. The Igala needs to know that while God may allow sin, evil or other calamities, He cannot be held responsible for them. In His nature, God allows all His creatures to use their free will. But He must judge their use of such freedom and punish the wicked. In God's justice, mercy is obtained by the righteous and punishment to the wicked.

The church should seek to understand the intercessory ministry of the ancestors and teach what the Bible says about the ministry of the Holy Spirit and Christ in relation to advocacy and intercession. While the Igala experiences God through the ministry of the ancestors, in Christ, Christians are drawn near to God. The Bible should also be used to correct the belief that the evil spirits have no access to God. The fact that the Bible teaches that Satan accuses the saints before God should show the Igala that there is accessibility. This accessibility must, however, be explained so that the Igala does not think that it implies that evil spirits can influence God.

CHAPTER 8

MORAL ORDER IN IGALA SOCIETY

The Igala word *ɛbiɛnɛ* "sin" comes from two Igala words *ɛbiɛ* and *ɛnɛ* which literally means defilement "*ɛbiɛ*" of a person "*ɛnɛ*". In its everyday use *ebiene* "sin" is used to represent evil and negative person or thing.

Sin in Igala thought may be defined as hatred, wrong attitude toward someone innocent or destruction of someone's property. A broader definition of sin would include wrongs done to self, other people, the spirit of the ancestors and the Supreme Being. In Igala thought, man is perceived to be very sinful. This is clearly shown in an Igala proverb and expression which says, "*Ɛfɛla jadu, ile; ɛfonɛ jadu ifɛkpa.*" This proverb means that "if an animal is saved from danger, she will run away but if a man is saved he will kill the one who saved him." This proverb leads to another expression, *Onɛ n̄yɔ chabunɛw̄n?* "Man is not worthy of being helped because man is wicked and very deceitful." Another proverb says "*machañyɔ onuku adeyi kpa tɛw̄n go no*" meaning "man cannot expose his innermost self to his friend because of shyness." To further express their reservations about the nature of man's sinful tendencies, the Igala will say "*Uwɛkpɛla bibi fodo do, ɛmeyikpa wɛ ko maja.*" This statement means that "if one lives with a wicked man he should take extra precaution in handling his affairs."

The fact that Igala believe that man is wicked and sinful does not mean that there is no moral order in Igala society. There are many ways through which morality is taught and instilled in people for the benefit of all in the society. Three of such ways are *elifo* "taboos", *phiaka* "myths" and *ita* "proverbs".

Igala taboos are their cultural prohibitions which regulate religious and social conducts of men and women in relation to sexual and marital affairs, ancestor's rituals and social relationships. Igala myths are used by the adults to teach the young people important lessons crucial to their social, religious and interpersonal relationships. The elders use myths to illustrate the danger of indulging in sinful acts and thoughts. In the same way, proverbs are used by the elders (male or female) to teach the young people many different life issues which would help, protect and give them wisdom in personal and interpersonal relationships.

However, it is important to realize that while these three ways by which morality is taught in Igala society have the same goal, the issues addressed in each are different. Furthermore, the procedure and method used in applying taboos, myths and proverbs are different and complex. Those qualified to use either of these methods are different and selective.

***ELIFO* "TABOOS"**

Igala taboos are essentially part of Igala customary laws. These laws or taboos have their basis in the needs and expectations of the people. The standard which these laws require are set by the people based on their need

for an orderly society. There are at least four elements of Igala taboo. These elements are:

- 1) Law - the precise requirement or appropriate practice based on people's needs,
- 2) Purpose - the main thing the law is designed to produce,
- 3) Penalty - the consequences for breaking the law; and
- 4) Remedy - the way out of the penalty.

It is important to emphasize that tabooism is borne out of the Igala concept of sin. Thus in Igala thought, sin comes into picture when a law or order (culture) designed to produce specific needs or results is violated.

When any taboo is not kept, the one involved is defiled, and that is regarded as a sin which must be dealt with. The way to deal with such sinful acts is through prescribed rituals in the form of sacrificial offerings. Failure to perform such rituals may lead to one being punished.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to show what the Igala taboos are, the reasons behind each taboo, and what to do if a taboo is violated.

These taboos are arranged in the following order:

- 1) Taboos relating to men
- 2) Taboos relating to sexual/marital affairs
- 3) Taboos relating to religious beliefs and practices
- 4) Taboos relating to women
- 5) Taboos relating to social relationships

TABOOS RELATING TO MEN

There are many Igala taboos which regulate the behavior and conduct of the men in Igala society. The following taboos are some which address Igala men:

It is a taboo for a man to eat at the house of a man with whom one has shared relations with a woman, especially if that is dead and death rituals are being performed. The Igala believe that if this taboo is violated, the deceased would kill the one involved by traditional means. This taboo is used to teach the importance Igala attach to sexual sin, especially the act of adultery. Because of the importance of death ceremonies to the Igala, people have to choose between sleeping with married women and participating in such ceremonies. The belief that the deceased could attack the living helps to keep people always conscious of the consequences of their decision and action.

The Igala believe that it is a taboo for a man to have sexual relations with the wife, spouse of his brother, and other relatives. The person who violates this taboo is guilty of defiling his own house and such a person faces the threat of illness from the ancestors. However, there is a remedy for the person who suffers from the consequence of the violation of this taboo. The Igala tradition requires that such a person offer a cock in a ritual to venerate his ancestors. In addition, he will take an oath (*akoje*) with the woman that he would not have any more of such relations.

If a man's wife commits adultery and she confesses this to her husband but he fails to offer the required cleansing ritual, the man's house is defiled and must be cleansed. Furthermore, the husband who fails to perform the ritual (his priestly role) for his wife would surely die. In such a situation the Igala believe that the husband must offer a cock to the ancestors. The ritual must be performed by the uterine kin (*oma onobule*) to atone the negligence of the husband. This taboo teaches that while adultery is a sin that requires a cleansing ritual to be performed by the husband, the husband's neglect to

perform his priestly duties to his wife by performing the required ritual is also a sin which is punishable.

Sexual intercourse in the elder's place (*annuku*) defiles and is punishable. It is thus prohibitive for a man to allow other men to have sex with women in one's deceased father's house. The Igala believe that such an act may cause accidents and misfortune which may result in death. The remedy is a purification ritual in which a cock is required to propitiate the deceased (the father of the owner of the house).

TABOOS RELATING TO SEXUAL AND MARITAL AFFAIRS

Some taboos are meant to regulate the behavior of men and women in relation to their sexual and marital life. These taboos specifically address the couple's personal conduct and self control in sexual matters. It is important to realize that purification, cleanliness and the welfare of children (especially during breast-feeding) are significant issues of interest in these taboos. For instance, the following taboos illustrate how moral order is enforced in Igala society.

If a husband asks his wife for sex and she declines and the husband vows never to have relations with her again, he must keep his words. It is a taboo for the husband to make such threats and later go back on them. Sex is sacred and to play with such words is a betrayal of manhood. The Igala believe that violation of the taboo could result in a sudden illness. The remedy for the one who has violated this taboo is to confess to his ancestors by performing a sin offering.

Spoken words are important. In relation to sex in marriage, the husband is to refrain from careless talks which may undermine his authority, as his wife might disregard and deride him.

The Igala teach that if a woman is menstruating, she should not be permitted to enter into the husband's inner room (*anuku*) until after five to six days following the menstruating period and after she must have been cleansed. Their house would be defiled if she violates this taboo. Furthermore, the man's fetish (*ode*) would become powerless and everyone would be vulnerable to misfortunes and evil attacks. The remedy of this taboo is a purification ritual (*ola egwo riñyọ*) after which she will be pronounced cleansed.

It is also wrong to have sex with one's wife or any woman who is breast-feeding. The husband or man must wait until the child is weaned. Failure to comply with this taboo may result in the illness of the child. The child should be taken to traditional doctors for treatment in such a situation. This belief is strong and primarily for the sake of the child's health.

TABOOS RELATING TO RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

One of the annual religious festivals of the Igala is Ibegwu Festival in which the ancestors are publicly venerated. It is a taboo not to perform the ancestor's festival. To refuse to perform this ritual is to leave one's self vulnerable to spiritual attacks as the ancestors would not continue to offer such people protection. Because people do not want to take the risks involved in neglecting their ancestor's wishes, such festivals are organized

and performed. What is important, however, is the fact that to disobey the wishes of one's ancestors, constitutes a sinful act.

Other taboos crucial to religious belief and practices are: singing of holy songs in vain (the use of musical instruments and songs which are strictly limited to funeral ceremonies) are an abomination. It is a taboo to disobey the ancestor's admonitions through the oracle (*Ifa*) or prophesy (*achẹ*). Furthermore, for a woman to see the ancestor's masquerade (*egwu-afia*) or enter into the shrine (*okwula*) are forbidden. The violation of these taboos may result in illness and; if adequate arrangements are not made to perform necessary ancestor's ritual to appease them, death may be the end result.

These taboos reinforce the importance of the ancestors to the Igala and why people are so terrified to disobey what they are being told are their ancestors' wishes, needs and demands.

The Igala priests believe that it is a taboo for the priest (*atama*) to touch a dead body. Dead bodies defile the priests. According to Igala belief, priests who see such bodies would surely die. There is no known remedy.

TABOOS RELATING TO WOMEN

Taboos relating to women are meant to show humility and submission to their husbands. While women's loyalty to their husbands and respect for their husband's ancestors are important reasons for some of the taboos addressing women, other reasons are personal hygiene, personal conduct and morality.

For instance, women are not to bring their sitting stools/chair (*akpẹtẹ*) and their bathing pail into the man's inner room (*anuku*). Similarly, women are not allowed to sit on the man's chair placed in his inner room. The Igala believe that the man's inner room is a holy place, and the presence of a woman there defiles it. Such defilement requires a purification ritual which must be officiated by the uterine kin.

The personal conduct of women is controlled by the taboo which forbids the use of profane words (*ina ẹbiẹ*) or certain holy songs (*eli kiafọ*). The use of profane words defiles the husband's ancestors and consequently the whole house. This taboo also calls for a purification ritual in which a cock is used to cleanse to woman involved.

It is an abomination for a woman to engage in adultery or allow men other than her husband to sit on her bed. Such behavior or act defiles the house and could result in her death. A purification ritual is needed to appease the husband's ancestors in the case of adultery while the house will be purified using a chick. At both rituals, it is required that the uterine kin must officiate.

When a woman delivers a baby, she must not enter the man's inner room until three months after the delivery — after which she must have performed the purification ritual. The husband is especially required to monitor his wife's movements in order to ensure that this taboo is not violated. The husband may become ill if he fails to take precautionary measures to ensure compliance. In case of violation, a chick must be provided for purification of the house from defilement.

TABOOS RELATING TO SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Taboos in social relationships regulate social behavior, interactions and interpersonal relationships. For instance, it is a taboo for a woman to give orders to a man and for a man to take orders from a woman. The reason is that the Igala believe that women are to serve while men are to provide for the women and children. Similarly, for the young to use proverbs when addressing the elders is a taboo because it is an insult for the young to teach the elders through proverbs. Those who use proverbs are wise people and for the young to use them implies that he is showing off or claiming to be as wise as the elders.

In relation to kinship, it is a taboo for the kinsmen of the deceased not to raise the children of the deceased, marry his widow or care for her and her children. To do this is wicked and it brings a bad reputation to the kinsmen involved. Other taboos address the prohibition of sex and marriage with a close kinsman and the danger of the old to kneel or prostrate for the young. Sex and marriage between close kinsmen are forbidden while the old must never prostrate for the young.

These taboos stress the importance or morality, conduct and the relationship of the old to the young. Social and family obligations, especially to the widows and orphans are specifically stressed. To fail in these responsibilities is a violation of a cultural prohibitions. Such violations are sinful and devastating.

QHIKA "MYTHS"

There are certain rules and guidelines which govern personal and interpersonal relationships in relation to moral order in Igala society. These rules are contained in some myths and are very crucial for the survival of the individual in Igala society. They are pertinent to everyday living and good neighborliness.

The following myths show the importance of human relationships and moral order. They also reveal the consequences of improper behavior.

Myth 1:

THE EVIL OF DECEPTION

Once upon a time there was a famine. Tortoise and his wife (Ayibo) were also seriously affected by this famine. Ayibo had a goat. One day, Tortoise told Ayibo that Ifa oracle was demanding her goat. He told his wife to go to the Diviner somewhere under a Ejiji tree. He further directs her to follow the long route or path leading to the Ejiji tree.

While she was on her way there, Tortoise took a short cut to the Ejiji tree and climbed it before his wife got there. On reaching there, she narrated to the Diviner what her husband had told her. She did not know that it was her husband who was pretending to be the diviner. Tortoise, who was pretending to be the diviner, changed his voice and spoke softly to Ayibo that the gods wanted the goat to be offered to them as a sacrifice.

On hearing the demands of the Ifa, she left for home. Tortoise immediately came from his hiding and took the short cut home. He got home before his wife. She did not know that it was he who acted as the diviner. On her arrival, she narrated her story to her husband and explained how the Ifa had asked that the goat be taken and be left under the tree. He sympathized with her as she took the goat away to be left under the Ejiji tree as demanded by the gods through the Ifa oracle.

Tortoise went there secretly and took the goat, killed her and roasted the meat. Before eating the goat meat, he decided to get some crickets. He dug the ground and killed some crickets. They were so sweet that he wanted to get some more. As he was digging, the hole

became large and there he found a giant chief (*Onu gbomu gbomu*). The giant chief forced Tortoise to take him to the Ejiji tree and on getting there, he saw the roasted goat meat. He decreed that Tortoise should disappear mystically and he did. He sat there and ate the whole meat and decreed later that the Tortoise should reappear. Tortoise reappeared and found that the whole roasted meat had been eaten.

The myth ends by the lesson that no one profits by deceit or deception. Tortoise deceived Ayibo (his wife) but the one who is more powerful than Tortoise used his power to rob him of the meat he had longed for. Thus, deceit is abhorred by Igala and people are taught to be honest.

This second myth teaches about the excellence of contentment. Igala tell this story to teach their children that contentment may build character and interpersonal relationships.

Myth 2: **THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTENTMENT**

There was a man named Idakwo. One day he went to the sea fishing. Suddenly his hook caught the fish called Ukpokpo. The fish told Idakwo, "Please leave me this year because I am too small. Come back this time next year, then I will be big enough for your food." Idakwo answered and said, "I will not leave you. Though you are small, you are big enough for one afternoon meal." Idakwo therefore took the fish home and prepared a porridge with the fish.

The myth's lesson is that a bird in one's hands is much better than two in the bush. Covetousness is bad, and interpersonal relationships will thrive in an atmosphere where people are trustful and trustworthy. The fourth myth is also about contentment. However, this myth shows the extent to which people can be driven as a result of their covetousness, desires and envy.

Myth 3: THE DANGER OF COVETOUSNESS

The story is about Atagohe (a naked man) and Alobate (one who wears underwear). One day Alobate said to his village people that he is the poorest man on the face of the earth and that no one is experiencing hardship like himself. He therefore told them to kill him so that his suffering would come to an end. A day was appointed when Alobate would be killed. As the villagers gathered that day to kill the poor man according to his desires, Atagohe came and asked why Alobate was being killed. They told him that Alobate was fed up with his life and poverty and demanded to be relieved in death. On hearing that, Atagohe said to the villagers, "Kill him quickly so that I can use his pants (underwear) for I do not even have that to cover my nakedness." When Alobate heard that, he said, "Is there someone else as poor as myself?" When he saw Atagohe, he consoled himself and asked the villagers to set him free. He was set free and was not killed.

Igala use this myth to teach that:

1. Regardless of one's economic status, one will always be better than someone else.
2. Even if someone is going through a tough time, he may be better off than some people.
3. This is how God has planned - some with little and others with plenty.

Interpersonal relationships depend on trusting people. Trustworthiness is crucial and in its absence, relationships may collapse. This myth shows the importance of such in relationships between people.

Myth 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUSTING AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Agwude was a fighter. He has a brother called Ichifu who plays the flute whenever Agwude was fighting. Agwude had a wife called Ijojo. The fight between Agwude and Egwubi-oko was so constant and Agwude was always victorious. Agwude trusted his wife Ijojo enough to tell her the secrets of his power.

One day, Agwude fought with Egwubi-oko and defeated him. After a short while, the fight started again. This time it was Ijojo

fighting in disguise. Because Ijojo knew the secrets of her husband's power, she began to beat him mercilessly. Agwude himself did not know that it was Ijojo in a disguised form. However, Ichifu, Agwude's brother who was playing the flute, recognized her and told his brother that it was Ijojo. Ichifu told Agwude to bend down and get some sand. Agwude got some sand and threw it into her eyes and that brought the fight to an end. Then it was discovered that it was Ijojo fighting and not Egwubi-oko.

Agwude also fought with Onegwu and defeated him. He was so powerful because God gave him power to do what he pleased. However, Agwude's victories became a source of pride for him and he forgot that God was the source of his power. As soon as pride set in, he suffered many defeats from Egwubi-oko.

This myth is told to teach the following truths:

- Whatever you do, reverence God.
- Every power belongs to God.
- Agwude forgot that God exists and his power left him.
- Do not expose your secrets to your wife.
- Women are very weak and cannot keep confidential matters. Don't tell all your secrets to them.

The Igala teach the importance of interpersonal relationships. They also teach through their myths, the dangers and consequences of pride, envying and coveting. This myth illustrates such consequences.

Myth 5: THE CONSEQUENCES OF PRIDE, ENVYING AND COVETING

Once upon a time there were two women who were involved in polygamous marriage. One was very poor, while the other was rich. The rich one was always at home either cooking or eating with her child. She also went about socializing and did not know what it means to suffer. She had everything she wanted.

The other woman, who was very poor, lived on manual labor and broom making. Her children sold the brooms in the market and it was by this very debased business that they survived. One day, one of the poor woman's children went to the market with some brooms. An old woman bought them but could not pay for the brooms. She told the boy to exercise patience until the next market day (about 5 days

later). The next market day, this same old woman bought more brooms from this boy and, instead of paying for the brooms, she told the boy to accompany her to her house in order to get his money. The boy obeyed and followed her home for his money.

On reaching her house, the boy discovered that the woman had a round house without any entrance or door. The old woman spoke to the house, and the house gave them an entrance and they both went in. She brought out a plate full of blood which she stirred and drank. She gave it to the boy and he drank as well. Whatever was given to the boy, he ate without complaint. Back home, the boy was declared missing. His mother was depressed because no one knew of his whereabouts. She wept and asked God to help her.

However, on the fifth day, about the time people were returning from the market, the mother saw her son far off. She was so happy to see her boy was coming home. The boy was carrying a drinking gourd. As soon as he got home, he climbed the roof of their house and, from there, he dropped the drinking gourd. The gourd broke into pieces and there suddenly appeared bales of clothes of different types and colors. He filled nine containers with clothes and had much more. They became very rich in material things.

When the other woman who was originally wealthy saw this development, she beat her child up mercilessly and said to him, "Can you not see what the child of this lazy woman has done? You should go and get involved in selling brooms too." Her child got involved in the broom business. One day he took some brooms to the market and when people wanted to buy, he declined because he wanted to sell them to the old woman who made the other boy rich. The old woman said she could not buy because she had no money. He told the old woman that he would sell the brooms to her on credit. She bought the brooms and promised to pay him on the next market day (fifth day). Then, getting home, he decided to prepare more brooms for the next market. He repeated the same thing by making sure that the brooms got to the old woman even though other people wanted to buy them. The old woman bought the brooms and paid him. The boy refused to take the money and wanted to follow her home. He followed this woman home. While travelling home from the market, the old woman took a bush path. The boy complained why it was the bush path that the woman should follow. Still on their way home, she removed her eyes and fixed them on what she was carrying on her head. The boy queried why that was so and said that was unusual. When they arrived home, there was a round house without any

entrance. The woman spoke to the house, the entrance appeared and they both went in.

On getting into her house, with her eyes fixed on the stool (Akpẹtẹ) on her head, she brought a plate of blood to drink. She stirred it and drank it and gave it to the boy to drink. He refused it on the ground that no one drinks human blood.

At this stage, the old woman brought her eyes down to their normal and original position, and stared at this boy. She killed the boy and drank his blood. She also skinned the boy and took the skin to the market. The next market, this boy's mother came to the market and discovered her son's skin. On that discovery, she wept bitterly home. She lost her son and riches. God brought into her life emptiness. The other woman who was originally very poor became rich and had many children. Then God told the woman who was wicked and jealous that she will weep all the days of her life. This is the work of God. *Gewñ kọjọ chetẹ kee!*

The lesson of this myth is the danger of jealousy and envying. It shows that the end of such attitudes may be sorrow, death or disappointment. It is important to realize that this myth shows how God can react in the affairs of mankind to right the wrongs done to people. It reveals God as the all powerful one who is the ultimate cause of events. Thus, in interpersonal relationships, people are warned of the reality of God's watchful eyes in the acts of men whether those acts are in secret (*Efumaja*) or in public (*efoja*).

ITA "PROVERBS"

Ita "proverbs" are words of wisdom designed to teach different important values of the Igala. They are used frequently in formal and informal meetings, casual conversations and family meetings to illustrate truths which the author/speaker intends to convey to his listeners. Proverbs are mainly used by the older people freely in admonishing young people on facts about life, relationships, behavior and how people ought to respond to

different problems of life. The young people are also free to use proverbs among themselves. They are not supposed to teach the adults words of wisdom and thus, could not use them to illustrate anything to the older people.

However, secularization of the society is changing the rules governing the use of proverbs as the young people can be found today addressing adults and illustrating their points with proverbs. This is especially true in some Igala protestant churches where preachers most of whom are young adults use proverbs frequently in their teaching and preaching ministries. Unlike myths, proverbs can be used any time of the day, informally, and at any meeting.

Igala proverbs teach and illustrate the importance of interpersonal relationships, gratitude, patience, carefulness, discipline, responsibility, confidentiality, and quality. Other proverbs teach about the evil of covetousness, revenge, retribution, ingratitude, disobedience, pride, and insubordination to elders. There are many other important themes addressed in Igala proverbs and it would be impossible to treat them all in this dissertation.

However, some themes which Igala proverbs address have direct bearing on the moral order in Igala society. These proverbs which the older people use are primarily for the purpose of admonishing the young people or those for whom they are responsible. The moral lessons taught in these proverbs are very crucial and often do regulate moral behavior in Igala society.

The following are some of the themes addressed through Igala proverbs:

Patience

Patience is important and the Igala teach their young people the need for them to always go slow and learn life's lessons to avoid the danger of failure which is common in people who would not take time to do things gradually. The following proverbs illustrate the importance of patience in Igala world view.

Igala: *Ejo kidefo tubę ibe ibe manę adukpa*
English: Whenever a snake enters into a clay pot, it is killed with extreme care.

Meaning: It means that delicate matters must be handled with caution so that such matters do not destroy or cause serious harm.

Igala: *Manaju acho run.*
English: Mushrooms are not hastily collected. They will break.

Meaning: A fragile object is carefully handled. This warns that life's matters and issues should be handled gently and steadily or trouble will develop.

Igala: *Ugbo karule aņyi alule aņyi. Manaju achoruno.*
English: He who walks reaches where the runner is going. Slow and steady is better than to rush and collapse.

Meaning: It is better to run a race and finish it alive than to finish the race and be dead. The lesson is on being slow and steady.

Igala: *Ewņ duu kiakpuna gbegbe bon.*
English: Whatever is hot is bound to cool off.

Meaning: It means that no matter how hard or difficult a situation is, it will ultimately calm down or be resolved.

Igala: *Aduwe matun, emeju ñọ n.*
English: One may not know how to arrange his load if it remains in a pre-arranged form.

Meaning: Corrections can only be made as a result of mistakes done and admitted. It teaches the joy in correcting mistakes in a way that is not discouraging to making necessary changes.

Igala: *Qwowe bięę ęduęę omunę fana n.*
English: If your hand is bad, you will not give it to someone to leak.

Meaning: One must learn to accept whatever situation he finds himself in as no one would be as helpful to anyone as himself.

The importance of patience is also illustrated to parents of children who are discouraged by their conduct. In advising parents not to give up on their children, the Igala use the following proverb.

Igala: *Mabi ọma abibe n.*
English: A child is never born with good conduct.

Meaning: Do not expect a child to be automatically what you want because you cannot produce conduct.

Truth is believed by the Igala to be essential. But, sometimes people are afraid of telling the truth or accepting the truth. For instance, a young person may be wiser than an adult but because the adult is older, it would be difficult for him to accept the truth about himself. For such a case, the Igala would say, "Truth is bitter." On the other hand, the young man may insist that he is wiser than the older person. The Igala would use a proverb to refute such an assertion as they believe that the young does not have the experience that comes with age. The following proverbs illustrate these.

Igala: *Ọgęcha ọla omina iche.*
 English: Truth is like a hot or boiling water.

Meaning: People do not respond well to truth as truth always reveals the wickedness and foolishness of man. Because of this nature of truth it hurts people like a bowl of boiling water.

Igala: *Imọtọ ajale ogijo n.*
 English: The young cannot be wiser than the old.

Meaning: The young should not insist that he is right and the elder is wrong. It means that the young cannot be as wise as the old.

Igala: *Ẹwń kogijo dachi kili, Imọtọ chekwu tanojkuńyi yalin.*
 English: What an elderly person saw in his sleep may not be seen by a young person, no matter how tall.

Meaning: The height and physical maturity of the young cannot supersede the wisdom of the elders. It teaches the young to humble themselves to the wisdom of the elders, regardless of how well educated they are.

In Igala society, there is a strong emphasis on age as a factor in interactions, relationships and social activities and events. This strong belief in the supremacy of the elders and of submitting to the authority of the elders occupies a prominent place in the Igala world of proverbs. Some of the proverbs teaching these values are:

Igala: *Ọma bibi ońwu anẹńwu bibi wẹfọja.*
 English: A bad child brings evil into the society.

Meaning: It means that a bad child is a disgrace to his family and it is used to teach the parents to train their children properly to avoid a public disgrace.

Child Discipline

Some proverbs are meant to teach parents the importance of child discipline. These are:

Igala: *Atami dawwa, Iyemi dawwa, yia fimqoq chqboq.*
English: Excessive permissiveness by parents spoil the child.

Meaning: When a child is praised often, he tends to remain close-minded to the lessons of life. This is to teach that praises should not substitute discipline and responsibility.

Igala: *Eju madu nonojo, ama itali oñwu madu nimqoq.*
English: The child is reared by the rod or cane.

Meaning: The child is raised by being disciplined. It admonishes the parents not to spare the rod.

Igala: *Ikokoli chimqoq oñwu manę, Igbakpa onę neke tqru geno.*
English: A tree can only be pruned when it is young.

Meaning: Discipline a child when he is young or he will be difficult to control when he is old. It is also used to teach the importance of being on time and prompt.

The older people are admonished to discipline the young. The Igala believe that failing to do that might result in the death of the older people. This is important because it motivates the older people to be more responsible to the welfare of the young people.

Igala: *Alimaka owñ chukwu ogijo.*
English: The elder who foresees evil and never warns of it is guilty.

Meaning: The elder is responsible for warning or admonishing the young. It is used to teach the elders how to become responsible.

However, when the young refuse to listen to the admonition of the elders, the young must assume responsibility for all repercussions and results of their disobedience and stubbornness.

Igala: *Aka magbọ oñwu chukwu Imọtọ.*
English: To refuse to listen to elder's advise is the death of the young.

Meaning: A child who is stubborn and does not listen to the elders faces a grave danger. This proverb is used to warn the young people of the importance of listening to the wise council of the elders.

Igala: *Ichẹwñ kochu imọtọ a fanẹ ololo, ifẹwũ boma.*
English: If a child is claiming to be too clever, he should be advised to be passive.

Meaning: The child should not show off because he could be threatened by those who are older. It warns that pride is wrong, and the young should learn to be submissive.

Though the Igala look at children as people who need to be protected by their parents, they also assure parents of the worth of their children. The parents need their children as much as their children need them. The following proverb illustrates how the Igala people value children.

Igala: *Abiqma akwun.*
English: A man who has children does not die.

Meaning: It means that if a man who has children dies, his children will live to be his representatives. Because his children live, he will not die.

Personal Safety

Proverbs are used to warn people of their behavior, relationships and conduct. The older people warn the young people with some proverbs for their own personal safety. For instance, the following proverbs show how proverbs can be used to mould character and attitude.

Igala: *Etiche ɛnatona.*
 English: When you play, remember tomorrow's responsibility.

Meaning: It means that one should think of the future in all of his endeavors and plannings. It used to communicate the concept of planning against a rainy day.

Igala: *Efe la jadu ile, ɛfonɛ jadu, ife kpa.*
 English: If a trapped animal is set free, she will get away from the scene quickly, but if a man is saved from danger, he will kill the one who saves him.

Meaning: Animals are innocent and will not harm people until their lives are being threatened. They respond well to help and assistance. However, man is wicked and knows no appreciation. In many cases, man's envy, hatred, covetousness, and greed lead him to kill those who have been of a great help to him. It is to warn people to be careful about their fellow men.

Igala: *Ela kpi-kpa fatawe kpa, efo be kpi kpa li, ɛkporule ñwu.*
 English: If one's father is killed by a red haired animal, he will run when he sees an animal that looks similar.

Meaning: It teaches vigilance and the importance for one to be careful and watchful to avoid falling into trouble unnecessarily.

Igala: *Ichewñ kɛnoɔba feɾe kɔ, ɛnebi kimɔlanɛ.*
 English: When the fore-man misses his steps, he who is behind will be ready.

Meaning: People who learn from past mistakes never get into the same trouble.

Igala: *Ode kia gbɛ, ɛgule ɔlemi wñ n.*
 English: One does not pretend to whatever is capable of saving him.

Meaning: Man always adores whatever or whoever is capable of saving him. One ought to be sincere and realistic to something that is important and life-threatening.

Appreciation and gratitude

Ingratitude is an attitude that the Igala do not appreciate. The Igala believe that when a favor is done for one, he must show gratitude and appreciation. This value is important and illustrated in the following proverbs.

Igala: *Onẹ chutodu wẹ kilekwu, ẹchutoduwǎn kẹ chẹ.*
English: If one dies for another's sake, the other should go further to reciprocate the one that died for his sake.

Meaning: No sacrifice should be too great to offer for the person who has given his life for one. It teaches right attitude, and the appreciation for the good done for one.

Igala: *Ẹma rewa ugbo komi kpẹn, ẹrewa ugbo kuma kuna wẹwan.*
English: If one does not remember where he was beaten by the rain, he will not remember where he was warmed up while he was freezing.

Meaning: One needs to remember the hand that feeds him. Always appreciate the help done to you.

Igala: *Obochi Uñyiẹnẹ awẹnẹ ejun.*
English: A doctor has no respect or regard from his own family.

Meaning: People always do not appreciate their own people's efforts. It is necessary that one is mentally prepared for rejection from his own occasionally.

Interpersonal relationships

There are different themes relating to interpersonal relationships which Igala proverbs are used to illustrate. For instance, pride is looked upon by the Igala as a sinful attitude. Those whose pride is a result of their riches or wealth are admonished with the proverb which shows that life is fragile.

Igala: *Ilẹ cholubọọ, Igbegbe dan.*
English: The world is like the shadow, it is not static.

Meaning: The world is quick to change and difficult to predict. No condition is permanent.

Some proverbs are used to illustrate the evil of envy and destructive criticism. These are:

Igala: *Ẹka komi onẹ kinaan, ewẹ akpunan.*
English: If one wants to plan evil, he may not even live to see his own end.

Meaning: One who plans evil against his own neighbor, may be facing similar evil through himself and that may cause his own downfall.

Igala: *Ẹmọwọ ka du ñwonẹ, ẹlẹ kibọ kpoju gbo wẹẹ.*
English: When you point an accusing finger at others, the rest of your fingers are pointing at you.

Meaning: Do not seek to criticize and judge others too quickly. Remember that others are also watching you and may be judging you too. It teaches that one should be self-conscious and not too critical of others' faults.

Igala: *Ejunubu ki chuwo.*
English: Guilt is like a hill or mountain.

Meaning: Guilt is so big or huge that it covers peoples' sense of reality. People do not tend to see their faults but those of others.

Interpersonal relationships thrive on understanding between and among people. The Igala believe and teach that such relationships are threatened when people interact among themselves and cultivate an attitude of trusting people. People tend to forge unity by asking questions, too. The

following proverbs show the importance of asking questions and keeping a company in maintaining human relations.

Igala: *Atene chekigbọ biẹ.*
English: The one who asks, asks to know well.

Meaning: Questions are important, for they help to impart knowledge and wisdom.

Igala: *Ẹmugba chaka koñye kpo ẹli eyi kẹdu m̀momi no.*
English: If one's dishes are dirty, he will have nothing to drink with.

Meaning: No man is an island. One does need to have company no matter how bad all people look to him.

In human relations, sometimes people need to keep certain things to themselves. People have to be able to control themselves and mind their utterances. An uncontrollable tongue is capable of breaking interpersonal relationships. The Igala people use a proverb to illustrate the importance of confidentiality.

Igala: *Ọwọ ẹjo, ẹrẹ ẹjo, ẹfuwñ ijọ.*
English: The legs and hands of a snake are inside.

Meaning: The ideas and desires of a man are inside him unless he chooses to reveal them. It is used to express that one's plan of action are within him.

SIN, PUNISHMENT AND FORGIVENESS

Igala demand confession or punishment for violation of taboo. Every sin must be paid for, especially if the sin is not confessed or dealt with on time. Where forgiveness is sought, the way to escape from the punishment is

shown and it is left for the sinner or penitent to take necessary steps to remedy the situation.

Most sins which are as a result of a violation of taboos are pardonable. Every sin is punishable and, confession often leads to forgiveness. However, forgiveness depends on the offering of the required sacrifice or ritual. Some consequences of sin may remain even after forgiveness is obtained. The consequences of pardonable sins may be misfortune, illness, accidents and other physical calamities.

Some sins are believed to be unpardonable. There are at least three of such sins which the Igala rituals cannot atone for. First, when a priest (*atama*) touches a dead body, he becomes defiled. Secondly, the Igala believe that when a man who has had sexual contact fails to cleanse himself before entering the inner room of the ancestors, he has committed an unpardonable sin. Thirdly, when a man eats at the funeral of a man with whom he had shared sexual relations with the same woman, the Igala believes that such act is an unpardonable sin. These unpardonable sins lead to physical death. The Igala would not perform any ritual for this category of sins.

Sin is also committed against other people and there is a method by which this is resolved. At the interpersonal level, sacrifices are not necessary except in a few cases. The process of resolving this is simple. The parties involved are to present themselves before the living elders who will try the case. Witnesses might be called where necessary, but the most important aspect of this is the emphasis on forgiveness.

It is the belief of the Igala that if one holds grudges against his neighbor for the wrong done to him, that one holding grudges will fall sick and may even die. It is also believed that the ancestor's will is to have the matter resolved so that there will be no bitterness.

However, where matters resulted in cursings and exchange of profane words, the ancestors must be propitiated in order for the sin to be atoned. This is because cursings and profane words defile the people involved and the ancestors. Involved in this reconciliation effort are two main things. First, the problem should be fully explained (*qla defu*). Nothing should be hidden or brought in to the matter later. Second, take a oath (*eralu*) or affidavit that one has cleared his heart of the wrongs done to him and that everything is finished. This is perhaps the most crucial point, as it is believed that the ancestors could strike anyone found concealing information with the intent to deceive or continue the enmity.

Finally, the issue of sin against self is not an isolated one. Every sin is punishable and as such, every sin, be it against the spirit beings or other people, is against self. So in this sense sin is looked upon as a personal issue from which self cannot be divorced.

ECONOMIC INTERESTS SERVED

The nature of the sin problem serves some important economic interest which sustains the economic life, activity and system of the people. This is especially important realizing that in sacrificial offerings, animals are mostly demanded. This keeps the animal sellers in business. It also boosts domestication of animals which is another economic activity.

Additional economic interest is the consumption of meat offered. In these rituals and sacrifices where animals are offered, the uterine kin is the one designated to serve as priest and he and his own kinsmen are the only one to eat the meat. Others are forbidden from eating. If this is violated, it will result in death. It is important to point out that this is perhaps the only way to compensate the uterine nephews, who are otherwise out of the family in a patrilineal society where the sisters cannot inherit anything. By making the uterine nephews priests, the law of equity seems to have been applied; for while they cannot inherit in the patrilineal society, they can now share in the material things through the sacrificial system.

In the same vein, the diviners who prescribe what should be used for any particular sacrifice based on what the *Ifa* oracle revealed are having their economic needs met. This could be monetary or in kind.

ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

There can be no question as to the denial of sin or its knowledge in Igala world view. This is well recognized and the taboos, myths and proverbs are designed to address them.

The organized system in which sins are dealt with shows the seriousness of sins and how the Igala perceive them. It is because of these strong beliefs that attempts should not be made by the church to argue or debate the definition of sin or philosophical basis for sin as given by Western philosophers, atheists, and skeptics. The doctrine of sin should be developed with the Igala world view relating to their society's moral order in view.

The nature of Igala taboos show the anthropocentrism of man in that these customary prohibitions are designed to help man enjoy life here on earth. In these taboos, man's need for purity, good health, protection from the spirit's or ancestor's anger, and his relationship to other people are subjects addressed. The church should use this as a springboard to introduce the doctrine of sin. While it is true that certain sacrifices are offered to God and that certain sins against others are considered ungodly, the idea of a sin in which God is directly wronged or transgressed against is not conceptualized. Even where death results as a consequence, it is not thought of in relation to God.

The use of myths and proverbs in illustrating some truths or concepts should be considered by the church as a valid way of teaching and preaching. It is important that theological students are taught the significance of using these indigenous forms over western proverbs and illustrations with which Igala cannot readily identify. Besides, the moral value of taboos, myths and proverbs to the Igala society is immense. A biblical evaluation of these traditional forms in which moral order is taught is essential for the contextualization of theological education.

CHAPTER 9

RITUALS IN IGALA WORLD VIEW

THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

Sacrifice (*Ichẹbọ*) is the medium by which Igala atone for sins. In Igala world view, for every sin committed, one must pay. The remedy for sin is to sacrifice whatever the *Ifa* Oracle reveals, demanded by the ancestors. It is this process by which forgiveness and pardon is sought through the medium of sacrifice.

It is important to distinguish between this sacrificial system for atonement and animistic rituals. While in animistic ritual, power is being sought for various purposes and uses, in the sacrificial system the main emphasis is propitiation. The Igala people strongly believe in the efficacy of sacrifices as a legitimate and valid way for propitiating the spirits, ancestors, and the Supreme Being.

THE IMPORTANCE AND PURPOSE OF SACRIFICE

Sacrifice is very important in that it is the sum total of the man's spiritual experience. In Igala sacrificial system, the spiritual life of a person is addressed whereas in magic and witchcraft, the problems of life here on earth are the main focus.

This writer is not suggesting that the physical dimension of life is not addressed in sacrifices. However, it is clear from the nature of Igala sacrifices

that while the present physical need of man is emphasized, the future spiritual life is equally addressed too. Thus, the importance of sacrifice is in the fact that it is designed to meet the present physical and spiritual needs as well as the future spiritual needs. It is important to observe closely how anthropocentric the objects and purposes are.

There are at least seven main purposes of sacrifice (they will be seen in Table 6). These are:

- 1) Atonement (to cover or hide one's sin from God and the ancestors)
- 2) To obtain forgiveness, mercy and blessing from *Qjq chama chala* (God Almighty)
- 3) To ensure the protection of pregnancy and infants from dangers
- 4) For fertility in marriage (quick conception)
- 5) Protection for the family members
- 6) Protection from sickness, premature deaths and epidemic diseases
- 7) For purification or house cleansing (after defilement of any sort).

In addition to these seven main purposes of sacrifice there are non-propitiatory purposes. They are:

- a) To ensure a good harvest
- b) Good trading
- c) Journey mercies
- d) Promotion and success in all endeavours
- e) Good health and prevention of accidents on the farm.

THE ELEMENTS OF SACRIFICE

There are at least seven different types of sacrifices (see Table 6). This table highlights the location of these different sacrifices, different roles played

by people and specific themes each sacrifice is meant to address. Two of these sacrifices (*Ibegwu* and *Ifa-ẹnẹ*) are rituals that must be performed in the Okwula Shrine, while *Ogwu-eda* is performed at the doorstep of the deceased. The fertility ritual (*Ẹbọ-oji*) and the ritual of God Almighty (*ọjọ chama chala*) are performed in one's compound. The last two (*Egwu'ńyi rińyọ* and *Erẹde*) are usually performed in the man's inner room, "*annuku*". It is important to realize that the rituals that are called for by the ancestors themselves are performed in the Shrine, while those initiated by the living towards the ancestors are performed either in the inner room of the living or outside within his compound. This dichotomy is due to the fact that in rituals where the ancestors are venerated in the Shrine, the ancestors' masquerades are brought out during the festival, and the preparations for that spiritual exercise have to be done in a sacred place such as the shrine. On the other hand, the rest which are performed at home do not require the physical presence of the ancestors. Thereby making the compound an ideal place for such low key rituals.

In every sacrifice (*Ichẹbọ*) four essential elements are featured. These four elements are prescribed by the one to whom the sacrifice is offered. The medium of prescription is divination by the diviner, usually with the aid of the Ifa Oracle. The four essential elements are: animal, priest, blood and selected food items.

However, in some sacrifices, the Oracle will specifically request for fewer elements. The number and type of elements to be used in such situations depends largely on the type and nature of problem and sacrifice. In any case, it is important to realize that sufficient information is always

TABLE 6:

A SUMMARY OF IGALA SACRIFICES

TYPE	LOCATION	WHO EATS THE MEAT	THE USE OF BLOOD	PRIEST	THEME OF SACRIFICE	REMARK
1 Ibegwu (Ancestors)	Okwula shrine	Members of one's family	Sprinkled on the ground in the shrine	The son of the deceased ancestor	To propitiate the ancestors	The animal sacrifice must be pure in order to be accepted. Blood is crucial.
2 <i>Ogwu-eda</i> (Making peace with the deceased)	Doorstep of the deceased	Member of one's familyground	Poured on the deceased	Relatives of and pave way for good luck	To avert misfortune	The animal must be clean in order to be good for the sacrifice. Blood is crucial.
3 <i>Egwu Ƴyi riñyq</i> (House cleansing)	<i>Annuku</i> (the man's inner room)	The chick used is thrown out—too small to be eaten	Sprinkled on whatever is being cleaned or purified	Uterine kin/nephew (<i>qmqnobule</i>)	To purify and cleanse from all defilement	Blood is crucial. Animal needs to be without blemish.
4 <i>Eredę</i> (peace making) with the dead	<i>Annuku</i>	The Uterine/Kin nephew (<i>qmqnobule</i>) and his kinsman	Poured on the grave where the deceased was buried	Uterine kin/nephew (<i>qmqnobule</i>)	To heal relationships	Blood is important and animal needs to be without spot.
5 <i>Ifa-enę</i> (when ancestors speak through the oracle).	<i>Okwula Shrine</i> for those in the ancestor's cult (<i>qma e gwu a fia</i>) others could offer this at home.	The head of the family and those in his family.	Poured on the ground.	The son of the ancestor who is making the demand or speaking.	To propitiate the ancestors	Blood is crucial. Animal needs to be pure.
6 <i>Ębq-oji</i> (Fertility in marriage)	In one's compound	The owner of the <i>ode</i> (fetish)	Poured over the <i>ode</i>	The owner of the <i>ode</i> (fetish)	To make marriage fruitful with children	Purity is needed in animal to be used.
7 <i>Qjochama-chala</i> (God almighty)	Outside in one's compound	Whatever is offered is to be consumed by children and invited adults. The invitation is indiscriminate and everyone is welcome.		The penitent or sinner in need of God's forgiveness and mercy	Seeking God's forgiveness, mercy and help	No intermediary is needed here. It is between the sinner and God. As people eat and laugh, God is propitiated.

supplied to the one performing the sacrifice with regard to the specific elements required.

Animal: Different types of animals are used for different sacrifices. Those that are generally used are: he-goat, cock, chicken, chicks, goat and tortoise. It is interesting to note that sheep are not used because they are considered lazy and foolish animals. Tortoise is used because it is considered the wisest animal on earth.

The animal to be used must be without blemish. It must be clean (*Èla kifẹ*). It should be without blindness, deformities, spot (different colors) or other known illness. Any animal with blemishes will be rejected and certified unclean.

There is a variation on the consumption of meat as seen in Table 6. The main reason for this variation is the fact that different priests are involved in these rituals. The meat is the property of the officiating priests and their families, and where a meat is too small to be eaten, it is thrown away. In *Ibegwu*, *Ogwu-eda*, and *Ifa-enẹ* rituals, the head of the family is expected to be the officiating priest. The meat becomes his property and that of members of his family. However, in *erẹde*, the meat is consumed by the uterine nephew and his kinsman, while in *Èbọ-ọji*, the owner of the fetish (*ode*) used in the fertility ritual being the officiating priest consumes the meat. There is an exception in the God Almighty ritual. Everyone who is present is to participate in whatever was used for the sacrifice. The reason for this is because every one is equal before God and is also in need of his forgiveness

and mercy. But in other rituals, it is the one for whom rituals are performed that has a need and not everyone present.

Priest: In almost all sacrifices, people are designated to be priests to offer the animals brought before the ancestors in the appropriate manner and location. There are three types of priests. However, in relation to the offering of sacrifices, two of these are prominent. These are:

1) The Uterine Nephew: The Ego's sister's son is perhaps the most important priest in matters of sacrifices. In many sacrifices, especially those relating to house cleansing and purification, the head of the family is not allowed to offer sacrifices by himself. He and his family members are not to eat the meat. The uterine nephew and his kinsmen are the only ones allowed to act as priests and they alone can eat the meat of the animal offered. We have pointed out elsewhere in this dissertation that this is the only area where those kin related to ego through their mothers have a specifically designed role in the mother's lineage. The uterine nephew is called *Omonobule*.

2) The Family Head: The family head, called *eneñyi*, is also qualified to offer sacrifices, especially those that relate to his own ancestors. Thus, he becomes the priest of his own house. The meat of the animal offered can also be eaten by him and his family.

3) Atama-Ebo (Ebo Priest): This is the only priesthood which is said to be of divine order. The *Atama-Ẹbọ* priesthood is a lineage or clan of its own. No one who is not a member of this clan can be priests. There are not many of these clans in Igala. The priests are very few and do not engage in daily

sacrificial system. They do not mix with people and have a separate and specific order, usually after their own clan head.

Because they are divinely appointed, they do not report to anyone and as such are not under any established human authority.

Blood: The most important thing in the animal to be offered in any given sacrifice is the blood and not the meat. This is why live and healthy animals are required. Usually the blood of the animal killed for a sacrifice is sprinkled on the altar or ground, or on the forehead of the offerer. On whatever and wherever the blood is sprinkled depends, however, on the nature and type of offering.

The Igala people believe that blood "*ebi*" is the life of the animal sacrificed. The blood poured out is important for atonement and it is required that the blood is poured on the very altar or fetish which is the physical object representing or symbolizing the one to whom the ritual is performed. For instance, the fertility fetish (*ode*) symbolized the power of the god of fertility and blood of the animal used in the ritual is poured over the fetish.

Food Items: The fourth element which is prominent in many offerings is food items (*Ẹw̃n alujẹ*). This is especially true of *Ọjọchama chala* sacrifice which is directed at God Almighty. The nature of this sacrifice calls for food items. In other sacrifices, palm oil, and yam (*oku uchu*) are used. In *Ọjọchama chala*, food items are consumed by people who are invited, while other types of sacrifices where food items (*ẹw̃n alujẹ*) are required, they are left on the ground for the ancestors' spirits.

CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDE TO THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

Unlike the colonial period and shortly after colonial rule when Igala and outsiders alike denigrated traditional culture, the attitude of contemporary society to the entire Igala sacrificial system is changing rapidly.

The normal interest in sacrifices during the precolonial days was replaced with indifference, skepticism and rejection with the coming of Islam and Christianity which brought about a change of world view due to the pressures of modernity, Western education, urbanization and secularism. During this period, Igala looked upon those engaged in sacrifices with ignominy. It was even "primitive" and "sacrilegious" to be seen engaged in such activity.

However, the story is different today. People are returning to the so called "golden days" or "good-old-days" because of problems brought about by modernity which they believe cannot be solved naturally. People have childless marriages and believe they are facing the wrath of their ancestors. Some say they need blessings and prosperity, and they believe these have to be addressed spiritually.

It looks like many more people, young and old, male or female, Christians or non-Christians facing pressures of modernity may patronize these sacrificial rites much more than before. And as long as their present physical needs are not being met, they will continue to seek all the help available through the sacrificial system and thereby sustain it too.

RITES OF PASSAGE

Rites of passage introduce another important theme in the culture of the Igala. The various rituals at the four stages of life circle mark these significant transitions, and social identifies for each person, at each stage.

Borrowing insights from Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1969) the Igala rites of passage (life-crises) as a movement through four stages and rituals which as a whole portray Igala individuals first in separation from the ancestors (incarnation), margin (childhood), incorporation into human society (marriage), then separation from society by death, and finally re-joining the ancestors as anti-structure to the living.

At birth, the child is well loved, appreciated, and adored. Then this is proceeded by the *Amude-oji* ritual which is needed for the child's protection. It is during these few months after birth that the ancestor who reincarnates in that child is determined. After these initiation rites, the child will now be left to grow and this period or stage of development is what we refer to as the "*Imqtq* stage" - meaning childhood stage. The child who once was well received and cared for by the parents becomes a nobody. He is just an *Imqtq* who does not know anything because "*Imqtq mqn*" - he is very limited in his thinking. Between the *Imqtq* stage and *Ogijo* stage, he goes through a liminal period in which he experiences status reversal (from an *Qmekpa*, a newborn baby, well-liked and loved to a stage where he is a nobody - *imqtq*).

In the second stage, he transforms from *Imqtq* to *Ogijo*. He experiences a status elevation all by virtue of being married. Marriage is looked upon with responsibility and maturity. By this single development, he has become a somebody who has all the attending respect, prestige and privileges of that

position. These privileges increase as he grows old and has children, grandchildren, etc.

At the peak of this dignified social status, he is brought down by death (status reversal) to a stage or state of *Ẹnẹyiokwyu* (deceased) where he looks unto the living to do some services (*Ubi* festival) by which he passes through the liminal stage of reversal to another state. Turner says that liminality implies that the high could not be high unless the low existed, and he who is high must experience what it is like to be low (Turner, 1969: 106). In that stage, the *Ẹnẹyioku* (deceased) must look up to the living for the performance of the *Ubi* ritual which facilitates his journey to the ancestors.

In this sense, the commoners are privileged to exert authority over the Supreme authority because the Supreme authority (potential ancestor) is portrayed as a slave and has to exert self-control or patience as he is no longer in control (Turner, 1969: 161). The performance of the *Ubi* festival will move the passenger from the third stage (*Ẹnẹyioku*) to the next, and last, stage of life crises. This is the *Ibegwu* stage. The passenger is thus elevated (see Table 7).

This description of stages in life cycle shows some things about the Igala concept of "persons." To the Igala, somebody truly becomes a person at marriage. However, prior to marriage, young boys are elevated to a status of "somebody" after the ritual of circumcision. In the same way, young girls become "somebody" at puberty. Marriage is the culmination of their personhood.

TABLE 7:

DESCRIPTION OF STAGES IN LIFE CYCLE

<i>Amude oji</i> ritual	<i>Ẹbọ oji</i> ritual	<i>Ubi</i> ritual	<i>Ibegwu</i> ritual	
status reversal	status elevation	status reversal	status elevation	
<p>BIRTH (1)</p> <p>At birth, a child is well received and elevated. In the process of growth, he becomes a nobody.</p> <p>"From <i>Ọmekpa</i> to <i>Imọtọ</i>"</p> <p>IMỌTỌ STAGE</p>	<p>MARRIAGE (2)</p> <p>At marriage, he becomes a somebody and now well respected.</p> <p>"From <i>Imọtọ</i> to <i>Ogijo</i>"</p> <p>OGIJO STAGE</p>	<p>DEATH (3)</p> <p>At death, his status is reversed and he now depends on the living to perform the <i>Ubi</i> ritual in order for him to have a safe passage to the ancestors.</p> <p>"From <i>Ogijo</i> to a deceased"</p> <p>ENEYIOKU STAGE</p>	<p>ANCESTOR (4)</p> <p>At this stage, he has become a spirit who is now feared and has to be venerated.</p> <p>"From <i>Ẹneyioku</i> to <i>Ibegwu</i>"</p> <p>IBEGWU STAGE</p>	<p>ETERNAL STATE?</p> <p>This stage is not understood in Igala concept. There is definitely going to be a judgment in which the ancestors will judge. But what happens after the judgment is not known.</p>

At marriage, a person becomes fully responsible and assumes the responsibilities and roles of an adult. He must stop relying on his parents and kinsmen for full support. In many instances, he becomes the bearer of other people's burdens and their adviser. He ceases to be a person at death when his activities are halted by the Almighty God.

A person has attributes that are different from the attributes of other beings and creatures. A person "*onę*" is a human being who possesses a physical body. The spirit beings "*amafu*" do not possess physical but spiritual bodies. However, the spirit beings have the power to transform or repossess human bodies. The Igala believe that the spirit beings talk, think, eat, drink, sing, and participate in activities in spirit or bodily forms. They do not have the human limitations.

On the other hand, animals "*ameła*" are believed to possess some ability to think, feel, and demonstrate such in their reaction to some situations. Animals cannot express themselves verbally and the Igala regard them as *ęla* "fools." To the Igala, animals are used for food, hunting, protection but should not be given the affection that human beings desire.

Finally, it is correct to say that rites of passage in Igala society involve both types of liminality - the rituals of status reversal and of status elevation. While in the liminality of status reversal, the high is brought low in order to listen to the feeling of the *communitas*, the liminality of life crises humbles the aspirant to higher structural status as he is first separated from the commonality and then must undergo liminal rites that rudely abase him before, in the reaggregation ceremonies, he is installed on his stool in final

glory. In the final analysis, the goal is to bring the social structure and communities into right mutual relation once again.

DEATH, AFTER LIFE, AND DEATH FESTIVALS

There is a strong belief in life after death. Death is believed to be a sleep or dream. It is not the end of everything about a man. It is believed that death is the beginning of another life in a dimension. The task here is to seek to find out answers to three crucial questions from the beliefs of the Igala concerning life after death. The questions are: What happens at death? Where do the dead go and what do they do? Is there a concept of salvation in Igala eschatology.

When a person dies, his body goes into *efojegwu*. *Efojegwu* is also believed to be synonymous with *efura* (grave). The body of the dead is referred to as *oję onę*. It will decay in the grave, because it is basically sand.

However, the spirit of the deceased (*afu*) remains in the outer world and it is this spirit which remains in the world that is referred to as *abegwu* (ancestors). While the body (*oję*) is sand, the spirit is said to be of God.

Ibegwu (the ancestors) are believed to be more powerful than the living because they have become spirits which are invisible. Because they are invisible, they cannot be fought and one cannot even contemplate fighting a person that is not seen. This is the main reason the ancestors are feared.

THE BELIEF IN REINCARNATION

Death is not the real end of life. The deceased is believed to be a living spirit who will reincarnate in a child to be born in the family of the deceased.

This concept of reincarnation is called *Qmaedawa* which means coming back in a child. It is also believed that a deceased person may reincarnate as many times as possible and could be either male or female. This implies that a deceased male may reincarnate in a female child.

In reincarnation, no physical resemblance is necessary. It is known through the *Ifa* Oracle. It is the practice of the Igala to consult the Oracle fourteen days after a child is born to find out which of the deceased relatives brought the child into the world. Usually the deceased who reincarnates in the child will become the god (*qjq*) of that child. This god is distinguished from the Supreme Being.

Although this god is not mixed with the Supreme Being, the father of the child will periodically offer sacrifices in appreciation to the spirit of the deceased relative who brought the child into the world.

The following is a case of a man said to have reincarnated in the child born to his younger brother. This case illustrates that to the Igala death is not the end.

The *Ocheje* Case

Ocheje was a church elder who was converted from paganism. He was the only one in his clan to be so converted. He had a wife and four children who were also Christians. Before he was saved, they had lost about thirteen children soon after their birth. It was after he had become a Christian that their subsequent children lived.

When *Ocheje* died, his brother (a pagan) decided to perform the death ritual (*Ubi* festival). His children objected on grounds that their father was a Christian until his death. Besides, he had instructed his brothers not to perform the ritual which is believed to make way for the deceased to join his ancestors. He told his brothers that by

becoming a Christian, he would no longer join his ancestors, but would be united with believers who had fallen asleep.

The case was so sensitive because Mr. *Ocheje's* brothers claimed that his spirit was disturbing them and that without the ritual, they would be restless. To make the matter worse, one of the brothers had a new child (boy) which he said was *Ocheje's* reincarnation. *Ocheje's* children took this matter to the social welfare department (a civil court) where the deceased's brothers were warned not to associate the deceased's name with their traditional pagan practices. The deceased's brothers would not listen claiming to have full assurance through the *Ifa* Oracle.

The matter has now ended but was never resolved. The deceased's children maintained that their father could not have requested a burial ritual nor reincarnation. On the other hand, the deceased's brothers stood their ground and carried out their own rituals by offering sacrifices to the ancestors and the spirits of their deceased brother.

CEREMONIES IN RELATION TO THE DECEASED

There are two important festivals in which the dead ancestors are addressed. These festivals show the place of the ancestors in Igala concept. They also answer questions concerning where the dead go and what they do. Since the ancestors occupy a prominent place in Igala social and religious life, attempt will be made here to be as detailed and informative as possible.

The two ancestors festivals are *Ubi* and *Ibegwu* festivals. While the *Ibegwu* is performed annually as a remembrance festival and feast, the *Ubi* festival is only performed at the death of old people. These two festivals communicate so much of what the Igala believe about their ancestors and their world.

***Ubi* Festival**

Ubi is a religious and social festival which is performed by the living relatives of the deceased for the purpose of accelerating their journey from this earth to their ancestors who have gone before them. This festival is significant because it is a time of remembrance and a time of joy because the elder whose *Ubi* is being performed died before the children or young ones. It is celebrated by those left behind because it is a bad thing for the old to bury the young.

Though it is a time to rejoice and a time to socialize as relatives and friends get together, the man who did not perform the *Ubi* festival for his own deceased parents is prohibited from attending another person's *Ubi*. If he does, the ancestors will turn around and kill him.

There are at least two main reasons why *Ubi* festival is staged. These reasons, which are for the benefit of the deceased, are:

- 1) *Ubi* festival facilitates the journey of the deceased from this earth to the feet of his fathers or ancestors.
- 2) To remember the deceased who, though dead, still live amongst the living.

There are many activities in *Ubi* festival. The details are summarized in Table 8. However, four are very crucial and of central importance in this festival. Without these activities, there cannot be said to be *Ubi* festival.

These activities include:

- 1) *Ucholo* (offering of an animal to be killed for the deceased's spirit. This is the most important aspect of the festival. It signifies peace and atonement).

- 2) *Akwu Eka* (this is a lamentation exercise in which the elders publicly declare to the ancestors' spirits that his *Ubi* is being performed so that they will no longer be troubled). As they eat and drink, the one lamenting will pray to the ancestors that there be no disease or epidemics of any kind.
- 3) *Egwu* (This is a social day in which people socialize, and parade their masquerades. This day is characterized by all kinds of social activities for the benefit of the living.)
- 4) *Qgba* (this is the last major activity. It occurs on the last evening and is an all-night dance. Thus, while the *Ubi* begins with the *Akwu Eka* ritual and *Ucholo* where animals are killed for the purpose of making peace with the ancestors, the *Qgba* is wholly social and characterized by dancing, drinking and other social events).

There are about five different categories of people involved in *Ubi* festival. These are seen in binary opposition.

- 1) Singers — dancers
- 2) Actors and planners — invited guests
- 3) Family members — extended family members
- 4) Masquerades — spectators
- 5) The Living — the ancestors

The different categories participating is significant in that everyone has a part to play and is encouraged to contribute to the overall success of the festival. This is an occasion where individuals must cooperate and work in a

TABLE 8:

PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES AT UBI FESTIVAL

DAY	SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY	SOCIAL ACTIVITY	REMARK						
F I R S T D A Y	<p>1. Lamentation and shooting of the gun at the grave of the deceased (<i>Akwu eka</i>). This is done at the evening of the first day.</p> <p>2. The lamentation is followed by <i>Ucholo</i> (a blood sacrifice) and <i>Iyoye</i>, (song of women only).</p>	<p>1. Final arrangements for the accommodation of participants.</p> <p>2. <i>Ibele</i> (all night song by men only).</p> <p>3. <i>Iyogwu</i> song is for women while <i>Iyogwu</i> dance/play is for men.</p>	Men and women perform different functions this day.						
S E C O N D a social day	<p>Different types of masquerades are brought to perform. They are: <i>Agbaka, Egwu-Igede, Qjamaledede, Amuda, Ajadu, Egwu-Agwę, Qlagenyi</i></p> <p>Different types of play:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1. <i>Olele</i></td> <td>4. <i>Ichabada</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. <i>Ogilinya</i></td> <td>5. <i>Qgba</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. <i>Agwomu</i></td> <td>6. <i>Iyogwu</i></td> </tr> </table> <p>Another special event this day is to parade the grandchildren of the deceased on a horse (<i>Egwola aju</i>). This is to show that the deceased is still alive, and that he is still concerned for the living.</p>	1. <i>Olele</i>	4. <i>Ichabada</i>	2. <i>Ogilinya</i>	5. <i>Qgba</i>	3. <i>Agwomu</i>	6. <i>Iyogwu</i>	<p>They are brought out to entertain the crowds. In some cases, each family or clan is represented by a masquerade.</p> <p>In the evening of the 2nd day, dance begins (all night).</p>	If a person or family is not in good terms with the deceased, his or their own masquerade will be turned away.
1. <i>Olele</i>	4. <i>Ichabada</i>								
2. <i>Ogilinya</i>	5. <i>Qgba</i>								
3. <i>Agwomu</i>	6. <i>Iyogwu</i>								
T H I R D D A Y	<p>On this last day, food is prepared in the morning and taken to the deceased's grave. The living will give the spirit of the deceased food to eat before they eat right there at the grave. This is to show that the living still love the deceased and will always venerate him. Because the deceased is now a spirit, the only physical place with which to identify him is the grave.</p>	<i>Qgba</i> dance continues until the morning of the last day.	The festival is brought to an end.						

group as there is no room for individualistic presentation and show. The group interest is what is uppermost here.

The Igala believe that the *Abegwu* (ancestors) stand between the living and the Supreme Being. The *Abegwu* are feared and revered in this situation more than God because the *Abegwu* are closer to the living. The ancestors are also feared because since they have become spirit beings at death, the living can no longer see them physically. The fact that the ancestors are now spirit beings is believed to be the main reason for their powers and as such must be venerated by the powerless (the living) who is limited by physical bodies.

Economic Implications of the Festival

The cost of the festival is shared among the relatives and their extended family members. It is important to stress, however, that each family or clan represented makes their own feeding arrangements. The immediate family's main responsibility is accommodation arrangements. The villagers in whose village the festival will be held normally house people without charge.

In the past, *Ubi* festival was held for as long as seven days. Later it was reduced to five days. At present, the festival goes between one to three days at the most. The main reason for these changes is economics. Today people are involved in a number of different occupational activities and cannot afford to spend many days at a festival since there can be many *Ubi* festivals each year depending on how many deceased relatives one has.

Apart from the economic side of the festival which affects the duration of the festival, people have other commitments such as social obligations, welfare of one's family and related problems to attend to. In spite of these structural changes, it is unlikely that modernity will affect its continuity.

There are a number of economic and social advantages of the festival to the organizers, invited guests, and the villagers in whose village the festival is held. Some of the benefits or advantages are:

- 1) People sell and buy from those traders who display their goods in their village stores.
- 2) Singers are hired and paid to participate in the festival.
- 3) Dancers are hired and paid to dance in the festival.
- 4) The time of the festival is a time of reunion for many family members who travel from far and near to participate. It also provides unity among members in the clan or family.
- 5) Some people come to this festival for the sake of finding a wife while others come to satisfy their sexual desires or appetites.
- 6) There are those whose interest is to socialize as they drink and eat with others. This is especially helpful to those who are single and lonely.
- 7) Others, especially the rich come to display their wealth through what they wear and how much money is donated to singers and dancers.
- 8) It is also a place where some politicians campaign for popularity and patronage as they donate and support the various festival activities.

***Ibegwu* Festival**

The *Ibegwu* festival is an annual event in which the ancestors are remembered and venerated. It is a festival that is religious and social. It involves the sacrifice of animals such as he-goats, cocks, and white chickens. The sacrifice is important since the ancestors are basically interested in the blood of an animal. The ancestors are believed to be present in the shrine in a spiritual form while the meat of the animal is eaten. The Igala sees the ancestors by faith and it is believed that anyone who sees the spirit physically will surely die.

In *Ibegwu* (ancestors) festival, every wish of the living is granted. The women and children are covered or represented by the head of the family-- usually the husband. Whatever the woman has to present is presented through her husband.

Ibegwu is usually a day long festival. The activities include the preparation of food and wine, animals for sacrifice to the ancestors, and a time specifically set aside for prophesying (see Table 9). Thus, while in the physical, religious and social rituals the living speak to the ancestors, the ancestors in turn speak to the living through prophesy.

The ancestors help the living by intervening in civil and domestic matters with the view to settling and restoring peace. This is especially the case in a polygamous home where the wives fight and quarrel as a result of competition. The ancestors also speak through prophecy to women contemplating divorce and others who might have violated a taboo. It is

important to realize that the ancestors normally tell those involved how to perform certain rituals to prevent punishment.

While the ancestors' prophecies are not limited to the women, the men are not addressed by them in public, but in the Shrine. Women are not allowed into the Shrine and are not supposed to hear the messages for the men because the men are family heads and should not be reprimanded before their wives and children.

While women and children are represented by the family head in the *Ibegwu* ritual, male children have free access to the shrine. The female children stay with their mothers to prepare meals for the festival.

Ibegwu festival meets several needs of the people. It is believed that through this annual festival, the ancestors provide or guarantee at least five important things. These are:

- 1) Good health (*Qlafia*) is assured through this festival
- 2) The ancestors are appeased (*kędq ma ki bq rę*)
- 3) To help the man catch his adulterous wife
- 4) To help the man settle his domestic troubles. This happens when the ancestors start to prophecy to the women concerning any problem troubling them.
- 5) To give the man success in endeavours (*kqna' kibi*)

The *Ibegwu* ritual is performed in the shrine (*okwula*) and women are never allowed in the shrine. They can, however, remain outside to sing and praise the ancestors as they come out of the *okwula*.

TABLE 9:

PROGRAM OF EVENTS ON IBEGWU DAY

	VENUE	ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS	REMARK
M O R N I N G	<i>Okwula</i> (shrine)	Preparation of the shrine Killing of animals	<i>Amoma egwu afia</i> (Those in the ancestor's cult)	Clear distinction between male and female in terms of where to stay or stand and what to do
	Home (<i>unyi</i>)	Preparation of food and wine		
A F T E R N O O N	<i>Okwula</i>	Men remain here to drink and to eat food brought	<i>Amoma egwu afia</i> (Those in the ancestor's cult)	-Women eat and drink at home -Men eat and drink in the Shrine (No one who is not cleansed from sexual contacts will get involved)
	Home	Women remain at home to drink and eat Non- <i>Ibegwu</i> men remain at home to eat and drink	Non-members of the ancestor's cult	
	Outside	The ancestors go out to visit people and homes	The spirits of the ancestors	
E V E N I N G	Inside the shrine	Ancestors are back to prophesy to women	Ancestors - inside Women - outside	The women sing until the whole festival is over. The <i>Iyoye</i> song is an indication that the feast is coming to an end.
	Inside	The ancestors dematerialize	Women remain to do the <i>Iyoye</i> THE END OF EVENT	

The *Ibegwu* day is fixed by the elders as they are the chief priests in this ritual. Men and women who have had sexual contact must be washed thoroughly before they can take part in *Ibegwu* festival. It is prohibited for the man who has had several relations with the wife or concubine of the deceased to participate in the deceased's *Ibegwu* ritual. This implies that even the deceased's brothers who have taken the deceased's widow are not free to participate because they have become *Agbaji* (have shared similar experience). Failure to comply may result in sickness and death of the living brother or relative who is involved. Thus, in a nutshell, there are three main people involved in this festival: the elders, relatives and families of the deceased, and invited guests and friends.

The type of animal to be used in this ritual depends on the needs of individuals. For example, white color is a symbol of joy and black is the symbol of sorrow and sadness while mixed color (*adikeke*) is usually not accepted as a correct type.

If a person is coming with joy to venerate his ancestors, he will be expected to come with a white feathered cock. Similarly, a person who is coming with sorrow or sadness because of problems will bring a black feathered cock for the ritual. The colors symbolize the person's state of mind or heart.

Social Involvement of the Festival

On the *Ibegwu* day, people socialize and get together in different activities. They find ways to have their needs met during this festival. Some of the needs met are either social, physical or spiritual in nature. As a way of

meeting their social and physical needs, people get together to drink, eat and share life experiences. Some try to get lovers, make new friends, and seek political support. Others sell, buy, dance, sing and settle long disputes between friends.

In relation to spiritual needs addressed in *Ibegwu* festival, the ancestors speak through prophesy in order to warn people of impending dangers, give instructions concerning rituals and give assurance to people facing problem situations.

THE CONCEPT OF SALVATION AFTER DEATH

Salvation is a process in Igala world view. It is based on sacrifices and rituals. The process of attaining salvation is a complex one. Salvation is, however, not attainable in this life. It is when one reaches the feet of the ancestors (*erę ata*) that he or she knows his or her fate. The concept of judgment also comes to Igala mind when salvation is discussed. Judgment is in the hands of the ancestors. Because it is a process which is based on what is done in this life, the Igala works through two channels by which he could pass the judgment: (a) sacrifices through the ancestors and, (b) another sacrifice which is directed at God without any medium or intermediary.

The Igala address God Almighty in *Ojq chama chala* sacrifice for both physical and spiritual needs. Salvation is obtained through good works as food is offered to children.

However, in *Ibegwu, Ogwu-eda, Egwuñyi riñyo, erede, Ifa-ena* and *Ẹboji* rituals, ancestors are addressed. They in turn will mediate for man. In these sacrifices, physical needs are the only needs expressed.

The medium of salvation is sacrifice in which offerings are made either to God directly or through the ancestors. The bottom line in this approach is that it essentially depends on the good works of a person.

Since the ancestors have the power of judgment, the need for sacrifices to pass through the ancestors is crucial. In the same vein, certain sacrifices can be offered directly to God without passing through the ancestors. Its acceptance depends, however, on the response of those that are invited to partake in the sacrificial offerings. God's acceptance is conditioned by the people's satisfaction.

ISSUES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH

Sacrifice is an essential element of the Igala religious system. It is the only legitimate way spiritual problems are solved. It is complex and yet so common and frequent a ritual among the Igala people. Once prescribed by the sorcerer, no matter what it takes, it must be fulfilled.

The efficacy of the sacrificial system is believed by practitioners although it is difficult to prove to non-practitioners. The fact that people still practice it and that modernism has not stopped its practice shows how much faith people still have in sacrifices.

The various types of sacrifices, the different types of animals required, and the fact that special people are designed to offer certain sacrifices show its

complexity and organized system. The church should endeavor to use the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Hebrews to teach the significance of sacrifice in the Old Testament and its goal. The climax or apex of the system as evidenced in the book of Hebrews should be taught as well.

It should be realized that sacrifices address specific themes and the importance of each is defined by the type of blood offering. The concepts of atonement and forgiveness are essential in that people offer sacrifices for either or both of them.

With this background, the biblical teaching on sacrifice and its culmination in Christ can be understood without much difficulty.

The Igala people believe very strongly that there is life after death. In this concept, death is seen as a passage from one stage to another. Death is absence from the body in this world and presence at the feet of the ancestors. This belief is built around their funeral ceremonies especially in *Ubi* and *Ibegwu*. The church has a lot to learn from the main issues in these ceremonies.

Although the object of judgment is not known and defined, the Igala people believe in a future judgment and punishment. The ancestors will have a leading role in this judgment. The ancestors are therefore feared because of their incredible power as spirit beings. The church ought to address the cause of this fear.

The belief in reincarnation is also strong. It however, shows a dualistic picture of the ancestors who are both believed to be spirit beings to be feared

(ancestors) and reincarnate beings in a newborn child in the physical, human body. This dualistic element is difficult to explain and express fully. This is a limitation of the Igala eschatology, and biblical eschatology could take over from here.

Ceremonies relating to deaths and funerals are both religious and social. They are also fast becoming economic ventures in which economic interests and political needs are served. It is yet to be seen if social and religious elements will continue to hold in the face of stiff economic competition.

The concept of salvation in the spiritual sense is not accorded a prominent place in Igala eschatology. However, the concept can be seen in the implication of the various sacrifices and rituals in which salvation is sought. The church needs to study the whole realm of life after death in Igala concept so that the Bible could be used to answer the questions people are asking.

SECTION THREE
APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 10

TRADITIONALISM CONFRONTS CHRISTIANITY

THE PROBLEM OF TRADITIONALISM

Christian missionaries have confronted many traditional practices (*ewñ ogwuchekwo*) of the Igala people, and rejected them. Some of these practices are polygamy (*qya wewe*), fetishism (*ode eche*), traditional medicine (*ogwueche*), levirate (*qya ogwu*), ancestral veneration (*abegwu kpai ubi*) drinking (*otę eño*), ceremonies involving plays and dancing (*iya ido du*), and eating of meat of animal used for sacrifice (*ęla ichębo*). The missionaries taught the Igala believers to have nothing to do with these practices.

Given the Igala reliance on oral communication and history, it is impossible to document how the missionaries taught them to disregard their own cultures in order to embrace Christianity. Where evidence of such neglect and rejection of the people's culture might be found, those who control archival materials have denied the author access.

Nevertheless, evidence from personal observations and from practices arising out of what the missionaries taught abound in Igala churches today. Some of the practices forbidden by missionaries were justified. Practices that promoted immorality, idolatry and syncretism were rightly stopped. However, the missionaries went out of their way to stop other practices about which they knew very little. They forbade use of traditional medicine and

traditional musical instruments. They excommunicated those found to be involved in dancing, drinking, and polygamy. Patience and systematic teaching could have probably addressed spiritual and moral issues of these practices. The changes could have been volitional and out of conviction.

Worship services had Western forms of organization and doctrines. Western music and instruments replaced the traditional ones. The marriage ceremony was introduced following the Western "civilized" style.

After the institutionalization of the church, some believers began to experience certain former felt needs which were not satisfied in their newly found faith. For instance, dancing, musical instruments, and use of traditional medicine appealed to many. With time, Christians began to go back to traditional practices when they faced life-threatening situations or significant social needs. They could not venerate their ancestors and were afraid of the spirit world. The Church began to split as the older people confronted the young people who insisted on bringing traditional musical instruments into the church.

This is the state of the Igala church today. This chapter will supply cases to reveal the nature of the present confrontation and conflict within the church. Furthermore, an analysis of these cases will show the need for the church to evaluate and expand its own theological studies. The Igala church must solve these problems, by facing the challenge of traditionalism to evangelism and theology and, taking the steps necessary to address them biblically and theologically without neglecting the Igala culture in that process.

THE CASES OF TRADITIONALISM

The following are cases of Igala Christians who have resorted to traditionalism. Some of these people have rejected Christianity for Islam or paganism, while others who remained have become nominal Christopaganists, and have brought practices into the church which may be called Christian syncretism. These case studies have been arranged into four groups, each dealing with a particular traditional Igala practice. These practices are:

- 1) polygamy
- 2) ancestral veneration and worship
- 3) traditional medicine, and
- 4) pleasure-seeking issues such as drinking and dancing.

Because many cases were recorded in the research process, only a selected few will be used in this report to show the nature of the problem that is confronting Christianity among the Igala people.

POLYGAMY

Polygamy is one of the problems facing Igala Christians. The following are some of the cases recorded showing different reasons people give for going into polygamy. The first case shows how a Christian's desire for children would lead him into polygamy.

Case #1:

YUNUSA

Yunusa was a pagan married to one wife before his conversion. Soon after his conversion he began to contemplate taking a second wife. He made all necessary customary arrangements for the marriage. The church was not aware of these arrangements. There was no indication that his wife was unfaithful, except that he had been under

pressure from his family to take a second wife because his wife was barren.

He yielded to the pressures on him and after all the traditional marriage requirements had been met and fulfilled, Mr. Yunusa formally informed the church of his plan to take a second wife. The church's response was obviously negative. The leaders of his church tried in vain to set him straight.

When he realized that the church was not going to sanction it at all, he told the leaders that he had already made up his mind to go ahead with his plans having concluded all necessary arrangements. The church, on hearing this, excommunicated him. Mr. Yunusa went ahead and took his second wife.

This second case has to do with a Christian whose decision to take a second wife was caused by his wife's bad conduct.

Case #2:

NOAH

He became a Christian along with his wife. Both were converts from animism or paganism. But there soon developed a serious marital problem which led Noah to decide to marry a second wife. He complained that the wife had a bad conduct which was unconnected with adultery. The church advised him against this plan to take a second wife.

However, Noah carried his plans through by marrying his second wife. The church responded by excommunicating him from the fellowship. The church also advised him that in order for him to be accepted back into the fellowship, he must divorce his second wife.

This case is well over 35 years old and Mr. Noah is still under church discipline and has not been brought back into full fellowship.

These two cases show clearly how people's felt needs drive them into polygamy. While the sexual desire of these men cannot be denied, the cases show that other needs equally trigger such action. In these cases, the need for children and the alleged bad conduct of the wife were the reasons given.

The following cases definitely show the problem of polygamy prompted by sexual desire, though other reasons may be given for getting into a polygamous marriage.

Case #3: **ANDREW**

Andrew was a Christian who had the privilege of attending a Bible school and was active in the Lord's work. He was a married man with a good family. His ministry in the church exposed him to so many people in the church and he used his position in the church to get in contact with those of the opposite sex. The church did not know that he was having sexual problems. When they knew, it had developed and degenerated into adultery.

He later took a second wife and the church followed with the excommunication order. When he realized he was excommunicated and it was unlikely that the church would rescind its order unless he divorced his second wife, he took two more additional wives. The church tried in vain to help him to deal with his problems. Andrew is still alive and attends church services but he has at least five wives today.

Case #4: **JOSEPH**

Joseph was a good Christian and dynamic preacher. He was a married man with many female children. However, in his efforts to help widows in his community, he yielded to temptation and committed adultery with a divorced Muslim woman. He later married this woman because he loved her so much. He also wanted a male child, since all his first wife's children were female. The church excommunicated him after much futile admonition.

Although he knew the seriousness of his sins, Joseph refused to restore his broken fellowship. His second wife later became pregnant and bore a male child for him.

Case #5: **ICHADO**

Mr. Ichado was a married man when he became a Christian. After some time following his conversion, he became ill. He consulted

traditional doctors contrary to the teachings and advice of the church. However, he was cured of the disease which was said to be a poison.

After his healing, he took a second wife. When he requested to be baptized, the church refused on the ground of adultery, polygamy and involvement in traditional medicine. Distressed that he would not be baptized, he went into alcoholism. He remained in the church but there is practically no distinction between Ichado and unbelievers in his practice.

ANALYSIS OF POLYGAMY CASES

These five cases have one thing in common. The first case of polygamy arose out of desire for children and the fourth case out of the desire for male children and sex. Similarly, the third and fifth cases were the result of desire for sex, while the second case arose out of the bad conduct of the wife which the husband could not tolerate.

These Christian men have another thing in common. They knew that the church stood against their plans, but persisted to carry out their plans and desires. Even in the second case where he informed the church, he did so only after every arrangement had been concluded.

As these men expected, the church responded in each case with an excommunication order, following admonition to stop their plans or put away such second wives. It should be realized that these men claim to be Christians and were in some ways active in their respective churches before their decision to take additional wives. The decision of the church to excommunicate them was based on the church's doctrine of monogamy, and not necessarily based on actual individual cases.

However, these cases have shown that Christians go into polygamy as a result of some felt needs and pressures from their families to meet certain expectations. They also show that life-threatening situations were not causes of polygamous marriages in these cases. Perhaps it will be better if the whole issue of traditional marriage and polygamy is addressed in the doctrine of the church so that the Igala Christians might see the Biblical and theological implications of this practice. Such teaching through dialogue and intense studies may result in a sound doctrine based on the Scriptures and the Igala practice.

ANCESTORS: VENERATION, RITUALS AND WORSHIP

Perhaps the most serious obstacle in the way of Igalas that is keeping them from embracing Christianity is the fear that the ancestors will be neglected or disregarded. This same obstacle stands in the way of Christians who are obviously faced with life-threatening issues. There are at least five important benefits the Igala derive from his ancestors. These are:

- 1) Peace - from being disturbed by the spirits of the dead
- 2) Prosperity - Protection from bad omen
- 3) Longevity of life - Prevents diseases
- 4) Protection - Reveals secret harmful plans against someone
- 5) Social acceptance - Credibility is restored when ancestors are venerated

These are felt needs which the Igala believe the ancestors provide. In order for one to be assured of these benefits or blessings, the one interested must perform *Ibegwu* ritual and *Ubi* festival. These are the two main ceremonies in which the ancestors are addressed or propitiated.

Ancestral veneration is so important and crucial to the Igala that even Christians will either renounce their faith in favor of it or become involved in Christian syncretism—practicing ancestral veneration and at the same time remain a Christian. The Igala church generally will not accommodate such syncretistic practices and those found involving themselves in ancestral veneration and ritual are often excommunicated. In spite of the reaction of the church to this practice, some Christians whose needs are being met in this practice prefer the discipline of the church to that of the ancestors and as such will remain in syncretism.

In addition to the above benefits, it has been said that fertility rituals are performed to the ancestors who would intercede for the parties concerned. Social acceptance is another reason why some Christians get involved. This is especially true of the *Ubi* festival and older Christian women whose prestige or status is determined by the *Ubi* festival.

The following cases show the extent of this problem among the Igala Christians. These cases also show the need for the church to address this for the benefit of the Christians who might be tempted to go into and those that have already become involved.

Case #6:

AKOWE

Akowe was the firstborn of his parents. Being the firstborn, in Igala culture he was supposed to be the head of the family at the death of his father. As head of the family, all religious, social and family rituals are his responsibility to organize and discharge in accordance with tradition.

However, Mr. Akowe became a Christian and he was expected to do away with his paganistic and traditional rituals. In addition, he left and stopped performing the rituals and sacrifices to the ancestors. This

negligence led his family members to prevail on him to denounce Christianity or at least remain faithful to the spirit of the ancestors.

He yielded to the pressures put on him by resorting to practice of ancestral veneration and associated rituals. The church, on hearing this, advised him to distance himself from traditionalism — to no avail. Mr. Akowe, while remaining in the church, refused to take a firm stand for Christ. Instead he prefers to be called a Christian and at the same time be involved in ancestral veneration.

Case #7:

IDAKWO

Idakwo was a pagan before his conversion to Christ. He was also a polygamist and a drunkard. When he became a Christian, the church admonished him about his drinking habit but he would not give it up.

There came a time when he fell sick and he was close to dying. His relatives told him that the cause of his sickness was his neglect of the ancestors since he became a Christian.

Having heard that his ill health was caused by his ancestors, he made up his mind to renounce Christianity. When the church heard this, efforts were made to get him to realize that the ancestors who are dead do not have the power to cause him harm. He left the church and has never been back since then. He was afraid that the ancestors would kill him if he remained in the church.

Case #8:

DANIEL

When Daniel became a Christian, he looked promising. He became involved in a number of church activities. However, not long after his conversion, he started to fornicate, drink and participate in the ancestor's rituals.

Because of his involvement in fornication and drinking, he became afraid of being killed by poison. This fear led him to embrace fetishism and ancestral rituals. His belief was that the ancestors will offer him protection. In all these he remained in the church, unconcerned and unrepentant. He does not see why ancestral rituals should affect his relationship to Christ.

This sixth case has to do with the need for one to be faithful to his ancestors. It illustrates how Christians are put under pressure to do what is

important and crucial to their families. People get into ancestral practices because of fear and need for protection from sickness. The ancestors are believed to be very powerful and protective. The fear of being poisoned is another factor which often takes people into ancestral veneration. This need for protection from evil spirits led Daniel into the ancestral rituals. For *Ahiaba* and his wife, their need for children was great. They were told that the ancestors could help them.

Case #9:

AHIABA

He and his wife were Christians. They were, however, suffering from infant mortality. Their children died at infancy and they were very much concerned. Their families advised them to offer some sacrifices to the ancestors in order to have their blessing. They were also to go to the native doctor for native medication. They wrestled with these for sometime. It was a difficult time in their lives as these practices were not sanctioned by their church.

On the other hand, the pressure to have children was on them. The church advised them to keep trusting the Lord for the blessing of children. Disturbed by the fact that without children, he would have no representative in his paternal lineage, he decided to perform the rituals prescribed and to also visit native doctors for medication.

After a short while, his wife became pregnant and bore a child and the child did not die. From this point on, their children lived. Even though the church put them out of fellowship, this situation was such that the church could not say very much since native medication has helped this couple.

Ancestral veneration is believed to be a way to appease them. Some people venerate the ancestors because they want to go to the ancestor's feet at death. The following case illustrates this.

Case #10:

EJIMA

It was the desire of Ejima on becoming a Christian to remain in a few traditional festivals. He wanted to keep the Ibegwu festival in which the ancestors are remembered and venerated. Secondly, he

wanted his family members to perform his death ritual (*Ubi* festival). The church told him not to fear the ancestors but without any success.

He specifically requested that his family members should ensure that *Ubi* festival is performed to enable him to go safely to the feet of his ancestors. A few months later he died and his family performed the ritual he had so longed for. This incidence disturbed the church greatly. The church felt that his conversion experience was probably not a genuine one.

For others, it is the need for protection and social acceptance that drives them into ancestral veneration and rituals.

Case #11:

OMEHI

Omehi was saved while attending a mission hospital. She was moved to accept Christ because of the loving care of the missionaries working at the medical centre. She spent a number of years at this hospital as she was suffering from leprosy.

When she was cured of her leprosy, she returned home to be with her people. Her relatives were surprised that she had become a Christian. They were concerned that she would no longer be involved in traditional practices. There were even more concerned that the *Ubi* festival would not be allowed at her funeral.

Omehi listened to the complaints of her people and agreed with them. She was particularly concerned that she would not see her fathers (ancestors) if the *Ubi* festival was not performed. To convince her family members of her decision to get back into these rituals, she left the church as she knew the church would not accommodate these ideas. When she died, she was buried according to the traditional rites.

The need for children is a crucial felt need among the Igala Christians. Many Christians who cannot have children either resort to polygamy (case #1) or ancestral ritual (case #9). In some cases Christians are put under pressure from their family members to consult their ancestors and use traditional medicines in order to get their wishes. This is what happened to Ahiaba and his wife (case #9).

Ejima (case #10) needed security and assurance which can be found only in Christ. Instead, he believed that such security could be secured from ancestors. He did not want to rely completely on Christ. In the case of Omehi (case #11), she wanted to be socially accepted by her people and she thought that she needed the ancestors badly. It seems that she fails to understand her privileges and completeness in Christ.

Need for protection from evil spirits is also a crucial one. Not only do people protect themselves, they are expected to protect their family members as well. This case shows that problem.

Case #12:

BALA

Bala, a young Christian man, was father of four daughters. He and his wife were looking for a son badly and God provided a son. However, this infant had curly hair. In Igala society when a child is born with curly hair, it is believed that the child is Ichekpa. This means that the Ichekpa spirit must be consulted and sacrificed to from time to time. It is also believed that the hair must not be shaven without the consent of the child and that if a haircut is given without the child's consent, he would die.

However, this belief is not held by the church. Therefore, the church moved in to this matter and instructed Bala to shave his son. Bala held that his child would die and so would not want to kill him. The church refused to see things from Bala's perspective.

Since Bala refused to do what he was told to do by the church, he was excommunicated. The church held that the boy's hair is a symbol of shame and disgrace. Furthermore, it shows that the Ichekpa spirit can indwell a Christian, which the church denies. The church also held that Bala's deliberate refusal to give his child a haircut shows that he was afraid of the spirit and was not grateful for God's gift of a child.

On the other hand, Bala maintained that he would be guilty of killing his son if he would go ahead and give him a haircut.

In the end, however, this child grew up and demanded to have a haircut. It was done and he is still alive. Bala is still under discipline about fifteen years after this incidence. He maintained that his excommunication was unjustified. The church also maintains that he will not be restored into fellowship without repentance. He is farther from the faith than he was when the church excommunicated him. And the church has not made any attempt to bring him back into full fellowship.

Analysis of Cases of Ancestral Rituals

These seven cases involve the veneration of the ancestors and participation in their rituals. Each case represents a felt need for which Igala Christians turned to the ancestors. Because these needs are very crucial to Igala people, when the church fails to supply adequate answers, people turn to traditional means.

The church reacted by confronting, persuading and finally excommunicating these people involved. The church did not offer any viable alternatives and thus failed to impact these people. Their needs were not addressed by the church and further, the church leaders reprimanded them for their practices. These people have been in the church and probably know the consequences of their actions. But what they need is not a person who will tell them how wrong they were. They need to be shown an alternative Christian way of meeting these needs of security, good health and protection from the evil spirits. That was what the church failed to offer them.

To these people, something which was obviously lacking in the church was available to them elsewhere. They had the assurance of the ancestors and, no matter what it takes, they accept and believe what they have experienced and seen.

The Christians, it seems, have become indifferent to the realities of the ancestral world. They have been taught by their leaders to disregard the spirit world. This is evidenced in the lack of this teaching in the theological studies contents. However, these cases should convince the church of the importance of the ancestral world so that the subject should be addressed in theological studies. Such understanding gained from systematic studies will help the church in evangelizing those still under allegiance to the ancestors and as well as those weak Christians who still venerate the ancestors out of fear, intimidation and lack of understanding of their own resources in Christ.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AND DOCTORS

The need for good health and security is a serious and crucial felt need of most people. This felt need cuts across sex and age barriers. The Igala people have a strong belief in herbal medicine. Before the coming of Christianity, traditional medicine (a combination of herbs and other ingredients) were used as a prevention and cure. This was often done by traditional doctors, sorcerers or diviners. In many instances, traditional medicine was associated with sorcery and religious rituals. Whatever form it took, one thing was clear. People were getting healed and protection from the attacks of medicine men was guaranteed.

When the missionaries came to introduce Christianity to the Igala and the church was established, the believers were taught that traditional medicine is evil. The missionaries in turn introduced Western medicine. It must be conceded that medical missions helped the Igala people immensely as God used these missionaries who had little medical training to bring healing to many people. Furthermore, most of the Igala people who accepted Christianity did so because of the exposure to the gospel through the medical work.

Despite these successes, Western medicine could not cure all the diseases of the people. Diseases are believed to have spiritual origin and that no medication could solve such spiritual problems. The Igala people believe that spiritual issues in sickness should be addressed spiritually and the Western medication does not have the power to deal with such cases.

There are several cases of people who were brought to the orthodox doctors who could not see any physical problem while the patient was obviously in pain. Such cases take spiritual medication for healing. Since this sort of cases cannot be comprehended by Western missionaries and medicine, it is frowned upon and often discouraged.

The Igala Christians are faced with this serious dilemma of whether to disregard traditional medicine for Western medicine. On the other hand, they have seen the weakness of Western medicine in cases where their traditional medicine could have brought healing. Because of the fear of being excommunicated, these Christians secretly resort to traditional practices when faced with sickness and security needs.

The following cases (#13 and 14) will show how two Christians received healing from traditional doctors and subsequently renounced their faith. Other cases (#15, 16, 17) concern the Christians' quest for some protection with the use of fetishes and charms instead of putting their trust in Christ. This concern is borne out of the proverb which says "one does not open his door for God to shut or close". In other words, man must seek to protect himself as God may be too busy to get involved in such petty details. These cases reveal that desire in people to help themselves.

Case #13:**MOSES**

Moses was a Christian and in fellowship (communicant). When he became ill, the church went to pray for him. The sickness would not go away. He was receiving treatment at a local hospital and there was nothing else the church could do.

When his condition was deteriorating, he went to seek the help of native doctors. The native doctors used herbs, charms and other ingredients in treating Moses. After a short period with the native doctor, he was cured and became well again. However, he became a Muslim following his discharge because he knew he had violated the church law which prevents Christians from receiving native medicine and doctors.

Case #14:**ADIJA**

Adija was a devout Christian but her husband was not. At a time she became ill and after all the church prayers had failed to produce healing, she was taken to a native doctor by her unbelieving husband. She was there for a long time and was finally healed. On returning home, she renounced her faith and became a pagan. Her reason was that Christianity was not able to heal her. She thought it would be reasonable to worship the gods that gave her healing.

On the other hand, Adija's unbelieving husband became a Christian. His own reason for becoming a Christian was because of the miraculous healing of his wife. And although he tried to win his wife back to the faith, she has refused to come back to Christ.

These two people who claim to be Christians, when faced with death or life-threatening situations decided to go traditional to obtain help in order for them to survive and live.

The church was confronted with these situations and the church prayed. However, these people were not healed. Because the church believed in Western medicine, they will not allow these patients to seek the help of traditional doctors.

When they realized that the church could offer no hope or help, they decided to consult traditional doctors who were able to help them. After their healing, they left the church because they realized that the church will respond by excommunicating them and also that the church does not have the power to protect them.

These cases discredited the church in that the traditional doctors were seen to have more power than the Christian God. They also reveal the necessity for the Igala Christians to know the distinction between traditional medicine using spiritual means, and the use of traditional medicine using herbal means. It is important that a thorough study of ethnomedicine be undertaken with the aim of making this distinction possible. Such studies could be a subject which theological education could effectively address.

Cases #15, 16, and 17 show the Igala people's need for security. The cases reveal how far Christians could go to seek for protection, security and power due to their fear and lack of faith in God.

Case #15:**ANAJA**

Anaja was a young Christian who demonstrated some signs of spiritual growth immediately following his conversion. He was a driver and had seen automobile accidents resulting in death quite a bit. He was advised by his friends to get some fetishes which would enable him to disappear or get out of a vehicle in times of accidents. This fetish is believed by most unbelieving drivers to be efficacious. Fear for his life and need for security drove Anaja into idolatry. In spite of the admonition of the church, Anaja went away to renounce Christianity. He realized that his new practices were incompatible with Christianity and so decided to go into Islam.

Case #16:**SIMON**

Simon was a good Christian who was in the pastorate for some years. However, he fell into sexual sin and was excommunicated. Because of the nature of his sin, flirting and having relations with people's wives, he decided to seek medicine and fetishes with which to protect himself from the attacks of his rivals and enemies.

Although Simon is still in the church, he has his hands in polygamy, witchcraft and native medicine. He could not trust and believe God to help him get over his problems and security needs.

Case #17:**ALI**

Ali was a good Christian until he became involved in several land disputes. In Igala culture, land is very important and when one is involved in a land dispute, he is said to be sticking his head out.

Having realized that he had made enemies in most of his land cases, he sought traditional medicine and fetishes with which to protect himself. In addition to self-defense, he became involved in charming people with the intent to do harm to them.

When it was public that he was involved in spiritism, he left the church. In all these practices, the church's effort to get him to reason fell on deaf ears.

The basic problem in these three cases is that of security. The man in case #15 wanted power to overcome spirits that cause accidents on the highway. In case #16, the man there was also in need of the power to protect

his life from the attacks of his enemies (those having sexual relations with his wives). Similarly the man in case #17 who was involved in several land cases or disputes wanted the power to enable him win his court cases and power which will provide security from that attacks of his enemies.

They knew very well that the church would not permit this practice and so decided to leave the church. These cases show that these believers do not know of the power of Christ and so decided on what the evil spirits can offer them. If they had seen the dynamism of the church, especially in responding to spiritual attacks on Christians, perhaps they would have been more inclined to think through their actions.

It is important to stress that while these men knew the power of traditional medicine (fetishes) because they were saved out of animism, there is need for the church to teach them from the Scriptural stand point. To deny their existence as have been the case will not solve this problem.

DRINKING , TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND COURT LITIGATION

Cases #18, 19, and 20 deal with three different issues that Igala Christians constantly face. They are the problem of drinking, traditional dancing and singing, and the problem of taking a fellow Christian to court.

Case 18:

EBILAYI

This case involves a Christian man called Ebilayi. His main problem was the drinking of alcohol. This habit degenerated into drunkenness. Mr. Ebilayi's church was against such habit, for it was prohibited. The pastor and elders of his church decided to preach against this habit and practice. In their messages, drunkenness was condemned. The church would not compromise on this issue and systematic Bible teaching was arranged on this subject. When Mr.

Ebilayi was tired of listening to condemnatory messages castigating his habit of drinking, he left the church since he was not prepared to stop drinking.

Case 19:

MARY

Mary was a Christian lady who was very interested in singing and dancing. When this was introduced in the church, she became very active and was fully involved in the church choir. However, the missionaries later decided that it was wrong to allow drumming and dancing in the church since this same practice was the way of the pagans in this culture. When Mary discovered that the church could no longer accept dancing and the use of traditional musical instruments, she left the church and became a pagan. She renounced her faith on the grounds that traditional music and dance were not allowed in worship.

Case 20:

ALIFA

The third case is that of Alifa. He loaned a fellow Christian some money which must be repaid at an agreed time. When the period within which the loan should be repaid arrived, the brother in debt would not care to pay. After several attempts to recover his money proved abortive or unsuccessful, he took the case to a civil court without consulting the church. As soon as the church realized this, without admonishing this man to withdraw his court action, he was suspended from the church for six months. Within this period of suspension, Mr. Alifa was not to come to church at all. Having been formally notified of the church's action, Mr. Alifa decided that he would have nothing to do with Christianity. He left the church. The church later could not persuade him to return and till today, Mr. Alifa has not returned to the faith.

These problems are common, but are smaller issues than earlier cases. However, they reveal personal crises in their Christian lives, and how the church has closed itself to issues of importance.

In case #18 the problem was that of drinking of alcohol and corn wine. The case shows that the church stands against drunkenness and this position

is well known by Mr. Ebilayi. However, the church's constant condemnation and preaching against this practice from the pulpit angered him. He therefore left the church as a result.

Case #19 involves the forbidding of the use of traditional musical instruments and dances in worship. When Mary realized that the church will not be open to the traditional music, she left the church to where she could continue to be allowed to continue to dance and use traditional musical instruments. It should be realized that the church's action to stop the use of traditional musical instruments has not been rescinded.

The issue of court litigation was the subject of case #20. The litigant was a believer who decided to go to a civil court instead of allowing the believers to settle their dispute. However, this action was distasteful to the church and the litigator was suspended from church membership for six months. Outraged by the church's action and the inability of the church to initiate out of court settlement, the litigator left the church and decided never to return to church.

These cases show the failure of the church to appropriate the serious nature of the problems involved. Perhaps these problems could have been solved if the church had been open to discussion and, treated each case meritoriously.

CHAPTER 11

APPLICATION OF CULTURAL THEMES FOR EVANGELISM

This dissertation examines some Igala cultural themes in relation to the way the Igala look at the world around them and other people. The thesis is that when Igala world views are used as frames of reference in communicating the gospel and theologizing, the Igala's receptivity to the gospel would be enhanced.

The explication of Igala cultural themes and world view is an attempt to de-Westernize the gospel and theology. This process of de-Westernization is referred to as contextualization in this dissertation. In the de-Westernization process, a distinction is made between the gospel message and the culture it came wrapped in. In the same way, to call biblical Christianity a white man's religion or Western religion is a mythical statement and assumption. This process, therefore, involves the rejection of that assumption and the incorporation of some cultural themes which are biblical and have relevance to the socio-cultural context of the Igala.

Thus, in the use of Igala cultural themes as a vehicle for evangelizing, this study identified "form" as the key issue in the whole process of communicating the gospel to the Igala people. It contends that the gospel message as seen in the inspired Word of God should never be manipulated just for the sake of making the message more palatable. However, a better

form of communication can be adapted to suit the socio-cultural context of the hearers. And this is very crucial to the reception and rejection of the entire gospel message.

Furthermore, in de-Westernizing the gospel message, it is argued that the basic salvation message should remain the core of the gospel. Other non-salvation issues should be a matter of discipleship and systematic Bible study. The issues of polygamy, traditional medicine, drinking, dancing and socializing with the unsaved should be distanced from salvation message. As important as these issues are, they should not be a part of the salvation message package. It is further argued that follow-up and discipleship after salvation must address these very important issues.

COMMUNICATION THEORY

Effective communication depends on the understanding of elements and basic assumptions which are essential to the communication process. A goal in communication is to communicate the message so that both the communicator and receptor know the message is received and understood with response. The fundamental communication process involves understanding the working of the three elements; the communicator, message, and the receptor.

The person communicating is the communicator. He is also known as the source. According to Samovar, et. al, " a source is a person who has a need to communicate" (Samovar 1981:14). The source or communicator needs to be credible. Hesselgrave says, "the perceived credibility, status, and image of the source have a great deal to do with whether or not respondents

will receive the message, how they will understand it, and what they will do with it" (Hesselgrave 1978:31). Similarly, M. Kraft observes concerning the communicator, "within himself, however, are several factors that make a difference in how well he communicates. His own ability with language and his communication skills make a difference in how well he gets his message to the receptor" (M. Kraft 1978:79). The communicator therefore needs to prepare himself well for his task. According to Marguerite Kraft, the [communicator] cannot communicate what he does not know or understand himself. However, it is possible to be overspecialized and so technical that the receptor cannot understand. The communicator needs to watch his attitude closely even when he knows what to communicate, as attitudes frequently come through in the message (M. Kraft 1978:79).

The importance of source credibility cannot be overemphasized. It is pertinent, therefore, to mention that this study sided with Dodd when he lists five elements or factors of communicator credibility. These are, according to Dodd, authority, trust, co-orientation, charisma and dynamism (Dodd 1982:134). While these are not exhaustive, they surely provide a basic understanding of what qualities are expedient for a good and effective communicator.

The second element of the communication process is the message, verbal or nonverbal. Marguerite Kraft says, "the message is the product that has been created by the communicator for purpose of eliciting a response from the receptor" (M. Kraft 1978:80). A message emerges after the process of encoding by which a message is created. Samovar observes that "although encoding is an internal act that produces a message, a message is external to

the source; the message is what must pass between a source and a receiver if the source is to influence the receiver" (Samovar, et. el 1981:14). This is, perhaps, the most delicate or intricate part of the communication process because of the form and context of what was encoded.

In his observation, Filbeck said "the encoding of a message on the part of the communicator proceeds from a [his] sociological foundation; many times, in communication, the foundation also establishes the message to be encoded. The encoding in turn is received and interpreted by another person on the basis of [his own] a sociological foundation ... [But] when a message is encoded on one basis but interpreted on another, problems in communication arise" (Filbeck 1985:4). This type of problem can and should be avoided.

The message must be contextual and dynamic. This can be made possible by being sensitive to the people for whom the message is prepared. Marguerite Kraft says that the receptor must be kept in mind as the message is being prepared ... [and ask questions such as] what code will be understood? What elements from that code will appeal to him and be easy to decode? What structuring of these elements would be most easily understood and remembered? What context of the message will be pertinent to his interest and needs? (M. Kraft 1978:81).

It should be mentioned that the process of encoding and decoding are very crucial in intercultural communication, and as such, discipline, diligence and dedication is required to make it a hitch-free one.

The receiver is the one to whom the message is targeted by the communicator. The term receiver represents the person or persons who intercept the message and as a consequence become linked as the source of the message (Samovar 1981:15). This is important since the goal of every communication is consummated in the receptor or receiver. Thus, a message is no message, and a communicator does not communicate if the intended message is never received by the receiver. It is not because the receiver is not physically present at the receiving end, but because the communicator did not have him in mind when the message was prepared and so communicated over him.

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

In communication, there are some general principles which deal with how a message gets to its receivers from the communicator. These principles are crucial to the relevance of the message to the anticipated receiver; and they are also concerned with how to make the message relevant and whether or not such message or messages will be received.

Communicating with and or to the Igala involves a number of basic principles. These must always be borne in mind by every communicator. Some of these basic principles are:

1) There must be a clear statement of purpose.

The Igala people are curious people. They always want to know the purpose of any message. Their reaction to a message depends on their knowledge and understanding of its purpose. For instance, one does not invite adult men to a meeting where the message is clearly on children or

women. The men will insist that it was not useful to attend such meeting. In most cases, the subject of one's message defines his audience or listeners or receivers.

2) The communicator must use familiar and acceptable form.

Sometimes, communicators want to impress people with how much they know. This mentality or attitude always results in the use of certain words which are either unfamiliar or unacceptable to the people. This point must be well noted by those involved in communication with the Igala.

For instance, the Igala believe that sex is sacred and it is out of place to discuss sexual matters publicly and especially before children. As a result, sex education is not conceived at all. In Igala traditional societies, even husbands and wives live in separate houses. They do not show affection publicly and before the children. Similarly, friendship must be on sex lines. The males relate to males and the females to females. Intimate relationship between boys and girls are suspicious. It is also unusual or inappropriate for one especially women to enter into conversation which may lead to sexual subjects. Women do not announce pregnancies or talk about their sex life to other men. Other words or expressions which are inappropriate for communication can be seen in Table 10.

TABLE 10: EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE WORDS FOR COMMUNICATION

Words or Expression	Reaction and Reason
1. Sex or open reference to it	—It is too sacred to be mentioned publicly
2. Subway	—Unfamiliar. [It is not known]
3. Equal rights for women	—Unfamiliar. [It is not accepted]
4. Children's rights	—Unfamiliar. [It is not accepted]
5. Homosexuality	—Unfamiliar. [It is not known]
6. Stories or questions about ancestors/masquerades in the presence of women	—Unacceptable questions
7. Sex education	—Unacceptable. It is obscene.
8. Family planning	—Unacceptable. It is against the norm.
9. Male/female intimacy	—Unacceptable. It is very unusual.
10. Old and young socializing	—Unacceptable. It is not the norm.
11. A woman talking about her pregnancy or related sex life to another man other than her husband	—Unusual.
12. Young people asking older people questions relating to sex	—Unacceptable. It is obscene.
13. Young people calling adults by their name	—Unacceptable. Disrespectful.

In the same way some forms or practice which are mostly informal and nonverbal but unacceptable are:

1. Talking to adults with hands in pockets,
2. Talking to adults and looking straight at them,
3. Walking while greeting the elderly people.

To the Igala people these three practices, which are aspects of non-verbal behavior, communicate messages of disrespect. Intercultural communicators must endeavor to use familiar and acceptable terms.

3) The message must have the aim of meeting some needs.

The communicator's message must be one that is useful or capable of solving some problems, and sensitive enough to identify, sympathize or show concern for the perceived needs of the receptor. People will naturally listen to communicators whose messages are clear, and are aimed at the receptors needs or wants. In situations where a receptor's problems are overlooked or undermined, communication is bound to fail. The communicator must identify and address the need of the receptors with his message. The communicator is also responsible to make the people see their own needs for his message even where they do not see such.

For example, if a communicator is able to use illustrations which are familiar and closely related to the problems that subsistence farmers are facing and perhaps suggest ways through which they can receive help, he would have met some needs of his audience. It is also helpful to relate to the sufferings, pains or untold hardships that people face in their struggle for life. The difficulties the poor people face and experience when they are asked to buy animals for some rituals are examples of the type of relief people are looking for. The Igala are always open to anyone who understands and identifies with their needs, even if such one does not have the means to help them.

4) The communicator must understand his message from the receptor's point of view.

This has to do with the ability or capacity to understand his own message and know their meanings and implications to the receptor.

For instance, the Igala people fear their ancestors and venerate them. They strongly believe that the spirit world has incredible powers to cause their death or physical harm. Thus, they spend money and resources struggling to protect themselves. The communicator may not believe these things which are crucial to the Igala, but his message for the Igala must address these serious issues from the Igala frame of reference. The reason some missionaries were ineffective was their outright denial of the existence of the things that the Igala strongly hold to. The communicator needs to see things from the receptor's frame of reference if he must successfully reach the receptors.

5) The communicator must be practical.

An illustration of this point might be seen in the attitude of some Brethren missionaries who preached about love to unbelieving Igalas and later refuse to allow them to pluck mango fruits from their mission station. Sometimes, these unbelievers are accused of stealing and faced the threat of being handed over to the police by missionaries who had earlier preached to them.

One would expect that the sacrifices made by missionaries to come to the Igala is sufficient to suppress any emotional attachment to mango fruits planted on the land freely given to them by these same people. In a situation like this, one finds it difficult to believe that the communicators (missionaries) are practicing what they preached.

The communicator's practicality is monitored and evaluated on three grounds. His ability to relate well to the receptor; ability to practice what

is communicated and be demonstrated positively; and his ability to be responsible and credible. These qualities will earn the communicator the respect and authority that he needs in order to present what it is that he has to communicate. They are necessary and required if other principles are to function well.

EVANGELIZING WITH CULTURAL THEMES

In identifying appropriate cultural themes and cues to be used in evangelizing the Igala, it is important to stress the form for communicating the gospel message. Communicating with, and to, a people group requires a thorough understanding of the people in relation to their background, belief systems, values, and attitudes; and how the message one wishes to communicate will be heard, received, understood, and prompt to action.

THE USE OF MYTHS

The Igala places emphasis on myths which, though not true stories, communicate true lessons and values. The myth may be recounted in such a way as to lead into a presentation of the gospel message. For example, the myth "God, Death and human Beings" in chapter seven of this dissertation is one that teaches about the inevitability of death. The lesson taught by this myth is that death has no mercy and does not listen to appeals. In communicating Christ, God's mercy in Christ can be built upon this myth immediately while people are still willing to listen. It is the responsibility of the preacher to make a good adaption, correlation and application.

THE USE OF STORIES

Although most anthropologists call what this author refers to as stories "myths", this distinction is made in accordance to the way the Igala understand and refer to them.

There are many stories told by the Igala. Some of these stories have to do with the beginning of the world (*Ilẹ*), the creation of man and woman (*amone*) and what happened at the beginning when the sky (*akpa*) was close to the ground (*ane*). These stories can be used as a springboard leading to the presentation of the gospel message.

TABLE 11: COMPARISON OF INIKPI AND GOSPEL STORIES

Inikpi story	Gospel story
— She was the beloved daughter of King Ayegba.	— Christ was God's only begotten son.
— She had all the royal privileges.	— He was equal with God.
— Her father's kingdom was facing imminent destruction	— His Father's creation faces eternal death.
— She was the one chosen to die.	— He was the one to die.
— She volunteered her life for the sake of her father's kingdom.	— Christ chose to die so that His Father's creation may live.
— She was buried alive volitionally.	— He was crucified volitionally.
— Nine innocent slaves were buried alive with her.	— Two criminals were crucified with him.
— She is still remembered in an annual festival today by the Igala people.	— He is still remembered today by believers everywhere and especially during the communion service.
— She did not resurrect.	— He resurrected and is alive today at the right hand of God His Father.
— She is dead and her father is dead, too.	— He will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment.

The story of Inikpi related in chapter seven is one that contains perhaps the best redemptive analogy for the Igala people. It is a story that is commonly known, told and is wholly believed. The chief character, Inikpi, is respected even today. The striking similarities in the story of Inikpi and the gospel story include their original position, opportunities, the problem they faced, and the fact that their decisions were volitional. A detailed comparison is illustrated in Table 11. The story of Inikpi may be used to present Christ to the Igala. At points where the companion falters, the evangelist must explain fully the superiority of Christ and the fact of His resurrection.

THE USE OF PROVERBS

The use of proverbs for evangelizing presupposes a working knowledge of many Igala proverbs. This is crucial because some proverbs need to be combined in order for one to fully relate the gospel story. Nevertheless, some proverbs are complex enough and rich in meaning that the preacher can effectively teach the gospel message through them without much difficulty.

Igala proverbs recognize the sinful nature of man and the sacrificial system teaches that the head of an animal must be used as sacrifice for atonement. Igala believe that God out powers fetishes and that God is the ultimate source of wisdom and power. Proverbs relate how God is a giver of gifts whose gifts are never appreciated.

Other proverbs stress righteousness in interpersonal relationships as well as with discipline, morality, and right attitudes. It is possible for the

preacher of the gospel to show how God through Igala proverbs has revealed his truth, and what the Bible teaches more clearly on such subjects.

THE CONCEPTS OF GOD

The Igala concept of God recognizes His existence, His personality, His attributes, His works, His decrees, and His essence. Although God is believed to be far away from the world (transcendent), he is believed to be immanent as the creator.

In communicating Christ to the Igala, it is necessary to place emphasis on how the Igala define God in their different divine and personal names for God. It is important also to do some word studies of the personal names and attributes characterizing God in their concept. Similarly, the works of God and His decrees can be expanded and in this, the gospel message can naturally flow out. Thus, the message is built on their knowledge of God.

The Igala believe God to be a God of love and judgment. He is said to be both good and bad. However, in presenting Christ to them, there has to be a clear distinction between God's love and goodness, and God's judgment of evil men and their deeds which is referred to as bad. It is worth mentioning that God did not even spare His own son who was being punished on the account of others. Like Inikpi who died for the kingdom of her father, Jesus died that all may live. And since God is almighty, wise and powerful, He works to bring about His own ultimate will for the good of His creation and creatures.

THE USE OF ACTIVITIES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD

There is a strong belief in animistic power among the Igala. The beliefs in fetishes and their powerful abilities are also pervasive so that it is almost natural for them to believe in miracles.

Unlike Western philosophy and rationalism which has esteemed and dignified the scientific method as the only authentic method of verification, the Igala people believe that spiritual events do not need to have human verification. For instance, the miracles recorded in the Old Testament and especially those of Christ in the gospels are not doubted by the Igala people because in their understanding miracles are possible.

In presenting the gospel message to the Igala, it is important to consider the use of miraculous accounts or cases in the Bible which people can readily relate to. Paul B. Long said when cautioning Western missionaries on repeating the past mistakes in relation to cultural baggage that,

Part of our western cultural baggage includes a general scientific, logical framework of our world view which is, in my judgment, naive in regard to the occult world of spirits. We have been conditioned by both culture and training not to believe in the spirit world and its interaction in the worlds of humanity. A superior smile, gentle ridicule, or angry condemnation of things we do not understand or refuse to believe have too often closed the door of communication with those whose lives are shaped, directed, and, at times, enslaved by spirits. (Long 1984:115).

Because Western missionaries assumed the irrelevance of the spirit world, they were unprepared to relate such a crucial world view to the preaching of the gospel message. The evangelist must recognize the spirit world of the Igala when communicating the Gospel message to the Igala.

The scope of Igala beliefs in the activities of the spirit world ranges over a wide variety of subjects. To the Igala, it is basically natural to see the following events or happenings:

1. A person can dematerialize and disappear
2. A person can transform himself into an animal or a wild tormenting spirit.
3. A person can walk on the sea or cross it.
4. A person can be harmed without being able to see the person doing it and how he did it.
5. A criminal can supernaturally charm the judge presiding on his case to halt proceedings.
6. A husband can charm his wife so that whenever she is involved in adultery, she will be caught red-handed.
7. A woman can charm a man to seduce him to make love to her.
8. With the use of the right fetish, a person can invoke bad omens on his enemies with an instant result.
9. It is possible to cause thunder and rain by the use of the appropriate fetishes.
10. A person fighting can arm himself with some fetishes which prevent bullets from penetrating into his body or knives from cutting through his flesh.

This list is not exhaustive. Igala believe in many more things that people can do through the spirit world. For the evangelist, the most important use of this belief system is to teach that God also has the power to perform miracles or supernatural acts, and that God can also overrule other powers. The communicator can proceed to show the power of Christ and, of course, explain further that His power is greater than the whole power behind the powers and principalities of the air and heavenly hosts.

To deny the existence and efficacy of the power of the spirit world is to deny the testimony of Scripture. More harm may be done to the gospel by

denying the existence of such opposing forces than recognizing their existence and impact.

THE CONCEPT OF SACRIFICE AND PROPITIATION

The philosophical basis for sacrifice and propitiation rests squarely on the need for forgiveness and pardon. This truth must be understood by anyone involved in reaching the Igala with the gospel message. Sacrifice is crucial to the Igala because through it, requests for different types of felt needs are made. The communicator must therefore acquaint himself with the types of sacrifices, their purposes and themes as he seeks to use these as his vehicle, or means, of getting into the gospel message.

SENSITIVITY TO AGE AND SEX FACTORS

Among the Igala, social relationships and religious practices are developed and carried out on age and sex basis. This implies that a male must relate to another male and a female to another female. In addition, a young person must relate to another young person while the adults socialize with their own kind of people. The situation in which young people appear before the elders to present the gospel is culturally inappropriate because the young are not supposed to teach the old. In Igala concept, the older person is wiser than the young person and is the proper person to teach. Teaching an important subject of life and death requires the wisdom which the young person does not possess. However, the young person can teach or present the gospel to other people of his own age or to those younger than himself. The evangelist must be sensitive to this age issue. It does not mean, however, that the Holy Spirit cannot cut through this seeming barrier to use the young

people to reach those older than them. However, evangelists should look for culturally appropriate means to cope with significant age differences.

Similarly, evangelizing those of the opposite sex can be misunderstood by the Igala people. Casual relationships are acceptable but close contacts such as is often needed in evangelism or witnessing is such that is often looked upon with suspicion. It is because of this inherent problem that it is affirmed here that witnessing to members of the same sex will help people to pay a better and undistracted attention to the one sharing Christ with him. While in this regard also the Holy Spirit cannot be confined to the view espoused here, every effort should be made by those involved in evangelizing the Igala people to be sensitive to their feelings and normal behavior. It would be outrageous to create the atmosphere of Western type of male-female relationships which are often seen on some mission stations.

The form in which the gospel message is presented should go beyond the Western method of sermonizing. The Western form is often characterized by rules and regulations such as the need for wearing a tie, two or three-piece suit, an outline, and a couple of illustrations gathered from homiletic books. While this method is not unscriptural, it is not the only right way to preach or teach the gospel. With the Igala people, it is advisable that preachers do not overdress as they may become the subject of admiration. The emphasis on eye contact should be minimized especially in a situation involving the old and the young, and the male and the female.

Furthermore, there must be a constant effort to critique modern forms of evangelism among the Igala people. The use of loudspeakers or public

address system might show and communicate disrespect to the elders. This is especially pronounced when young people are involved. It is disrespectful to talk directly to adults or elders, shouting and calling on them to come forward to accept Christ. The use of many people, especially in saturation evangelism might make people feel very uncomfortable. In the same vein, religious affairs which are private matters are also corporate matters. When a pagan is confronted with the gospel, he needs time to think through the issues involved. In most cases, he needs to consult his extended family members, and will not want to succumb easily.

While the use of open air meetings and crusades are not condemned, the crusaders will be served if they knew issues confronting those they seek to reach with the gospel message. Simplistic gospel and emphasis on easy believism should be discounted when dealing with Igala pagans.

It should be clear to Christian communicators engaged in evangelizing the Igala that respect of tradition is not worship of tradition. Openness to what other people believe may go a long way to open them to the truth they need to be introduced to.

CHAPTER 12

APPLICATION OF CULTURAL THEMES FOR THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Contextualization of theology is one of the most controversial areas in missiology for theologians and missionaries from the West. From the Two-thirds World has come arguments for and against the whole concept of theological indigeneity.

Some abuses of contextualization and misconceptions have emerged over the years. Many African theologians, having called for Africanization of Christianity, had in mind the indigenization of Christianity in the context of the African society. They allow that the departed ancestors and gods of the land are analogous to Christian saints (Etuk 1985:215); that polygamy will be licensed by theology (Etuk 1985:217); and that spiritism and traditional medical practice will be Christianized. In spite of these extremes, this writer sees contextualization of the gospel and theology, through which the present form of Christianity is de-Westernized of its Western wrappings, a legitimate and desirable venture.

This dissertation is not concerned with the arguments for and against theologizing or contextualization. This is not an attempt to write theology or to contextualize for Africans or for the Igala people. However, it advocates the need for contextualizing the gospel and theology for the Igala people, and

contends that theology should be allowed to flow out of the socio-cultural context and environment of the Igala, as they experience tension from, and respond to the truth and authority of Scripture.

The primary emphasis, however, is to show here that Igala needs, questions, and cultural themes lay a framework for theological response for the Igala Christians. In presenting these cultural themes, it should be realized that issues such as rationale and hermeneutical systems, which are essential considerations in theologizing, will not be addressed here. The point to be argued here is the justification for contextualization using cultural themes.

In the last two decades, many scholarly works have addressed the problem of contextualization or noncontextualization. While the Western theologians, anthropologists and missiologists were busy debating among themselves, the Christians from the Third World were also busy writing and calling for different sorts of theological indigeneity. Notably among these are studies by Nicholls (1980) on a theology of gospel and culture, Fleming (1980) on contextualization of theology, Mastra (1980) and Tippet (1980) on contextualization of the gospel in Bali and Fiji respectively. These studies show the importance of contextualization of theology and the gospel and dealt with specific precautionary issues involved.

Hiebert (1985) shows how critical the need for contextualization is to people from non-Western cultures when they become Christians. Both Hiebert (1985) and Fleming (1980) emphasized the importance of taking the Bible as the final and definitive authority for Christian beliefs and practices

(Hiebert 1985:191). This same position was taken by Padilla (1979), Kato (1979) and Costas (1983).

Other theologians have also made significant contributions to the subject of contextualization. Costas (1984) says that the contextualization of the gospel is not a new theological phenomenon; it has been around from the earliest moments of the Christian faith (Costas 1984:5). He is supported by Kim (1984), Hedlund (1984) and Rowen (1984). Fabella and Torres (1985:ix), stated clearly that Western theology is inadequate for the Third World and irrelevant for the peoples of underdeveloped countries. Pobee (1977, 1979) has shown the importance of contextualization when he called for African theology (which to him should be based on indigenous beliefs and practices). This call has been supported by Charles Kraft and Tom Wisley (1979), Charles Kraft (1979), Marguerite Kraft (1978), Bediako (1983), and Taber (1979). Others who strongly support this whole idea of Africanization are Mbiti (1979), Allomen (1979), Dickson (1984) and Shorter (1977, 1978 and 1973).

It should be borne in mind that while many others have called for the Africanization of theology, Pobee (1979), Mbiti (1972, 1975), Idowu (1962), and Mbihi (1979) have taken steps towards producing "African" theology. From these studies, however, only Idowu (1962) and Mbiti (1970) actually written theological treatises. In theologizing, it is the position of the present study that the source and recipients must be designated clearly. What could be seen as apparent weakness in many writings of African theologians is the fact that Africans are lumped together often as having one culture called "African culture" from which the so-called "African theology" must evolve. This was

the weakness of Pobee (1979), Dickson (1984), Muzorewa (1985) and Appiah-Kubi and Torres (1983).

THE ISSUES OF CONTEXTUALIZATION IN THEOLOGY

The need for a theology derived from the Bible to address biblical Christians wherever they are found has led many to rethink their positions and perspectives on Western theology. With reference to the African situation, a number of ideas have emerged. The White South Africans seek the theology of oppression while the Black South Africans call for Black Theology or Theology of Liberation (Goba 1985). Donders (1986) finds a better theological alternative in what he called non-bourgeois theology based on an African experience of Jesus. Schreiter described the present problem as follows,

"There has been an important shift in perspective in theology in recent years. While the basic purpose of theological reflection has remained the same — namely, the reflection of Christians upon the gospel in light of their own circumstances — much more attention is now being paid to how those circumstances shape the response to the gospel" (Schreiter 1985:1).

In identifying cultural themes crucial to a theology for the Igala, the writer agrees with Curtis (1985) that as evangelicals we affirm that every theologian, irrespective of his culture, must utilize the data of Scripture (and the data of Scripture alone) in formulating his theology (Curtis 1985:1), and that God's revelation through the Scriptures was given in cultural form (Holloman 1983:1); that the cultural perspective of the interpreter will effect his statement and organization of theology as will the cultural perspective of those to whom he is communicating (Curtis 1985:2). It is conceded that since theologians are limited by their own cognitive styles, assumptions of their

respective world and life views, and the unique historical and social circumstances in which they were created, Western theologies are therefore limited (Lingenfelter 1984:8). According to Kraft, if, then, Christian theology as we know it in Western philosophic garb is to be of value to Latin Americans, to Asians, to Africans, it must be transculturated into the concepts and language framework in terms of which they operate (C. Kraft 1979:257).

The Igala Christians face serious problems of traditional beliefs and practices. They need a theology based on the Bible which will also identify and address the very issues they are facing. Padilla says, "the church in the third world needs a theology that answers to its own needs. From Western missions it has received the gospel reduced and wrapped in a cultural clothing that robs it of much of its transforming power. This is its greatest strategy and its greatest challenge" (Padilla 1979:300).

To the Igala Christians, the 'arguments for the existence of God' are irrelevant to their theology because no one quarrels about God's existence. Their pastoral theology must address the issue of polygamy and bride price instead of dating, courtship and pre-marital counseling which is part of the Western theology being taught. These are just examples of what process theologizing may eventually take. Thus, according to Schreiter, from the analysis of [one's] culture comes the emergence of what may be called cultural texts, in which are contained themes that in turn are the cultural nucleus around which a local theology develops (Schreiter 1985:30).

It is important to point out that the present systematic theology in the West was not handed down from heaven on tablets of stone to the Western

church. The different branches of theology embodied in the Western systematic theology evolved with time, need, and experience. For instance, certain theologies relating to church growth, mission, youth work, man, para-church organizations and Christian education are relatively new in the West. These are ministries that arose out of need with time and since they did not contradict the Bible, they were allowed to remain part of the Western theology.

In the same way, there should be no hard feelings from any quarter if the Igala develops a theology of social relationships which teaches the importance of extended family network, biblical basis for unity and extended family instead of the nuclear family system in the West. If the West believes that the Bible is not contradicted by living an individualistic life, there is no reason why the Bible will be contradicted in extended family theology where unity and close fellowship are encouraged. Similarly, if the Western church organizes premarital counseling, seminars and homes for the single and unwed mothers in their own countries, should they contest when someone else develops a theology of social works? Furthermore, if the West chooses to drive the elderly into nursing homes because they can afford it, and cannot endure the pains of caring for the elderly, what is wrong when others develop a theology of caring in order to cater for this group of people in their communities?

Should they choose to study the theology of Christian marriage in order to address polygamy or theology of Satan and the spirit world, what wrong have they committed against the Bible? There is need for an open mind and true Christian spirit of love and understanding whenever a group

of people have needs which the Bible is being used to address. This is what should be expected in this type of study — to identify the problems of the Igala, and incorporate them into their systematic theology so that exegetical and biblical theology will provide the framework through which those problems will be addressed.

PRINCIPLES OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

In examining the curriculum and theological course contents at the C.M.M.L. School of the Bible Missions, the author discovered that the theological courses lacked three important elements which are crucial to any process of education and cross-cultural training. The three elements missing are social context, cultural communication methods and relevant content principles (See Table 12).

Contextualization exercises should distinguish the gospel content from its social context and cultural communication. Since the message of the gospel is timeless and unchangeable, contextualization of the gospel affects only the social context and cultural communication methods.

In the same way, systematic theology changes from time to time and people to people. Its contents are issues (subjects) of significance to people (e.g. Marxism, Feminism, Creationism, Evolution and Theism) which the Bible has something to say about. Even though issues or subjects change with time and people, the Bible which is timeless remains unchangeable.

SOCIAL CONTEXT PRINCIPLE

The courses taught are very important. However, they fail to relate directly to the questions those who are being trained and those the

TABLE 12

DYNAMICS OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

	Social Context	Cultural Communication Methods	Relevant Content
GOSPEL	Changing Receptors	Changing Methods of Evangelism	Scripture Unchanging
			Contextualized
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY	Changing Church	Changing Methods of Instruction	Scripture Unchanging
			Issues of Significant Concern to Igala Church

trained will reach are asking. The books that are used for theological studies were written to answer questions asked in the West by Westerners. While it can be argued that these books are not meant to answer Western questions, it is obvious that some of the questions the Igala people are asking were not even conceived by these Western writers. For instance, one of the issues confronting the Igala people is the issue of their ancestors which the present theological courses have not yet identified as a problem to address.

The social context principle should examine the contents of theology proper, soteriology, hamartiology, pneumatology, christology and eschatology in order to see what has been taught, what questions are being answered in relation to what questions the Igala Christians are asking, what needs to be taught, and how their questions are to be answered.

RELEVANT CONTENT PRINCIPLE

The significant issues in the content principle are those relating to deletion/addition and relevant/irrelevance of theological course materials.

This principle is concerned with determining what should be deleted or added and what is relevant and irrelevant based on the context principle. Where important and relevant materials and themes are crucial for the receptors of theological education, those issues must be added to existing course materials. In relation to the Igala people and church, the issues of polygamy, ancestor's spirits, traditional music, sex roles, racial discrimination, and social injustice are crucial. The whole dynamics of the spirit world and traditional medicine are of significant interest to the Igala. There is nothing in the Scriptures to preclude their inclusion in theological studies. The fact that a subject is included in a theological course does not necessarily imply that Scriptures will be violated. For instance, the issues of evolution, birth control, capital punishment, homosexuality, feminism, and Christian singles are being addressed in theological studies in the West and nobody sees anything unsanctimonious about them. It is the position taken on these issues that matters. In the same way, the content principle in relation to theological education of the Igala does not threaten the Scriptures. This process is to allow the Scriptures to address issues relevant to the Igala which have been irrelevant to Western theologians.

At the crux of contextualization is the content principle. This is crucial because it involves the deletion of irrelevant theological subjects and the addition of relevant theological subjects. What should be deleted are not

necessarily un-biblical. They are just irrelevant because the recipients of such theologies are either not familiar or have known them for ages. For example, the theory of evolution is the problem of the scientific and secularistic Western society. Because it is a problem in the West, it occupies a prominent place in anthropological studies in Bible colleges and seminaries. For the theological schools of the Igala church, people who do not question that God created man do not need for study arguments for creationism or against evolution. To the Igala people evolutionary teachings are irrelevant, not necessary and should be deleted from theological studies for which they are recipients.

On the other hand, spirit possession, fetishism, the problem of witch doctor and idolatry are issues that the Bible has something to say about. However, because these issues are not issues of questions in the West, theological education does not see their importance. These issues are of significant interest to the Igala and are therefore relevant and should be added to theological subjects.

The relevant content principle should be used in examining the contents of ecclesiology, anthropology, angelology and Bibliology courses, in order to identify issues which need to be brought into these courses.

CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLE

This is perhaps an area that extends to almost all the course contents examined at CMML School of the Bible and Missions. Because teachers have either been trained in the West or by Westerners, and books in use are written in the West by Westerners (in most cases), they are taught in the way

these courses are taught to those for whom they were developed and written. The communication principle has to do with the receptor's frame of reference. It has nothing to do with the content. The frame of reference principle helps the teacher to know his trainees better. In it, the teacher moves from what the Igala people know to the areas that are unknown. In application to theological education, students are made aware of their own beliefs and practices and led to the areas of significance in biblical and theological studies. Usually the frame of reference of the West is imposed by subjecting students to memorize theories of Western atheists, philosophers and theologians to the utter disregard and ignorance of their own background.

The Igala people have their stories, myths and proverbs which could be used to substitute the ideas and philosophies of Western scholars. The use of these traditional forms is not a substitute for the Bible just as the use of Western theories, philosophies and logic are not used to substitute the Bible. The Igala people do not know Voltaire, Marx, Hegel, Dewey, Darwin, Kant, and Kierkegaard. But they know how to use their myths, proverbs, stories, and songs to teach profound theological truths which could help them in the understanding of biblical theology.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The problem of traditionalism should not be underestimated realizing that Christians and non-Christians alike will continue to patronize these traditional practices for as long as their felt needs are met. Traditionalism is a challenge to the Igala church and has great implications for theological education.

It is obvious that less and less people will be attracted to the gospel if those who have already believed are courting the unbelievers in the same practices. It is also important that the Christians understand where unbelievers are coming from, where they are and are going.

This is why the importance of theological education which recognizes the receptors, the receptor's social context and felt needs is crucial. Theological education, in order to be effective must be rooted in the Scriptures and be addressing the itches of its recipients. To the Igala church, there is need to appraise the present contents of theological education. The focus of such existing theological studies must be shaped to reflect clearly the issues threatening the Igala church.

There are two other theological schools located among the Igala people. These are Qua Iboe Church Bible College, located in Ankpa; the Faith Bible College which is located in Ayangba. The CMML School of the Bible and Missions belongs to the CMML Church (Plymouth Brethren); while the Faith Bible College was established by the Qua Iboe Church, CMML Church, Fellowship Church, and Bassa Christian Fellowship.

These schools were established through the joint efforts of the national believers and their missionaries. They have both missionaries and national believers teaching in these schools. The administration of the schools are in the hands of the national believers. These schools have trained many of the national believers who are in leadership positions in their respective denominations and as well as those in supportive roles.

However, three things about these theological institutions are important and crucial to the evaluation of theological education in the Igala church. There are:

1. Missionary teachers teaching in these schools were trained in the West and knew the Western system of education and philosophy of theological education of the West.
2. The national teachers received their theological education either in the West or in schools in Nigeria where the Western system was in place.
3. The theological textbooks used were written in the West by Westerners and primarily for Western Christians and theological institutions.

EVALUATION OF THEOLOGICAL COURSES

At the CMML School of the Bible and Missions, ten theological courses were evaluated. These are anthropology, pneumatology, theology proper, Christology, Bibliology, Soteriology, Hamartiology, Ecclesiology, Angelology and Eschatology. The evaluation of these courses revealed the need for the inclusion in the course content some topics which are of significant interest to the Igala and the importance of using the Igala Social Context and cultural communication method in teaching, preaching and in practical theology.

SOTERIOLOGY

The Igala people have a strong faith in their ancestors whom they believe to be their mediators with the Spirit Beings. Their concept of salvation is therefore based on works and salvation is seen as a process. In this regard, it is crucial to analyze and compare the role of the ancestors as

well as the role of Christ. The ultimate purpose here is to show the superiority of God's plan over the ancestors and the fact that Christ is the last mediator and advocate. Table 13 shows that the current content of soteriology taught is so academic and does not relate at all to the daily practice of sacrifice of the Igala. Similarly, the importance of blood offerings, the role of the ancestors as mediators and the Igala experience of the limits of their sacrifices are not considered in the course content. These aspects of Igala belief are crucial to their understanding of Christian soteriology and, should be introduced into the course.

HAMARTIOLOGY

Sin should be understood in the way the Igala conceptualize it. It is true that all have sinned and that the consequence of rejecting Christ is eternal damnation. However, there is a need to make the Igala people see beyond the sin of rejecting Christ for they do not know Christ. There is need to know also what they consider to be sins for which sacrifices or rituals are performed. Their own teachings on sacrifice, forgiveness, punishment, taboos and systems for dealing with sins can be used as a stepping stone to teach what the Bible teaches about sin. Thus, Table 14 shows what should be incorporated into hamartology. These new areas are of significant interest to the Igala.

While the Bible shall remain the ultimate source of authority and support, this approach shall delete the theological arguments based on Western philosophical questions and definitions of sin. To the Igala there is no rationalism about sin. They know what sin is, and also know how to deal with it in their own religious system.

TABLE 13: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN SOTERIOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. Repentance</p> <p>II. Faith</p> <p>III. Election and Predestination</p> <p>IV. The Sufferings of Christ</p> <p>V. Justification and Assurance of Salvation</p> <p>VI. Sanctification</p> <p>VII. Service</p> <p>VIII. Eternal Security of Believers</p>	<p>I. The meaning and nature of Igala sacrifices.</p> <p>II. The importance of blood sacrifice.</p> <p>III. The Igala concept of salvation.</p> <p>IV. The intercessory ministry of the ancestors.</p> <p>V. The limit of Igala sacrifices.</p> <p>VI. The Significance of the Substitutionary death of Christ.</p> <p>VII. Comparative Analysis of the Old Testament and New Testament teaching on sacrifice.</p>

TABLE 14: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN HAMARTIOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Origin of Sin</p> <p>II. Theories of Sin</p> <p>III. The Meaning and Nature of Sin</p> <p>IV. The Result of Sin</p> <p>V. The Consequences of Sin</p> <p>VI. The Imputation of Sin</p> <p>VII. The Remedy for Sin</p>	<p>I. Moral order in Igala society.</p> <p>II. Methods for addressing sin in Igala society.</p> <p>III. The Igala concept of forgiveness and propitiation.</p> <p>IV. The results of sin in Igala world view.</p> <p>V. The consequences of sin in Igala world view.</p> <p>VI. The role of ancestors in personal sin.</p>

Furthermore, the methods by which moral order is introduced and taught should be included in the doctrine of sin. A comparative study of the Old Testament sacrifices and the Igala sacrifices should be done with a solid New Testament critique of both sacrifices. This critique should be with the idea of introducing Christ — the last and perfect sacrifice.

PNEUMATOLOGY

As shown in Table 15, in this course, the Holy Spirit is recognized as the third person of the Triune God. The ministry of the Holy spirit in the present age should be distinguished from the work and power of the evil spirits today. Such a distinction needs to take into cognizance of the evil spirits, the ancestor's spirits, and those people possessed by evil spirits. While the Holy Spirit cannot be equated with these other spirits, the distinction is necessary in view of the fact that they are active in this age too.

The Igala Christian faces the problem of traditionalism and especially the pressure put on him to depend on the power of fetishes and traditional medicine practitioners. It is important, therefore, to examine the nature of Igala felt needs which fetishes are used to address, as well as cases of spiritual activities (possession and power encounter) in which Igala Christians are involved.

Furthermore, the nature of the spirit world in Igala world view should be compared with the Western world view of supernatural and natural, as this dichotomistic world view is not conceptualized by the Igala.

TABLE 15: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN PNEUMATOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Deity of the Holy Spirit</p> <p>II. Personality and Symbols of the Spirit</p> <p>III. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament</p> <p>IV. The Holy Spirit in the New Testament</p> <p>V. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in This Age</p> <p>VI. The Eschatology of the Holy Spirit</p>	<p>I. The spirit world in Igala world view.</p> <p>II. The role of the ancestor's spirits.</p> <p>III. The Christian and the use of fetishes.</p> <p>IV. The nature and problem of spiritism.</p> <p>V. Felt needs, fetishes and the Igala Christian.</p> <p>VI. Examination of cases involving evil spirits and the Christians.</p>

TABLE 16: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Origin of Man</p> <p>II. Theories of Creation</p> <p>III. The Nature of Man</p> <p>IV. The Personality of Man</p> <p>V. The Fall of Man</p>	<p>I. Biblical origin of man.</p> <p>II. No need to teach the Igala western theories since they believe in God as the creator of all.</p> <p>III. The Equality and Unity of man (Genesis 1-3; John 10:16; 17:21; Romans 12:5; Romans 12:16; 15:5; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 10:17; 12:13; II Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:3; 5:23, 30; Philippians 1:27; 2:2; I Peter 3:8). These passages show the importance of oneness in Christ.</p> <p>IV. The personality of man.</p> <p>V. The evil of slavery (example of Israel in Egypt—Exodus 1-13; I Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 4:1.</p> <p>VI. Igala proverbs, sex and age roles.</p>

ANTHROPOLOGY

The teaching of anthropology with special reference to the importance of origin and theories of creation have been the traditional focus at CMML School of the Bible and Missions. This can be seen in Table 16. In addition to what has been taught, it is necessary to realize that there is no need to teach the Igala people about Western theories of creation since there is a strong belief in God as the Creator. However, there is a need to focus on some other topics such as the equality and unity of the races. It is also significant to treat the subject of slavery since the Igala people were in the fore-front of slave trade during the 18th and 19th centuries (Wolf 1982:217). It is likely that such teachings with their bases in the Scriptures will address what the liberals have been trying to address through their theology of liberation (Muzorewa 1985).

Although it will be redundant to teach Western theories of creation since the Igala have a lot of arguments for creationism, it is important that this course continues with evolutionary theories. This is especially crucial because of the influence of western education and secularization upon Igala young people.

THEOLOGY PROPER

In Theology Proper, there is need to teach the Igala about God whom they already know. In this regard it is important that the Igala concepts of God be replaced with the different Western approaches and teachings about God which have been the focus of traditional theological education.

This course should critically focus on areas where the Igala concepts of God is weak, wrong and areas unrecognized by the Igala in their thought.

This critique should carefully examine issues of transcendence and immanence of God, the problem of evil and originator of evil and sin. The Bible should be used to clarify, and direct the Igala as to the nature of God in relation to sin and the problem of evil. The Igala needs to know that there is a clear distinction between God's sovereignty and human responsibility. The fact that God has absolute power and authority does not mean that freedom of choice has been removed. This clarification would help the Igala to see that God's love does not contradict his punishment or judgment of evil; and that while he remains in complete control of the Universe, mankind has the free will to act in accordance with his over desires and choice. Furthermore, the study of theology proper must lead the Igala to accept what is known as incomplete knowledge of the person of God in his total essence.

CHRISTOLOGY

An important area of doctrine which needs to be taught well and carefully, the doctrine of Christ is significant because the ministry of Christ as Savior, intercessor and mediator goes well with the functions of the ancestors in Igala concept (Table 18). In teaching the biblical doctrine of Christ, a thorough understanding of the Igala beliefs concerning their ancestors are crucial. Emphasis in such teachings should be placed on the role of the ancestors and their limitations. The power and influence of the ancestors should not be underestimated here. However, every effort should be made to contrast the ancestors to Christ and, ultimately to present Christ as the final, perfect sacrifice and only Savior.

The Igala needs to know that Christ is not only the final and perfect sacrifice, but He is also the only Savior who has triumphed over death, sin

TABLE 17: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN THEOLOGY PROPER

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Arguments for the Existence of God</p> <p>II. The Arguments against the Existence of God</p> <p>III. The Personality of God</p> <p>IV. The Attributes of God</p> <p>V. The Decrees of God</p> <p>VI. The Trinity of God</p> <p>VII. The Sovereignty of God</p>	<p>I. Teaching the same material with the Igala World View (concept of God) as a frame of reference.</p> <p>II. There is no use to teach arguments about God's existence. It is a general belief that God exists.</p> <p>III. The transcendence and immanence of God.</p> <p>IV. The problem of evil and the nature of God.</p> <p>V. God's sovereignty and human responsibility.</p>

TABLE 18: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN CHRISTOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Deity of Christ</p> <p>II. The Humanity of Christ</p> <p>III. The Incarnation of Christ</p> <p>IV. The Death and Resurrection of Christ</p> <p>V. The Substitutionary Work of Christ</p> <p>VI. The Ascension and Glorification of Christ</p> <p>VII. The Second Advent of Christ</p>	<p>I. The ancestors in their ministry as intercessors could be a type of Christ.</p> <p>II. The limitations of the ancestors.</p> <p>III. The need for an efficacious sacrifice.</p> <p>Greater emphasis given to</p> <p>a) The priesthood of Christ.</p> <p>b) The mediatory role of Christ versus ancestors.</p> <p>c) The power of Christ over ancestors.</p> <p>d) The superiority of Christ over spirit beings (Hebrews).</p>

and evil spirits. Such assurance would help the Igala Christians who are either afraid of their ancestors or the power of evil spirits through fetishes, charms and other spiritual mediums.

ECCLESIOLOGY

As shown in Table 19, what has been taught is good. However, key crucial issues of significant interest have been left out. This is perhaps an area where a lot of rethinking needs to be done. The doctrine of the church should address issues relating to the following:

- i. Leadership structure reflecting the Igala leadership pattern.
- ii. Incorporation of traditional songs, music and instruments after careful study and analysis of the types of music available.
- iii. The matter of sex and gender roles
- iv. Igala Christian marriage versus Western Christian marriage.
- v. The involvement in social work and the distinction between between social gospel and social responsibility.
- vi. The issue of kinship and extended family relationships and how to use these opportunities for church planting and evangelism.
- vii. The issue of spiritual gifts and how the Igala Christians could relate to the subject of miracles and spiritism.
- viii. The problem of polygamy, divorce, remarriage, alcoholism, and others relating to ancestral veneration, native medicine and the relationship of the believers to their unbelieving close kin.

Therefore, the content principle should in addition to what is addressed in ecclesiology include subjects such as indigenous church leadership, the problem of polygamy, social responsibility, indigenous form of

TABLE 19: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN ECCLESIOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Meaning of the Church</p> <p>II. The Church and the Kingdom</p> <p>III. The Responsibility of the Church</p> <p>IV. The Structure of the Church</p> <p>V. Assembly Principles (doctrines and practices)</p> <p>VI. Dispensationalism</p>	<p>I. The meaning of the church</p> <p>II. The uniqueness of the Body of Christ and its corporate identity</p> <p>III. Social Responsibility and Justice (Isaiah 5:22-23; Amos 2:7; Psalm 94:20; Ecclesiastes 4:1; Exodus 3:7-8; Psalm 140:12; Isaiah 3:14-15; Psalm 82:3-4; Luke 1:46-47, 52-53; Matthew 11:4-5; Romans 2:6-11; Luke 10:25-37)</p> <p>IV. The Indigenous Principle in Church Leadership (I Timothy 3; Titus 1, 2; Acts 20:17-38; II Timothy 2:2)</p> <p>A. The System of Worship Importance of traditional music and dances (Psalm 33, 81, 92, 149 and 150; II Samuel 6:5 I Chronicles 15:28; 16:42; II Chronicles 7:6; 29:25; Isaiah 5:12; 14:11; Daniel 3:5; Amos 6:5; Luke 15:25; I Corinthians 14:7; Ephesians 5:18-20)</p> <p>B. Teaching and preaching using traditional methods or teaching and preaching without necessarily rigid on — a three-piece suit — sermon outline using systematic and analytical method — emphasis on eye contact.</p> <p>VI. The issue of traditional marriage and polygamy. (Genesis 29:21-30; I Samuel 1:1-2; I Samuel 25:42-44; II Samuel 11,12,13; I Kings 11:1-13; Matthew 19:4-12; I Corinthians 7:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-33; I Timothy 3:2-5 and Titus 1:6)</p>

worship, and principles of homiletics using indigenous methods of communication amongst others.

ANGELOLOGY

The doctrine of angels (Table 20) should also go beyond the description of their activities to their practical everyday realities in the Igala experience. Thus, it should be developed around what the Bible teaches concerning Satan, the spirit world and their activities and issues pertaining to spiritual warfare, spirit possession, insanity, sickness, and premature death. Other crucial issues are traditional medicine and, how Christians should relate to the Spirit world.

This course should be taught with the spirit world in Igala world view in mind. The academic treatment of angels, satan and demonic forces in traditional theological education should be taken farther to include how the Igala Christians struggle with spiritual forces in their Christian experience.

Furthermore, the Bible should be studied holistically in relation to the whole subject of spirit beings, mediums and the powers of the evil spirits to torture or torment Christians. Such holistic studies would help the Igala Christians to know how to react to spiritual problems facing him daily.

TABLE 20: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN ANGELOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Reality of Angels</p> <p>II. The Classification of Angels</p> <p>III. The Personality of Angels</p> <p>IV. The Ministry of Angels</p> <p>V. The Fallen Angels</p> <p>VI. The Fall and Work of Satan</p> <p>VII. The Ministry of Demons</p> <p>VIII. The Eschatology of Satan</p>	<p>I. The issue of spirit possession and the reality of the spirit world.</p> <p><u>Spirit World and Possession:</u> I Samuel 16:14,23; I Samuel 28; Matthew 12:43-45; 15:21-18; Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43^a; Luke 11:14; Acts 9:9-24; Acts 13:4-12</p> <p>II. Healing and traditional medicine.</p> <p>III. How Christians should react to the spirit world.</p> <p><u>Sorcery, Divination and Mediums:</u> Leviticus 20:27; 19:31; Isaiah 8:19; I Samuel 28; I Chronicles 10:13,14; II Kings 21:6; Acts 16:16-18</p> <p>IV. The ministry of the evil spirits and the ancestors.</p> <p>V. Dreams, visions, divination and witchcraft.</p> <p><u>Witchcraft:</u> Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:26,31; Leviticus 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18:10; Isaiah 47:9; Micah 5:12; Malachi 3:5; Galatians 5:20; Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:15; II Kings 23:24; II Chronicles 17:17; Acts 8:9, 16:16; Acts 19:19</p>

ESCHATOLOGY

The doctrine of last events (eschatology) as seen in Table 21 is excellent. However, it is important to relate biblical eschatology to the Igala world view of death and life after death. The issues of the ministry of the ancestors and, the belief in reincarnation should be addressed biblically. It is significant to allow the Igala world view of death, life after death, judgment, and the role of their ancestors in future judgment to be fully considered. Such consideration would enable a better and systematic critique of Igala eschatology.

In relation to the role of the ancestors, it would be helpful to consider what the Bible has to say about some ancestors in the Bible. Bible characters such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, and David may be studied individually to determine their roles in eschatology.

It is significant to the Igala to consider the question of the dead before Christ in relation to salvation. This should take into cognizance the fact that God has always revealed himself and is known to the Igala. Eschatology, which deals with the subject of eternity, must also study the Igala concept of eternity "*ere ata*" (literally translated Ancestor's feet). Since every unbelieving Igala's wish is to be at the feet of their ancestors at death, it is significant to compare the "ancestor's feet" with the "Father's throne" or "Right hand of God" with the idea of presenting the Biblical view point as the ultimate place of eternal rest, peace and blessing.

TABLE 21: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN ESCHATOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p>I. The Biblical Covenants and Dispensations</p> <p>II. The Old Testament Prophecy Concerning the First and Second Advents</p> <p>III. Theories of the Second Advent</p> <p>IV. The New Testament Teaching on the Second Advent</p> <p>V. Israel and the Church in Prophecy</p> <p>VI. Judgments</p> <p>VII. Eternal State</p>	<p>I. Life after death in Igala concept.</p> <p>II. Ancestors in Eschatology —Abraham —Elijah —Moses</p> <p>III. Salvation of those who died before Christ.</p> <p>IV. Judgment in Igala world view.</p> <p>V. The concept of eternity "<i>ere ata</i>" in Igala world view.</p>

TABLE 22: COMPARISON OF COURSE CONTENTS IN BIBLIOLOGY

WHAT HAS BEEN TAUGHT	WHAT NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT
<p style="text-align: center;">OUTLINE</p> <p>I. Supernatural Character of the Bible</p> <p>II. Composition of the Bible</p> <p>III. Revelation</p> <p>IV. Inspiration</p> <p>V. Illumination</p> <p>VI. Authority and Canonicity</p> <p>VII. Interpretation</p> <p>VIII. Contemporary Attitude Toward the Bible</p> <p>—Higher Criticism</p> <p>—Lower Criticism</p> <p>—Theories of Inspiration</p>	<p>The use of non-linear and deductive method for Bible interpretation to supplement the inductive, linear method which is analytical, objective and systematic based on formal logic.</p>

BIBLIOLOGY

In addition to what is presently taught in bibliology, (see Table 22), there is need to introduce a non-linear and deductive method as another way of studying the Bible. It should be understood that all contemporary methods used in Bible studies, including the principles of Bible interpretation, are based on external evidence and light from other disciplines. The Bible itself does not claim that the inductive system is the only and absolute way of knowing God's truth.

While the literal method of interpreting the Bible with its emphasis on grammar, historical and cultural contexts is perhaps the best way to understand the intent of the original writers, it should be understood that the practitioners are fallible men trying to understand the infallible Word of God. Perhaps such understanding of the interpreters finiteness will reduce the type of arrogance and certainty with which literalists dogmatize.

This type of line of reasoning has nothing to do with the inspiration, inerrancy and authority of the Bible. For while it is clear from internal evidence that the Bible writers were moved by the Holy Spirit to write what they wrote, the present day interpreters cannot claim to be under inspiration; and while it may be argued that interpreters might be under illumination, there is no absolute assurance or guarantee that such illuminating state constitutes "inspired condition". As a consequence, the Christian must allow himself to be led by the Holy Spirit in his interpretation and should recognize the inevitability of his own human limitations in such interpretation. This would avail the interpreter an opportunity to be open to different methods by which to arrive at the meaning of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER 13

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

STRATEGY FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The tension and conflict in the Igala church poses a serious threat to evangelism and church growth. It was this serious threat which arose out of the conflict and tension between the old and young generation of Igala Christians that prompted this author to study the problem in this dissertation for possible ways through which the conflicts might be resolved.

The dissertation itself introduces potential problems and conflicts between the rival factions by its proposals and recommendations. This implies that a procedure for handling problems and conflicts which would inevitably arise therein must be sought and used in implementing this dissertation.

The problem in the Igala church can not be resolved through the functionalist approach because it is static, ahistorical, and does not recognize the existence of conflicts and contradictions. The dialectical theory with its slogan on revolutionary changes regardless of its means and cost is insensitive to the plights of the people it claims to represent. Furthermore, it is important to use a theoretical model which recognizes the historical picture

of tension in the nation of Nigeria and the Igala church, and analyzes such tensions and conflicts thereof over time.

However, drawing upon the positive elements in the functionalist approach, an approach which is sensitive to the feelings of people and respects their structure and on dialectical theory which is sensitive to the dynamics of social change and inevitability of change, a theoretical approach which is ideal in resolving the conflict in the Igala church is the diachronic method. The diachronic approach would be very helpful in reducing the tension, minimizing the conflict, and create an open forum for dialogue.

In diachronic theory, practice and beliefs work together and progressively as social forces manipulate beliefs to accept new practices until beliefs are submerged in practices. Culture is dynamic and interrelated (holistic). It sees historical change as well as functional meanings in cultures and practices in the society. As changes take place in a society, the basic assumptions are being redrawn to reflect contemporary realities in order to prevent contradictions and conflicts which are denied in structural functionalism and mystified in dialectical theory. Because it is holistic, conflicts and contradictions are gradually worked out and progressively replaced through negotiations and dialogues between the rival parties.

The diachronic perspective is more suitable to the type of proposals made in this dissertation because it recognizes the type of changes taking place in contemporary society. It also sympathizes with their belief and respect of their traditional institutions, their pride in their culture and heritage.

PROCEDURE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The author proposes five steps to be taken in the application of the diachronic perspective in resolving the tension and conflict in this study. Following these steps and applying this theoretical orientation would be meaningless, however, if divine purpose and will is ignored and rendered inoperative. The author strongly believes that it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that human efforts will be fruitful and meaningful. Therefore, in making these proposals for the resolution of tensions and conflicts, the various parties involved must see to it that Christ and His Spirit are allowed to deal with their hearts.

IDENTIFICATION OF CONFLICT ISSUES

Although there are nine factions involved in the conflict, the issues contested are five. It is important to identify these issues to handle them.

The issues contested are as follows:

1. Introduction of traditional forms into worship and church teaching
2. Retention of Western forms
3. Accepting the young people for leadership roles
4. Whether theological education constitute assuming of leadership position
5. That changes are necessary but must be done carefully and gradually.

By identifying the key issues, the scope of the conflict is being narrowed to a manageable size where participants can objectively see or visualize them.

CATEGORIZATION OF CONFLICT ISSUES

Once the conflict issues are identified, it is necessary that they are placed in their different categories to allow each party to see which category they fall into. For example, Table 23 shows the importance of categorizing the different factions into their issues of interest. The various factions can easily be identified with their ideological interests. Similarly, the different issues of conflict can be seen in relation to the factions and interests represented.

TABLE 23: CATEGORY OF CONFLICT ISSUES

No.	Issue	Faction	Category
1.	Introduction of Traditional forms	Some old people Young educated and nominal Christians Young people with professional theological education Pagans	Favor changes
2.	Retention of Western forms	Old people in leadership Old people not in leadership Some young people	Oppose changes
3.	Acceptance of young people for leadership positions	Some older people Educated people theological college graduates Educated young people struggling with tradition	Favor changes in leadership styles and structure
4.	Leadership positions based on theological education	Young people with professional theological education Older people in non-leadership	Radical changes in leadership structure
5.	Changes necessary and desirable but should be done carefully and gradually	Educated young people who are struggling with the tension between tradition and Western Christianity	Moderate view of changes in leadership, tradition, and Westernization

CRITIQUE OF CONFLICT ISSUES

The critique of conflict issues is necessary in order to arrive at what the crucial points are in each issue presented. A diachronic critique of the issues would lead to a balanced view of what are the points of controversy. It is important to look at the disadvantages and advantages of traditionalism, Westernization, theory of change and theological education as criteria for leadership positions. The merits and demerits of issues of conflict should be available to parties involved in the conflict. The diachronic perspective would help as issues are seen in what they were and are. The knowledge of the present would enhance the perception of the future.

FACTORS FOR RECONCILIATION

The resolution of the present conflict using the diachronic perspective is aimed at minimizing tensions and conflicts. Reconciliation is recommended for all parties involved through the medium of some principles that make for peace. These principles are dialogue, sacrifice, slow change, and de-personalization. The author believes that dialogue is essential and must be kept constant. However, in dialoguing, it is important to realize that desired changes are effected slowly and gradually. Furthermore, sacrifices must be made by all involved in the conflict. Conflict participants must be able to swallow their own pride, interest and ambitions in the pursuit of peace. After all, this conflict involves the Church. If Christ is the Head of the Church, it must be God's business. Christians must de-personalize the tension and conflict.

CULTURAL ORIENTATION FOR MISSIONARIES

Throughout this dissertation, Western missionary methods have come under severe critical analysis. These criticisms should not be construed to mean personal attacks on anyone. As a product of missionaries' labors, this author appreciates the sacrifices Western churches and missionaries have made in the past. Their present effort is also appreciated. The fact that missionaries left their own developed homeland is a testimony to their unselfish sacrifices and commitment to the cause of Christ.

The present conflict in the Igala church could have been minimized had the missionaries been given cultural orientation. However, as part of the conflict, missionaries need to think through their own acts. To prevent further acts that could create tensions and conflicts, missionaries need to become culturally sensitive as they serve or anticipate service among the Igala people. Such sensitivity to the receptor's cultures on the part of missionaries would eventually safeguard against tensions and conflicts introduced by Westernization.

CONCLUSIONS

Can Igala world views be used as frames of reference in the contextualization of the gospel message and theology? This dissertation is an attempt to answer that question. In order to understand God fully, to the extent that He has revealed Himself to man, the Bible (which is God's revelation) must be relied upon when reconstructing local systematic theology for the Igala church and culture is a grid for looking at the Bible. However, Igala culture, like any other culture (the West inclusive) are in and of themselves inadequate to comprehend the incomprehensible God.

This diachronic and holistic study of Igala cultural themes to be used as a means for contextualization of the gospel and theology for the Igala is timely. It is so crucial because of the nature of problems the church in Igala is facing today. With the problem of Christians resorting to traditionalism and difficulties involved in evangelizing the pagans, the need for the study of the Igala world view for contextualization cannot be overemphasized.

The Western missionaries sincerely made mistakes in that they knowingly or unwittingly worked to destroy the societies and cultures within which they ministered. Given the time the missionaries came to the Igala and the life the people lived then, one is not surprised that the missionaries thought the Igala culture was without any religious content. This wrong assumption, however, provided the missionaries an opportunity to sow the seeds of Western civilization and culture to the detriment of the indigenous culture. After a close observation of the Igala Christian Church, it became obvious that mistakes have been made by men and women who are finite and fallible. This dissertation is evidence of such mistakes.

According to Etuk,

Everybody now admits that the early missionaries, partly out of over-enthusiasm and partly out of ignorance of cross-cultural communication problems (but certainly also out of ethnocentric pride), denied any values to cultures other than their own, and confused the essential Gospel message with Western cultural accretions (Etuk 1985:215).

Among the Igala, the initial growth of the church was phenomenal. But little effort was made to relate the form of the gospel message in a way the Igala people could easily identify. The content of liturgy and theology were

foreign and had no bearing to what the Igala Christians needed. The very tough issues faced by Igala Christians were not addressed by the Western theology imported into the Igala church. The Western answers for non-Western questions asked by the Igala were not strong enough to quell the anxieties of people, academic answers were given to practical problems which the Igala Christians faced daily.

What is being advocated here is the need to identify those areas where the present theologies do not affect. Kato says in connection with the idea of the call for African theology, that it must

Express Christianity in a truly African context, allowing it to judge the African culture and never allow culture to take precedence over Christianity...Express theological concepts in terms of the African situation. The insights of western theologians over the years must be appreciated. But the squabbles of the west do not have to be the pattern for the younger churches. The final word has not yet been said in expressing Christianity. But the Bible content remains unchanged... Similarly, in scratching where it itches, the African problems of polygamy, family structure, spirit world, liturgy, to mention a few, need to be tackled by evangelical African theologians and Biblical answers presented (Kato 1979:487).

This writer feels the same as Kato. The problems of the Igala people and church are still there. They need to be addressed theologically and biblically. The church will be doing a great disservice not to live up to that expectation. The usual reaction of some evangelical theologians to the issue of contextualization is an over-reaction which shows an utter ignorance of the nature of the subject, indifference and, insensitivity to the needs and aspirations of Christians in other lands who desire to remain Christians within their own socio-cultural context.

It is indeed sad and ridiculous that the genuine need for contextualization, in which the modes of communicating the gospel and contents of the present systematic theology should be addressed, has been taken too far to a new horizon by some Western missionaries and anthropologists and African liberal theologians. Etuk says,

Present day missionaries, perhaps in an unconscious desire to atone for the sins of their predecessors and aided by liberal African theologians, have become vocal about the 'validity' of other cultures and the need to 'clothe Christianity' in African cultural dress, that is to say, to Africanize Christianity (Etuk 1985:215).

That notwithstanding, it is a myopic exercise to assume, as has been the case in the past, that Igala cultural themes cannot be used along with the Bible in evangelizing and theologizing. It seems that such a view and presupposition is not only myopic, naive, and ethnocentric, but it places human limitations on cultures that are God-given, regardless of how exotic such cultures are perceived to be.

Building evangelism strategy on traditional religious practices and beliefs of the Igala people increases the possibility of reaching them with the gospel. It has been demonstrated repeatedly in this dissertation how the religious beliefs and practices of the Igala people come close to the Old Testament teachings in relation to the nation of Israel. The lessons taught by myths, stories, and proverbs illustrate how God's truth permeates human cultures. In the sharing of the Gospel message to the Igala, using these beliefs and practices which are Scriptural and with which the Igala are familiar will enable them to identify readily without much opposition and hostility.

A closer look at the religious rituals and sacrifices shows more similarities than dissimilarities with the Old Testament sacrificial system. This author contends that when the gospel is presented using this Old Testament background, the Igala people will open up to the gospel as it appeals to their belief system, instead of the usual condemnation of their beliefs and practices in the past. The use of the Igala frame of reference would therefore minimize the potential hostilities and negative reactions to the gospel message. It is important that those involved in evangelizing the Igala do not stop with the use of their religious practices and beliefs, but rather should move forward to show the contemporary attitude towards sacrifice and rituals as well as the significance of Christ's sacrifice. In doing this, arguments and haste should be avoided to allow the Igala to think through the issues involved.

Igala Christians resort to traditional religious practices when faced with life-threatening issues because the church is not meeting their felt needs. Therefore, the church must address the problems the Igala Christians are facing. The answers to the questions these Igala Christians are asking must be sought locally instead of confronting Igala questions with foreign answers. The cases recorded and analyzed show how Christians facing life-threatening situations resorted to traditionalism. Part of the problem was the inability of the church to respond properly to cultural problems and their indifference to the spirit world. It is suggested that the church should place less emphasis on ready-made answers from the West and concentrate on finding local and biblical solutions to these serious spiritual problems.

The situation where the only answer the church can offer the problem of traditionalism is excommunication would not solve this crucial problem. The church should have the desire to help Christians facing any life-threatening issues find their refuge and solace in Christ and the Holy Spirit. Excommunication must always be the last resort in a perpetual situation.

The Christian's experience of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit is definitely the only solution to the problem of traditionalism. The church, the Body of Christ, must assist the Igala believers to that deeper experience.

The picture of traditional Igala world view is changing because of the threat of Western education, industrialization, urbanization and the influence of Christian religion. The different factions show how diverse and conflicting the Igala people are.

Furthermore, modernity has led to diverse personal world view. This is especially true in the Igala family structure, marriage, occupational activities and on the roles of individuals in the society. Changes have also occurred in the area of festivals which are becoming more like money-making events. It has been discovered that most of these changes are caused by economic factors. People will go for any change as long as their economic interests are served.

While it is difficult to measure the extent of structural changes occurring in the Igala contemporary society, the very nature of Igala society suggests that these changes are continuing and cannot be stopped. To deny the existence of tension and conflict and its continuous presence is tantamount to a denial of the existence of the Igala people. However, the

current surge of changes in Igala society must be pursued gradually to minimize disruptive and chaotic environment.

Christianity brought about changes in many areas of Igala social, political, economic and cultural life. To the extent that Christian missionaries contributed immensely to the introduction of education, medicine, and Western civilization, they can be rightly credited with the liabilities and assets arising thereof.

Economic factors increase the rapidity of social change in Igala society. While the fact of world view change due to Westernization cannot be denied and mystified, the economic implications propelling the wheel of social change are enormous. The traditional historical practices relating to family life, relationship, kinship, kingship, economic activities, age and sex stratifications and value systems are fast changing. It cannot be denied that money buys power through which changes are influenced. The very problem which is the subject of this study is central to economic factors of power and control. It is necessary to realize that conflict resolution must recognize the significance of economic implications of social change and behavior.

The uncontextualized Western theology has resulted in the practice of Christian syncretism as seen in polygamy, ancestral rituals, practice of traditional medicine and the introduction of traditional music. The problem of Christian syncretism cannot be studied in isolation of the causes and benefits. For instance, in the matter of the spirit world and power encounter, cases studied show how God had proved His power by thwarting the power of Satan. However, in some cases, the devil was allowed to triumph over the

Christians. It is ridiculous to deny the existence of the spirit world and their power in these situations. To continue to deny such powers like the missionaries have done is to render the church vulnerable to perpetual Satanic attacks. When Christians are exposed to the activities of Satan, they will know exactly how to respond better to problems relating to the spirit world.

Furthermore, Christian syncretism dissipates as Christians see for themselves the diabolical acts of Satan. They will see the falsehood and deceit in the power of darkness as they examine closely the nature and methods of traditional doctors and medicine. The church must give biblical basis for forbidding people from patronizing traditional doctors. There must be a clear examination and distinction between herbal medicine and native doctor's medicines. The fact that Western medicines or doctors are not consulted should not be misconstrued to mean that all other medicines are unchristian. Hospital medicines are just the same as herbal medicine. Perhaps the church must be exhorted to rethink her theology and look to the Lord in this direction. The situation where native doctors heal all manners of sickness when the Church has failed after much prayer is exceedingly embarrassing.

This writer agrees with Etuk that contextualization which assumes that the Christian Gospel in its content must take the forms and expressions of the different cultures of the world or which seek to find God's revelation of His redemptive acts in the various traditional practices of non-Western peoples, is wrong. However, in admitting that the Gospel message is absolute and non-negotiable, and that it should not be dressed up in cultural regalia, it must be emphasized that God's redemptive acts can be found in some

cultural practices in the form of redemptive analogies (Etuk, 1985:220). It should be understood that what is crucial is the cultural communication method. Thus, the form in which the gospel message is presented should be dressed up in cultural regalia.

In contextualization, cultural themes are used as a vehicle or frame of reference and not a substitute for the Word of God. Etuk was right when he said, "no collection of African stories, myths, philosophies, and folk wisdom, or even of mystical writings can substitute for the Holy Bible" (Etuk 1985:220). However, it should be understood that stories, myths, philosophies, and folk wisdom, especially as seen in the Igala world, can be used to point people to the God of the Bible. Thus, while the Bible remains the only content of the Gospel, the context and communication of the Gospel depend on the receptors. Similarly, the content, context and communication aspects of systematic theology must relate to the socio-cultural context of its recipients.

Contextualization using the Igala world views and the Bible will safeguard against syncretism as Christians are not blinded from the events in the spirit world, but are encouraged to see for themselves the evils thereof, and respond to Christ whose power is greater than he that is in the world. Cases of Christians resorting to traditionalism should help anti-contextualizers to see that syncretism is even more prevalent in situations where contextualization is ignored.

It is the thesis of this dissertation that diverse perspectives of Igala world view, when used as frames of reference in the contextualization of the gospel, will enhance the communication of the gospel message. This is with

the realization that the traditional Igala world view, which cannot wholly express God in all ramifications, will be used with the Bible to produce an adequate and reliable source of theology for the Igala Christians. The situation today where the believers are split into different factions with each faction struggling to exist without the other does not help church growth.

The picture of tension in Nigerian political history corroborates the history of how tension was built over time in the Igala church. The present conflict in the church may be crucial and great, but employing a diachronic method might connect and link these rival groups. It is capable of putting the dissembled social and cultural distinctiveness and the static and disconnected bits into a dynamic interconnected relationship and holism which the Igala Christian community needs.

If the Igala Christian must remain an Igala and a Christian in Igala socio-cultural context, he needs a local culture that is able to show God, His purpose and plan for mankind. It is then that God's plan of salvation in history will reach its climax — when all cultures begin to see such a unique plan in their cultural themes and realize the universality of such a plan and purpose and open up to God.

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