

# IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON ORISA WORSHIP IN YORUBALAND: EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS A CASE STUDY

By

AbiodunAjayi *Ph.D*

Department of History, Adeyemi College of Education Ondo

biodunajayi1@gmail .com, [ajayia@aceondo.edu.ng](mailto:ajayia@aceondo.edu.ng)

## Abstract

Orisa worship is an attribute of the Yoruba people. The practice attests to the fact that, contrary to the Eurocentric views of the Europeans that Africans were atheists, Africans were notoriously religious through their believe in Olodumare (the supreme deity) and other deities who were believed to be intermediaries between God and man. Their religiosity before the advent of the Europeans is also a confirmation of advancement of African civilization. However, sequel to the encounter with colonialism and Christianity, Orisa worship (ATR) has never remained the same. This study therefore aims at examining Orisa worship in Yorubaland with a view to ascertaining how it responded to changes occasioned by Christianity, the religious wing of the European colonialism. The study adopts historical approach which depends on written, oral and archival sources. Oral interviews will be conducted with purposively selected key informants such as priest and custodians of Yoruba deities in the area of the study, kings, chiefs and church leaders who are of considerable ages. An investigation of a matter that concerns change and adaptation in the Yoruba traditional religion will no doubt reveal things that are basically Africans and those that are Europeans in the Yoruba Orisa worship system.

**Keywords:** Impact, Orisa worship, Christianity, change, adaptation.

## Introduction

Contrary to the popular and misleading postulation of many half-baked white Scholars that Africa is a religious, cultural or technological desert, Africans are notoriously religious (Fabarebo, 2014). Religion constitutes the bedrock for all human endeavours. African traditional religion otherwise known as Orisa worship in Yorubaland is the indigenous African religion. Although, it has no clear doctrines or written documents comparable to the extraneous religions of Islam and Christianity until recently, yet, it breathes life to the totality of the African person. Africans, more than any other race in the world are keenly conscious of the supernatural, the cosmic awareness, the inter-penetration, intermingling of spirits as they dovetail into the physical realm at will. African cosmology therefore is like spider's web where all beings both spiritual and human are linked together by a network of relationships and impinge on one another (Ikenga, 1991).

In spite of the absence of missionaries, Traditional Religion commands large followership. This is because, people are born into it and the family as well as the society serves as the agent for transmitting its tenets from generation to generation. This is inherent in the Yoruba adage that, "Orisa ta o ba fihan omo, yoo parun ni" (a deity that is not shown to children shall go into extinction). Thus, there is no atheist or unbeliever in African traditional society. As a matter of fact, an individual personally is defined within the community. This is well encapsulated in Mbiti's statement, "I am because we are", which implies a corporate solidarity (Mbiti, 1979). This is what Akinjogbin calls "Ebi" (common wealth) (Akinjogbin, 2002). The religion is not for individuals, but for the community at large. Chapters of African Religion are written everywhere in the life of the community. To be human is to belong to the community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, practices and rituals of the

community. Individual morality is subsumed in the community morality, respect, justice, truth, sincerity etc.

For example, Yoruba cultural education as contained in the Yoruba world view teaches that the world is chaotic. This is because, Yoruba supernatural world is made up of two opposing spiritual forces. Broadly, Yoruba world is divided into two; natural and supernatural. The natural world comprises man, animal and plant, while the supernatural world is divided into gods and anti-gods. The gods who include Ifa, Osun, Oya, Ogun, Sango among others are four hundred in number. They are usually referred to in Ifa literary corpus as *Irinwo mole ojukotun* (four hundred primordial gods of the right). The anti-gods who include *Iku, Arun, Ofo, Egba, Ese* among other are two hundred in numbers and are usually referred to as *Igba mole ojukosi* (two hundred primordial spirit of the left). They are irredeemably malevolent. Since their preoccupation is to wage war against man and gods, they are known as the *Ajoguns* (Warriors). While *Aje* (witches) are in alliances with the *Ajogun, Esu* combines the attributes of the benevolence and the malevolent forces (Ajayi and Ojo, 2009).

In this world view, man is therefore expected to offer sacrifices to both forces in order to survive. He needs to offer sacrifices to the benevolence forces so as to continue enjoying their supports and blessings. He also needs to offer sacrifice to the malevolent forces and their allies so that they might not oppose him whenever an important project is to be carried out. Above all, he needs to offer continuous sacrifice of good character which is much cherished in the Yoruba societies (Abimbola, 1975).

### **Historical Assessment**

Orisa worship is as old as the Yoruba societies themselves. Evidence of this abounds in Ifa literary corpus which is the popularly known records of the past. This debunked the ethnocentric idea of the early European scholars that African cannot conceive of God and by that fact, they are atheist (Fabarebo, 2014). The reason for this is not farfetched, various efforts they made at laying hands on written records that are comparable with the Bible and Quran prove abortive. To them, absence of written records means no history and hence atheism. Thus, they have equated written records with history. They totally disagree with the African idea of considering oral tradition as a source of history (Ajayi and Olupayimo, 2014).

Right from the onset, African Traditional Religion that is being tagged Orisa worship in this context, is highly dynamic. For instance, new deities were being added as time went on and orisa continued to increase at a geometrical ratio as each local heroes became deified (Ilesanmi, 1991). The increment in the number of the Yoruba orisas is also in reference in Oba Laoye 1, Timi of Ede's comment, when he said, "The Yoruba deify their heroes and great men and refer to them as Orisa" (Ilesanmi, 1991). However, encounter with western civilization has culminated into changes in their nature and modes of worship. Adaptation had been its responses in most cases, such that, it has succeeded in adapting to the various conditions engendered by modernity and its various agents of changes. By adaptation we mean its ability to continue to exist in the face of the onslaught of the extraneous religions, first with Islam and later with Christianity (Ajayi, 2014). African Traditional Religion was therefore grafted into the new environment provided by colonialism and its characteristic spirituality that was totally opposing to African Traditional Religion.

The implication of the foregoing is that, the form which the African Traditional Religion has assumed in the recent years has made observers to think that, it is in its original form, whereas, its originality has gone into oblivion long time ago (Falola, 2000). The present form is its modern form which is a total deviation from the long lost ancient original form. This has not been examined by scholars in spite of the very many studies on the African Traditional Religion.

The study focuses on Ejigbo Local Government in Osun State of Nigeria. This is not unconnected with the dynamism exhibited by orisa worship in the local government,

particularly in important Ejigbo towns like: Ola, Masifa, Isundunrin, Ife-odan, Isoko, Ika and Ejigbo metropolis. Over the years, it has been observed that traditional religionists in these towns worship in like manner as their Christian counterparts.

The above is not to say that the dynamism exhibited by traditional religion is peculiar to Ejigbo, as noticeable changes abound in the worship of the traditional religionists in Oyo, Ibadan, Osogbo, Iwo, Ile-Ogbo, Kuta and a host of other Yoruba towns, but the choice of Ejigbo local Government that is representative of the entire Yorubaland in this study would enhance the conduct of an in-depth research. As a matter of fact, all the changes and influences being studied are present in the areas so chosen.

The study adopted historical approach, which depends on written, oral and archival sources. The narrative and descriptive methods for effective and thorough analysis of phenomena such as colonialism, Christianity and traditional religion are also utilized. An examination of African Traditional Religion in Yorubaland, particularly in Ejigbo Local Government, was made with a view to identifying the changes that it had witnessed over the years. The areas of possible adaptation of the African Traditional Religion to Christianity or the latter's adaptation to the former were also explored. The importance of this enquiry lies in the fact that, the idea of mistaken the Yoruba religious culture for those of the European and vice versa would be corrected.

In fact, different aspects of the religious culture of the Yoruba people were identified with a view to determining their origin, areas of their change and adaptation in the contemporary period. These include congregational worship, annual harvest, choir system and the use of musical systems, scriptural and sermon message among others.

Oral interviews were conducted with purposively selected key informants from the selected towns of the Ejigbo Local Government. This is in a view to getting firsthand information about the influence of Christianity on Orisa worship in Yorubaland.

Under secondary sources, books that have generally analysed the Yoruba Traditional Religion and Christianity were consulted. Books written on other Yoruba institutions that are related to Orisa worship were also utilized. This enabled the researcher to have a broad view of the concept of change and adaptation in relation to African Traditional Religion and other institutions that are performing supportive functions in the preservation of the different aspect of the Yoruba Traditional Religion. All these helped the researcher in no small measure in studying the influence of Christianity on Orisa worship in Ejigbo Local Government and Yorubaland in general.

This study aimed at extending the frontiers of knowledge in African Traditional Religion by focusing on changes engendered by the advent of Christianity in Yorubaland. This in another way is the study of the trends in the development of African Traditional Religion with particular reference to the period of the advent of Christianity in Yorubaland. The study is an important addition to the religious historical study of the Yoruba people. It would contribute in no small measure to a proper understanding of the trend in African Traditional Religion over the years. This study was limited to Ejigbo Local Government, particularly in towns where Orisa worship is still prominent. The towns include Ejigbo, Isundunrin, Masifa, Ola, Isoko, Ika and Ife-odan.

Furthermore, existing literature have argued that dynamism of African Traditional Religion has been destroyed by Islam and Christianity. These authors are of the opinion that, African Traditional Religion in the contemporary time, lack the vestiges of indigenous African practices due to overwhelming influence of colonialism and its characteristic Christianity. As a matter of fact, Ejigbo Local Government is one of those places, where certain ancient religious practices that are indigenous to Africans, particularly the Yoruba people remain. In fact, these religious practices have been further strengthened by the

discriminating attitude (holier than thou attitude) of the Christians in relation to the practitioners.

In the final analysis, influence of Christianity has been mentioned in passing in some existing literature, adequate attention which this aspect of the Yoruba culture deserves in the discussion of the onslaught of colonialism on Africa has not been accorded it. In addition, while some aspects of the influence of Christianity have been dealt with, the focus has always been on urban centres like Ibadan, Lagos, Ijebu, Egbaland and some other parts of Yorubaland. Such discussions about the remote parts of Yorubaland like Ejigbo and its environs are nonexistent.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Change**

The following concepts need to be clarified, because, they form the framework for the examination of impact of Christianity on Orisa worship. As a matter of fact, certain aspects of Christian worship were grafted into Orisa worship in Ejigbo Local Government, ditto for other parts of Yorubaland. Also, a substantial aspects of the worship experienced changes. The concepts therefore need to be clarified.

Change is the process of becoming different (Afigbo, 1980). This can be explained as ceasing from being in one state or condition or form. It also means conversion or transformation. Change is a feature that applies to almost everything, be it natural or manmade, and it is as old as the period of creation of the world. This fact alone makes it deserving of its description as the essence of history (Ade-Ajayi, 1988). All facets of human life experience changes, thus we can have, political, social, economic and more importantly religious change as applicable to Yorubaland in the period under study.

Moreover, a change can be negative, if it has an adverse effect on people, or positive if its effect is good. Emanating from this is the fact that change can be desired if people are interested in it, and resented if it is seen as inimical to their well-being. Worthy of mention here was the change imposed on Africa by colonialism, that of the loss of sovereignty, which the people resented vehemently (Afigbo, 1980). While commenting on the issue of change, R.A. Olaniyan said:

*History is about change, and change is the stuff of history. In other words, changes that affect our world, our society, can also modify our conception of history itself in order for history to be current and relevant (Olaniyan, 1990).*

Equally, the comments of Oloruntimehin (1976) are in line with the intention of this study when he remarked that, “the task of the historian is to study and interpret the changes embodied in society and explain the reasons for them” (Oloruntimehin, 1976). Thus, as much as possible, this work studied and interpreted the changes in the African Traditional Religion in the period of our concern and explains the reasons for them.

#### **Adaptation**

Adaptation is the evolutionary process through which a population becomes better suited to its habitat. This process takes place over many generations and is one of the basic phenomena of history (Patterson, 1999). Adaptation may also refer to a feature, which is especially important for an organism to survive (King, Standfield and Mulligan, 2006). For example, adaptation of the Yoruba traditional religious practices to the colonialism and its characteristic religious wing implies the process by which the Yoruba religious practices were made to suit the conditions and situations that characterised the colonial era. In other words, it implies the continuity of Yoruba traditional religious practices in an adapted form. Hence, adaptation helps organisms to survive as many Yoruba traditional religious practices survived the onslaught of the corrosive European culture.

This issue of adaptation shows that, Yoruba traditional religious practices are so flexible, which is an important feature that helps them to fit into the new religious system brought by the Europeans. However, flexibility which is embedded in adaptation is the ability of a particular organism to maintain itself in different conditions rather than going into complete extinction (Ajayi, 2014). This is because, if a particular organism cannot move or change sufficiently to preserve its long-term viability, then obviously, it will become extinct (Ajayi, 2014).

Therefore, the fact that Yoruba traditional religion adapted to different conditions, especially Christianity as demonstrated in this study, shows that it is a flexible religion. This refutes the various European descriptions of African religion as static, unchanging, backward, subsistent and inflexible. In fact, as stated *inter alia*, this issue of adaptation further proves that African cultures have not responded to Christianity through extinction, but through adaptation and continuity with remarkable resilience.

### **Worldview Basis of Orisa Worship**

As in other parts of Yorubaland, Orisa worship in Ejigbo is premised on Yoruba worldview (Ajayi and Ojo, 2009). According to the Yoruba cosmology, the world was created by a Supreme Being, called Olodumare in which all Yoruba people believe. It is rare if not impossible to come across a Yoruba who will doubt the existence of this Supreme Being or claim to be an atheist. If there is anyone like that, further investigation will no doubt reveal that he has been exposed to non-African cultural influences (Aransi, 2011). In other words, an average Yoruba man has a belief in the existence of a self-existent being who is believed to be responsible for the creation and maintenance of heaven and earth, of men and women and who also has brought into being, divinities and spirits who are believed to be His functionaries in the theocratic world as well as intermediaries between mankind and the self-existing being (Ajayi, 2007).

### **Orisa Worship in the Pre-Colonial Ejigbo**

Orisa worship is as old as man himself. As a matter of fact, adherents and custodians of various deities inherited them from their great grandfathers. Also, there are many adherents that were chosen by one deity or another as revealed by Ifa divination (Oyasogo, 2018). Right from the earliest time, different votaries, custodians and adherents of different deities offered sacrifices daily, weekly, fortnightly and individually, as the case may be. Adherents of other deities joined their fellow traditional religionists on special occasions, such as annual festivals and when certain prescribed sacrifices have to be made to a deity for their group (cult), a family or the entire village or town. The foregoing indicates that, from the time immemorial, individualistic worship prevailed among the Traditional Religionists in the pre-colonial Ejigbo as in other parts of Yorubaland. And when worshippers have to gather, usually on weekly bases, it has to be worshippers of the same deity usually known as “cult”. This means that, there is no Orisa worship that does not have cult (Awo). For example, there are Obatala cult, Ifa cult, Osun cult, Sango cult, Oro cult, Ogun cult and many other unpopular cults in the present Ejigbo Local Government (Oyasogo, 2018).

As mentioned *inter alia*, pre-colonial worship on individual and deity bases did not mean absence of cooperation among the Traditional Religionists. Occasions that call for their gathering included deity festivals, village or town festivals, and some other special occasions. In other words, they cooperated at both levels of intra and inter-deity levels. All through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Traditional Religionists saw no need for a generalized weekly worship in the form of the modern day cathedral worship of the Christians. This is because, Islam which had arrived earlier had few adherents and had little or nothing to copy in this regards. In addition, many adherents of Islam were also members of

the Orisa worshippers, this is sequel to the fact that Islam tolerated some Yoruba cultural practices which Christianity preached against. For example, Islam got to Ejigbo in 1820 and the building of Central Mosque had to wait till 1892 (Babatunde, 2005).

### **Christianity in Ejigbo**

Although, available records established it that Christianity had arrived Ejigbo in the last decade of the nineteenth century, precisely, in 1892, its presence was limited to Ejigbo township (Babatunde, 2005). Other important towns in Ejigbo had to wait till the second decade of the twentieth century. And when it got to towns like Isundunrin, Masifa, Ola, Isoko, Ife-Odan and other important towns in Ejigbo Local Government, it faced a trying situation in which traditional religionists in collaboration with their Moslem counterpart had to fight it with all their might. This was the case in 1926, when traditional religionists in Isundunrin appealed to the messenger of Olubadan who was in the town to collect tribute, to help them demolish the newly built Baptist Church with a falsified message of the Olubadan (Gbenro, 1986). This is because, they felt that the newly built church constituted a threat to the survival of their own religion in the town. Eventually, the church was demolished and the messenger did not wait to face the consequence, having fled the town the following morning (Gbenro, 1986).

However, Baptist denomination of Christianity on arriving in Ejigbo in 1892 got spread to different other towns in Ejigbo Local Government with the exception of Ife-Odan where Anglican denomination entered through Oyo because of the closeness of the duo. As Baptist entered Ejigbo and its environ through Ogbomoso, Anglican and Catholic mission entered Ife-Odan. This is an indication of the fact that Oyo wielded much influence on Ife-Odan in spite of its being a part of Ejigbo Local Government. The advent of the Baptist mission in Ejigbo and its environ was credited to the mission field opened by Rev. T.J. Bowen in Ogbomoso in 1855 (Church History Committee, 2002). After His return to Ijaye where he continued his missionary work, Rev. Bowen sent Rev. Clarke to continue the missionary work in Ogbomoso area. It was Clarke's missionary extensive tours of Ogbomoso, Ejigbo, Ede, Iwo and Osogbo that was responsible for the spread of the Baptist mission in the area that became known as Osun area (Church History Committee, 2002).

### **Influence of Christianity on Orisa Worship**

As envisaged, Christianity had a great influence on African Traditional Religion in its entirety. Unlike Islam, which tolerated certain aspects of African culture, Christianity was an important agent of change during the colonial period. Right from the onset, family members and relatives within villages and towns were set against one another because of conversion and the contents of the Christians' preaching. The reason for this is not far-fetched, conversion to Christianity and enlightenment in Christian preaching liberated the people from believing in taboos and unnecessary fear that the indigenous religion stood for (Gbenro, 1986). For instance, while giving the account of his missionary journey through Yorubaland, Gollmer explained how he visited the small town of Eruwa in 1877 during a cattle epidemic.

An Ifa priest offered to consult Ifa and sacrifice a kid. This was seriously and earnestly done. When he was done we begged permission to teach them a better way, a short and practical lesson or ordinary laws of health. They should clear up the filth in the town. Then from cleanliness to godliness, from sacrifice of blood to an imaginary deity, we spoke of sin as done against God and the great sacrifice (Peel, 1990).

More importantly, people's patronage of Ifa priests and votaries of other deities for assistance reduced drastically. This implies that source of affluence of the traditional priests

was curtailed as income ceased flowing in as before. People no longer gave money to masquerades and the number of houses masquerade visit during their seasons got reduced drastically. Sacrifices were replaced by prayers in the churches. Improved health facilities that the missionaries added to their works really reduced the importance of the herbalists and Ifa priests whose divination was of no need (Gbenro, 1986).

The reactions of the traditional religionists were negative and this proved counterproductive for them. Many of them withheld their children from going to school so as to guard against their conversion to Christianity. Instead, they were involved in farming and some learnt one trade or another. These reactions place them far behind their Christian and Moslem counterparts in the areas of development. For example, by the time Western education was paying off for the Christians and some Moslems who cared, in good jobs and better placement in the field of politics, traditional religionists were kept at the lowest level of the societal hierarchy (Gbenro, 2018). By the time they woke up at the latter part of the twentieth century, their children were converting massively as they were acquiring western education. Thus, what they feared eventually caught up with them.

In addition, their negative reaction also made them to rely on the limited power of human memory in keeping records pertaining to their tradition. For example, Ifa literary corpus is just recently being documented and a substantial number of it are still being committed to human memory by the Ifa priests and their apprentices (Ojo, 2018).

The more far-reaching effect of Christianity on Orisa worship in Ejigbo Local Government is the change in the mode of worship as opposed to the dietary cults and worship among the votaries of various deities. In the first instance, cathedral worship (Ile Ijuba) became the order of the day among the traditional religionists. This is noticeable particularly in Ejigbo, Isundunrin, Masifa, Ola, Isoko, and Ife-Odan (Ilesanmi, 1991). Traditional religionists now worship in temples that are not different from churches. Inside the temples are arrangements that are not different from the church platforms, pulpit, choir seats, elders' corner, priests' wives' seats and audience seats. This is what Thomas Mekanjuola described as, "shrines giving way to ecclesia structures as opposed to the ancient approach of placing emphasis on individual Orisa and seeing each as a local communal unifying factor" (cult system). This according to him makes Orisa adherents to get initiated into all the Orisas together, but they may later patronize the one that best suits their desire (Ilesanmi, 1991).

In such initiation, Ifa priests play prominent roles. This is inherent in the name they adopted, "Ijo Orunmila Adulawo Ifakowapo" interpreted in various ways by Peel as, a modernized Ifa indigenous church, Ile Ijuba or traditional but adapted worship houses. Shrine worship has also changed to ecclesia structure among the Ijebu people where African congregations of Orunmila devotees became the umbrella organization for all traditional worshippers including herbalists (onisegun), diviners (Babalawo), masqueraders (elegun), worshippers of water deities (Osun and Olokun) and all others believe and accept Ifa as the mouthpiece of Orunmila (Omotayo, 2020). Thus Ifa assumes a hegemonic position over and above all other cults by so doing (Peel, 1990). It should be noted here that ecclesia worship among the traditional religionists is not a common place in all Yoruba towns. Areas where they exist apart from Ejigbo include Lagos, some Ijebu towns, Ibadan, Oyo, Oke-Ogun, Ondo town, Iwo, Ede, Ile-Ife and Osogbo.

On Saturdays, which is the meeting or worship or holy day, they converge, sing praises to Ifa and other deities. At times, adherents of different deities will render praise songs and poems to their deities in turns. Ifa verses are recited and lessons were drawn to teach worshippers good moral lessons. From around 1980, the use of books of service, published liturgical holy books was adopted. This books contains some lessons that were derived from some Ifa literary corpus. After this, the choir renders songs and worshippers dance, contribute offerings which they use for the upkeep of the temple. It is important to

note here that; Saturday meeting or worship is not limited to the adherents of Ifa alone. In all the towns mentioned above, all the traditional religionists who include adherents of the different deities attend the Saturday service in the temple (the temple is known in another name as Ile-Ifa) (Peel, 1990).

The presence of a good number of traditional religionists in Masifa and Ola has made the temples in these towns to be increased to two, each with capacity of about 400 to 500 seats. Those of Isundunrin, Ife-Odan, Isoko and Ejigbo are smaller, they contain not more than a hundred seats each. In all these towns, number of worshippers increase only through marriage and high child birth rather than by conversion as in the case of Christianity. In all the towns where there is no temple, worshippers who are usually scattered around the towns and many of them combine Orisa worship with Islam or Christianity unlike in the towns where temple worship exist (Ojo, 2018).

However, in the towns with temple worship, cooperation is enhanced among the adherents of different deities. Such that it will be difficult to differentiate between Ifa, Eegun, Obatala, Oro, Oya, Ogun adherents among other traditional worshipers especially during the festivals of the different deities. They now do everything in unity. In the temples are women society (Apetebi- wives of the Ifa priests), men society and the youth society for unmarried boys and girls. There are royal squared, offering collectors and ushers. Youths are strictly monitored in order to guard against marrying outside their religion and thereby causing loss or reduction in their folk (Ojo, 2018).

At their functions, such as burial, naming and child dedication, holy books of service are read and sermon preached in addition to recitation of Ifa literary corpus (Ogundeji, 2018). In all the towns where the temple worship exists, congregational worship therefore makes Ifa to be more important among all the other Yoruba deities. This may be due to the fact that, Ifa serves as a rallying force or meeting point of all the deities. There is no such deity that has no connection with Ifa. On many occasions, peoples' consultation with Ifa always results in sacrifices to many of the deities. Ifa is the most organized, its priests are more knowledgeable and very versatile (Ojo, 2018).

Worship of Ogun cut across traditional and extraneous religions, this is because of its attachment to the hunting profession, such that, among the hunters are Christians and Moslems. As a matter of fact, Ogun festival involves the trio of Christians, Moslems and traditional religionists who are hunters. This is also the case in other parts of Yorubaland (Ojo, 2018).

Even, at the annual Oke-Itase Ifa festival, adherents of other deities also attend. This annual Ifa anniversary at Oke-Itase Ile-Ife is usually done in the form of the Moslems' annual Hajj and Christians' Jerusalem visitation. All these, especially congregational worship, with all its features were all adopted from Christianity. The areas that have not been adopted are evangelism, revival and crusade. And since increment among their folk has only been through marriage and birth, polygamy is highly encouraged. And through this, many children are being born into the traditional religionist folk (Ojo, 2018).





**Fig. 1:** This is the temple of the orisa worshippers in Isundunrin. It is known to the traditional religionists as “Ile Ijuba” (house of reference), or Ile Ifa (Ifa temple) but this does not mean that it is meant for Ifa adherents alone as adherents of other deities equally congregate with Ifa worshippers. Thus, the title, “Ile Ijuba” is more appropriate.



**Fig. 2: This is the temple of IjoOrunmila No. 1 Masifa. This first temple gave birth to a new one because of population explosion.**



**Fig. 3: This is the second temple of the traditional religionists in Masifa town. It came into being as a sequel to the increasing number of the worshippers.**



**Fig. 4: This is the inner view of the second temple of the traditional religionists in Masifa town.**



**Fig. 5: This is the worship center of Isoko traditional religionists.**



**Fig.6: This temple in Ika town is now being used by the traditional religionists in Ika and Ejigbo. This is because, the temple in Ejigbo has fallen.**



**Fig. 7: This is the first temple of Ola traditional religionists. It is known as Ola No. 1. It also gave birth to another one sequel to population explosion in the first one.**



**Fig. 8: This temple is known as Ola No. 2. It is the second temple of the orisa worshippers.**





**Fig.9: This is the inner view of Ola No. 2.**



**Fig. 10: Ife-Odan temple of the Traditional Religionists.**

### **Conclusion**

Before the advent of Christianity, active Orisa worshippers have always been very few. Although, the generality of the people believed in the deities, majority of the people were not active worshipper. The non-active populace was the first to fall prey of the voracious Islam and Christianity. However, among the two extraneous religions in Ejigbo Local Government, Christianity wielded much influence than Islam (Olupayimo, 2008).

Even, in towns like Masifa, and Ola, where there are large numbers of adherent, the trend of Orisa worship ever since the advent of Christianity has been retrogressive. An inverse relationship has therefore been observed between Christianity and Orisa worship.

However, if Christianity could have so much influence as it had before now, various areas of adaptation to Christianity need to be explored with a view to further affect the African indigenous religion. If Christians could be more observant, modern day hard core of African Traditional Religion in Masifa and Ola could be penetrated for more possible positive influence.

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### Oral Interviews

Names	Age	Occupation/Title	Address	Date
Mr. Ifakayode Oyasogo	43	Ifa Priest	Alagbaa's Compound Ife-Odan	25/10/2018
Pa. Yemi Gbenro	96	Farmer/an Elder in the church	Alayan's Compound Isundunrin	06/11/2018
Mr. Ifawole Ojo	53	Lecturer, Adeyemi College, Ondo	Oba's Compound, Ola	04/11/2018
Mr. OjoAwo Ogundeji	41	Driver/an Ifa adherent	Agbena's compound Isundunrin	08/11/2018
Rev. Babatunde Afolabi	46	Pastor	Alayan's Compound, Isundunrin	07/11/2018

**Archival Source**  
Annual Reports, 1894