

African Research Review

An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia

Vol. 9(1), Serial No. 36, January, 2015:109-122

ISSN 1994-9057 (Print)

ISSN 2070--0083 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrev.v9i1.9>

The Christ Army Church and Socio-Cultural Changes in Khana Local Government of Ogoniland

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Abstract

This is a study on Christ Army Church and socio-cultural changes in Khana Local Government of Ogoniland in Rivers State. It is aimed at examining the role of an African Independent Church in social change. To achieve this set goal, the writer has used the historical, sociological and theological approaches. Theologically, it deals with Ogonis world view. Sociologically, it examines the role of Christ Army Church in social change and historically, the study gives detail narration of the interaction of Christ Army Church and Khana society. Findings from the study revealed that the Church adjusted and modified its beliefs and practices in order to make way for social change in Ogoniland. Khana society is highly syncretic in nature. It is hard to know where and when to separate the Church's beliefs and practices from traditional practices. Some of the vital hallmarks of the Garrick Braide's Christ Army Church is that it makes indigenous people feel at home during worship as locally composed songs, clapping, ecstatic dancing and use of indigenous liturgy in praising God. An opportunity and atmosphere that were not allowed in mission Christianity. The Garrick Braide's movement's radical and practical approach to resisting opposition and fighting injustices meted on indigenes in the Niger Delta by the authorities of mission Churches and imperialist power in Ogoniland, attracted the Khana people who offer themselves as agents of social change to it.

Introduction

Christianity, like most world religions, when it came to Khana attempted to penetrate the entire socio-cultural spheres of the people with its new influence. This attempt changed the history of the people, and the centre of life, which was predicated on indigenous religious beliefs and practices could no longer hold. Khana society was thrown into confusion and a near anarchy with a disturbing traditional solidarity caused by denominational Christianity namely, the Mission, Independent and Pentecostal Christianity.

Mission churches in the area were strongly linked with the historical traditions of Christendom and colonialism in terms of organizational expansions, financial supports and personnel. There was a deliberate attempt made by European missionaries to convert the people of Khana and their culture to western pattern and style. What Williamson (1965) observes in his study of Christianity among the Akan of Ghana that missionary effort was directed towards drawing converts away from traditional life towards what missionaries thought was the proper, civilized and Christian expression of the new faith; was similar to the situation in Khana under mission Christianity.

Independent churches where the African prophet led churches otherwise called spiritual churches because of their emphasis on prayer, revelation from the Holy Spirit and practical worldly notion of salvation in which healing is prominent. Independent churches represent a radical indigenisation of Christianity in Africa. Their authorities encouraged a radical and practical approach to Christianity which in many respects, were similar to the beliefs and practices of the local people. For instance, indigenous cultural rite and social institutions were encouraged and made ritualistic because dancing and rejoicing strengthened community solidarity and emphasized the corporate whole. Garrick Braide's Christ Army Church in Khana is a good example of a new religious movement, a brand of African Independent Churches. It is one of the African prophet led churches otherwise called spiritual churches because of their emphasis on prayer, revelation from the Holy Spirit and practical worldly notion of salvation in which healing is prominent. The movement represents a radical indigenisation of Christianity in Africa. Similar to most new religious movements Garrick's Christ Army Church emerged following disagreement between him and the authorities of the Anglican Church. It was a response to an alleged revelation from God in reaction to unwarranted arrest and expulsion meted on him and his followers by the authorities of the Anglican church. Equally, it was a way of escape from the political reality of colonial rule into the solace of ritualism and to serve as an outlet for frustrated leadership talent (Mbiti, 1969).

Pentecostal churches were group of Christians who laid little or no emphasis on organisation, structure and ecclesiastical hierarchy but on the gift of the Holy

Spirit and baptism of the spirit attested to by speaking in tongues. Okwueze (2004) observes that the Pentecostal movement originated in the United States as a protest against the increasing formalism, modernism and the middle-class character of the mainstream denominations. With the above distinguishing characteristics of the three major Christian denominations introduced into Khana traditional socio-cultural environment, social change became necessary.

Conceptualizing socio-cultural change

The New Collins Concise English Dictionary defines “social” as “living or preferring to live in a community rather than alone; denoting or relating to human society or any of the sub-divisions of or characteristic of the behaviour and interaction of persons forming group; relating to or having the purpose of promoting companionship, communal activities...” Igbo and Anugwom (2001) opine that ‘cultural’ pertains to the culture of a people or society. According to them culture refers to the way people live their lives and interact among themselves. It includes the things they do, how they dress, what they eat and how they eat it, what they wear and how they wear it, their values and belief systems, their technology etc. In short, culture is the totality of a people’s way of life which is passed down from generation to generation. Cultural change refers mainly to culturally meaningful symbols produced by human beings in their attempt to survive within their societies. Ryan (1969) defines cultural change generally as “modifications of the body of knowledge of a people or their tools or their idealized patterns in contrast to the actuality of their behaviour”. Cultural change often leads to social change.

Social change is a concept used by social scientists. According to the Dictionary of the social sciences, social change refers to “the significant alteration of social structures (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduction) values and cultural products and symbols”. Denisoff and Wahrman (1975) define social change as the alteration or modification of social institutions and societies over some period of time. Giddens, et al (2003) define social change as “the transformation over time of the institutions and culture of a society” Igbo and Anugwom (2001) state that social change takes place in a social system; and it is all about novelty and fundamental restructuring of the way members of a particular society relate or the manner a group in society functions in relation to another group. According to Igbo and Anugwom a social system of a society is made up of all the ideal patterns of behaviour within that society. The social system provides a general guide for behaviour and interaction among individuals and groups in the society.

The Khana scenario

Before a thorough examination of the socio-cultural changes caused by the interaction of Christianity with indigenous tradition and culture of the Khana people,

it would be worthwhile to briefly look at Khana's set up. Khana is one of the groups making up Ogoni nationality. It is located on the eastern fringe of the Niger Delta in Rivers State. The geographical entity is now a single local government area with its headquarters at Bori, an earlier seat of colonial administration. These groups of Ogoni's are distinct from their kin and kings of Gokana, Tai and Eleme because of the dialect 'Kana' which they speak. Khana tribe is made up of three clans; Nyo-Khana, Babbe and Ken-Khana. Khana is located on a flat level land with fresh stream running through and salt water of the Imo River surrounding them. The people enjoy rainy season, which begins in the month of May and ends in November when the dry seasons sets in from November to April. Nyo-Khana areas have tropical rain forest vegetation. Ken-Khana and Babbe areas are very close to the Atlantic Ocean than the Nyo-Khana people. The border communities of Nyo-Khana are Okwale, Luebe, Lorre, Yaa, Dae, Bangha, Kalooko, Opuoko and Luuwa. These border communities share boundaries with the Ndoki an Igbo speaking group and the Efik/Ibibio, Anang speaking group. While the border communities of Ken-Khana and Babbe are Bane, Bere, Benwiinete, Kono, Kpean, Gure, Sii, Nama, Gwara, Kaa, Luawii and Kwiri-Boue communities sharing common boundaries with the people of Opobo, Andoni, Bonny, Okirika, etc.

Khana have a land area of approximately 100sq. miles with link roads, especially the east-west road from Port Harcourt to Ikot-Abasi in Akwa-Ibom State. The road network connecting Nyo-Khana, Ken-Khana and babbe meets at Wiiyaakara where a junction is formed with the Port Harcourt, Bori, Kono road to link the east-west road at Taabaa. The population of the area is about 45,595. The vast area of flat fertile land of Khana made the people predominantly farmers. Proximately to the coast equally offer most Khana communities, especially, the Babbe and Ken-Khana people, opportunity to combine both fishing and farming. The people engaged themselves in petty trading activity. The articles for trade are farm produce, fish, pottery works, salt etc. exchanged with goods from their coastal neighbours of Andoni, Opobo, Bonny, Ijaw, Igbo, Ibibio and Okirika.

The Khana socio-cultural order

Talking about the socio-cultural order in traditional Khana society can hardly be done without looking at the pre-Christian religious cosmology and philosophy because the people were religious and so were all the spheres that make life meaningful to them. It is imperative that we treat the background of the pre-Christian Khana society into which Christ Army Church emerged in 1920. The society then was pre-literate, small, isolated type with little or very low level of technological development. There was little or no division of labour, exchange of goods and services were religious and magical personnel or specialists were in full control of the affairs of the people, and the type of communities were the rural areas. The people

who lived in that society were communistic in nature. It was seen to be a society where religion pervades all the action and activities of the group whether familial, political, economical or recreational. For example, the planting and harvesting of crops, the building of houses, the economic and technical transactions or even the people's professional undertakings were marked with sacred requirements and religious ritual that form part and parcel of their traditional magical and religious ceremonies.

Its customs and traditions were known and followed by all because the society was small and homogenous. This factor also made religion to influence the value system of the society with its sacred imprint, thereby providing the principal focus for the integration and cohesion of the society in general. In fact, it was described as a conservative and ritualistic society as everything that molded life of the individual and the community was religious. Therefore, it was difficult to access the relationship between religion and the community (Ekarika in Saale, 1999).

The society was communistic and ritualistic in nature. As a result, the study shall take advantage of the above reality to examine the socio-cultural life of traditional Khana society. This is one sure way of understanding how much change Khana life has undergone as a result of the impact of Christianity. Khana people like other Ogonis before the coming of Christianity believed in the existence of a famine, all-powerful being called Kawaabari who is the creator of the universe. The name Kawaabari meaning mother of creation is in view of her creative nature. The people believed in the existence of good and bad spirits in the universe and ancestors as intermediaries between the Supreme Being and man. Apart from their recognition of the position of religious institution and functionaries like priests, kings, medicine men, diviners, witches and oracles, myths, symbols, ritual ceremonies, sacrifices from the basics of their beliefs and practices (Saale, 1999).

Concepts about death, burial, time and space, and cultural phenomena such as naming, dressing, tribal marks were part of expression of their religious experience. Cultural institutions in Khana society maintain order, regularity and continuity of events and ensure social stratification and the integration of members. These cultural institutions include; men initiation rite called "yaa", women initiation rite called "bokor", festival and ceremonies for planting and harvesting. There was the custom of not giving out the first born – daughter 'sira' in marriage. The pre-colonial administrative system was matrilineal and later patrilineal. The political structure was drawn from the kingship structure; family 'Be', lineage 'Ga', village 'Bue' and clan 'Bua'. The welding of authority, as a specialized full time occupation was virtually unknown. The people of Khana in pre-Christian period were individualistic and egalitarian in nature. With their Amanikpo, Kazim, Agiri, Ganige dances and other numerous ritualistic festivals and festivity. Life is full enjoyment among the

traditional Khana people who live in a culturally homogenous community (Saale, 1999).

There is a high rate of religious syncretism as evidenced in the people's ways of life and beliefs, systems resulting from the distinguishing characteristics of various brands of Christianity especially, that of the Garrick Braide's Christ Army Church which is the focus of this paper. One of the vital hallmarks of Garrick's movement is that it makes indigenous people feel at home during worship as locally composed songs, clapping ecstatic dancing and use of indigenous liturgy in praising God possible. An opportunity and atmosphere which were not allowed in mission Christianity.

The Garrick Braide's Christ Army Church in Khana

The Christ Army Church is an example of the independent church movement in Nigeria was founded by Garrick Sokari Idaketinea Braide of Bakana, in Kalabari Kingdom of Rivers State. The appellation, Christ Army Church was given to the church by one Mr. Frank Kukruba Pepple of Bonny in 1916 in the following words "Ndi Ogu Krist" meaning the Army of Christ Church (Tasie, 1980). Although, the name Christ Army Church sounded military, the group is peculiar in organisation, leadership, mode of dressing, beliefs and practices from any other religious sects going by the word "Army" like the Salvation Army Church. Christ Army Church as a movement fights evils and resists oppression meted on the indigenous people particularly, the people of the Niger Delta region under the cover of mission Christianity at the time.

The movement was carried to Khana in Ogoni kingdom from Bonny in 1920 by one John Gbo Pyagbo Teeweakua. According to sources, John felt sick of an ailment that was considered a psychiatric case in 1919. When several efforts at curing him through traditional methods proved abortive, his relations acting on the advice of some Bonny traders took him to Rt. Rev. Moses Opuene Hart in charge of the Christ Army Church at Bonny Parish. The Reverend gentle man revealed to John Gbo after prayers and fasting that God who has called him to serve his people was responsible for his affliction. After the revelation and John's subsequence acceptance of the call of God, he became normal in health. He was baptized and commissioned by Rev. Moses Hart in the early 1920 to carry the Christ Army Church to Khana (Saale, 1999). The Garrick Braide's Christ Army Church was able to change the socio-cultural history of the people of Ogoni, particularly, Khana because of the movement characteristic features. Firstly, the adherents and supporters were made to feel at home during worship as locally composed songs, clapping, ecstatic dancing and use of indigenous liturgy in praising God which were not allowed in mission Christianity were encouraged by Braide. Secondly, polygamists who were rejected by the mission churches were accepted by the authority of Christ Army Church. The reason for such

tolerance was because the founder of the movement was indigenous and being part of the society understood the social and economic relevance of polygamy as a source of wealth and prestige. Thirdly, Garrick Braide's brand of Christianity adopted a more radical and practical approach which was in consonance with the traditional religion. The religion was more ritualistic instead of the memorization of creed, the Lord's Prayer, the catechisms, baptism and confirmation that were made compulsory conditions for one becoming member of the mission churches.

Also, Braide himself and John Gbo spoke and taught the indigenous people how to worship God in their local language and also gave a down to earth explanation of the people's cosmology and fears of the forces of nature, which they were very familiar with. Moreso, the period of 1920 during which the Christ Army Church arrived in Ogoniland, the Khana especially, Babbe axis was timely for two reasons. The movement was embraced and supported by the local people who were not happy with the methods adopted by the authority of mission churches introduced into the area during and after the three punitive expeditions meted on Babbe by the colonial power. According to Saale (1999), the Garrick Braide's movement radical and practical approach to resisting opposition and fighting injustice meted to indigenes in the Niger Delta by the authorities of mission Churches suspected to be collaborators with the imperialist power in the Ogoni area attracted the Khana people to register their protest against the influence of the mission Christianity through the Christ Army Church.

Christ Army Church and modern change in Khana

This section of the paper discusses the position and role of the Christ Army Church in Khana society where socio-political, economic and cultural changes are taking place. For proper understanding of the relationship between the Church beliefs and practices, the characteristic features which have made the society modern will be examined. This effort is necessary because the beliefs and practices of any organisation like the type for our discussion are representations of the organisation. The rites performed are aimed at sustaining those relationships and in effect serve as rules of conduct which prescribed how man should comfort himself in the presence of the sacred objects (Crowder, 1962). Again, this paper will be more sociological because "Religion is seen as the child of the society and/or society a child of religion (Ekarika in Saale, 1999). For Christ Army Church to have survived or continue to survive in Khana society in the face of various changes, it must have been sustained by the society and conversely, Khana society must have enjoyed some essential contributions made through the beliefs and practices of the Church towards the spiritual and material development of the area.

For any meaningful discussion on the relationship between Christ Army Church and modern changes in Khana, we must acknowledge the fact that the Khana

society is still in its pre-modern/pre-industrial stage even though it is being influenced by the wind of modern changes flowing into it from outside. The characteristic features of any pre-modern and pre-industrial society that are prominent in Khana, supports the claims. For example, the communities in Khana society are the types in which there are the coalitions of sacred and secular values and there are also certain degrees of literacy and technological development. There are considerable social and labour mobility and division of labour, agriculture and land industries with a few urban trading centers, which are the means of support for the economy. Arrangements are on for the streamlining of the former rural district council, village headquarters into sub-urban centres. These sub-urban centres are developing into an anticipated local government authorities or headquarters.

It is a society in which there is an overlapping of governmental, religious and familial activities. Authorities and focus for the cohesion, integration and stabilization of the society still reside in the religious potential though the organisation and the government are distinct. The community is the vehicle through which religious sentiments are expressed and the more people are involved so they are in community affairs. The more they favour religion, the more they favour political arrangements in the society. For instance, the success of any politician in Khana society depended largely on his/her membership in a large and influential religious congregation. At the same time he/she must enjoy the endorsement of his/her candidature by the priest to the powerful divinities in the area. Although ordinary members of the society no longer wait for the approval of religious personnel before carrying out their daily activities, community heads and local government chairman nowadays depend on sacred endorsement for their authorities and statue. Thus, at every swearing in ceremonies of the local council chairmen and crowing of community heads, Church reverend and indigenous religious priests are been invited to pray to God or pour libation to ancestors and gods. There is a clash of interest between the religious and political organisation because of the fusion of the religious and secular values.

With the expansion in literacy and technology and the influence of foreign cultures and philosophies flowing into Khana, some members of the society are beginning to develop their psychic behaviour towards individualistic, heterogeneous and egalitarian living while they still exist within a given religious congregation. There are dissenters, skeptists and heretics who have emerged partly because of their over-political exuberance or of religious intoxication. At this point we can look at the position and roles played by Christ Army Church as an institutionalized organization in relation to the rapid social changes in Khana society.

Christ Army Church and Socio-Cultural Changes in Khana

Christ Army Church as an institutionalized religious organisation has existed in Khana society because of its roles in maintaining the equilibrium of the social

system as a whole. The Church has continued in the performance of these duties by maintaining its beliefs, practices and ecclesiastical organisation which concerns itself with intangible and incomprehensible reality of the universe in which the people live. It has always offered explanation, prediction and some measure of control to some unobservable and transcend event of everyday human experience through faith, healing and prophetic pronouncements. This duty has established the position of Christ Army Church as an institutionalized religious organisation in Khana on which depends the groundwork of morality, the source for public order and of inner individual peace.

Another contribution of the Church in Khana society characterized by contingency, powerlessness, scarcity, frustration, deprivations, suffering and death, disaster and coercion due to changes is that of providing religious mechanism for adjustment. Tasié (1980) observes that the mechanism used by the Church to provide solution to these societal problems, seems to have defiled all mundane prescription including the use of an indigenised liturgy and mode of worship in which the people praised God in their own spontaneous and locally composed songs in ways attuned to the local culture. For instance, the public worship organised by the Church during annual festivals, anniversaries, remembrance day, birth, deaths, burial, memorial ceremony and marriages, provided opportunity for the people whose actual pattern of behaviour and performance has been affected by negative restrictions and sanctions in other institutionalized churches from expressing their emotional feeling. The public worship did not only create an atmosphere in which the people clapped, danced ecstatically and sang away their sorrows, but it creates a sense of security, love and brotherliness in the mind of people whose hope may have been lost probably because of their banishment under the indigenous religious traditional laws and taboos.

It is observed in the course of this research that participating members especially, the less privilege and deprived ones express their feelings of security and sense of belonging because of the Churches full involvement in events like birth, death, burial and marriages. Beside the wonderful work of faith healing offered by the Church order of divine healing in the remote area where there were no hospitals and clinic, aids in cash and kind were offered by the church authority to needy people. These functions of the Christ Army Church did not only attract more people as members but it has established the Church as religious organisation, serving as sources of public or social order and of the inner individual peace in Khana society. Furthermore, despite the distinctiveness of this organisation from other religious organizations, government and familial activities in Khana, because of its particular beliefs and practice; the Church still allows rooms for fusion, cohesion and integration of some societal ideologies in order to achieve set goals. The Church has always done this through the adjustment and modification of some of its beliefs and practices that are no longer fitting in the present day Khana society.

Religiously, the organisation has adjusted its worship and prayer hours to early morning and evening, and public meeting are shifted towards weekends on Saturdays and Sundays in order to allow members to participate actively in other societal activities. For example, the former beliefs and practices of the Church were such that demands strenuous and rigorous fasting and prayer for an attainment of spiritual powers. Members of the ecclesiastical and divine healing order were scarcely seen in the public because of the beliefs in separation for attainment of holiness. The hours of worship and prayer were late at midnight, and most practices were kept secret. Thus, the members were suspected as members of 'secret cult' and persecuted by members of the society.

The Church has avoided its earlier confrontational approach against government policies believed to be evil by its founders. Nowadays, the organisation agrees with government by obtaining operational permits for all its public meetings, especially when the ban on public gathering was still in force in Khana because of the 'MOSOP' crisis. Also, in the political and social spheres, the Christ Army Church has adjusted beliefs and practices about the mundane activities. It has adjusted its early emphasis on the need of members to have an ascetic and mystical life to meet God's demand. Today, members are encouraged to participate in politics by voting for politicians of their choice and also to aspire for political positions to be voted for.

From 1864, the revised constitution of the Church has encouraged its members in Khana to pursue higher education and to train their children and wards in public schools and colleges. This singular attitude which was hitherto discouraged by the Church is responsible for why members of the Church in Khana do not occupy top government positions in the Local, State and Federal Government today.

Moreso, members of the Church are presently encouraged to go for treatment of their ailments in public hospitals and clinics and to apply all prescribed drugs for such ailments, instead of depending solely on faith healing, practiced by the Church order of divine healing. Also members are nowadays allowed to join some non-religious group for social benefits. Again, female members are presently allowed by the Church authority to embrace all government plans towards family planning in as much as it is being practiced with caution and with the fear of God. The practice of polygamy which was permitted by the founders because of its local meanings and importance is still in force among members of the Church of the ecclesiastical and divine healing order of the Church who were formerly forbidden by the Church authority.

In the areas of culture, the organisation more than any Christian organisation operating in Khana has been at the fore front of indigenisation which was an attempt by the organisation to make Christianity or interpret and apply it in ways that perhaps spontaneously, render Christianity both practical and meaningfully to members of the

society. Thus, the Church finding itself in a communalistic and highly ritualistic society as Khana with majority of less acculturated Christians encouraged clapping, ecstatic dancing and an indigenised liturgy in which the people praised God in their own spontaneous and locally composed songs. In worship, the founders tolerated a freer atmosphere in which the people worshipped and praised God in ways attuned to the local culture.

The culture of the people like Mbiti summarizes it, "... were established and made ritualistic because they felt that dancing and rejoicing strengthen community solidarity and emphasizes the corporateness of the whole group. Also, cultural institutions were created to maintain order, regularity and continuity of events and for purposes of social stratification, and integration of the members of society" (Mbiti, 1971). These institutions served as places for teaching and learning of their predilection and handiwork, integrity, love and respect among the people. The Church more than many Christian denominations in Khana has modified its liturgy to accommodate these aspects of the people's culture. Members of the organisation are allowed to join cultural dancing groups outside the Church in so far as it is not a secret club. They are allowed to dress and use their local languages during Church service even sometimes against the authorised vestments for clergymen and members of the ecclesiastical and divine healing orders.

It is worthy of note that some very strong members of the organisation support or participate in the indigenous culture of (Yaa) the men initiation rites, Borkor, the women initiation rites and the Sirah tradition, which is the practice of not allowing first daughters to go into marriage. Members of the Church whose dead parents and relations were custodian of the indigenous belief and practices of the people, especially heirs are nowadays, organising burial in ways attuned to their culture without being suspended or excommunicated from the Church by the authority concerned. Facing this development as a result of modern changes taking place in Khana, the Christ Army Church is nowadays involving itself in burial of parents or relations of members whether such parents has been their member or not while alive. The move according to Church sources is been taken to check excesses on the part of affected members during burials. Some reasons for the Church adjustment and modification programme of beliefs and practices in Khana society is observed to be that, the organisation realizes that non compromising approach would be dangerous to the Church extensive and intensive growth. Moreso, rituals and ceremonies are believed to be a sustaining agent of the organisation's beliefs and practices which themselves can elaborate into theologies and cosmologies for the articulation of participants commitment through faith.

The Christ Army church as a religious organisation has realized that men in society count upon one another to fulfill their social obligation. Thus, the Church has

encouraged its members in government to carry out the tenet and norms of Christianity as laid down in the Church constitution in the discharge of their official roles. Labourers in the private sections are urged to be honest in their day's work. While those of them who are employers of labour are encouraged to be just in their payment of wages. Children are expected to respect and help parents while parents should in turn provide for their children, wards and servants both spiritual and material need. As citizen, they are to obey the just laws of the land and Church, support government and individuals in positions of authority to reward and punish good and erring members when necessary. For the effectiveness of these social obligation, the Church has in its constitution some power or authority to constrain their members so that they forgo or play less on their self interest for the sake of society. An example of the church position in the maintenance of public peace and order is demonstrated in the return of peace and calmness to Ogoni land especially in Khana during the MOSOP crisis. The Christ Army Church in co-operation with other Christian organisation operating in Khana after the address of the chairman of the government internal security Task Force, stationed in the area, adopted a 'call to house' programme of their members. Through these efforts the church contributed in no small measure for the return of peace in Khana in particular and Ogoni in general. The success became possible when both government and church recognised the fact, that short of brute force, people conduct their affairs simply because they trust each other (Ekarika in Saale, 1999).

The calling back to the church programme became necessary in order to preach the values of co-operation, respect to constituted authorities, tolerance in the face of the unexpected to members who were not separated from the event in the society. Another contribution of the organisation to the maintenance of social norms, values, peace and other in the face of social changes is in its provision of both informal and formal religious and moral education to children in their most impressionable years. This is because it has been observed that every individual as he/she grows needs a system of values to guide him in his activities and behaviour in society, and to serve as integrating forces for his developing personality.

Parents are directed by the church to train their children informally as demanded of them by the holy scripture in (prov. 22:6) they are expected to imprint on the minds of their children and ward moral duty of respect, honesty, chastity, truthfulness, etc. the Church is equally involved in the formal training of children. This is done through the establishment of children Sunday school classes, nursery and primary schools, religious associations like Boys Brigade and Girls Guide where children are taught how to attain their salvation by going to Church. They are taught how to receive baptism, sacrament, read and meditate conscientiously, live frugally, reframe from dishonest acts, unchastely and violence. It is the believe of the Church that the Khana society would gain indirectly when these trained children would grow

up as responsible members of the society by keeping with the social system, obligation and moral standards on which the survival and stability of the society itself depends. It is worthy of note that the pre-modern, pre-industrial Khana society is characterized by mob violence, wanton hooliganism and indiscipline, a situation that is caused by youths when they consider rules and regulations contrary to their own interests. This is a task, which the Church is grappling with the Khana society that is undergoing various changes nowadays.

Recommendations

Firstly, religious organizations should operate as potential instruments of social change because belief system has a compelling influence in the life of society.

Secondly, Christian leaders should avoid the use of sentiment on matters of socio-cultural change that could enhance maintenance of public peace and order in societies characterized by insecurity.

In addition, Christianity in African societies should consider the adjustment and modification of aspects of its liturgy to accommodate the on-going elements of change within the social system necessary. So far it is not against Biblical standard.

Finally, there must be a role Christianity must play in socio-change in order to remain relevant in any pre-modern, pre-industrial society characterized by mob violence, wanton hooliganism and indiscipline caused by youths and corrupt politicians. After all, as Lintonen (2002) observes, people listen to Christian leaders because they have an authority based on faith and word, ethics and morality.

Conclusion

This paper has presented the role played by the Garrick Braide's Christ Army Church in the socio-cultural changes in Khana Local Government of Ogoniland in Rivers State. It is a research effort in support of some sociological claims that religion is the product of society and society conversely is the child of religion. The paper agrees with the argument of some sociologists that for a given religion to exist in the social system as indeed it does, that religion must therefore have a latent function and contribution towards that system. The study revealed that the adjustment and modification of the liturgy of Christ Army Church in a way attune to the local culture of Khana people made the organisation's contribution towards socio-cultural changes possible in Khana society.

For proper understanding of the emergence of the Christ Army Church, a brand of African independent Church movement in Khana society in 1920, the paper traced its origin back to its founder Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide of Bakana in Kalabari kingdom and John Gbo Teeweakua of Boue in Khana. Also, to examine the role of Christ Army Church in socio-cultural changes in Khana, the study has

presented the traditional Khana scenario, socio-cultural order and geographical location as soil already prepared for major changes. In the course of the study it was not difficult to identify the role played by Christ Army Church in socio-cultural changes in a highly syncretic society as Khana. This was because like most independent Church movements in Africa, its independence was in the use of indigenous liturgy in praising God, acceptance of polygamists who were rejected by the mission Churches and adoption of a more radical and practical approach to resisting opposition and fighting of injustices meted on indigenes in the Niger Delta by authorities of both mission Churches and imperialist power among others.

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