

Drawing a Line in the Sand: British Response to the Emergence and Activities of Indigenous Prophets in Colonial Yorubaland, 1918 – 1951

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Abstract

This study examines the emergence, activities, and some manifestations of indigenous prophets among the Yoruba of south-west Nigeria and how the British colonial administration responded to them. The Yoruba of south-west Nigeria believed in prophets because too many of them, prophets possess the power to heal, deliver people from evil forces, prophesy and deliver God's and ancestral messages to the people. The study relies upon archival sources, extant literature, and oral testimonies on the subject. The study states that there were some differences as a result of religious beliefs that existed between the British colonial administration and the emerging indigenous prophets which made the former to attempt to control the latter. In the end, what was regarded as the excesses of the indigenous prophets which the colonial administration tried to check did not result in the complete subjugation of the former.

Keywords: Prophets, Miracles, Colonialism, Yorubaland, Healing Water, Fanatics, Ayo Babalola

Introduction

The Yoruba have always believed in prophets and prophecies. This belief is exhibited in a saying, 'Ogun asotele, ki n pa aro' - a paralyzed person is never ensnared by a pre-announced war. Some Yoruba towns were homes to popular individuals who provided expert advice on traditional medicine. They were also involved in diagnosis through divinations.¹ In pre-colonial Yorubaland, the 'Babalawo' and 'Ifa' priest acted as prophets. The Babalawo was akin to a prophetic voice of the 'Orunmila' god, one of the primordial divinities in the Yoruba religion.² It was common in those days to consult 'Orunmila', the oracle god, before beginning any major undertaking, such as betrothal, marriage, naming ceremony, selection of kings or chiefs, journey embarkation, etc.³ For example, Ola Rotimi's fictional *The gods are not to blame*, depicts how the Yoruba consult the oracles in order to foresee what becomes of a newborn when he/she grows up.⁴ This act is known as *akosejaiye*.

During the pre-colonial period, most of the professions had guilds that regulated their activities. It is on such basis that oaths were taken to

ensure that reprobates were promptly dealt with in unison.⁵ The healers (called *Adahunse/Onisegun*) continued with their trade of treating patients with all types of diseases. These treatments were highly inculcated in African traditional beliefs,⁶ and they were regarded as the first line of defence against diseases among a great proportion of the people. With the advent of Christianity and the commencement of activities of early Christian missionaries, these traditional practitioners began to be questioned and soon became very critical of the newcomers. Some indigenous converts and practitioners could not get along with the doctrines of the early Christian missionaries, and so, they left the mission voluntarily or were compelled to leave immediately. This development paved way for the second sect of Pentecostalism or Christianity known as the Faith healing or African Instituted Churches (AICs).

This set of Christians in the second phase of Christianity comprised the *Aladura* or African Independent Churches. These churches or societies were indigenous and founded by Nigerians. Scholars have given the characteristics of the *Aladura* or AICs as a combination of the two fundamental elements of Christianity and African culture in a way that advertised their Christian faith without undermining their African credentials.⁷ They further held that the *Aladura* shared some features, which are relevant and valued by the African people, such as prophecy, healing, prayer, vision, dream and the use of sacred objects.⁸ Aside from their beliefs, the society and its leaders or prophets embarked on different strategies to convert new entrants as well as to enlarge their horizon. These ambitious strategies conflicted with that of the British Colonial Administration, who found loopholes in their ideals and activities.⁹

Against this background, this study examines the activities of the prophets who headed these new Pentecostal churches and its African instituted counterparts as well as how the British colonial administration responded to their activities. The methodology of the study is through a critical historical analysis of archival sources, oral testimonies, and extant literature. This becomes necessary because adequate research has not been conducted to examine how the British colonial government responded to the activities and at times the excesses of some of the self-acclaimed prophets. Our study focuses on the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Movement and the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC).

Emergence of the Indigenous Christian Prophets

During the colonial period, Christian prophets who had either broken away from the missionary churches or were expelled by the Mission churches, or those who independently proclaimed their calling and inspirations from God began to emerge.¹⁰ Although some of the earlier professions such as the healers and miracle workers, *onidan*, were still practising, the new prophets, i.e., 'Christian Prophets'¹¹ were gaining more popularity. Apart

from spreading their doctrines through evangelism and crusades, these emerging prophets also claimed to perform healings and miracle works. One of the ways by which they also attracted crowds was through revivals and destruction of idols owned by indigenous people and, at times, opponents. For instance, a religious movement emerged in the neighbourhood of Opobo and one Gabriel Braid declared himself as the Prophet Elijah II.¹² The British Colonial Administration did not interfere in his practices until his followers took to wrecking the fetish idols of those who did not adhere to his propaganda, and this development ultimately degenerated into violence in the area and did not subside until government intervention became necessary.¹³

Such pronouncement and beliefs as noted above were quickly accepted by the people as it coincided with the period of the influenza epidemic in the Colony of Lagos and across other colonies. In September 1918, a devastating epidemic of influenza spread to Lagos from some parts of Europe.¹⁴ This caused the suspension and, in some districts, the total abandonment of all farm works. These circumstances naturally reduced food supply, and to an extent, were responsible for the subsequent reduced prices. Aside from the conditions arising from the First World War, the prices of local agricultural produce increased in a marked degree during the year.¹⁵ The Influenza persisted sporadically up till 1919. As a report puts it:

There were 216 cases with 14 deaths—a rate of mortality, viz., 6 percent slightly higher than that estimated in the 1918 epidemic. It was estimated that the mortality of last year's epidemic was about 5 percent. Only 5 cases were recorded among Europeans. There were no deaths among Europeans though influenza was the cause of invaliding of one official.¹⁶

The above shows that the epidemic led to more loss of lives in 1919 than the previous year. Indeed, the failure of the British medical machinery of the imperial establishment, coupled with the initial lack of understanding of the nature of the pandemic, slowed down the control of the pandemic.¹⁷

With these developments arising from social and economic factors as well as the political conditions in the country, many societies began to spring up claiming to have the power to solve the unmitigated challenges via spiritual means. For instance, an uninitiated leader in the Anglican Church in southwestern Nigeria, Joseph B. Sadare, formed a praying group, *Egbe Okuta Iyebiye* - Precious Stone Society within the church and that group eventually parted with the Anglican church because of disagreements over the praying band's sole reliance on faith healing rather than western medicine, its belief in visions and dreams, and its rejection of infant baptism.¹⁸ They came across the Philadelphia-based Faith Tabernacle, which they later associated themselves with and transformed into the

Diamond Society of Faith Tabernacle.¹⁹ However, they later separated from this group to form the Apostolic Church.

Subsequently, the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim was incorporated under the Companies Ordinance 1922 (Cap.138).²⁰ In addition, there was the Apostolic Church of *Aladura* by Joseph Babalola—though there were reports that despite Babalola's popularity in Ilesha, he hailed from Offa (Ilorin).²¹ He claimed to have the power of faith healing through water and paraded a lot of people, mostly women, aged, cripples, among others, who poured into Ilesha and left with bottles of holy water.²² However, men in the area regarded the whole thing as a nuisance that unsettled their women. The Assistant District Officer (ADO) had to even disguise to know more about the association. He noticed the crowd holding their water bottles high above their heads to be blessed by 'Prophet Joseph,' who uttered weird incantations, which purportedly made people receive healing.²³ A large crowd of people, not only from Ilesha but across all the surrounding towns and villages attended vigils organised regularly by the Apostolic Church. It was also observed that the crowds came with bottles of water, which after being blessed by Joseph Babalola, it was believed, morphed into water possessing marvellous healing qualities as a few remarkable cures were recorded.²⁴ Women were reported to mostly make up the crowd.²⁵ It was further revealed that the more work Babalola did, the more the people patronised and spread the news of his 'miracle-working water' to the extent that in three days, the numbers of the congregation and sick people attending his revivals increased significantly.²⁶ Hence, the popular song, '*Babalola Olomi Iye re ooo, Omi iye, Iye ree ooo, Omi Iye*,'²⁷— 'Babalola, the man with the healing water, healing water, this is healing from the healing water'.

Although the emergence of indigenous prophets and their churches during this period in Yorubaland alone was not considered a threat, rather, it was their activities and confrontations with African Traditional Religion or native religion that provoked the British Colonial Government. For instance, when the rumour that one prophet Idubor, the leader of Usanugegbe cult was about to be released from the Enugu Convict Prison, this caused a revival of the movement during July and August in Ekpoma District of the Ishan Division until it was handled firmly by the District Head and Enogie of Ekpoma.²⁸ The uproar subsided as rapidly as it arose. Little wonder, a scholar, B.L. Bergene observed that the epidemic may have created a vacuum for these prophets to permeate the indigenous people using Prophet Esa, from Wolaitta, Ethiopia and other East African colonies between 1920 and 1928 as examples.²⁹

Indigenous Prophets: Activities and Drawing a Line in the Sand

The Cherubim and Seraphim society was headed by one Miss Abiodun Emanuel and Moses Orimolade Tolase in the Lagos Colony. However, their

activities spread across Lagos and beyond in record time. The threat posed by the society began to manifest in the Okitipupa Division in April 1930 when some of its members destroyed pagan emblems and announced that all native laws were abolished in April 1930.³⁰ The violent disturbance which erupted ceased when the ringleaders were arrested and fined.³¹

In the Oyo Province, the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) in Ibadan hinted the Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police in Lagos on the activities of the society known as the Cherubim and Seraphim. Miss Abiodun was especially underpinned as the leader who introduced the Society into Oyo Province. Moses Tolase, though hardly known in person, was assumed to be their spiritual leader and head. The ACP, Ibadan further reported that Moses claimed to be gifted with special powers of healing the sick and soothing those that were spiritually traumatised. Also mentioned was one Obafemi, a Lagos based legal practitioner and a staunch believer in the creed of the Cherubim and Seraphim society.³² The members of the society believed in spiritualism and faith healing and their password was 'Arimro,' that is, the seer who hears from God or one of his angels.³³ Elisha Renne distinguished between dreams and visions, which he succinctly puts it thus:

Dreams and visions are largely distinguished by the context in which they take place—dreams occur during sleep, whereas visions may take place while awake or during trance. Trance (ni'nu' e'mi', literally "in the spirit") may refer to a conscious or an unconscious state. While in trance, a person is unable to control her or his body and may be unaware of her or his surroundings. In either case, the person may experience visions, which often involve one's spirit travelling to another realm. Having such spiritual powers is also indicative of the special qualities of those who experience them—for example, that one is a holy person.³⁴

At Ibadan, and in each of the branches, decrease in the number of membership of the society was experienced as a result of lack of confidence in the healing expectations, which failed to materialize when their kith and kin were affected.³⁵ As for Ilesha, it had around 500 worshippers which perhaps could be the largest from the society's meeting centres. The report gave a general assessment of the society as responsible citizens, but probably fanatical at times, which made them act in a hostile manner towards the fetish (*juju*), which they aggressively destroyed. The Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) promised to keep in touch with the Resident Officer should the activities of the sect change.³⁶

On 16th April 1931, the Senior Resident, Oyo Province requested to know from the District Officers (DOs) of Ife and Ibadan as well as the Assistant District Officers (ADOs) of Oshogbo and Ilesha, about the

activities of the society; he wanted to know if they got permission for their operation in the districts as they had apparently committed crimes in the Ijebu Province.³⁷ The Assistant District Officer, Oshogbo, observed that they worshipped nowhere except Ikirun, but had no sites or buildings in the districts and that the Chiefs disliked them intensely.³⁸ In another communiqué to the Senior Resident, the ADO, Oshogbo subsequently wrote that the ceremonies of the society seemed to be 'Bacchanalian rather than Christian with promiscuity in a sexual relationship as their main objectives; it frequently involved the procession of men and women around the town at night, singing and dancing while indulging in all forms of immorality.' He further stated that the *Akirun* - the *Oba* of Ikirun land sent for their leader, Jacob Ogundijo, who was warned that the activities of the society must stop.³⁹ It was only the District Officer, Ife Division that gave a clean note about the society when he reported that it was frequented by one Miss Abiodun.⁴⁰ The DO acknowledged that the society did not charge any fees for its services and was not regarded as a serious threat since there were no complaints against it. He said the Ilesha branch had ceased to exist while the application to commence work at Ibokun was refused by the Owa and Chiefs and *Oba* Ibokun.

However, due to the persistent reproach of the British colonial government against the C&S, especially concerning the expansion of their works at Ikirun, Igbajo, Eragbiji, Ibokun, Ororuwo, Ibala, Ipetu, Obagun, Iresi, Ekusa and Iba, the C&S society petitioned the District Officer and pleaded to be accorded the rights being enjoyed by other religious societies,⁴¹ especially the missionary churches. The District Officer, in a strongly worded response, averred that he would not interfere in the affairs of the Chiefs. He puts it thus, '...I may add that I am entirely in agreement with them in their desire to stop noisy and disorderly crowds parading around their towns at night.'⁴² With resolution far in place, the Senior Resident Oyo Province, W.A. Ross warned the Assistant District Officer, Oshogbo of the menace of the '*Aladura*' and the tendency of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society to disturb the peace, impair parental control and spread profligacy in all the homes as they were against Christianity and Mohammedanism, which they regard as enemies.⁴³ An excerpt of his letter reads:

The *Aladura* had used methods which cause strife and riots. The Cherubim and Seraphim are a troublesome people who have caused great trouble in the Ijebu Province and some trouble at Oshogbo and Ikirun. They are rascals who use their so-called religion for the enjoyment of promiscuous sexual licence against all native customs and good order and they are enemies to the *Obas* and parental control. They should be rooted out of the Province and dealt with severely if they do not stop their propaganda.⁴⁴

In fact, the *Alaafin*, as well as the Bales and Councils in the Province, were asked to drive them out of their districts as a result of their nefarious activities.⁴⁵ Similarly, for the *Aladura* Religious Movement, a confidential report was transmitted through a book of prophecies, '*Awon Asotele* by Woli J.O. Ositelu, which was considered dangerous because they were liable to cause unrest if preached.⁴⁶ It may appear like Ositelu shot himself in the leg by acknowledging that 'all the Churches will be scattered because they know nothing besides money',⁴⁷ and although this position may be viewed from different prisms, he also submitted in the book that 'Shagamu, Iperu, Ode and Kaajaa will all be destroyed'⁴⁸ and 'the doctors will be ashamed and confused saith the Lord; for there will be no healing power in their medicine.'⁴⁹ The question is if, indeed, the first prophecy manifested, what about the claims about the destruction of towns and the emasculation of medical doctors and western medicine? No doubt that this prophecy did not materialize as most of the indigenous people continued to crave for Western medicine in their respective regions.⁵⁰

Elsewhere in Akure, it was observed that there was trouble caused by Abigail, a Nupe girl and a follower of Babalola, who posed as a prophetess and claimed to be in direct communication with Jesus. She prophesied that tax would be 3/- per head.⁵¹ Such pronouncement no doubt would have caused some uproar, an increase in the cost of goods, hoardings and panic buying, which would have had a huge consequence on the colonial economy of the town. In fact, when Abigail was arrested at Owo, she stated that she would continue to preach when inspired even if her throat was cut.⁵²

It was also reported that Babalola had been visiting towns in the Ekiti and Owo Divisions where the local population believed that he had raised people from the dead and had been providing miraculous healings since October 1930. A colonial report described Babalola as a religious fanatic who preached about the Second Advent of Christ.⁵³ The report further held that he had a great personality and the orderly manner of the crowds he attracted was remarkable.⁵⁴ One of the reasons for this was the belief by his followers and some members of the public that he could heal the sick and raise the dead.⁵⁵ A report puts it thus:

These went and spread the news of their healing, and within three days there were about 200 sick people rushing to this brother for healing, and so the meetings grew stronger and stringer until there was about 2,000 people three weeks after the meetings started. About 100 lepers cleansed, about 60 blind people received sight, over 50 lame and crippled walked to the surprise of the towns' people.⁵⁶

Veritably, it was reported that about 300 patients who heard about Babalola at the Wesleyan Hospital quickly abandoned orthodox medical care from the hospital and only about 10 remained there.⁵⁷ Consequently, the

European doctor in charge was enraged and therefore reported the case to the local authority. Interestingly, a confidential report on Joseph Babalola revealed that when he started his healing cult and ritual of blessing water, he charged no fees but later, he began to charge four pence (4d) for his curative powers as well as solicited voluntary gifts.⁵⁸ An investigation of a newspaper correspondent in London put it thus:

The obvious fact that the water contained large numbers of tadpoles and other species of small aquatic life did not appear to perturb him in the least....He announced in businesslike voice, which was guaranteed to cure all bodily ills, was the trifling sum of one shilling and two pence per bottle.⁵⁹

On the other hand, The C&S Society, through some of its members, also broke the peace of Ikirun by attacking one Adegboye.⁶⁰ Their activities were reported at the headquarters of the Southern Provinces, Enugu. Hence, the headquarters warned that any preacher who used abusive language to popularise its tenets should be tried by a court of competent jurisdiction and not just released on the mere provision of sureties.⁶¹

The C&S Society was also alleged and admonished for testing witchcraft for a fee, an accusation that was strongly condemned in its entirety by the Southern Province Headquarters.⁶² However, indigenous beliefs in witchcraft and attempts to eradicate it remained a source of a serious challenge to the British colonial administration. It was therefore not surprising that the administration, among other considerations, recommended that the treatment of an allegation of witchcraft practices, was not as a criminal offence (slander) but a case in which the accused should be given the opportunity to protest his innuendo on oath in a Native Court. Whether the oath was taken or not, the case was to be reported immediately to the District Officer, who would urge action by encouraging the bewitched to appeal to their elders for assistance and, at the same time, seek orthodox medical assistance.⁶³ It was further recommended that all cases of witchcraft murder should be treated on its merits, and failure to seek a remedy against bewitchment as in the earlier recommendations, and the bewitched was not encouraged to appeal to their elders for assistance, then, such could tend against a recommendation to mercy.⁶⁴ And in addressing witchcraft eradication itself, E.S. Pumbleton, Resident Officer, Benue Province opined that:

...any attempt to eradicate the belief in witchcraft within a few years or even a few generations, simply by harsh punishment is in my opinion bound to fail and in its failure is bound to affect adversely relations between the primitive peoples and the Administration. He furthered that remedy lied in the spread of Christianity under the guidance of

Missionaries spiritually and mentally qualified to preach it and in the general dissemination of modern scientific and particularly medical knowledge. But in the meantime, sympathetic, not harsh treatment is required.⁶⁵

The above shows that the only recommended institutions by the British Colonial Administration to tackle the menace of witchcraft accusations and beliefs were the Missionaries and the Native Courts. Despite these various avenues, the activities of the African Instituted Churches and its societies entirely continued to, allegedly, accuse some people of witchcraft. To a great extent, they continued to cause conflicts in the areas where they resided, and this situation led many people to frown and resist the idea of leasing their lands to members of society. Yet, the members of the society reacted to this untoward act by causing trouble and disturbing public peace. For instance, when one Alfred Agbo Jesu was denied land to establish a prayer ground in Oyo by some Baptist Members at Oyo, the situation led to a free for all fistcuff.⁶⁶ The Society in a letter addressed through the District Officer, Oyo Division to the Resident Oyo Province challenged how their missionary, Alfred Agbo-Jesu, was denied access to land after the chiefs had initially agreed but later had a change of mind.⁶⁷ As a result of these endless altercations, an undertaking was reached where the C&S Society promised never to take by force fetish arms such as *Igbadi* – a protective waistband and other harmful preparations, and not to violently tamper with people or their idols unless the owners voluntarily surrendered them or an order in-writing was given to them to do so. They were also told to stop the selling of foul-smelling incense and concentrated water. These efforts produced a calm atmosphere, which meant a total submission to colonial authority and an achievement of public peace.⁶⁸

Furthermore, the Society applied for permission from the Native Authority (NA) of *Akirun* and Chiefs to erect a 'Prayer House' at Oke-Amola, Ikirun on a plot of land given by one Chief Elemo.⁶⁹ At Ijabe, the C&S Society was also given a plot of land to erect a building by yet another NA, the *Onijabe* of Ijabe, but after about three years, there was a conflict which threatened the unity of the society. The splinter group wanted land for the new take-off of their group, having requested the *Onijabe* to grant them another piece of land after having received approval from the *Olokuku* and his council members.⁷⁰ Although this issue was subsequently resolved, the C&S movement was granted a place in the Forest Reserve to build a church at a lease with a fixed plan proposal. They, however, added some contours, which altered the plant reservation of the government, a move that was considered an affront and distortion of forest reserve arrangements. The Senior District Officer, Ibadan, then recommended that Government should not shift ground to suit the convenience of the holder of a temporary Occupation Licenses, but should rather have them relocated from the hill.⁷¹ The leader of the Society at Ibadan decried this stance as they believed it

would push them close to the plot of land allocated the Nupe people in the area. Thus, they further claimed that they were on the ground they acquired by divine instruction, and further declared that:

As it was the policy of this Organisation to pray for the welfare of the Country and the Government. At an outbreak of War, Plagues, Epidemic or famine, the Society makes it its special duty to assist to pray to God for its cessation... That on this SANCTUARY & elsewhere under the strainest condition this society prayed day and night under burning sun and rain for the period of 6 years for the Victory achieved against Germany.⁷²

The District Officer claimed it had met with them and discovered that the Society did not want to move because they had improved the ground by covering it with white sand, which they moved from the bottom of the hill.⁷³ The Senior Resident, Oyo Province, did not, however, subscribe to this view, although he allowed them to continue to use the praying ground and asked that they should be informed accordingly of his position.⁷⁴ Pre-empting the response of the Oyo Senior Residence and erroneously assuming that their wish would not be granted, the Society petitioned the Resident through some of its *Igbirra* members.⁷⁵ However, the District Officer in a memorandum to the Resident, Oyo Province, affirmed that the Society, New Eden branch, asked for a plot in the *Igbirra* Settlement for building a church but were refused since the area was originally proposed for a Hausa settlement.

Also, the Tapa and *Igbirra* settlements were earlier abandoned for lack of sufficient space. The Government ultimately rejected their request for space on grounds of deficient characteristics; the church was small, new and was believed to be a source of noisy meetings that were polluting the environment and which was harmful to other religious bodies.⁷⁶ The Resident affirmed and regretted that grossly inadequate settlements that were originally assigned for the purpose of erecting residential houses were being encroached and converted to the Society building,⁷⁷ and sadly, it was around the same time that another faith-healing church known as the Celestial Church of God surreptitiously emerged in September 1947.⁷⁸ The Head, C&S Movement in *Igbirra* and Mokola, Chief Lawani, also applied through the D.O., Lands, to build a church in one of the plots, 'Block 49' of the layout plan, but this time, the Senior Resident responded in the negative.⁷⁹

The Society at this juncture must have decided to obey the constituted British colonial authority. Hence, it applied for incorporation under the Land (Perpetual Succession) Ordinance through their trustees.⁸⁰ Consequent upon their conducts, that of their trustees and the generality of the society itself, the Senior District Officer acknowledged that all the Office-bearers of the Society were all respected members of the community

and had no cause to deny them recommendations.⁸¹ In addition, the Resident and Provincial Education Officer acknowledged the personality of the people,⁸² and the British colonial authority affirmed that there was nothing incriminating against the Society and was thus treated as such.⁸³ Thus at the end, the British colonial administration had to some extent worked fervently to reform the Yoruba society along the lines of British civilization, although the British civilization, so-called, was quite secondary a motive.⁸⁴ Hence, the British colonial administration had successfully drawn a line in the sand to checkmate the excesses of the erring indigenous prophets.

Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the entrant of a new set of Christianity known as the African Indigenous Churches (AICs), -a breakaway faction of the Missionaries, their activities or ways of propagating their fate as well as how the British colonial administration responded to these ways. We found among other things that it was not all the AICs, led by indigenous prophets that emerged because some of its members were not pleased with the doctrine of the European Missionary Churches. Some of them emerged in response to the prevailing socio-political and economic conditions of the colony during that period. For instance, the influenza epidemic, the World War I and its consequences, which led to food shortages, hunger, starvation and high cost of living, led to the emergence of some of the movements. Most indigenous people were also drawn to these new leaders as a result of the existing traditional beliefs that adversity and negative occurrences or inexplicable circumstances were caused by witchcraft practices, and ultimately, the devil (*esu*).

In order to propagate its activities, many of the members of the new churches aggressively pursued winning converts for themselves, especially among the African traditional believers. The adoption of the violent and coercive method of winning new converts coincided and conflicted with the British colonial goal of evangelising the entire continent and country as a whole, particularly the Yoruba society and making the indigenous people give up the unholy practise of human sacrifices, cannibalism, and the killing of twins among other practices. These were made possible through the British colonial partners---the Christian missionaries.

The missionaries therefore diligently worked on spreading its own version of the civilisation or Church as well as converting the African traditional believers, who were also eyed by the AICs. The objectives of the AICs then conflicted with the British colonial policies of not just imperializing the population but also educating them on some cultural and social beliefs, particularly on the issue of witchcraft, diseases and

illnesses, which the indigenous people and the AICs, most times, believed were spiritual without medical examinations and multiplicity of tests.

Moreover, the study found out that the AICs were also involved in some activities that depicted that they had no respect for constituted authority, the British as well as the feelings of other religions, particularly the African Traditional Religion. To arrest this situation, the British colonial administration took measure to check some of the activities of the AICs. These measures, which were parts of the ways of suppressing the colonial state, included arrests, the imposition of fines among others. The response of the colonial authorities was sometimes excessive, but in the end, it helped to maintain social order and at the same time did not result in the extermination of the AICs.

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- 17 D. Killingray, "A new 'imperial disease': The influenza epidemic of 1918—1919 and its impact on the British Empire" *Caribbean Quarterly*, 49 (2003): 30-49; J.M. Oluwasegun, "Managing Epidemic: The British Approach to 1918—1919 Influenza in Lagos" *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, (2015): 1-13.
- 18 J.D.Y. Peel. *Aladura: A Religious Movement*, 64-65; Adedamola Osinulu 2017. 'A transnational history of Pentecostalism, 5-10.
- 19 Allan Anderson *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press Inc., 2001), 80-82; M.A. Gaiya, "The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria," *Occasional Paper of the Center of Africa Studies*, University of Copenhagen 15-18 July, 2002), 5.
- 20 National Archives Ibadan [NAI hereafter]. Comcol I, 785. 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Eternal Sacred Order founded by Moses Tunolase, November 1925'.
- 21 *Ibid.* He was connected with the Faith Tabernacle organisation of Philadelphia, USA, with one J.A. Babatope as assistant.
- 22 NAI, Oyoprof I, 662, The Assistant District Officer, Ilesha to The District Officer, Ife, 13 August, 1930, 1
- 23 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 24 NAI Oyo prof. 662. Assistance District Officer, Ilesha to District Officer, Ife. 13 Aug 1930

- 25 *Ibid.* The Assistant District Officer Ilesha to the District Officer, Ife 13 Aug 1930, par 3, 1. He did not receive money as investigated by the Assistant District Officer, par 7
- 26 Interview with Seun Odumbo at CAC, Ijako-Amayo Sango Agbado Ijaiye 8 February 2017.
- 27 Interviews, Evangelist Segun Odumbo, at CAC, Ijako-Amayo Sango Agbado Ijaiye 8 February 2017. Members and followers of Ayo Babalola still sing this song.
- 28 Colonial Reports—Annual No 1528. Nigeria. Report for 1930. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1931) 8, par 40.
- 29 B.L. Bergene. "Prophets and prophecy as a response to crises: Prophet Esa in traditional religion of Wolaitta (1920-1928)," *African Journal of His. & Culture*. Vol. 8, 6 (2016): 52-59, DOI: 10.5897/AJHC2016.0339
- 30 Colonial Reports—Annual No 1528. Nigeria. Report for 1930. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Stores, 1931) 9, par 40
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 NAI, Oyoprof I. 661, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ibadan to Assistant Inspector General of Police, 30 August, 1930, 1.
- 33 *Ibid.* 2. The report also gave the places where it had been established as Ibadan, Ilesha, Ife, Apata, Oshogbo and Ede. The report however stated that Ilesha was their principal centre
- 34 Elisha P. Renne "Dressing in the Stuff of Dreams: Sacred Dress and Religious Authority in Southwestern Nigeria" *Dreaming*, 14, 2-3 (2004): 124.
- 35 NAI, Oyoprof I. 661, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ibadan to Assistant Inspector General of Police, 30 August, 1930, 3
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 He wanted to get information about them as well as suggested that the chiefs and people should discourage them. The District Officer Ibadan responded that they usually held meetings in members' houses but had not received permission to occupy any sites or buildings. He gave their leaders to be Messrs N.S Oke, Omowon and Eman Tailor, while the Bale and Council were keeping an eye on them. See NAI, Oyoprof I. 661. The District Officer Ibadan to The Hon Senior Resident Oyo Province, 28 April, 1931.
- 38 NAI, Oyoprof I. 661. Memorandum of the Assistant District Officer, Oshogbo to the Hon Senior Resident, Oyo Province, Oyo, 7 May 1931.
- 39 NAI, Oyoprof I. 661. Asst. District Officer, Oshogbo to the Hon Senior Resident, Oyo Province, Oyo. 27 May 1931.

- 40 NAI Oyoprof 661. District Officer Ife Division to the Hon., The Senior Resident Oyo Province, Oy. 26 May 1931.
- 41 It wrote that the Society was duly registered on 14 February 1930 under the Companies Ordinance 1922 Cap.138. See General Secretary for Moses Orimolade to District Officer 16 June 1931
- 42 R.L. V Wilkes, Asst., District Officer Oshogbo to writer, 20 June 1931. He advised the Organisation to send representatives to Ikirun to hear from the chiefs and other Christian bodies about the society's behaviour.
- 43 Similar memoranda were sent to Ife and Ibadan. See: Senior Resident, Oyo Province on tour at Ibadan to the Assistant District Officer Oshogbo. 14 August 1931; Senior Resident Oyo Province on tour at Ibadan to District Officer Ife, 14 August 1931; Senior Resident to the District Officer, Ibadan, 14 August, 1931.
- 44 Senior Resident Oyo to the District Officer Ife 14 August 1931.
- 45 Extract from Minutes of Judicial Council held on the 15th September, 1931
- 46 *Ibid.*, paras 6, 11, 12 51, 52, 53, 54, 76, 139, 140, 141, 149, 150
- 47 *Ibid.*, par. 19.
- 48 *Ibid.*, par. 51.
- 49 *Ibid.*, Par. 62.
- 50 National Archives Abeokuta. . ED. 427/1. The war had taken its effect on finances as well. See, Sec to sole administrator EODC to Division Officer, and Sole administrator Division Office. Abeokuta 20 Oct 1967. The Area comprises Erube, Ilogbo, Ijemo and Ijeun area in *Egba* Obafemi DC. The area has many villages such as Apena Erunbe, Sode, Ijemo Oke, Ijemo Odo, Balogun Oluwo, Sobande Sobujo, Lisa etc. See Letter of the entire Inhabitants of Erunbe, Ilogbo, Ijemo nd Ijeun c/o Mr T A. Fajobi, Sode Village to Divisional Officer and Sole Admin Divisional Office, Igbein Hall, Abeokuta. 15 July 1967.
- 51 NAI, Oyoprof I. 662. The Asst. Commissioner of Police, Oyo-Ondo Province, Ibadan to The Resident, Oyo, 1.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 Colonial Reports—Annual No 1528. Nigeria. Report for 1930. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1931) 9, par 44
- 54 *Ibid.*
- 55 Interview Pastor David Folowo, Head Pastor, CAC Irewamiwa, Isawo Ikorodu, 12 July 2018.
- 56 NAI COMCOL 1301. Pastor D.O Odubango to pastor D.P. Williams 4 May, 1931, 2 par 2

- 57 *Ibid* par 1
- 58 NAL Oyoprof 1, 662. The Resident, Ilorin Province to the Resident Oyo Province, 5 October 1931
- 59 *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 'Faith-Healing in Nigeria' Friday 8 January 1932, no page. [Attached in a memo from Assistant District Officer, Oshogbo to The Resident Oyo Province, Oyo. 29 January 1932 Oyoprof 1, 662.
- 60 Although the ten accused led by Ojo George were apprehended and they were fined 20/- each by the Native Court. See Asst. DO Oshogbo to the Resident, Oyo Province, Oyo, 28 January 1932.
- 61 NAL Oyoprof 1 662, AEF Murray, resident Oyo to the Hon., The Secretary Southern Provinces, Enugu. 12 February 1932, 1-2. The Secretary Southern Province responded that the Native Authority lacked the power to judge such cases; rather it should be heard by the Provincial court if breach of peace was established.
- 62 NAL, Oyoprof 1 662, Chief Secretary to the Government to the IGP 4 August 1932.
- 63 NAL, IjeProf 4, J.635. Resident, Benue Province Makurdi to the Secretary, Northern Provinces, Kaduna 13 December 1933, 2-3
- 64 *Ibid*.
- 65 *Ibid*, 4
- 66 The cause of the fisticuff was when Alfred tried to convert one Abraham Akiyemi who had deserted the Baptist Church, Oyo. He was asked to go to Abeokuta to start his Society of C&S. See NAL, Oyoprof 1 662, J.A. Ojaowo for President and Judges to the District Officer Oyo. 7 September, 1936
- 67 NAL, Oyoprof 1 662, C&S to Resident Oyo Province, Ibadan. 3 June, 1936, 1-2
- 68 Agreement to be signed before issue of identification Card.
- 69 NAL, Oyoprof 1 662, Orimolade and others to The Akirun & Chiefs, Ikirun, 12 January 1937.
- 70 The Assistant District Officer Ibadan supported the Onijabe not granting another land since the petitioners had an unused chapel. See, NAL, Oyoprof 1 662, Asst. District Officer to The Resident, Oyo Province, Oyo, 13 August, 1942.
- 71 See Senior District Officer, Ibadan to The Resident, Oyo Province, Oyo. 17 October 1946. It should be noted that this is one reason people do not want to lease Churches premises as they work hard to take over.

- 72 Leader, Sacred Cherubim & Seraphim Missionary Society, Ibadan to The Resident Oyo Province, District Officer Ibadan, and Olubadan & Council. 12 October 1946.
- 73 Senior District Officer, Ibadan Division to the Honourable, The Senior Resident, Oyo Province, 6 December 1946
- 74 Senior Resident Oyo Province to The Senior DO, Ibadan 23 December 1946
- 75 Their grievance was that other religious bodies as the Anglican, CMS or Methodists were given exclusive use of land in the area, so there was no reason to deny the society which had over 1000 members in the town. Letter from The C&S Society New Eden to the Resident, Oyo Province. 30 May 1947, 1-2
- 76 District Officer Ibadan Division to Resident Oyo, 19 June 1947
- 77 Ag. Resident Oyo Province to the Society, New Eden 2 July 1947
- 78 Afe U. Adogame. *Celestial Identity in a West African Prophetic-Charismatic Movement*. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 7-15.
- 79 Senior Resident, Oyo Province to Chief Lawani, 10 August, 1948.
- 80 Memo from the Commissioner of Lands to the Resident, Oyo Province, Oyo. 8 November 1950
- 81 District Officer, Ibadan Division to The Resident Oyo Province Oyo, 29 November 1950
- 82 They are Joseph Ojo Fawole, Daniel Abiola Jacobs, David Aiyedara Durowole and Sameul A. Adegbokun.
- 83 District Officer, Ife to the Resident Oyo Province, Oyo. 16 April 1951.
- 84 P.R.O. (London) Adm. 1/15589 Commander A. Murray to Commodore C. Hotham, 24th March 1948.