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A Brief Survey of the Emergence and Impact of the Anglican Church in Kogi and Kwara States (1854 - 1999)

Ven. Dr. S.M. Mepaiyeda

Introduction

The Missionary enterprises that originated in Sierra-Leone among the leading Missionary Societies in mid–19th century pestered the growth of Christianity in the Coastal cities such as Lagos, Badagry and the Delta. By 1854, the missionaries accompanied the European expeditionists to the confluence area; that is, part of what constitutes the present Kogi state for the purpose of planting the gospel in Lokoja and it's environ.

Records reveal that prior to the coming of the Church Missionary Society in the nineteenth century¹, Christianity had been introduced to some parts of Nigeria in the 15th century through the Augustinian and Capuchin monks from Portugal.³

Oshitelu traced the coming of the Portuguese explorers and colonialists to the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, because some Missionaries were in their company.³ The latter planted the seed of the gospel in Benin and Warri, but unfortunately it did not germinate. The failure of the Missionaries in Benin kingdom, according to Ryder⁴ could be traced to political and commercial factors. The Oba's interest in the new religion extended no further than a desire to acquire European weapons from the King of Portugal. Unfortunately the Papal decrees forbade the delivery of arms to infidels. Beside, the objectives of the Portuguese was the development of trade along the costal areas; and this resulted in having contact with Benin and the Oba who by then

GA Oshitelu, *Expansion of Christianity in West Africa* (Ibadan, Oputoru Books, 2002), p. iv.

² G.E. Igwe, *Christianity Comes to Africa* (Umuahia, Ark Publishers, 2000), p. 37.

³ G.A. Oshitelu, Op Cit, p. iv.

⁴ A.F.C. Ryder, "The Benin Missions", Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. II, No. 1, Dec. 1960, p. 231ff.

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enjoyed a monopoly of most important exports of his state inevitably maintained a cordial relationship with the Portuguese. Therefore, it could be argued that when politics and commerce failed, Christianity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries went into extinction in Benin kingdom.

However, it was not until December, 1842 that Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society (who came on the heels of Thomas Birch Freeman of the Methodist wing) sowed the seed of Anglicanism properly when he landed in Badagry from Freetown, Sierra Leone, After the Niger expedition, the Methodists were the first to enter Nigeria. Thomas Birch Freeman and Mr. & Mrs. De Graft arrived in Badagry on 23rd September, 1842. This could be referred to as the effective beginning of Christian Missionary enterprise in Nigeria.⁵ Within three months, Missionary activities of the Wesleyan Methodist were already noticed in Abeokuta through Freeman. The cooperation of the reigning king in Abeokuta, Sodeke, and the fact that the Missionaries were actually requested by the returnees made this possible.

Having got the vision of liberation, civilization and evangelism clear, the Niger Expeditions of 1841, 1854, and 1857 were embarked upon. Despite the fact that the expeditions were purely meant for civilization and commerce among the people living around the Niger, they attracted the attention of the Church Missionary Society who had been looking for an opportunity to establish a Christian Mission among the natives of the Niger area.⁶ Consequent upon this, the Church Missionary Society ordered Rev. J.F. Schon and Mr. Samuel Ajayi Crowther who at that time were in Freetown to join the expedition team that left Portsmouth with the three boats-the Albert, the Wilberforce and the Soudan on April 11, 1841.⁷

After about three months journey on the sea from Freetown, the team arrived the Niger-Benue Confluence (Lokoja).⁸ This first expedition was said to have ended in tragedy owing to high rate of mortality resulting

⁵ M.A. Oduyoye, The Wesleyan Presence in Nigeria 1842 – 1962 (Ibadan, Sefer Books Ltd., 1992), p. 3

⁶ Duke Akamisoko, Samuel Ajayi Crowther in the Lokoja Area (Ibadan, Sefer Books Ltd., 2002), p. 3

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, p. 4

from unfavourable climate condition. Nevertheless, another team of British explorers and merchants set out for Niger expedition in 1854. A letter was sent to Samuel Crowther at Abeokuta by the Church Missionary Society's parent committee in London requesting him and one Simon Jonas, an Igbo who was a catechist in Sierra Leone to join the expedition. Dr. William Baikie, the commander of the ship, took along with him some medical equipment especially quinine. This served as security against unpleasant climate that claimed lives in the previous expedition. With this stability, Crowther introduced Christianity on the banks of the Niger. Hence, Lokoja became the cradle of Anglicanism in both Kogi and Kwara States.

The major problem addressed in this paper is the slow numerical/ territorial growth of the Anglican Church in Kogi and Kwara States between 1854 and early 1970s. The areas under review for a long time were under the supervision of the Yoruba Mission. Right from 1952 when Ibadan and Ondo/Benin Dioceses were created, Ilorin and its environs merged with the former while Lokoja, Kabba/Akoko and others in that axis were part of Ondo.

However, the non-existence of numerical growth of the Anglican Church in Kogi and Kwara States when compared to what obtained in other areas is a problem. Apart from the fact that many attempts had been made to facilitate growth such as the creation of Kwara Anglican Diocese in 1974 and later the proliferation of Dioceses in 1990s, the situation remains unchanged. Various reports through interviews and questionnaire show that many crises erupted in Kwara Diocese. Also, it could not be ascertained that the creation of Dioceses really brought about the territorial or numerical growth since membership had not increased. Therefore, the strategies for expansion seemed to have brought financial burden on the areas which are largely agrarian.

The objective of this paper therefore is to examine in a historical perspective, the emergence and development of the Anglican Church and its contribution to the socio-economic, health and educational spheres of the people of Kogi and Kwara States. Besides, an appraisal is made on the efficiency of the approach of the Missionary agents responsible for the establishment of the Anglican Church in Kogi and Kwara States. In addition, since the economic potency of any particular Missionary

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agency is a major factor that determines the vibrancy of its off shoot, this paper establishes the fact that the early withdrawal of support by European Missionaries had negative effect on the development of the Anglican Church in the two States.

This study adopted a historical research method in order to evaluate and explain past events in the areas of study for the purpose of gaining a better and clearer understanding of the present and making a more reliable production for the future. Extensive fieldwork was carried out in Ilorin. Offa and Igbomina (Kwara State) as well as Lokoja, Kabba and Ebiraland (Kogi State). This involved scanning through Church's documents such as the minutes books, log books, annual Synod report⁹ and publications.¹⁰ National Archives in Ibadan and Kaduna were consulted. Reports and correspondences¹¹ from such Archives elicited information that included among others, the conflict between Christian and pagan customs in Ebira division of Kabba Province, the slow pace of the Church Missionary Society in Igala and Idah divisions, the giant strides of the Sudan Interior Mission in Isanlu Makutu, the increasing number of converts to Church Missionary Society (CMS) through the educational facilities that attracted the youths in Kabba and Ebira divisions and other Missions that were at work in the Province, such as Ebenezer Baptist, Wesleyan Methodists and African Church.

In addition, information on the inspection of the site for school building in Offa in 1947 was contained. Magazines and Journals published by the Church Missionary Society were examined to supplement Archival materials.

Furthermore, interviews with purpose-living prominent Church leaders were conducted. These included Rtd Bishop H.A. Haruna (old Kwara

Annual Report from N.D. James, Resident, Kabba Province, 1928 & 1929. Annual Report from Chris Gilmore, District Officer, Igbira Division to the Resident, Kabba Province dated 26th May, 1925

⁹ Synod is annual conference of the Anglican Church Comprising the Bishop, House of C lergy and House of Laity.

¹⁰ "The Rainbow" A Magazine of the Mothers' Union and Women's Guild, Diocese of Offa Anglican Communion, Vol. 1, May 2003.

A correspondence from Ayorinde, the Manager in Offa to the District Officer in Ilorin, dated 30th April, 1947

Diocese), Rtd Bishop J.A. Fabuluje (Kwara), Bishop J.A. Akinyemi (Igbomina Diocese), Bishop G.B. Akinbiyi (Offa Diocese), Rtd Bishop S.O. Oyelade (Kabba Diocese), Rtd Bishop G. Bako (Lokoja Diocese) and Bishop Egbunu (Lokoja Diocese).

The Activities of the Anglican Church in Kogi State

The early encounter that the Missionaries had with Lokoja in 1841¹² and the successful expedition of 1854,¹³ marked the beginning of the Anglican Church in areas known today as Kogi and Kwara States. From Lokoja, the Anglican Church began to spread to other areas around the confluence through native Missionaries and Evangelists among whom were Dandeson Crowther (son of Bishop Ajayi Crowther) and Thomas Walter Bako, the man who was martyred for his rugged evangelism. Bako was said to have started his Missionary work at Kippo Hill in 1883¹⁴ after which he travelled to develop new stations in Igbiraland, Umaeisha, Koton Karfe (Nupe) and Bassa Country.

Anglicanism was said to have penetrated Kabba and Yagba areas around 1900 through the effective evangelism of Mr. Daniel Olowolayemo,¹⁵ a freed slave who regained freedom at Abeokuta. With the abolition of the slave trade, he returned to his village, Obele, near Kabba with the light of the gospel. After Bishop Ajayi Crowther had administered baptism and Confirmation on him, Daniel commenced his evangelistic campaign among his people; who were said to have refused to embrace Christianity owing to the conviction that it was a threat to their traditional religion. In order to encourage the pioneering effort of Daniel Olowolayemo, Rev. Milatyre, Mr. Walter Bako, Mr. Alfred, Mr. J.G. Ekin and Mr. Thomas were sent from Lokoja as Missionaries to reinforce the evangelistic enterprise in Kabba and all parts of Okun areas.¹⁶

D. Akamisoko, Samuel Ajayi Crowther in the Lokoja Area (Ibadan, Sefer, 2002), P. 9
Ibid.

¹⁴ E. Isichie, "Biography of Evangelist Thomas Walter Bako The Martyr" (1982), p. 12

¹⁵ S.O. Oyelade, *Presidential Address* at the first session of the first Synod of Kabba Diocese, Kabba, May 1996, p. 3

¹⁶ Ibid.

The spread of the Anglican Church became manifest in Kabba in 1903. Consequent upon this, Mr. Paul Aribido was sent to the area in 1906 as the first church worker.¹⁷ Further expansion eventually led to the creation of Kabba Church Council in 1922 which constituted part of the Yoruba Churches under Rev. C.W. Jebb, an European Missionary. Ijagbemi shed light on the above statement when he said;

Three Missions and one Church were established among the Okun people at the beginning of this century; these were, the Church Missionary Society, the Sudan Interior Mission, the Roman Catholic Mission and the African Church.¹⁸

By this historical evidence, it is obvious that the Anglican Church predated the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) which registered its presence in Yagbaland and Kabba around 1906.¹⁹ The Sudan Interior Mission later metamorphosed to what is known today as Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA).

The preponderance of evidence shows that the coming of Christianity through the Church Missionary Society into Ebiraland was not a oneway traffic affair. Anglicanism penetrated through multi-directional means. While the Ogori people had contact with Anglican form of Christianity through their sons living in Edo and Western States of Nigeria around 1911 and 1912, the people of Okene, Ihima and Achagana all had contact with Christianity through different means.

One Moses Eleko from Ogori was said to have brought Anglicanism to his people.²⁰ During his business trip to Ejinrin market in Ijebu province, he was introduced to Yoruba prayer book and some verses from the Book of Psalms by one Adewumi. Since Eleko could not read nor write, Adewumi taught him ABD from a Yoruba Primary book, the recitation of Yoruba alphabet. He later graduated to the reading of the Yoruba Bible.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ A. Ijagbemi, "Christian Missionary Work and Change in North East Yorubaland" Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religion Studies, Vol. xiii (June 1981) p. 35.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ N.R. Yakubu, Christianity in Nigeria, Ebiraland in Focus (Lagos, Majab Publishers, 2000), p. 25.

With the acquisition of basic knowledge of the Bible, Eleko and his close friends Messrs Daramola, Isaiah Alabi, Daniel Akerele (later the first Baba Egbe of St. Peter's Anglican Church Ogori) and Adeoye Akibito were all involved with the planting of the Church in Ogori in 1911.

Ajaokuta area benefited from the wind of Evangelism that blew from Kabba through one Ekundina from Kabba in 1914. Ekundina was said to be a trader of Tobacco who combined his trading with the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Among his first converts in Eganyi were Joel Onipe, Paul Puke, John Baiye Pin, Jacob Bajeh, Iregba Ore and Samuel Akove. Among the women were Madam Membeya, Onyi Ajagu and Ologo.²¹

The Anglican Church in Okene started in form of a house-fellowship in the house of Chief Abraham Ihieze Ijibana around 1914. With the effort of Mr. Adegbulu, a non-indigene who had already been an Anglican prior to his coming to Okene, the house cell became very formidable. Later around 1919, when Archdeacon L.A. Lennon (a Jamaican) was sent by C.M.S.' authority in Lagos to supervise the Churches n Owo, Akoko, Kabba, Ogori, Lokoja, and Kukuruku areas, a piece of land was secured to erect the present St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Kabba.²² Lennon's friendly disposition won the attention of the then Atta, Alhaji Ibrahim Onoruoiza who in turn contributed to the take-off of the Church's project. Yakubu's assertion could be summarized thus;

The late Atta was keenly interested in the C.M.S. that he supplied the bundles of corrugated iron sheets ... and directed late Mr. Peter Onyejekwe to roof the Church free of charge.²³

Emergence of Anglican Church in Kwara State 1907 – 1910

One of the problems that this paper aims to solve is to put the record straight that although Ilorin seems to be in the forefront in the history of Anglicanism in Kwara State, Offa was the Church's cradle in the state. The extension of the Nigeria Railway line to Offa in 1907²⁴ brought both

²¹ Ibid., p. 30

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ D. Abodunrin, The History of Kwara Diocese of the African Church (Offa, Dee Root) p 16

economic and religious gains to the people of Offa. It was reported by Pa. F.O. Osundun²⁵ that one Mr. Fasanu, a native of Abeokuta working with PZ in Offa brought Christianity to the town prior 1907. Fasanu was said to have been going to Osogbo every Sunday to worship because there was no Anglican Church at Offa. At his request in 1907, Rev. (later Bishop) Alfred Smith brought the Anglican Church to Offa. The Missionaries on arrival in Offa showed the natives an open air Christian film for two days in the frontage of the Oloffa's Palace.²⁰ This attracted the natives to attend evangelical programmes that followed. Eventually many of them began to show interest in the religion brought by the Missionaries.

The Missionary Activities of Bishop Alfred W. Smith in Kwara State

Much information is not available as to this agent of Anglicanism but Pa Osundun²⁷ described Smith as tall and lanky of about 5 feet 8. His wife was a tall and very hospitable woman, who used to dress up the wounds of the children who had injuries during playing. She also got herself involved in the running of Mission schools established by her husband.

Evidences abound that the Missionary work of Bishop Smith which started in Offa in 1907²⁸ and later spread to Ilorin around 1912 had much impact on the development of the Anglican Church in Kwara State. According to V.O. Akintuoye, the oldest educational institution in the defunct Northern Nigeria that ranked next to Holy Trinity Primary School, Lokoja was St. Mark's (CMS) School, Offa. It was opened by Rev. & Mrs. A.W. Smith in 1910.²⁹ Corroborating this view, Olafimihan in his book "Iwe Itan Offa" asserted that apart from the fact that Rev. & Mrs. Smith brought Christianity and Christian Education to Offa, they adopted a house-to-house evangelical outreach which led to the conversion of

²⁵ F.O. Osundun, a questionnaire respondent from Offa, Nov., 2003, 80 years.

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ J.B. Olafimihan, Iwe Itan Offa (Offa Descendant Union, 1987) p. 109

²⁹ V.O. Akintoye, "The Creation of Offa Missionary Diocese", (Diploma in Theology's Project submitted to Immanuel College of Theology, 2001) p. 14

some people among whom were, John Opaleke, J.O. Sholeye, Chief J.O.S. Onawola, N.O. Olawoyin known as 'King' and Pa. J.O. Awodola. Thus from 1907, Offa became a Mission station to Osogbo D.C.C. Consequently upon their acceptance, the CMS sent letter to "the Resident" in Ilorin in February 1908 through Rev. Mackay, indicating the willingness of the Oloffa to release a piece of land to build a Church, a school and a teacher's house.

In 1909, a Mission house was built in Offa through a grant of 50 pounds from the Oyo Mission of the CMS and was cemented by one Emmanuel Kehinde.³⁰ Reminiscing on the residence of the first priest before the construction of the Mission house, Pa. Osundun referred to it as "Ile Oluwe" and the first worship centre was at "Ile Ojomu Doyin".³¹ This is an evidence of the acceptance of the Anglican Church by some prominent indigenes who offered their compounds referred to as "Ile" to be used as vicarage as well as worship centres.

The C.M.S. Mission Churches continued to grow in and around Offa. From Offa through her Missionary work, Christianity spread to Ilorin in 1912, Esie 1912, Ikofu 1922, Iludun, Oyan, Erin-Ile, Idofian, Omupo and other places.³²

Rotimi Omotoye corroborated this assertion when he mentioned that although Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther's Evangelistic tours in 1859 and 1872 took him to Horin. However, it is important to note that the warm reception accorded him by Emir Shitta and his successors did not lead to the establishment of a Church Missionary station in the town.³³ What prevailed at the time according to Danmole³⁴ was a cordial atmosphere. However, Christian teachers were not allowed to operate hence there was not even a single Christian Church or School in Horin at the end of the 19th Century. The Emirs were suspicious of the effect of such hospitality on Islam and Quranic education.

³⁰ F.O. Osundun, Op Cit.

³¹ Interview conducted by the *Rainbow*, a magazine of the Mothers' Union and Women's Guild, Diocese of Offa Anglican Communion, Vol. 1, May 2003, p.37

³² V.O. Akintoye, op cit, p.11

³³ R. Omotoye, "Christianity and Educational Development in Ilorin Metropolis" (1855-1955) University of Uyo, *Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. 1, No 1, 1998, p. 106

³⁴ Ibid p. 107

Three factors that contributed to the emergence and expansion of the Anglican Church in Ilorin are worthy of note. First is the administration of the British Colonial Government in Nigeria from 1900 which reduced the absolute power of the traditional rulers in Nigeria.³⁵ The suppression of the power of Emirs who did not allow the spread of Christianity resulted in the growth of the Anglican Church. The British colonialists seemed to have been favourably disposed to the work of the missionaries. The second factor is the migration of traders from the West who had known and accepted Christianity from their homes before coming over to Ilorin. The need for them to practice their religion became inevitable. These traders included people from Ijesa, Ogbomoso and Egbaland. By joining other Christians, the Church began to grow numerically.

The third factor is the construction of Railway lines by the Colonial Government in the early 20th Century from Southern to Northern Nigeria. This led to the expansion of Christianity in Ilorin. According to Omotoye, since Ilorin assumed the status of a gateway to the North, many Railway workers from Southern Nigeria who were already Christians infiltrated Ilorin to take up job opportunities available there.³⁶

The political, economic and social factors discussed above led to the Christian activities that became noticeable about 1910. Omotoye asserted that "initially, the Christian Fellowship was interdenominational, holding in the house of one Mr. Ajia, nicknamed, Baba Ijesa". But after a few years, the fellowship metamorphosed into the present Anglican Church at Sabo Oke (a place reserved for strangers and given to Christians by Emir Shehu Suleiman). The reason advanced for the metamorphosis was that majority of the early Christians at Ilorin were of the Anglican denomination from Ijesaland.

Despite the negative response of Ilorin Muslims to the introduction and rapid expansion of Christianity, the religious activities of the pioneer Christians became more noticeable that Bishop Smith who was based at Offa (a neighbouring town to Ilorin in Kwara State) had to visit the Christians in Ilorin for the purpose of encouraging them. From his

³⁵ Ibid p. 109

³⁶ Ibid p. 107

correspondences to Archdeacon Mackay, A.W. Smith seemed to have come on board in 1914 to assess the situation on ground. And having been convinced of the commitment of Christians in Ilorin, he appointed one Mr. Adekunle as a Catechist to supervise the infant church. The first Church that the group of Christians in Ilorin erected was a thatched roof shed on a piece of land donated by Chief Adetomiwa, a native of Oyo.

Notable among the early Ilorin converts were late Honourable Samuel Ayinde Babatunde and late Pa. Joseph Aremu Ladipo.³⁷ Their conversion to Christianity was said to have generated ill-feeling among their Muslim brethren who decided to persecute them. However, the Christians gave them accommodation and befitting burial at death.

That the Anglican Church was established in Igbominaland in 1912 is incontrovertible. Some indigenes of Esie among who were Pa. Michael Ogundokun, Pa. David Tejumola and Daniel Oyeniyi were said to have gone to Lagos around 1910 for the purpose of trading.³⁸ In the process, they had the opportunity of acquiring a bit of Western Education and had contact with Christianity. On arrival in Esie around 1912, they started to propagate the gospel among the indigenes.

The visit of two missionaries, Rev. E.T. Pakenham and Rev. F. Hedger to the palace of Elesie of Esie in 1912 marked the formal planting of the seed of the gospel in Igbominaland. After having some discussions with the literate indigenes like Pa. Ogundokun and Tejumola, they promised to send a Church worker, Mr. Bolarinwa, who was resident at Offa to Esie for evangelism. The latter began to visit Esie on Missionary work.³⁹ Later he was succeeded by Catechist D.A. Omonyi who made a regular visit from Offa to Esie.

Church Services were organised at 'Ile Aro', the residence of Pa. Michael Ogundokunn, the leader of the Christian Community. The arrival of more indigenes of Esie resident in Lagos in 1917 gave Christianity a solid footing.⁴⁰ Having been exposed to the religion and the gains of

³⁷ Bolaji Dele, *Christianity in Ilorin*: Manuscript by the section of Ilorin Descendant Christian Association, 1991.

³⁴ Ayodele Oyinloye (ed), *The Official History of St Michael's Church, Esie, 1912-1993* (Ilorin, Gbenle Press Ltd) p. 16

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

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basic amenities attached to accepting it, they joined the other indigenes to spread the CMS Church in Igbomina.

From Esie, the Church Missionary Society's type of Christianity was introduced to Oro in order to ease the burden of Oro Christians attending services at Ile Aro in Esie. Cultural contacts as well as trading gave the Anglican Church the speed to spread to other Igbomina towns of Omu-Aran. Igbonla, Aransun, Edidi, Omupo, Oke-Onigbin and Idofian to mention just a few.

Impacts on the People of Kogi and Kwara State

Having so far traced the history and the development of the Anglican Church in the States under review, this aspect seeks to evaluate the effect of Anglican presence in the areas. This involves appraising both the positive change that might have occurred to the psyche of the people as well as the error (if there is any) of 'depersonalizing and dehumanizing'⁴¹ which might have been committed against the people through contemptuous disregard for African culture, experience and religion.

Anglican Church and the People's Tradition

Tradition has been described as "the delivery of opinions, doctrines, practices, rites and customs from generation to generation by oral communications".⁴² The presence of the Anglican Church in Okene, Kabba and Lokoja, no doubt, brought about a loss of value to some traditional festivals. Yakubu seemed not to see anything wrong in traditional festivals among the Ebira such as Echane, Echahana, Eche-Ori, Ekwechi and others.⁴³ But the fact remains that unlike in the olden days when festival were celebrated in an atmosphere devoid of violence, brutality, hatred and vandalism, their celebration in recent past decade has brought

⁴¹ D.O. Akhilomen, "The Planting of Christianity and Cultural Imperialism in Nigeria" An Appraisal of the Euro-Centric and Afro- Centric Perspectives in Epha, *Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 3 Nos. 1&2,June 2000,p. 33

⁴² Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary of the English Language, p. 1934.

⁴³ N.R. Yakubu, *The Tension Between Christianity and Culture in Ebirraland*, (B.A. Hons Dissertation, Religious Studies Department, UMTC, Ilorin, 1994), p. 65.

sorrow and inflicted physical damage to non-adherents who preached against such festivals.

What initially was celebrated in order to appreciate the Supreme Being, deities or ancestors was later bastardized. Hoodlums and enemies of peace capitalized on masquerade festivals in Ebiraland to perpetrate evils such as beating with the use of charms which led to hospitalization of some victims while those who were unlucky died.

Constant denunciation of such violence during festivals by the Anglican Church has reduced participation and commitment during the season and that seems to have a dwindling effect on the celebration of such festivals.

Daniel Iluromi, recounting his experience on the impact of Anglican Church and other Churches in Oweland (Kabaa) stated that, most of the traditional customs and practices such as prohibition of planting of Kolanut, eating of pork, clapping of hands in the night and eating of new yams (unless at the end of the second month), were all thrown into oblivion with the coming of Christianity.⁴⁴

Investigation revealed that the prohibition of the eating of pork before the advent of Christianity in Oweland was purely on hygienic grounds. Local pigs were reared in a dirty environment which attracted infection at the legs called Triclopotus Vibroijiga. That Owe people frowned at clapping of hands in the night so as not to incur the wrath of the spirits could be interpreted from environmental perspective. Such act was viewed to cause pollution, hence it was prohibited. The Anglican Church's enlightenment programmes therefore, brought about a change of orientation that made some natives to jettison some of the customs and practices.

Although it took the Anglican Church decades to penetrate the Nupe land as well as other confluence areas, its impact on the natives became noticed. At the initial stage, the preaching of the gospel led to some natives to abandon their traditional beliefs.⁴⁵ Some were said to have submitted their idols and charms to the Missionaries for destruction while other worshippers of traditional gods turned their back on all festivals, regarding such as paganism.

⁴⁴ D.O. Iluromi, *Itan Ibere ati Idagbasoke Isin Kristi ni Kabba ati Agbegbe Re* (Kabba, no date), p. 58.

⁴⁵ Duke Akanmisoko, Op Cit, p. 58.

Some adherents of traditional beliefs reacted to what they perceived as destructive effect of Christianity on the religious life of the people and meted out stringent punishments to converts of Christianity such as denial of basic rights, rejection by families who were adherents of traditional beliefs and even martyrdom.

In most parts of Kwara State, the situation was not all that different. It seems the only area of divergence was Ilorin where the imposition of Islam around 1823⁴⁶ led to the stamping out of some of the traditional values of the people. The prohibition of the celebration of traditional festivals in Ilorin led to a saying:

Ilu to yi, ko leegun Esin leegun won Oko loroo won

Meaning:

A town as big as this Without a masquerade Horses are their masquerade Arrows are their cults.⁴⁷

In Offa area, Christians were said to have experienced various degrees of persecutions, ranging from rejection by families to ostracization by the entire traditional community.⁴⁸ Mention should be made of the persecution of Christians in Iloffa, Odo-Owa and Oke-Opin areas of Kwara States. Christians who refused to participate in heathen festivals were given strokes of the cane, dragged to the Law Court or denied land to build a Church.⁴⁹

In Igbominaland, Esie experienced a difficult time at the initial stage of the planting of the Church due to the apathy of the traditional worshipers. The sudden death of two prominent Christians, Samuel Babatunde and David Oyeniyi,⁵⁰ were traced to the evil machination of the traditionalists.

⁴⁶ R. Omotoye, Op Cit, p. 104.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 105.

⁴⁸ Dele Abodunrin, The History of Kwara Diocese of the Anglican Church, (Offa, Dee root), p. 17.

⁴⁹ J. Fabuluje, History of the Diocese of Kwara, Unpublished, p. 21

⁵⁰ Ayodele Oyinloye (ed), Op Cit, p. 46.

However, the hatred for the Christians seemed to subside right from the time of the involvement of some Anglican members in the political life of Esie. Later, around late 1940s, the conferment of traditional chieftaincy titles on some Anglican members strengthened the position of the Church at Esie. Oyinloye remarked that the Christian Chiefs, both traditional and honorary have effectively brought Christian virtues to bear on the administration of Esie town. This friendship brought the consequential effect of religious harmony needed for the development of any town.

Moreover, later, it seems such compromise became inimical to Christianity, hence syncretism resulted. While some natives decided to identify with the Church for the purpose of social status, the worship of Ebora (in Kabba) and Ohomorihi (in Ebira), went side by side with Christianity. Iluromi observed from experience, factors responsible for this syncretic way of life among the people of Kabba. The desire for social status and uninterrupted freedom to marry were part of the reasons. He stressed that "whoever was not a worshipper of Ebora could never be given chieftaincy title in Kabbaland".⁵¹ Therefore, in order to avoid penalties imposed on them, some Christians reverted to Traditional Religion while some others played syncretism. The view of Modupe Oduyoye puts the above statement better when he stated thus; "The Missions have left permanent stamp on the social scene far out of proportion to the number of their converts".⁵²

It may be difficult to refute this argument because even till date, many Christians seem to find it inconvenient to detach from the religion of their forefathers. Therefore, no matter their commitment in the Church, they still look for the religion that gives concrete solution to their problems, religion that provides practical panacea to their existential problem and deliver pragmatic benefits such as protection from malevolent forces, miracle of healing, winning military victories and even magical powers or medicines to defer death.⁵³ Therefore, that the Church failed in these

⁵¹ D.O. Iluromi, Op Cit, p. 36.

³² Modupe Oduyoye, *The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland* (Ibadan, Daystar Press, no date), p. 299.

⁵³ Olorunfemi Ojo "Success, Successors and the Melchizedekian Connection" Lecture delivered at Oluku Club, Kabba, Dec. 2005, p. 4.

regards did not allow her to penetrate into the spirituality of the people thereby limiting its impact on the social sphere of the society.

Anglican Church and Islam

Furthermore, the influence of Islam in Kogi State before the emergence of Christianity cannot be over-emphasized. The Islamic religious wars (Jihad) under Shehu Othman Dan Fodio in 1804 led to the carving out of a large empire from Sokoto to Ilorin and Ebiraland as well as Kabba Provinces, South of the Niger.⁵⁴ Fabuluje stated further that; "A large proportion of the North including Ilorin and Ebira adopted Islam, the religion of the Fulani as their religion".⁵⁵

Olorunfemi Ojo equally recalled the devastation of most of Okunland during 1897 by the Nupe warlords.⁵⁶ It seems Islam's popularity was further intensified in Okunland during this period. Based on the premise that Islam predated the emergence of the Anglican Church, it must have been prominent among the people of Kogi and Kwara States because Africans are often interested in religions that provide practical solutions to their existential problems; religions that meet the social and spiritual needs of the people. Significantly, the 'mallam' who was seen as the apostle of the new religion, played many roles as a man of God, preacher, teacher, scholar, trader, adviser and medicine man.⁵⁷ Unlike the European Christian Missionaries of the 19th century, miracle-working, healing and meeting of worldly needs of their converts seems not to be part of their evangelism. Their demand for a life of self denial could have explained why it took Christianity a long time to become popular.

Therefore, the effect of the Anglican Church on the Muslims was very insignificant. Islam had already mixed with the traditions of the people. Bishop Crowther acknowledged this fact when he said that converts were more easily made among the adherents of Traditional Religion than among the Muslims.⁵⁸ Recounting how Islamic way of life

³⁴ J. Fabuluje, Op Cit, p. 1

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Olorunfemi Ojo, Op Cit, p. 2

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 4

⁵⁸ D. Akamisoko, Op Cit, p. 59

gained ground among the Ebiras, Yakubu reported that;

The Clannish greetings such as Akoro Oziogu, Oziomoye, Ozi Okoro, Oziidu meaning 'well done'... are fading away. While 'a Salam aleku' which is the Islamic way of greeting is now gaining ground in Ebiraland.⁵⁹

Doctrinal issues also seemed to have weakened the impact of Anglican Church on the Muslims. The doctrine of Trinity, for example, pitched Islam against the Christians. The Muslims in the states under review insisted on the absolute oneness of God (Tawhid). *Muslims* ' conception of Trinity as three Gods made them to detest Christianity, denouncing it as polytheistic. In addition, the first and the greatest teaching of Islam is proclaimed by the Shahada. Therefore, the issues of someone being the Son of God is inconceivable. Only Allah is God and all men are his slaves.

The above statement is not to underestimate the extent to which the Anglican Church went in order to convert some Muslims. A few Muslim families from one city to another were recorded to have turned their backs at Islam especially at the introduction of Western Education by the Anglican Church. Notable examples are the families of late Rev. Ayo Bello, a Baptist Minister, a prominent name in Ilorin. Likewise Venerable David Buraimo Akande of the Anglican denomination and Rev. Ayoola Yusuf described as a Muslim fanatic before conversion were among converts from Islam.⁽⁴⁾ The need to be civilized and acquaint with cosmic ideas may have influenced this.

The consequential result of such conversion of Muslims to Christianity always brought sharp disagreement and religious riot. In Ebiraland for instance, Muslim fanatics who held tenaciously that one's faith should be made personal would do every thing possible to stop house-to-house evangelism of the Christians, a strategy aimed at converting non-Christians.⁶¹ In Ilorin and its environs, Islamic fanatics were ever hostile. The seizure of a piece of land owned by the Anglican Church in Moro/ orere Local Government Area of Kwara State due to Islamic dominance

⁵⁹ N.R. Yakubu, Op Cit, p 67.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 69.

⁶¹ Ibid.

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in 1975, the stoning of some Anglicans at Oloje in 1978 over Christ Church's land; the disturbance that marred the laying of the foundation stone of Bishop Smith Memorial Church, Gaa Akanbi in 1983 over Muslims' claim of ownership and wanton destruction of lives and properties that resulted from the fanatics' attack on the procession of Christians on one Palm Sunday⁶² were all evidences of Islamic strategies to make the Anglican Church (in particular) and Christianity (in general) irrelevant in Kogi and Kwara States.

Considering the impact of the Anglican Church on the social development of the people of Kogi and Kwara States, one can remark that both the positive effects of the Church as well as the counter-effects are glaring. The social effects permeate the culture. Western Education, health and the marriage institution among others.

Anglican Church and People's Culture

Culturally, African names were substituted for Biblical or English names. Names such as, Thomas, Walter, George, Daniel, Jacob, Mary, Gallen and so on became fashionable among the native converts in Kogi and Kwara States. At baptism, Anglican Church made it a standing order to attach such names to native family names. As the children grew, some of them sometimes went to the extreme of retaining the foreign names while their family names such as Olowolayemo, Bako, Oyinloye and so on were jettisoned. Some might have done this to curry the favour of their colonial masters or the Missionaries. However, it is unfortunate to note that such change of identity did not automatically make them whites.⁶³

In addition, the marriage institution seemed somehow affected. The Anglican Church with its emphasis on monogamy as a system of marriage denounced polygamy, which is the widely acceptable phenomenon among the natives in Kogi and Kwara States. Noticeable areas of conflict between the Church and the traditional institution included consent in marriage, appointment of middle men, character attestation, post marital report and

⁶² H. Olumakaye, "The 'See' Controversy in the Anglican Diocese of Kwara" (B.A. Hons Dissertation, Department of Religious, University of Ilorin, 1987), p. 12

⁶³ Oral Interview with Chief (Dr) S.A. Adekunle, Kabba aged 68 on 13th May, 2005 (Industrialist).

the custody of the children of a late parent in case of the marriage between a traditional husband and Christian wife.

Before the emergence of the church, marriage in the States under review (as well as other African Communities) was an integrating force among families and communities. Hence the need to seek the consent of both families and not the couple alone. This was the role of the middlemen or women. This practice is best stated by Mbiti.

It is the point where all members of a given community meet, the departed, the living and those yet to be born. All the dimension of time meet here and the whole drama of history are repeated and revitalized. Therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from corporate society, a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate, otherwise if he does not participate in it is not only abnormal but under-humans.⁶⁴

The missionaries' teaching to their converts that what matters most is their individual relationship with their spouses seemed to have fostered unbridled individualism which characterizes modern day life as against the communal and monolithic structure of the indigenous community.⁶⁵ That is why Wilson Ehianu reported from a random survey that the high rate of divorce today is traceable to the fact that young men and women no longer investigate but marry out of infatuation.⁶⁶ Apart from this, polygamists were asked by the Church to disown all their wives but retain one in order to be admitted into full membership and enjoy the privileges of the Church. This was viewed as a kind of restitution needed for salvation. The counter-effect of this principle was the creation of an atmosphere populated by nuisance. Children so disowned were uncared for and therefore constituted a threat to the community.

Anglican Church and Ecumenism

At this juncture, we need to state that since the Christianization of Kogi

⁶⁴ J.S. Mbiti, African Religion and Philosophy (London, Educational Book Ltd., 1990), p. 133

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 37

⁰⁰ Wilson Ehianu, Op Cit, p. 29

and Kwara States was not done in isolation by the Anglican Church, its relationship with other Christian Missions or Churches should be looked into. It is equally important to state in this article how the Anglican Church in Kogi and States responded to the declaration of Lambeth Conference of 1988⁶⁷ as touching the ecumenical vocation of the Anglican worldwide.

The earliest evidence of the ecumenical nature of the Anglican Church is traceable to Bishop Samuel Ajavi Crowther. He was said to have extended the bond of friendship and brotherhood to the Missionaries of other denominations in his days.⁶⁸ Typical of such disposition was his offering of free accommodation to the Catholic Missionaries who arrived Lokoja in 1884.69 They were housed at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church as a take-off point for their Mission work. Crowther was said to have been driven by the conviction that working together will speed up the work of Mission, since no single denomination can evangelize the entire nation. This action fostered unity between the Anglican and the Catholics in Lokoja, Kogi state. The reverse was the case in Kabba where the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Mission, (as it was called at that time) were engulfed by misunderstanding. D.O. Iluromi attributed such crisis between the two Churches in 1925 to ignorance and doctrinal differences.⁷⁰ The historic rift happened on Christian day in 1925 during the reign of Obaro Oliyori. Lack of respect for each other during Christmas rally or procession led to physical combat that lasted for hours before the District Officer known as C.R. Niven came with some policemen to stop the fight. However, with the passage of time, there existed cooperation and understanding between the Catholics and Anglicans in Kabba.

Suspicions, separation and allegation of snatching of converts were other factors responsible for breach of unity among Christian denominations. For example, when the Roman Catholic Church emerged in Ogidi (near Kabba) around 1911,⁷¹ some members of the Church Missionary Society were reported to have deflected to the Catholic

71 Ibid

⁶⁷ "The Truth Shall Make You Free", *The Lambeth Conference 1988* (London, Church House Publishing, 1988), p. 6

⁶⁸ Duke Akamisoko, Op Cit, p. 33

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ D.O. Iluromi, Op Cit, p. 33

Church. This generated bad feelings from the Anglicans' circle. One may then agree with Ijagbemi's account of the delimitation of spheres of Missionary influence by the colonial lords in Okun land. He stated that while the Church Missionary Society concentrated in Owe (Kabba) and Ijumuland, the Sudan Interior Movement, presently known as ECWA concentrated in Yagba land (Isanlu, Mopa, Ponyan and Ife-Olu Kotun) where the Roman Catholic Mission was to be found all over the territory.⁷² The Policy was aimed at minimizing inter-denominational clashes among the faith based organization. The above argument is one of the factors responsible for the late presence of the Anglican Church in areas like Jege, Ponyan, Ife-Olukotun and other towns in Yagba land.

However, in Kwara State, the Anglican Church played a prominent role in originating interaction among the Churches. The formation of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Ilorin branch was said to have been initiated by the Rt. Rev. Herbert Haruna, the Anglican Bishop of Kwara around 1978.⁷³ By February 1982, it seemed there already existed a full cooperation and strong unity among the churches within the association that led to the foundation laying of C.A.N. headquarters complex in Ilorin. The large turn out at annual Palm Sunday procession round the city of Ilorin, annual joint Carol service and prayer meetings for the civil service were part of the evidences of Christian unity. The involvement of Bishops Onayekan and Makozi of the Catholic Mission as well as Rt. Rev. Dr. S.K. Solanke of the Methodist Church⁷⁴ really made the Association a force to be reckoned with. On occasional cases, representation was made to the Government to discuss matters relating to peace in the state.

In addition to this, the Anglican Church in Kwara State was said to have originated the Christian Pilgrims Welfare programme⁷⁵ before the State Government embraced it. The scheme was used as an instrument by the Christian Association in Kwara State to request from the Government's sponsorship of a few Christians on annual pilgrimage to

⁷² Adeleye Ijagbemi, Op Cit, Pp. 35 & 36

⁷³ H.Y. Haruna, Christian Ministry in today's Church and Society (Abuja, Memo Ventures), back page.

⁷⁴ J. Fabuluje, Op Cit, p. 49

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 50

Jerusalem. Such trip is presumed to have attracted spiritual benefits and deepened the ecumenical nature of the Christians in the State.

With such dynamic leadership in ecumenical matters, Rt. Rev. Herbert Haruna was given a national award of 'Officer of the Federal Republic' (OFR) in 1982. His contributions to the cause of religious harmony in Nigeria (under CAN) earned him another International honour as an 'Officer of the World Conference on Religion and Peace' at a conference which held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1983 among many others honours.⁷⁶

Anglican Church and Educational Institutions in Kogi and Kwara States

Education has been described as one of the three major factors of social, cultural and religious development of any society.⁷⁷ Omotoye would not agree that it was the Christians or Muslims that first introduced education to African people. He buttressed his point with the fact that African society had moral education, which grew out of their traditional religion before the introduction of Western or Quaranic education.

The Anglican Church in the States under review made it a primary duty to establish and manage some primary and secondary schools as a means to inculcate sound formal and Western education in the children of members as well as non-members. Apart from long established schools such as Holy Trinity Primary School, Lokoja, St. Mark's (CMS) School Offa, St. Barnabas Anglican Primary School, Ilorin, Bishop Smith Memorial Primary School and College, Ilorin, more schools sprang up, new colleges under Anglican Churches were founded in Ilala, Iyara-Ijumu, Oke-Opin and Omu-Aran. In Ilorin, the Anglican Church founded St. Barnabas Nursery and Primary School in 1988, Mt. Olives Nursery/Primary School in 1991, Anglican Women's Guild Nursery/Primary School in 1993, Anglican Grammar School in 1994 and Women's Guild Vocational Centre for Day Care in 1994.

⁷⁶ H. Olumakaye, Op Cit, p. 17

⁷⁷ Akinyele Omoyajowo, (ed), The Anglican Church in Nigeria 1842 - 1992 (Lagos, Macmillan, 1994), p. 177

Apart from the strategies highlighted for consolidating the Church, Bishop Haruna encouraged Anglican Churches to invest in projects that would serve as sources of generating income for future development. St. Barnabas Ilorin and St. Michael's Esie, took the giant strides by investing on building projects which today are veritable sources of income to them. These help the Churches to cope with annual financial obligations.

Concluding this aspect of the study, it may be necessary to stress that the Anglican Church in the States under review is in the fore front in tackling national issues that are detrimental to the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria especially, Nigeria's membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference, and through her effort to hold many ecumenical dialogues, some denominations which had existed as "Islands" now became integrated into the Christian body.

Recommendation and Conclusion

S.A. Adewale in Akinyele Omoyajowo⁷⁸ opined that for a religion to attract people and survive in a foreign land, it must adapt itself to the taste of the local people. Such adaptation will not only make the religion meaningful to the people, its practice will also be down-to-earth. From observation, worship in the Anglican Church in the States under review still reflects more of the European Liturgy with little cultural elements. Some clergy still hold tenaciously to some aspects of the Anglican liturgy when they offer prayer from the "Book of Common Prayer"⁷⁹ instead of praying from their hearts. Some aspects⁸⁰ which seem irrelevant to this generation are still in vogue.

Apart from this, since Africans seek practical solutions to spiritual problems besetting them, the deliverance and healing ministry of the Early Church must be revisited. The evolvement of such ministry would

⁷⁸ S.A. Adewale in Akinyele Omoyajowo (ed), *The Anglican Church in Nigeria 1842-1992* (Lagos, Macmillan 1994), p. 199.

⁷⁹ 'Book of Common Prayer' is a service book used by the Anglicans all over the world. It has various versions like 1549, 1552, 1662 and the 1980 Alternative Service Book.

⁸⁰ Like the prayer for the Queen of England and the Litany which had historical antecedents. Litany was a Stately prayer composed in Europe during the break-out of pestilence. It is English oriented.

checkmate members' reliance on traditional methods of healing and protection and even reduce patronage of some Christian "Prophets" for solution to their problems.

As a matter of fact, proliferation of Churches in the States under review (in particular) and in the country (in general) remains a menace in the 20th century. Reason being that, not all such Churches are divinely motivated. Many of the founders had political, cultural, religious, educational and other personal motives tied around establishing their Churches. Adewale asserted thus; "they apparently connive at ambivalence in religious practices. Some of them are members of secret societies...."⁸¹ Therefore, the Anglican Church must evolve programmes that would prevent her members from falling prevs in the hands of some wolves in sheep's clothing.

Furthermore, the Anglican Church should emphasize hospital visitation ministry in order to make the Church more relevant in the States under review. The laity can be encouraged to participate effectively in this area. The clergy themselves should invest much of their time to pastoral visitation. It has been observed by Herbert Haruna⁸² that this is an area where new generation Churches have an edge over the Anglican Church. Pastoral visitation helps the clergy to acquaint themselves with the problems facing their members and to know those who are sick in order to minister to them. Some members who are facing other problems financially, educationally and domestically need the counselling of their Pastors in solving the problem. The danger in lack of effective Pastoral visitation was described by Herbert Haruna thus;

It is possible the ministers of the new Churches take the initiative to care and minister to the sick. And when the sick survives, the patient and the members of his/her family often change over to the new Churches...⁸³

Moreover, one of the factors inhibiting the effective pastoral ministry in the Anglican Church from one generation to another is the clergy

#3 Ibid.

⁸¹ S.A. Adewale, Op Cit.

⁸² H.Y. Haruna, Op Cit, p. 43.

welfare. Instead of the authority to evolve a salary structure that reflects the financial reality, they only give peanuts to their clergy in the name of stipend. It is expected that since the Pastoral work is highly demanding, twenty four hours daily, the clergy should be accorded better treatment. Gone were the days when the clergy were being supplied with various food items by their members. The economic crunch in the country has made many people to even look up to their Pastors for feeding and financial assistance.

In addition, the Anglican Church in Kogi and Kwara States could still revisit the policy of assisting the clergy in the education of their children. Grants could be given to the children of the clergy or at least a reasonable reduction of the school fees in schools owned by the Dioceses. If this policy is put in place, it would make some clergy to be committed to the spiritual progress of their members instead of spending much of their time on the farm or looking elsewhere for money to survive their domestic obligations.⁸⁴

For a Church to be sustained in this competitive generation, economic empowerment seems very essential. The Anglican Church in the States under review should harness every material resource together to achieve this. For example, whatever legacies or establishments that belonged to the Church in the two States could be co-funded by the Dioceses.⁸⁵ Bishop Smith's Theological College in Okene, the only institution in the States under review bearing the name of the man that established Anglicanism in most parts of the States, should not be left in the hands of Lokoja Diocese alone for up-keep.

Furthermore, for the Anglican Church to have a good future in the States of focus, over-concentration on the urban cities should be discouraged. Farm settlements, hamlets and villages should not be neglected. The interiors should be evangelised and Churches planted there in order to have Anglican presence. If such step is taken and the evangelists or pastors stationed in such rural areas as resident workers

⁸⁴ Oral Interview with Mr. B.O. Akande 63 years old, Okene, January 10, 2006 (Layreader).

⁸⁵ The five Dioceses are Kwara, Lokoja, Kabba, Offa and Igbomina.

are given incentives, the future of the Church is guaranteed.

Finally, the development of the Anglican Church in Kogi and Kwara States should not be measured by the number of Dioceses it already has or would have later, but by the numerical strength of membership. This can only be propelled by massive evangelism. It is an area where lay ministry could be encouraged because evangelization does not necessarily need ordination. Each Anglican member should be encouraged to be involved in evangelism in order to double the Church's population. Evangelism through medical services⁸⁶ is also a sensitive aspect of the early Missionaries which should be resuscitated.

Other ministries that would enhance the growth of the Anglican Church in the States under review are the healing ministry, children evangelism ministry and the youth ministry. The last two ministries should be well funded. If the Anglican Church can invest on such vital areas, positive dividends would be the result.

⁸⁰ D. Sebanjo "Medicine as a Tool for Evangelism" Anglicana, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1997, p. 23.