Gosple Approaches to Cultures and World Views in Africa

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Abstract: *The witnessing of Jesus Christ in the synoptic gospels and the gospel of John were all witnessed within the context of the people's cultures and worldviews. Jesus is connected with the history of his people the Jews in Matthew 1:1. Jesus himself was a man with culture and worldview, and he presented the gospel in that manner. Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Jesus said to them "give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's (Mark 12:17)." Paul proclaimed the unknown God to the people at Thessalonica through their traditional known gods (Acts 17:23). Roger Haight, S.J. (2005:167), says: "Whether it be the four Gospels, each of which is distinctive, or the letters of Paul. It is characteristic of our historically conscious culture to recognize the real differences in the various appreciations of Jesus that were generated in different communities." Roger is right for saying that culture makes us recognize the reality that people show appreciation of Jesus through their cultures. The early church was situated in communities with established cultures and traditions with different worldviews. H. Richard Niebuhr (2001: 83), asserts that: "These men are Christians not only in the sense that they count themselves believers in the Lord but also in the sense that they seek to maintain community with other believers. Yet they seem equally at home in the community of culture. "Richard (2001: 83), did not see any "Tension between church and the world, the social laws and the gospel, the working of divine grace and human effect, the ethnics of salvation and the ethnics of social conversation or progress on the one hand, they interpret culture through Christ. "The gospel cannot be preached to an unknown world. To know the world is to know the cultures and worldviews of the people, so as to present the gospel to them in a contextual manner. Louis J. Luzbetak, S. V.D (2001: 135), says, "We can understand and deal with the world. "In my tribe (Mwaghavul land), it is an abomination to steal, sleep with some body's wife. Unmarried youths are not supposed to have sexual intercourse and so on. Those cultural laws stated above are the same with the gospel laws as presented by Jesus in the Bible. Therefore, the gospel should be presented to the people in a contextual manner for proper understanding and acceptability. This article will pay particular attention to the culture and world view of Igala people in North Central Nigeria, with the view to discuss some cultural issues for cultural contextualization of the gospel*

Keywords: *Human Anthropology, Multiple Religions, Cultural dynamics, and Igala people*

1. INTRODUCTION

This Article seeks to define Gospel, culture and worldview, and to view the terms and their relationship in the context of the gospel. Understanding cultural context and worldviews of the people makes the difference is presentation, propagation and acceptability of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and salvation. Jesus and Paul presented the gospel to the people in the context of their culture and worldview. That makes the gospel relevant and shaped their understanding of what is wrong and right within their culture.

1.1. Statement of Problems

Lack of understanding the concept and practice of contextualization is a big issue of conflict between the cultural worldview of the people and the gospel. Propagation of the gospel can be misunderstood, if the right model of presenting it is not adequately adopted.

2. CULTURAL WORLDVIEW AND THE GOSPEL

Gospel

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (1985:442), defines Gospel as "public announcement of something wrought by God e.g., good tidings or glad tidings to publish good news or preaching (Isaiah 61:1)."

American tract society Dictionary (2.5) defines Gospel as "good news, and it is that revelation and dispensation, which God made known to guilty man through Jesus Christ our savior and Redeemer. The scripture speaks of the kingdom of God, (Matthew 24:14). The Grace of God (Acts 20:24) and of peace (Romans 1:12)" Dictionary of Paul and His letters, (1993: 369), defines it as, "glad tidings or good news, and in Pauline usage it refers to the message of God's saving work in Jesus Christ."

Edward P. Clowney (1995:37), asserts that gospel is a "message of God's saving rule." I see as the Gospel as the propagation or relating the divine message of God's kingdom, salvation and peace to mankind through Jesus Christ.

Culture

Randee Ijatuyi- Morphe (2011: 478), defines culture as, "values, moral norms and religious customs imposed by the traditional worldview on people's lives, that provide a frame work and often become a regulative force for regnant values observable in a given period or social areas."

Stephen A. Grumian and Marvin K. M Marvin K Mayers (1979:41), define culture as "learned and shared attitudes, values, and ways of behaving. Culture also includes the material artifacts created by the members of a culture of a cultural group."

Stephen and Marvin also cited Edward Tylor (1979:41), that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Culture could also be defined as common practices and Behaviour of people in a particular community as regards their social, religious, political, economic and other ethical issues acceptable to them.

Worldview

Encarta English Dictionary defines worldview as "personal conception of humanity, the world of life." Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2010:1717) defines worldview as "a person's way of thinking and understanding life, which depends on their beliefs and attitude."

Worldview be defined as person's mentality concerning event and situation in a peculiar way with reference to thinking and interpretation of event or situation.

3. VIEW OF THE TERMS GOSPEL, CULTURE AND WORLDVIEW

Gospel is seen in a general term as public announcement or propagating of the good tidings or good news of God's kingdom, salvation, grace and peace to the guilty man, through Jesus Christ.

Culture is regarded as, common learned and shared attitudes values, material artifacts, religious and traditional beliefs of a particular community, while worldview is accepted as personal conception and understanding of an event or a situation in a peculiar way with reference to thinking and interpretation of things in and around a given community.

4. PROBLEM OF CULTURE AND WORLDVIEW

Where there is a culture, there is automatically a worldview. Jesus Christ in his human nature was a Jew, remained a Jew till his died and resurrected. But he confronted some Jewish cultures. That those not mean that culture is bad. But that the Gospel can change and shape a wrong culture to a right one. That is to say that there is no perfect culture, but the gospel has what it takes to shape or change it. H. Richard Niebuhr, in his book Christ and culture raised the following issues. The Enduring problem of culture, Christ against culture, the Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, Christ the transformerr of culture and a concluding unscientific post script. In all those facts, there is no fact that has biblical proof that Christ is completely against culture, although he is against wrong cultural practices.

5. ORIGIN OF IGALA PEOPLE

As mentioned earlier, the home of the Igala people is situated east of the river Niger and Benue confluence and on both sides of the Niger in Lokoja, Kogi State of Nigeria with its headquarters in Idah, which is the seat of the Attah Igala (the paramount ruler of Igala people). The pertinent question now is, what is the origin of the Igala people? Where do they come from?

Luka (2018:5) was right when he asserts that "The origin of any people group falls within the historical period captured in Genesis chapter ten and eleven and the subsequent dispersion of the tribes after the confusion of human tongues at the tower of Babel in Shinar." In the same vein, the morphology of traditional Igala kingdom traces its roots back to this period. The gap between Shinar and Idah, which is now the headquarters of Igala kingdom can only be reconciled by legendary tales. A number of literatures put the history of Igala people as far back as 36 B.C. Another even as far back as 500 B.C. As a matter of facts, there are couple of traditions about the origin of Igala people. Yoruba history holds that the first Attah Igala was the second son of Oduduwa who rebelled against his father and left Ile-Ife, the cradle of Yoruba race, with some of his servants and father's subjects and settled at Idah where he established the Igala kingdom.

Another history by Ajayi Crowther (in Adoji, 2004) has it that "*Akpotos* occupied the present-day Idah, the traditional headquarters of the Igala people, before the arrival of a man called Ata from Ife enroute the river Niger in search of a conducive place he could make a permanent home. The Akpotos who willingly accommodated him later submitted their sovereignty to his leadership because of his influence and leadership traits. It is claimed that this marked the beginning of formal government among the Igala people." According to *Opaluwa* (in Adoji, 2004) "Certain histories link the *Igalas* with Bini and Jukun on the basis of similarities and value systems, customs/traditions, methods of succession and languages as well as institution of divine kingship, which perhaps is as a result of the ancestral links between them."

6. HUMAN ANTHROPOLOGY AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF IGALA PEOPLE

There should be proper understanding of human anthropology in the context of multiple religious and cultural dynamics of the Igala people. It discusses human anthropology, the context of African Traditional religion, Islamic religion, and Christian religion; and how this multiple religion has affected the culture of the people and its impact on the spiritual, social and political life of the people. *Igala* is an ethnic group in Nigeria, and the 9th largest tribe in Nigeria. In the account of J.S. Boston (1968:28) "The *Igala*kingdom is skirted on two sides by the great waterways that divide Nigeria into its major natural and cultural regions, the river Benue and the river Niger. In shape it is roughly triangular, with the confluence of the two rivers forming the apex and the base extending irregularly into *Idoma* and Ibo country. Its strategic situation is of key significant in the historical development of the kingdom. Their geographical position has brought the Igala into contact with a wide range of people and a great variety of cultures, including contact with the Ibo, the Yoruba, the Edo-speaking people, and the Jukun, to name only the principal groups. *Idah*, the Igala capital, is situated on the river Niger, and is clear both from written records of nineteenth-century exploration and from traditions of the many peoples who trace their rulers' decent to *Idah* that the Igala kingdom has dominated the affairs of this riverain zone for many centuries. But although the Igala are deeply involved in the system of contacts and common economic, political, and cultural interests engendered by this riverain network, they are not a riverain people in the strict sense of the term. The Igala utilized the river for trade in slaves, food-stuffs, and imported goods. But their traditional economy was based on arable farming, and they value hunting more highly than watermanship or any form of riverain activity"

In the account of Ojonemi,Edino&Ojonimi (2015:012-029), "the Igala nationality in Nigeria consists of the majority of people living in the present Kogi State. In a vivid description, Miachi (in Ojonemi and Ojonimi, 2015) explained that Igala is located in the tract of land to the lower of the Benue and east of the Niger, in the confluence area of these two great rivers. It is observed that the Igala population is estimated at four million (2006 National Population Commission result), because they are majorly found in Nyanya/Mararaba-Abuja, Lagos, Brigade-Kano and Kakuri-Kaduna."Similarly, Okakachi (in Ojonemi and Ojonimi, 2015) buttressed the assertion that the population overflows to states like Anambra, Edo, Delta, and Enugu. They extended transversely to all six geo-political zones in Nigeria. At its peak and before its disintegration owing partly to the 1804 Jihad, the Igala kingdom hard extended Northeast to Otukpo and Igumale in Benue state and Northwards to Lokoja and Koto-Karfe embracing all the Igbira-Panda and Tao areas and to the west across rivers Niger and Benue to Auchi and Igara in Edo State, and South-East to Nsukka, Nri, Aguleri, Onitsha up to Aboh. In another clarification, Egbunu (2009:7) contended that, 'Igala' refers to the triad of the language, the ethnic group and the territory located on the eastern flank of the confluence of the rivers Niger and Benue in

Kogi State of Nigeria. Igala people are immediate neighbours to the Bassa-Komo, Bassa-Nge, Idoma, Igbo, Ebira, Kankada, Afemai, and the Nupe. Igala folks are identified to have some long-standing kingship with the Jukun, Yoruba and the Benin kingdoms. Obviously, they are an amalgam of the various ethnic configurations in Nigeria including the Hausa/Fulani and other ethnic groups earlier mentioned which has been somehow assimilated into the Igala mainstream. Igala therefore holds a pride of place as a cultural melting pot majorly due to their centrality of location. Therefore, varieties of people from different ethnic origins, speaking different languages live in Igalaland. However, the dominant group are the Igala people themselves who are also regarded as the most primordial of all the identifiable groups that are existing in the area today."

Anthropologists take a broad approach to understanding the many different aspects of the human experience. They consider the past either through archeology to see how human groups lived hundreds or thousands of years ago and what was important to them. African traditional religion is the birth place of Igala cultural and religious beliefs, so the Igala perspective of human nature is similar to African traditional beliefs. Some African theologians hold that the human nature is dichotomous. Among them is Metuh (in Ekweozor, 2011:107-108) who strongly holds that the African man's understanding of human nature is 'double'. Metuh was among the first theologians to come up with this concept of 'double' and in the light of this concept about the human nature, he further classified the human nature into four basic principles: "Breath, destiny Soul, Ancestral guardian Spirit, and the human person himself."

  i. The Breath-Is conceived as a vivifying principle, a live force which links man with other life forces in the universe and is in vital relationship with them.

  ii. Destiny Soul is conceived as an emanation or spark of the creator inside man.

  iii. The Ancestral Guardian: The ancestral spirit is believed to be incarnate in man and linked him up with the life-force of the clan, firmly and any other human groups

  iv. The human person himself: The human person himself, the unique individual person created by God, generally traditional African believes that God created the human being.

Similarly, Egbunu (2013:13) asserts that "In the Igala ontology of being, the human person is said to be made up of the *"Anola"* (Body) and *"inmi" (Soul).*

The latter, which is easily equiperated with life (olai) is often translated as breath and most often rendered as "afu" (air). Therefore, a typical Igala person holds the notion that God created the human person; filled him with "afu" (air, spirit or breath) which is life in itself. It is likened to a manner vulcanizers pumped air into a deflated tyre or blowing of air into a ball or balloon. This invisible part of the human being is described in terms of a "vital force". In which case, the spirit is said to have sway, control over or rule over the entire human physical body, even the "edo" (heart)which is said to have the capability of working as the seat of love, functions along with the "okoto" (brains) which is the seat of decisions. The heart and the brain are said to be working hand in hand with the spirit of man to bring about "ibe" (thinking)."

He went further to reveal that Another element of the vital force in man is said to be the "ebie" (blood), which makes the link with the ancestors (consanguinity affinity) through the nuclear and extended family line possible. So that, when a person says, "anola akola nwu- I" (he is being spoken to by his body) what it means is that "Ebie" speaks (idiomatically the blood in his veins makes him feel). This happens especially when something negative has occurred to a family member and there is some kind of premonition. In this respect, the "ebie" (blood) and "anola" (body) are inextricably related as one. Invariably, of a living body is to talk of active living flow of blood.

The "Edo" (heart) which pumps blood is seen as the engine-room of life, courage, zeal fervour, determination, candour, kindness generosity, love, attentiveness, compassion, forgiveness, conversion, change, etc. The heart works with the "afu" (breath) in man to determine one's level of social, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, economic, cultural and other spheres of life. Central to this whole array of functionality is that the life "afu" (spirit, air, soul) is what gives life. When the creator takes the "afu" or "inmi" (breath) back, the body becomes helpless, motionless or becomes inactive and man ceases to be a person because he is physically dead. However, the soul of a person is said to be immortal or indestructible.

There is also a sense in which an Igala person may asserts that someone is "okwu one" (dead person) without the physical death occurring. In this case it could mean social, spiritual or some other form of death. An indecisive person or a hardened criminal, for instance, could be considered dead in the Igala worldview. It is the spirit (afu) of a man which works in conjunction with the heart and brain and precipitates action. The "okai" (sense of agreement) of the person then works with forces surrounding the destiny of the person to lead to the execution of whatever has been contemplated.

Armed robbers, kidnappers, ritualists murderers are by every standard considered less-human metaphysically. This is owing to their anti-social activities. The "abiku" (born-to-die babies or ogbanje) children, witches and wizards(ochu), sorcerers(inacha) are considered far less-human too and are in their own different category.

In this respect, the human entity who is not part of integrally healthy and positive human community is only referred to sarcastically as an "enwu-I" (an "it"). That goes to explain how Igala person abhors deviant attitudes with passion or livid hatred. This significant to in relation to Igala general attitude to morals. Life gives back to you what you offer it. In other words, the entire atmosphere of the Igala traditional society seems to radiates the belief that One good turn deserves another. It is even most significant considering the fact even a corpse (okwu) under normal circumstances is not referred as "it"- in Igala worldview. At funerals, you could hear, "ene kidachi-te-I" (this person lying here) out of respect, even though is no longer fully "one "because he is obviously lifeless. This seems to be what Ansah (2011:2) was alluding to when he noted that "Africans speak of what lives on after death as "the man himself", or it is "the little man. "There is a sense in which the living is often said to be in communion with not only the living but "he lives, moves, marries, and dies within the family of the living and the dead" (Nwoko, 1985:279). That is why when Mbiti says "I am because we are" it refers to an additive collective we" (Menkiti, 2011:179). As Richard Bell (2002:60) rightly expressed it, "Africans do not think themselves as discrete individuals but rather understand themselves as part of the community".

As Mbiti (1969:108) in his inversion of the famous "cogito ergo sum" of Descartes started it, "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am." And he earlier explained: "The individual owes his existence to other people… He is simply part of the whole… whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: I am, because we are; and since we are therefore, I am." This is very central in the African view of man. For the Igala "ikere bimo ikere beju, ikerebeju ila ikerebimo" (what affects the nose equally affects the eye and vice versa). It is in this spirit parents can easily "dewn kpalugba" (offer up their needs) in order to satisfy their children. This is because in the spirit of sacrifice, the Igala parent is ready to offer anything within his/her reach in cash or kind so as to remove shame or embarrassment from the family. As it is often said, "Igala tene achukatan" (the Igala person abhors embarrassment or literally, anything that entails removal of their crown or destiny). As it were, capacity for moral personality in the society largely has to do with the ability to stand against anything which has to do with blatant breaking of acceptable moral norms or values.

7. CULTURAL PRACTICES OF IGALA PEOPLE

Igala cultural practices are not only similar to those of other Nigerian people but also related, especially to the culture of those from the middle-Belt and South regions. Miachi (Adama, 2015:7) notes "The culture of the Igala people is very similar to the culture of most other Nigerian people, especially those from the geographical middle – Belt, South wards, to the coast. Cultural practices such as kingship, funeral ceremonies, beliefs, marriage, masquerading, mode of dressing, body adornment, etcetera are similar to those of other Nigerians in the sb-region mentioned above. For instance, the Egwu masquerades of Igala are similar and indeed are related to Egwugwu or Nmanwu of Igbo land, Egwugwu of Asaba (Delta state), the Alekwu off afia of Idoma, the Eku od of Egbira, the Gunu and the Udeako Gboya of the Nupe but for some slight differences. The Ogani festival performed at Idah and Ankpa are also celebrated in the Southern parts of Plateau state, especially in the Umaisha and parts of Nassarawa areas."

 Igala concept of God

The concept of God is central to religion and therefore constitutes one of the central themes of the cultures in African in general. The Igala tradition concept of God is a belief in the supreme Being

whom they call Ojo. Egbunu (in Theophilus Adama, 2015) asserts that "Igala people believed in the existence of the supreme Being they referred to as 'Ojo' Odobagagwu (Almighty God) or Ojo-Ochamachala (God who owns everything), Ojokinyi (the creator), Ojoanemagedo (God of great courage and power). He is also known as Ojokinuma (God of wisdom), Ojo-agogba-gubi (God who sees front and back). He is believed to be omniscient both in the past, present and future. And He ostensibly ranks supremely far higher than any of the deities or spirit beings in Igala religious imagination."Isaiah Aduojo Negedu has carefully observed that:

> "The closeness of the Igala with the Yoruba, the Igbo, the Gwari people, etcetera, would appear as though the Igala people in Kogi have a borrowed notion of God. Though there were influences, they still have their peculiarity. There is a general belief in the supreme God called Ojo, but that it is a function of intercourse between cultures or tribes is impossible to determine. African culture generally has a name they ascribe to the person of God, but the spirits and gods that serve as intermediaries with the ultimate Being differ from one culture to another."

Divinities (Spirits)

> Discussing about the divinities in the Igala traditional religion, Negudu notes that "there is almost a thin line between divinities and ancestors in Igala culture. However, the ancestors (Ibegwu) rank second in authority to the Supreme Being. Some persons extol the Ibegwu as having a direct link with God himself. This is due perhaps to the role of Ibegwu as messengers or representatives of God. The ancestors are the departed relatives of the living, who led good lives on earth at present, have found an abode with the rest of the ancestors in the underworld. 'For the Igala, the dead are the essential force behind their existence; they control crop-yields, human fertility, peace and progress in their society. There is therefore the belief in the existence of ilei (this world) and the oj'ona (the afterworld)'. The oj'ona is the world of the ancestors. For the Igala people, the oj'ona is the continuation of ilei. That is why it is believed that a king in this world is also a king in the hereafter. A slave in this world is also a slave in the hereafter. Little wonder, slaves were buried with kings in former times."

He went further to elaborate that the ibegwu are ever living an active, once they have died, they become 'everlasting'… Ancestors are especially remembered once every year at the Ibegwu festival. The day of this festival occurs shortly before yams are harvested. It marks the beginning of the period of harvesting yams. In this period, the ancestors are appreciated for their protection throughout the previous year and are appeased to bestow more blessings in the coming year.

Negedu also reveals "among the divinities, the Igala people have strong belief in *Ikpakachi*. These are gods of the river where the community fetch their water. When a child is born, a drop of water (omiumo) from the community stream is given to the child. The child then gets one of the spirits from the stream as a guardian. In some places, holes are dug beside houses of Ikpakachi worshippers and as many bottles as possible are fixed in the holes. Each person has his/her own bottle. Parents perform this rite once they give birth to a child and as the child grows, they expect the child to sustain the ikpakachi in a bottle form. People who are stubborn to the dictate of these spirits should be ready to bear each consequence. The spirit protects lives and properties and puts off obstacles; it also brings illness to the stubborn of heart. Every man is married to a female ikpakachi (oya ikpakachi) and every woman is married to a male ikpachi (oko ikpakachi)."

Ifa, another divinity for instance is considered as the god of divination in Igala culture. It is believed that Ifa carries messages from the underworld to this world. It is also a medium of dialogue between the living and the ancestors. Worships of gods and spirits are usually carried out at the advice of the Ifa priests and are usually led by special individuals, depending on the grade of worship. There is the *atama ebo* (priests and priestesses) of the various gods, goddesses and spirits who lead worship.

This view is also confirmed by Theophilus who says that "Igala people generally believed in existence of spirits and other gods. Ojo is held so supreme, that out of His supremacy he gave powers and authorities to the gods and spirits over the different spheres of human life. These gods and spirits have practical dealings with human beings in their everyday life activities. Igala people believes the spirits dwell in trees, springs, wells, stones, and mountain. According to Egbunu (in Adama, 2015) the traditional worldview of the Igala is expressed in their beliefs, myths, legends, proverbs, rituals, symbols and festivals."

Religious Practices in Igala Land

History shows that the Igala kingdom was already existing before the advent of colonization and birthing of Nigeria as a country. It is worth noting that Igala land was one of major place where African Traditional Religion thrived tremendously before the coming of Islam and Christian religion. This view was confirmed by Andrew Abah when he writes concerning Igala land that:

> "The entire land and the Attah ruling clan were neck deep in idolatry and fetish practices, of unimaginable magnitude. We were a dread to other nations (tribal groups) because of the mysterious strength, expansive land and formidability of our kingdom." He went further to reveal that "To sustain our dreaded outlook, keep the territory off constantly invading enemies and remain relevant, our fathers, rulers and people embraced worship of strong spirits, idolatry and very implicative sacrifices. Thus, the entire land and people became totally infested with idolatry and spiritual darkness."

Concept of Unity

> Writing on unity within Islam, Greg Haleblian (in Parshall, 2003) notes: "One of the first principles most worthy of consideration is the Muslim's love for unity or oneness. This comes to the foremost notably when the contrast between the interior of the mosque on one hand, and the interior of the Church on the other is sharpened. As one enters into the mosque, he finds himself submerged in an atmosphere of total unity; Muslims' love forunity or oneness is by no means limited to religion. It is dominant in many areas of Arab culture and most notably in the material products, such as houses and clothes…"

Parshall comments that this evidence of sameness can also be seen in Hebrew culture, and perhaps related, in both cases, to the emphasis on the unity and oneness of God.

Concept of Time

Muslims have a high respect for historical perspectives. Speaking of Muslims regard to the past, Lynn Silvernale (in Parshall, 1003), says "Bengalis are oriented toward the past … their past is their life. What they are now doesn't matter, they glory in what they were in the past…. The future enters very little into the thinking of the Bengalis…. To some extent Bengalis consider it presumptuous to talk about the future, probably due to the fatalism of their religion."

Concept of Family

The interaction of the Muslim family is generally a beautiful thing to behold. Ties between family members run very deep. Haleblian (in Parshall, 2003) describes these relationships:

"Generally speaking, the family lives either I one big house, or in several adjoining houses. Income and expenditure are shared by all members of the family, but controlled by 'its head.' Property is also held in common by the extended family. … The extended families enjoy a greater measure of security and solidarity. In events of economic hardship, physical illness or death, there are other members of the family to take over responsibilities. The extended family guides and assists the young married couples in child rearing, cooking, and other household chores."

Concept of Peace

Islamic concept of peace includes: "to be well," "peace and health," peace in this world as well as in the next." Like the Jews of Old Testament times, the contemporary Muslim sees peace as harmony, integration, and a total way of life. It is both internalized and externalized. It embraces past, present and future.

Honour

According to Parshall, the greatest tragedy in a Muslim's life is to see dishonour brought upon the family's name. The hurts, embarrassment, and perplexity of family dishonour will have negative effect on the name and reputation of feature generations.

Status

In Muslim society status is more assigned than earned. This could arise from inherited wealth or property, an honored family name or advanced age.

Individualism

The Muslim does not value the autonomous approach to life. He derives strength from interrelatedness, not independence. Silvernale (in Parshall, 2003) writes of the individual in relation to the group which he belongs. "To do something against an individual Bengali is to arouse the ire of the group, because the individual stands for the group and must be upheld."

Secularism

To the Muslim, Allah is very real even in the midst of tremendous pressures to move toward secularistic society. Islamic law is tied closely to nationalistic pride.

Interaction

The coming of Christianity to Igala land. Christianity came to Igala land through missionary activities. In the order of chronology of missionary penetration, Okwoli (in Theophilus, 2015) notes that "The Church missionary society (C.M.S.) was the first missionary group that came to the area. The C.MS. penetrated into Idah, the royal seat of the Igala, by 1857and succeeded in establishing a mission station there. As a result of misunderstanding between the missionary agents and local rulers the station was later closed down."

The second missionary group that came to Igala land was the Roman Catholic missionaries. In the account of Usman (in Adama, 2015), the missionaries arrived in Dekina between 1903 and 1904 from their station in Onitsha through the handwork of Rev. Fr. Joseph Shanahan. It is worth noting to state here that Roman Catholic Church made great impact in Igala land through their educational and medical services.

The third missionary group was that of Qua Iboe Mission. The Qua Iboe mission penetrated Igala land in 1931 when the desire of the Igala people for salvation was made known to QIM missionaries. In 1931 Jim Wesgart and John Nelson of QIM mission were sent from Calabar to explore the possibility of reaching the Igala with the gospel message. After the consultation with the Attah- Igala, the QIM sent Reverend David O'Neil to work among the Igala where he first settled in Ugwolawo. In 1932, another mission station was opened in Odolu and in 1932 the base was shifted to Idah the royal town.

8. CHRISTIAN AND IGALA RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Changes occur through conscious and unconscious activities, so culture influences the other and it is equally influenced by others. The Igala culture was rich and intact before the advent of Christianity, but the growth of Christianity and education in the area introduced religious and social changes which affected the people both positively and negatively.

Positive Impact

1. Abolition of the killing of Twins

Abolition of the killings of twins is one of the positive impacts of Christianity on Igala culture. Prior to the coming of Christianity to Africa, the Africans and Igala in particular considered it uncultured and an abomination to give birth to more than one child at a time. According to Ugwu (in Adama, 2015) "this was done because they felt it was an abomination to the earth deity and the ancestral spirits". With the effort of missionaries and Mary Slessor in particular this obnoxious practice ended in Nigeria and Igala land.

Eradication of Human Sacrifice

Another positive impact of Christianity on Igala culture is that of eradication of human sacrifice. Human sacrifice was normally carried out inform of atonement when there was an abomination in the land leading to a breach of harmony between the spirit world and the communities. Another aspect of human sacrifice is the burial of chiefs with slaves who would serve them in the underworld. This act of man's inhumanity to man was stopped only with the advent of Christian religion (Ugwu in Adama, 2015).

Improved Health Services Delivery

The missionaries provided health delivery services through establishment of hospitals. For example; Grimad Hospital Anyigba, Immaculate Heart Maternity Dispensary, Awo-Akpali, Ika Christian Hospital Ika, Holley Memorial Hospital Ochadamu, to name but a few were their hand made.

Reformation of Widowhood Practices

Reformation of widowhood practices is another positive impact of Christianity on Igala culture. In Igala land, when a man dies the wife would be subjected to the humiliation of widowhood practices, whereby she removes all the good clothes and jewelries on her body, and be confined in one place for three months. She is not allowed to talk loudly. She sits and sleeps on the mat. She takes bath only at night. She wears black clothes as mourning attire. She is expected to be wailing between 5 and 6 am for seven days. In some part of Igala land the widow is expected to feed the women in the deceased husband room morning and evening for seven days. The deceased husbands' brother can inherit the widow and take her as a wife (oya ogwu). The advent of Christianity has put an end to this. The number of days the widow is restricted is reduced significantly, and widows now wear white attire especially Catholics in place of black one.

Introduction of Western Education

Christianity introduced western education which improved the status of those who received it. For igala people western education was mainly focused on men. Fathers regard female children as other man's property and need not to spend on them. This was why Denis a missionary in onyeidu (2004) observed that This was why Ezeogu (in Adama,2015) observed that:

> "My father could not read or write yet he owned a bible. In fact, he owned the only bible in the village an enormous red-edged book. Nobody ever read my father's bible. It was not acquired to be read like ordinary books. No, my father's bible was always carefully wrapped in white cloth and kept under lock and key in a wooden cabinet in which my father kept things he particularly treasured. Whenever you saw my father open the cabinet and bring out bible you know that there is a big palaver in the village. There must be certainly a dispute which had defiled the ingenuity of the village elders and the only way to settle it would be for one of the contending parties to swear an oath. And for this, my father's bible was the most reliable means. For those first generation of Christians my father's bible had replaced the sacred staff (ofo) of the traditional religion as an object of oath taking".

In tandem with the above Ugwu (1999:56) stated that "this undoubtedly has provided room for moral decadence and other vices in our society system". What this means is that people hide under the cover that Christianity did not permit oath taking to commit one evil or the other. In the past the junior and the young greeted the elders with great respect by kneeling down or prostrating. But today, the educated elements greet the elders standing. They only show respect by removing their hat from their heads and bowing a little. That salutary aspect of African culture of kneeling down and prostrating is now regarded as primitive, uncivilized and servile (exam success undated). Igala styles of drumming and dancing has also been influenced by Christianity. According to Odiniya (2011) Igala drumming and dancing is divided into four; royal music such as odechi and ukaga onu, entertainment or social music such as ichabada, ugwolo, olele, agbaka and agale, the cleansing and rituals music are ogba, iyogwu, and oye, the dual music. These are the one that can feature on different occasions such as odechi, which can feature in traditional second burial. Etc. he further stated that the odechi ogba, andoye have lost most of its profit to Christianity and Islam.

It is a common knowledge that Igala girls are highly valued by their people. This is because they observe chastity before marriage as a moral value. Observation of chaste before marriage is highly treasured and appreciated by Africans. This was why Mbiti (1985) attest to the fact that:

Both the girls and other relatives have preserved the sanctity of human reproduction. Only marriage may share this sacred blood for in so doing unlucks the door for member of the family in the loins to come forward and join both the living and living-dead. Virginity symbolize purity not only of the greatest glory and crown to her parents. Husband and relatives. P141)

As a result of great emphasis given to the virtue of virginity in many African societies, so many gifts are showered on the virgin and her parents for her chaste character. In this respect Daramola (1997) observes that;

A faithful woman who is discovered to be undefiled at marriage is considered a good ambassador of her family hence symbolic items depicting chastity are sent to her parents. The traditional symbolic items include keg of palm wine, a box filled with matches, a white stained clothe used in the process of coition (p 40-41)

Today, these Igala traditional boundaries of sexual chastity are being removed by western civilization and new morality of sexual freedom. People who still cherish virginity, chastity and self-control are regarded as old-fashioned moralist (Hans, 1976:82). In the support of this, house Etal (1988:29) observes that:

Sexual mores have taken culture shift over the past 100 years but the vestiges of this transition are still with us today…. in the past times couples were guilty if they went to bed before marriage. Now they are made to feel guilty if they don't.

Africans and Igala people in particular cherish communal life and brotherhood. There are morals concerning social, economic and political life of the people. Everybody in the community is expected to help one another in times of need and also show hospitality to relatives, friends, and strangers. This was why Mbiti (1975:770) opined that "it is held to be moral evil to deny hospitality, even to a stranger". The practice of hospitality manifests itself in many ways such as friendly exchange of gifts, sharing of food and shelter through which peace and harmony are achieved in what would otherwise be a chaotic world. This development brings about the establishment and maintenance of cordial relationship that promotes human welfare. (Abah 2011)

In the extended family system older relatives such as cousins, uncles, nephews, brothers, sisters and aunts are expected to be catered for by their relatives that are well-to-do. They in turn bless and pray for God's blessings upon them. Indeed, things have fallen apart with the arrival of Christianity. This was why exam success (nd) observed that:

The idea of extended family is African. By this a man regards as a member of his family cousins, uncles, nephews, brothers, sisters and aunts. They bring their problems to the well-to-do member of their family. The able man also regards it as his duty to help them from their financial problems. Christianity has brough to west Africa the idea of one-person catering for his immediate family only. That is, your wife and children. The extended family system therefore giving way to the limited family system among educated Africans, especially those educated in the Christian mission schools. (p51)

Igala traditional religious culture also influences Christianity. For example, Christianity opposes polygamy which was a valid and cherished form of marriage in Africa. The mission-based churches rejected polygamy as incompatible with Christian standards. Some of the African independent churches like the Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial church of Christ apostolic church does not forbid polygamy. It is regarded as a normal African way of life. These African independent churches adopted polygamy because they belief that polygamy does not contradict any Christian principle (N.T.I 2000:31) to this effect Agha observed that:

"What we see among some African Christians is an insidious campaign in favour of polygamy. In fact, it is no longer a hindrance to becoming a full member in some churches. Consequently, a few church members are involved in polygamous life without any form of punishment"

Some of the Igala music and instruments such as drums and ukelegwu are adopted by Christian churches during their worship. Igala language is employed in singing hymns and worship in churches. Churches have different Igala hymn books are otakada eli catholic by Rev Fr. Sunday o. Umoru and Eli abolojo published by Ika Christian press.

Traditional Africans hold the ancestors in high esteem and accord them all the reverences and honour due to them through offering them food and drink naming them in prayers naming children after them and by consulting them during any ritual and misunderstanding. According to Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004) "Africans implore their ancestors has been employed by Christians.

9. GOSPEL CONTEXTUALIZATION CONSIDERATION

Gospel, culture and worldview are related for the establishment of God kingdom, salvation, grace, wellbeing of the people and absolute peace in Jesus Christ. Presentation and propagation of the gospel today should take the form of contextualization consideration where, the Gospel, culture and worldview of the people are put together for effective evangelism and mission. Human failings are major hindrances to the cultural development of all people, in particular the Africans. Religion and culture are supposed to be complimentary. However, the reality on ground is that they are at conflict

with each other. People that brought these religions, for instance, Christianity and Islam, super imposed their cultural opinions on the people. That is, the Western and Arab cultures. Multiple religion is not supposed to be a disadvantage, but they are because the operators don't really have the proper model of relating to the people with the gospel. People need to reaffirm the moral stand of culture and shape their norms in the light of scriptures. The interplay of various religious believes and control is making it now very difficult for the gospel to be rooted in the lives of the people.

Conflict

It is worthy of noting that the antagonism between the religions themselves has a serious effect on the cultures of people generally. It reduces the concept of cultural perspective of peace and harmony between people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Development

The neglect of moral values for freelance, self-centered lifestyle has brought dire consequences on humanity, most especially in Africa. There is the need for a reversal of this obvious cultural experiences for the sake of peace, unity and development in a wholistic manner on the African continent and the entire world at large.

Reorientation

Reorientation is key to salvaging the present quagmire. It is important that we take a look at how we operate in religion and culture, so as to give people the right orientation in the light of scriptures and valuable cultural norms are a productive. People seriously need to meet up with human basic needs in society for them to live and well.

10. CONCLUSION

1.The world is in dire need of positive results in the entire human endeavours in life. Cooperation for humanitarian interests and human existence in the context of true freedom, salvation, human dignity and to gain fundamental human rights and privileges in Church and Society are necessary for good lifestyle in accordance with God's will and purpose for mankind created in his image from the beginning. Anything short of that, is an error and needs to be corrected urgently.

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