

**THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON EARLY NIGERIA
SOCIETIES: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN
ODOLU, KOGI STATE**

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Abstract

Christianity as a considered civilization which permeated most Nigerian societies in the wake of colonialism is increasingly and significantly accepted and practised by many. It is an important instrument for mobilizing resources and organizing the rural populace to have cogent interests in providing for their wellbeing. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to examine the impact of Christianity on early Nigerian societies. The paper beams a searchlight on the socio-economic impact of the United Evangelical Church in Odolu, Kogi State. The study adopts the qualitative method of historical analysis. It makes use of both the primary and secondary sources. The paper observes that the existence of the United Evangelical Church in Odolu has had a lots of impact on the socio-economic activities of the people of Odolu. However, it should be noted that the impact the United Evangelical Church had on Odolu was not only positive but also negative with observable challenges.

Keywords: Christianity, Civilization, Colonialism, Early Societies, United Evangelical Church

Introduction

Religion is well known to be a means and also a connection between man and the Supreme Being. In this direction, this paper is deeply rooted in the contemplations of the impact of Christianity on the Odulo area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The conception of the subject matter for consideration stems from the fact that in juxtaposition with African Traditional Religion, it is considered idol worshipping. The fact that African Traditional Religion is seen as idol worshipping

is visibly discussed among some African scholars. For instance, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o captures this attitude when he says:

The Europeans had attacked the Primitive rites of our people, had condemned our beautiful African dances, the image of our gods, recoiling from their suggestion of satanic sensuality. The early African convert did the same, often with greater zeal, for he had to prove how Christian he was through his rejection of his past and roots¹.

In contrast, Elder Onakpa reasons that this much criticized and condemned African ways of life as stated above are unarguably not only erroneous but parochial and narrow-minded². He argues that the aforementioned is predicated on the fact that it is a Western perception, perhaps deeply rooted in their personal cultural experience which does not portray African culture as relevant with rich potentials.

Notwithstanding, it is noted that Christianity as a religion is well-practised in most Nigerian societies. It is an unarguable instrument for change of values and attitudes as well as mobilizing resources and organizing the rural populace to have cogent interests in providing for their wellbeing. The aforementioned is predicated on the fact that it is unarguable that Religion helps in creating an ethical framework and is also a regulator for values in day-to-day life. The ethical approach framework of consideration of religion presents religion as helping in character character-building of a person. In other words, People are always on the quest of fulfilling the economic and material pursuits in today's world.

¹ N. Wa Thiong'o. *Moving the centre: The struggle for Cultural freedoms*. (London: Heinemann, 1993)

² D. K. Onakpa, 70+ years, interview by Enema-Agono Success Ejura on August 30, 2019.

The foregoing is chiefly underscored by sociological perspectives and considerations about religion. Thus, religion as Emerson, Monahan and Mirola reason, serves several functions for society. These include giving meaning and purpose to life, reinforcing social unity and stability, serving as an agent of social control of behaviour, promoting physical and psychological well-being and motivating people to work for positive social change³.

Thus, this paper examines the advent of Christianity in early Nigerian societies. The major plank for interrogation is an assessment of the socio-economic history impact of the United Evangelical Church in Odolu, Kogi State.

Odolu land: Historical overview

The land of Odolu, generally known as Adore is a small place in Igalamela-Idolu Local Government Area in the eastern flank of Kogi State in Nigeria. Its population is about 8,203. It shares a boundary with villages in Enugu State, for instance, Nsukka, Enugu-Ezike, Adani, Ibagwa-aka, Ete and Opi. Odolu is 50km away from Idah which is seen as the capital of Igala land. The latitude or width of Odolu is 7° 03'26 3'N while its length or longitude is 7°01'07.5"E. (Nigeria places –in-the-world: 2023). The villages around Odolu are Ojokiti, Agejojo, Ojuwo eyele, Olajoba, Ajaka, Ugbamaja, Uda-abaji, Ofe Okpuye⁴.

The Advent of Christianity in the Odolu Area of Kogi State

³ M. O. Emerson, S. C. Monahan, and W. A. Mirola, *Religion matters: What sociology teaches us about religion in our world*. Upper Saddle River: NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011. pp.1-13

⁴ Places-in-the-world, <https://nigeria.places-in-the-world.com/7729969-region2-igalamela-odolu.htm> (accessed October 25, 2023).

The introduction of Christianity into the African continent came in the wake of the liberated slaves returning home to Africa. In light of the above-stated fact, Gbadamosi and Ajayi posit that most Christians were converted during their period of captivity in Europe and the Americas while some were converted after they were granted freedom in Europe or Sierra Leone. According to them, Thomas Fowell Buxton and others postulated that Africans should even be returned to their countries to engage in agricultural development and evangelization. The missionaries and Sierra Leonean authorities, after an initial period of scepticism and indifference, became reconciled to the ideas of Thomas Fowell Buxton as the combined introduction of the Bible and the plough would usher in light and civilization into the heart of the African continent⁵.

They further maintained that after some abortive attempts in the past, Christianity was at last successfully introduced into Nigeria in 1841. Thus, Christianity's successful introduction into Nigeria in 1841 marked a pivotal moment in the country's religious history. Prior attempts had been made, but it was not until this period that significant progress was achieved. According to Isichei, Elizabeth, despite earlier efforts, Christianity gained a foothold in Nigeria in 1841, signalling a new chapter in religious dynamics within the region. The Niger Expedition of 1841, led by British naval officer William Allen and physician Richard Lander played a crucial role in this process. She further argued that the Niger Expedition of 1841 catalyzed subsequent missionary activities, laying the groundwork for the Christianization of Nigeria and influencing the trajectory of colonial expansion in the area⁶. As documented by Ajayi and Smith, the expedition not only aimed at exploration but also had underlying motives of trade and missionary activity. The

⁵ M. Enejo Idakwo Ameh, 60+, Achema-Achadu of Odolu, Interview held at Odolu, 29th of August, 2019

⁶ T. G. O. Gbadamosi and J.F. Ade, Ajayi, "Islam and Christianity in Nigeria." In *Groundwork of Nigerian History* by Obaro Ikime (Eds), 347. Ibadan: Oluseyi press limited, 1999.

expedition's interactions with local communities along the Niger River provided opportunities for the dissemination of Christian teachings⁷. Also, Falola and Heaton emphasise how the Niger Expedition of 1841 facilitated the establishment of missionary stations, enabling missionaries to spread Christianity more effectively across Nigeria. The expedition's findings and reports generated interest among missionary societies, leading to increased support and resources for evangelization efforts in the region⁸. From the foregoing, it is therefore discernable that, the successful introduction of Christianity into Nigeria in 1841 was a result of various factors, including the efforts of missionaries and the strategic initiatives of the Niger Expedition. This event not only marked a significant milestone in Nigeria's religious landscape but also had far-reaching implications for its social, cultural, and political development. In 1842, the first missionaries came to Badagry⁹. As they observed, they were unable to stay because its former bustling slave trade had impoverished the town and the people were in no mood to receive Christianity and they offered the missionaries little cooperation. Therefore, they moved on to Abeokuta but as it was a new town under dynamic leadership, struggling for survival, the chiefs, despite the friendly disposition of their leader, Sodeke hesitated and insisted on keeping off the missionaries in 1845¹⁰. The missionaries in 1846 were admitted and they soon began to paint a rosy picture of Abeokuta as their main gateway into Yoruba Land and regions beyond. In 1890 a group of twelve missionaries known as the Sudan Party arrived at Lokoja which later became the capital of Kogi State, under the leadership of Graham Wilmot Brooke¹¹. Although they faced

⁷ E. Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995,

⁸ J. F. Ajayi Ade and Smith, Robert. *Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964,

⁹ T. Falola and M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008

¹⁰ T. G. O. Gbadamosi and J.F. Ade, *Ajayi Yoruba Warfare*349

¹¹ T. G. O. Gbadamosi and J.F. Ade, *Ajayi Yoruba Warfare* p.374

challenges as four members of the Sudan Party resigned, Brooke himself fell victim to black water fever and died in March 1892 with little to show by the way of success. Nevertheless, In 1905 American Quakers arrived at Lokoja¹². Christianity as a religion first came to Igalaland through missionary activities. The first missionary group to enter the Igalaland was the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.). Unfortunately, their station which was based at Idah where they penetrated in 1857 was closed down due to conflicts between the missionary agents and the local rulers. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M), through Rev. Fr. Joseph Shanahan unrelentingly came into Dekina in Igalaland between 1903 and 1904; their coming therefore gave room to other missions like the Qua Iboe Mission which penetrated Igala land in 1931 when the desire of the Igala people for salvation was made known to the Qua Iboe Mission (Q.I.M.) missionaries¹³. However, Christianity came to Odolu through the Qua Iboe Mission in 1932¹⁴. Their advent in Odolu brought about changes in Odolu, for instance in their culture, belief system, health care and also in the educational system as the missionaries introduced Western education which to most missionaries was used as a means of evangelism to convert the natives to Christianity.

This paper then follows in this direction to fill the vacuum created by scholars on the history of the United Evangelical Church in Igalaland as books and even research works have talked on the history of the United Evangelical Church in other areas but Odolu. It should be noted that Odolu was the second place the Qua Iboe Mission entered in Igalaland but the information given

¹² T. G. O. Gbadamosi and J.F. Ade, Ajayi *Yoruba Warfare*35

¹³ T. Adama, "The Meeting of Two Culture: Igala Traditional Religious Interaction." *International Journal of Theology and Culture and Christianity in Inter Reformed Tradition* 7 (2015): 118.

¹⁴ T. Adama, "The Meeting of Two Culture: Igala... p.119

about Its activities are skeletal. Therefore, the work specifically gives an in-depth knowledge of the impact of Christianity and the activities of the Qua Iboe Mission in Odolu.

Socio-economic impact of United Evangelical Church in Odolu.

The existence of the United Evangelical Church in Odolu from its advent to the present day has had a lot of impact on the socio-economic activities of the people of Odolu. However, it should be noted that the impact the United Evangelical Church had on Odolu was not only positive but also had a negative impact. First, the United Evangelical Church made the Odolu market more patronized than before, as more than four hundred people attended the Qua Iboe mission dispensary at Ojuwo Enefu every Ede market day¹⁵. This health care given by the Qua Iboe Mission attracted people from various communities both within Igalaland and outside Igala for instance, the Nsukka division which is part of the east, as they came to Odolu to receive healthcare, they also bought goods from the market. It has also been discovered that where people from different communities and tribes meet, there are always inter-group relations, either positive or negative but in the case of Odolu, it was positive and led to inter-tribal Marriages between the Igala and the Igbos and even led to the settlement of some Igbos in different communities in Odolu.

More so, on the social aspect, the Qua Iboe Mission changed a lot of things in Odolu beginning with the marriage system and the rate of childbirth. Before the advent of Qua Iboe missionaries in Odolu, the people of Odolu practised polygamy to aid fanning activities also some converts married more than one wife due to pressure from family as most people saw it as a way of life among the people of Igala, while some did it due to lack of children from the first wife.

¹⁵ P. E. Okwoli. *A Short History of Igala*. (Ilorin: Mataumn, 1973), 158.

However, through evangelism, the missionaries addressed the issue of polygamy in the doctrine of the church so that the Odolu people would see the biblical implication of this practice. Some over time began to change to monogamy while some even converted Christians stuck to their polygamous practices. The indisputable positive contribution of Qua Iboe Church in Odolu where in the social aspect was the abolition of human sacrifice and the killing of twins. Before the advent of the Qua Iboe Mission in Odolu, human sacrifices to the gods were acceptable practices along with the killing of twins as they are regarded to be of bad omen to the family and society¹⁶.

More so, the people of Odolu experienced inter-community, inter-clan crises which were for survival and supremacy for political and economic domination but the advent of these missionaries brought about peace, oneness, equality and brotherhood and also against fighting wars and the elimination of internal slavery and servitude. As a result of the preaching of the Qua Iboe missionaries, peace was restored and servitude and slavery were stopped. It is worth noting that, before the coming of Qua Iboe missionaries, the economic practice in Odolu was filled with challenges which hindered or discouraged the traditional farmers from extensive and commercial farming some of the problems were a lack of profitable market, very poor transport system to carry their food crop to another part of the country, no availability of herbicides/ pesticide, and also poor preservation of food crops. However, when the Qua Iboe missionaries came they provided some food preservation techniques and pesticides which they gave to the farmers to improve agricultural practices¹⁷.

¹⁶ P.E., Okwoli. *A Short History...* 158.

¹⁷ Jean S. Corbett. *According to Plan: The Story of Samuel Alexander Bill, Founder of the Qua Iboe Mission, Nigeria.* Walter: Worthing, 1977:71

The Qua Iboe church missionaries on their arrival to Odolu met the people in bad and miserable economic plight as a result of poor economic incapability. The missionary reacted promptly from the on-set by making a lot of charitable donations and caring for the widows, orphans, nursing mothers, motherless children, the handicapped and also new converts. Some of the charitable gifts were clothing, shoes, umbrellas, mirrors, eye spectacles, earrings, necklaces, rings, hand bangles, kerosene lamps, caps, traditional regalia, chief/rulers and domestic cutleries and cooking pot¹⁸.

Also, Qua Iboe church provided employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector as they employed interpreters' stewards, clerks, cooks, preachers pastors and school teachers that were paid to meet the ever-increasing needs of the local congregation. Nevertheless, the overall economic impact of the Qua Iboe mission (aka United Evangelical Church) on the economic sector of Odolu was that the agriculture sector which was subsistent before they came gradually changed to modern agricultural practices which led to the improvement of the standard of living of the natives of Odolu. The Qua Iboe mission preached against many social injustices like oppression of the widows and orphans and for the equality of all men before God irrespective of sex. This was because, before the advent of Christianity and the Qua Iboe missionaries in Odolu, women were denied certain rights and were also regarded as only good for childbearing and domestic work. However, the coming of Qua Iboe's mission brought changes that led to the emancipation of women in politics economic activities and education. As the women were given education, most of them were now able to fend for themselves and even their children when the man was dead or

¹⁸ Jeremiah, Itodo Idakwo. *Contributions of Qua Iboe Church(UEC) to Nation Development*. Nsukka, 2009:94

was unable to work. They now began to engage in small-scale trade that could enable them to attend to a few needs in the family.

As earlier said, these impacts also have negative sides. Various missionary societies in Nigeria, which includes the Qua Iboe mission preached against many African Cultural practices such as Cultural festival songs, traditional norms, taboos, oath taking, title taking, and traditional names of persons and referred to them as barbaric, uncivilized, uncultured, untutored, animism, fetishism and paganism¹⁹. In the aspect of name bearing of native Igala names, these missionaries have condemned bearing of native Igala names which often helped to identify people with their compounds and parents, and also helped to identify events that occurred at the birth of a person this therefore led to the reason why Igala Christians do not gala name at sacraments like baptism insisting that such names could not be part of Christians heritage. They prefer foreign names like Daniel, Maxwell, Patrick, and Simeon to native Igala names like Ifiene (in the regime), Atuluku (he who bares seed does not die), and Ocholi (iron) to mention a few²⁰. This had therefore contributed to the crumbling of the Igala cultural and social institutions.

In the past, the youths greeted the elders with great respect by kneeling or prostrating. But today, most "educated" or "modern" Igala youths prefer to greet their elders standing rather than kneeling and/or prostrating due to modernity²¹. Additionally, Igala music has been influenced greatly by Christianity, especially the royal music such as Odechi, and Ukaga Onu, entertainment or social music such as Ichabada, Ugwolo, Olele, Agbaka and Agate, the ritual music which are Ogba, Iyogwu and Oye and the dual music as they are hardly remembered and has lost most of its

¹⁹ Jeremiah, Itodo Idakwo:96

²⁰ J. Itodo Idakwo:96

²¹ T. Adama, "The Meeting of Two Culture: Igala Traditional Religious Interaction." *International Journal of Theology and Culture and Christianity in Inter Reformed Tradition* 7 (2015): 122

profits to foreign religions²². Also, the Igala traditional boundaries of sexual chastity which involves a female staying pure as a virgin before marriage have been removed by Western civilization and new morality of sexual freedom as people who keep their virginity and chastity are being regarded as old fashioned²³. These above have therefore made the Christian convert deviate from the age-long cherished traditional and cultural practices thereby destroying social institutions.

Challenges of the United Evangelical Church Missionaries in Odolu

The truth remains that in as much as the United Evangelical Church missionaries did a lot in Odolu to encourage the natives to accept Christ, there were sacrifices that they had to make and challenges they faced when they came to Odolu. In as much as they did not have any negative and life-threatening reaction from the natives of Odolu like most missionaries had in most African communities²⁴, there were other forms of challenges they faced.

First, with the advent of these missionaries in Odolu in the persons of Rev. and Mrs Dickson, the missionaries had to move to their first house at Odolu which was made of grass. This house was unsuitable for the rainy season so they had to stay there until a few months later when they moved to their new house at Ojuwo Enefu²⁵. Although the people of Odolu had allowed the Qua Iboe Missionaries in without fighting them, they refused to agree with the missionaries on the aspect of polygamy as one who had more wives and children was seen as great and wealthy. Therefore, most people who would have bought the idea of converting to Christianity which was

²² T. Adama, "The Meeting of Two Culture: Igala Traditional Religious Interaction." *International Journal of Theology and Culture and Christianity in Inter Reformed Tradition* 7 (2015): 123

²³ Adama, T.: 123

²⁴ Adama, T.: 124

²⁵ Onakpa Daniel K. ,70+,Senior Elder United Evangelical Church, Odolu, interview held at Odolu,30th August,2019

the sole aim of the missionaries in Odolu, refused to convert as they felt the missionaries did not want their progress.

Second, these missionaries for some time experienced communication barriers as the natives of Odolu could not understand English and the Qua Iboe missionaries did not understand the Igala language. However, this language barrier was surmounted after tutoring a few native converts through the Qua Iboe mission early school, they were employed as interpreters to help interpret whatever they had to say especially the gospel of Christ²⁶.

Third, there was a lack of good means of transportation. As a result of the geographical location of Odolu, there existed a very difficult terrain which could not allow easy movement of people from one place to another. Odolu which happens to be low land topography and the nature of its soil there muddy, made transportation difficult. At the time the missionaries came, there were no accessible roads and only footpaths were available. No vehicle could carry the missionaries into Odolu, this therefore meant that the missionaries had to trek with their belongings on their head. Fortunately for the missionaries coming to Odolu (Rev. and Mrs Dickson), they had with them the Ibibio converts from the 1929 revival who served as helpers and these people carried their loads and cleared the footpaths for easier passage²⁷.

However, the above challenges started during the early times when they came to Odolu in 1932, but now, the main problem or challenge they are facing is a lack of money or funds and this is because the Qua Iboe mission now United Evangelical Church was founded by only one man

²⁶ D. K. Onakpa, 70+, Senior Elder United Evangelical Church, Odolu, interview held at Odolu, 30th August, 2019

²⁷ Jean S. Corbett. According to Plan: The Story of Samuel Alexander Bill, Founder of the Qua Iboe Mission, Nigeria. Walter: Worthing, 1977:28

and enjoyed little or no sponsorship from any other mother denomination. The only help it ever received was from interested friends and sympathizers. In Odolu, the new church building has not been completed due to lack of funds; even the intention of the church to open a secondary school has not been achieved because of the same problem of funds. Closely related to this is the challenge of trained personnel who could carry on the missionary work effectively. The mission was not having enough money to train its preachers and there was no money to build good houses for white missionaries. This therefore made it impossible for quick developments²⁸.

In addition to the above problem or challenges of the Qua Iboe church is that of cultural differences. The culture of the people in Odolu and the whole of Igalaland as regards the roles of women in the society before the missionaries were such that did not allow women to attend meetings with men but when Qua Iboe missionaries came, they wanted to do away with this social difference and this created a problem for them. Apart from the meetings, the area of dressing was another issue as the men were used to Putting on caps, especially in their gatherings but when the missionaries came, they wanted to stop them from having caps on their heads while at church, this generated a conflict as the natives considered it as humiliation²⁹.

Another area where cultural differences posed a problem for the Qua Iboe missionaries was dancing and clapping. When people were converted to the Christian faith, the missionaries wanted them to do away with their cultural dances, for instance, they wanted the converts not to participate in dancing or clapping hands during a funeral ceremony of their dead relatives as the Qua Iboe missionaries considered it to be against the Christian faith. However, it was not easy for the new

²⁸ D. K. Onakpa, 70+, Senior Elder United Evangelical Church, Odolu, interview held at Odolu, 30th August, 2019

²⁹ Enemadukwu Agono Duke, 50+, Officer of the Igala kingdom, interview held at Umuahia Abia state, 2nd of August, 2019.

converts to give up their culture, therefore it became a problem for Qua Iboe missionaries in Odolu to make the converts adhere strictly to the 'Christian culture'³⁰.

On Alcohol, Chief Enemadukwu Agono Duke also reveals this:

The Christian faith was against the intake of alcohol but society sees it as a social practice which keeps people together in peace and makes merry. The Christian missionaries therefore found it extremely difficult to eradicate this idea of taking alcohol. This posed problems for them in the sense that both sides felt that theirs was better and were not ready to surrender at all.

However, unless two people agree they cannot work together³¹.

Prospects of the United Evangelical church in Odolu

The Qua Iboe mission (Now known as achieved own as United Evangelical Church) in Odolu has achieved so much since their advent into the land. However, most of the facilities like the dispensary, Qua Iboe early school, an orphanage and social care for the natives of Odolu which were their main contributions to Odolu came to an end in 1938 when Rev. Dickson and his wife moved to the mission house at Idah. The only thing that remained was the church building where they continue the church services as preachers were left in Odolu to continue the conduction of church services; this building was also used as the Qua Iboe Primary School³².

The areas where the United Evangelical Church have prospects in Odolu are the areas of education and church buildings left behind by the missionaries. In the educational aspects,

³⁰ Adama, 123

³¹ Enemadukwu Agono Duke, 50+, Officer of the Igala kingdom, interview held at Umuahia Abia state, 2nd of August, 2019.

³² Enemadukwu Agono Duke, 50+, Officer of the Igala kingdom, interview held at Umuahia Abia state, 2nd of August, 2019..

although there is now a building for the Qua Iboe Mission Nursery School and a separate building for the Qua Iboe (United Evangelical Church) primary school, the United Evangelical church has plans to open up a secondary school. The building for the secondary school is available but there is still no fund to start up the school as resources like teachers, books, and school uniforms are to be made available since the United Evangelical Church gives free education in Odolu. This therefore means that for this vision or plan to be brought to reality, funds are needed. More so, in the aspect of church building, their prospect is to complete the church building and also, they have started a building at Ojuwo Enefu close to the place where the missionaries lived as at 1932 to 1938. This building is being put in place so that the Monday prayer meeting could be held there and this in a way would keep the history of the Qua Iboe missionaries at Ojuwo Enefu alive. When they gather on Mondays, the sight of the old and destroyed mission house at Ojuwo the Enefu reminds them the Qua Iboe missionaries came to Odolu to bring the gospel of Christ to the land³³.

Conclusion

The paper has discussed the missionary activities of the Qua Iboe mission now known as United Evangelical Church and Odolu. From the foregoing, this paper has been able to bring to limelight, the activities of the European Christian missionary of which the Qua Iboe mission is included and their impact in Odolu land specifically. Beginning from the general introduction of the work the history of the advent of Christianity and European Christian missionaries into Africa, Nigeria, Kogi state and down to Odolu was given. Thus, the paper aimed to add to the existing knowledge of the missionary activities in Igalaland and Nigeria as a whole. This was done with the aid of related works like textbooks and Journals as well as pictures, maps and oral sources.

³³ D. K. Onakpa, 70+, Senior Elder United Evangelical Church, Odolu, interview held at Odolu, 30th August, 2019

However, to aid in the comprehension of the subject matter, the history of the land and the people of Odolu was stated. Odolu like other communities in Igalaland has long been in existence before the advent of the Christian missionaries and it was and is still located in the eastern flank of the present-day Kogi State and is 50km away from Idah, the capital of Igala kingdom. The people of Odolu had their form of political administration which was able to keep the Odolu community together in peace before the colonial era. The people of Odolu also had their social structures put in place to ensure morality and eradicate social vices and misconducts and also economic structures that made sure everyone in the community, irrespective of the deity worshipped had food to eat and made sure everyone was comfortable to a large extent.

More so, having given knowledge of the land and people of Odolu, the paper brought to the fore the missionary activities in Igalaland and how Bishop Ajayi Crowther brought Christianity into Igalaland in 1857 which was an encouragement for other Christian missions like the Roman Catholic Mission, Christian Mission in Many Lands (CMML) and Qua Iboe Mission to mention a few, to come into the Igalaland to spread the gospel of Christ. The work also explains how the Qua Iboe mission now known as the United Evangelical Church came into Igalaland after sending two missionaries, John Nelson and J. West to make preliminary investigations which gave them the courage to step into the land to evangelize. The Qua Iboe missionaries first entered Ugwolawo in 1931 and they came to Adoru (present-day Odolu) in 1932 through Rev and Mrs. Dickson to bring the gospel of Christ to the people.

Odolu will never forget the advent of the Qua Iboe mission as it was the first Christian mission to step into the land and it brought a light never seen before which bore with its development. The mission provided social service as they took care of the motherless, orphans and

homeless people and also health care services where people in Odolu and communities around Odolu were given health care mostly on Ede market days which was the Odolu market day. More important, was the development of Western education in Odolu by the Qua Iboe mission which made the villages around Odolu to be able to go to school and have Western education.

Nevertheless, in as much as the above-mentioned came into Odolu land, the work gave knowledge of the reaction of the indigenes of Odolu towards the advent of the Christian missionaries into their land. Although, unlike other communities had no form of violence, not everyone accepted Christianity. The Qua Iboe missionaries as well did not force the belief on them and this led to the knowledge that those who converted to Christianity did it genuinely without coercion.

The challenges and prospects of the Qua Iboe Mission (now known as the United Evangelical Church) as well as their socio-economic impact in Odolu were discussed in the paper. The United Evangelical Church over time had impacted the land and the people of Odolu positively and negatively. Its positive impact was that it brought Western education to give more enlightenment to the people of Odolu, medical and social services, the gospel of Christ, independence for women, abolition of human sacrifice and the killing of twins. However, it impacted the people negatively as the age-long cherished traditional and social institutions of Odolu have been destroyed due to deviation of the Christian converts in Odolu as these cultural practices like laying down and kneeling to greet elders are being neglected and regarded as primitive and the Igala traditional boundaries of sexual chastity which involves a female staying pure as a virgin before marriage has been removed by Western civilization and now regarded as on missionaries in Odolu old fashioned. It is pertinent to note that the challenges of United

Evangelical Church missionaries in Odolu were mentioned in this work, as the missionaries encountered difficulties in and on their way to Odolu. Those challenges include; inadequate shelter or housing, communication barriers, lack of good means of transportation, lack of funds and also cultural differences.