

Christian Faith: Its Impact on Indigenous Practices in Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún up to 2000

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Abstract

By the mid-nineteenth century, Christianity had spread rapidly in Yorùbáland. In Yorùbáland, nay Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún, Christian missionary organisations provided the foundation for the modern formal educational system. Indeed, Western education birthed a new elite that became influential in virtually all sectors of society, and that promoted the spread of Western culture. In Yorùbáland generally, and Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún in particular, Christianity was able to establish a strong influence, introducing many new ways of looking at the world by destroying or modifying many aspects of indigenous practices. This paper investigates how Christianity got to Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún vis-à-vis its impact on indigenous practices of the people. In doing this, the paper employs both primary and secondary sources of data. The paper, therefore, argues that retrieval and sustenance of the Yorùbá customs and culture would go a long way in solving some of the developmental challenges in Yorùbáland in general and Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún in particular.

Keywords: Christianity, Culture, Development, Education, Indigenous practices.

Introduction

Generally, Africa, over the years, has been influenced, and indeed transformed by its contacts with other parts of the globe, especially Europe and Asia.¹ Among the notable issues that have dominated debates among scholars are slavery and slave trade, the spread of Christianity and Islam, the imposition of colonial rule, among others.² Indeed, each of these issues has influenced African customs, cultures and developmental capability by introducing new values and ethos, and birthing “new systems of inter-personal relations, domination and exploitation.”³

By the mid-nineteenth century, Christianity had spread rapidly in Yorùbáland. Its rapid spread coincided with the colonial rule. These two issues have been lumped together in some literatures as imperialism.⁴ In Yorùbáland, nay Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún, Christian missionaries provided the foundation for the modern formal educational system. In fact, Western education gave birth to a new elite that became influential in all sectors of society, which promoted the spread of Western culture. In Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún in particular, Christianity as a religion, was able to establish a strong influence by introducing many new ways of looking at the world by destroying or modifying many aspects of indigenous practices. In other words, Christian faith demanded its own alliance and loyalty among the Òkè-Ìlá people, just like any other society in Yorùbáland.

This paper, investigates how Christianity got to Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún and its impact on indigenous practices of the people. This discussion is organised into six parts. With this introduction overview; the paper proceeds to examine indigenous practices among the people of

¹ For more information on this, see Tóyìn Fálólá, *The Tóyìn Fálólá Reader on African Culture Nationalism, Development and Epistemologies* (Austin, Texas: Pan-African University Press, 2018), 270-272.

² See Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle L’ouverture Publications, 1972).

³ Fálólá, *The Tóyìn Fálólá Reader on African Culture*, 270.

⁴ See also, B. Barkindo, M. Omolewà and G. Babalólá (eds.), *Africa and the Wider World 3: Africa since the Scramble* (Lagos: Longman Nigeria Plc., 1994), 54-61.

Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún; the third part focuses on Christian faith and Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún experience. The fourth part examines the influence of Christianity on the indigenous practices of the people of Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún society. The fifth part discusses the retrieval and sustenance of the customs and culture of the Yorùbá in general and Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún in particular which could go a long way in proffering solutions to some of the developmental challenges facing the Yorùbá as a race. The sixth part concludes the paper.

Indigenous practices among the People of Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún

The Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún people belong to a distinct dialectical unit of Yorùbá called the *Ìgbómìnà*. According to Afọláyan, the *Ìgbómìnà* refers to “the people and the land they occupy”.⁵ They could be found within latitude 8° and 9° North, and longitude 4° and 6° East. In fact, they comprise many sub-groups which include: the Ìlá, Ọ̀po, Ọ̀yàngbá, Isin, Ọ̀ró, Ọ̀resè, Ọ̀sìsá, Ilé-Ire, Ọ̀kè-Ọ̀de and Ọ̀sààrẹ̀.⁶ Apart from Ìlá sub-group (Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún inclusive) all the *Ìgbómìnà*, are currently located in present day Kwara and Kogi States, respectively. The Ìlá sub-unit are located presently in Osun State.

Before the advent of Christian mission, the Yorùbá in general and Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún in particular had the knowledge of a Supreme Being, called *Olódùmarè*. In other words, before the introduction of Christian religion, Yorùbá people had their own religion. From *ìgbà iwáṣẹ̀* (the cradle of life), the Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún people refer to God as *Olódùmarè*, *Adáni 'áyé*, *Aṣẹ̀dá*, *Ọ̀lórún*, among other names. This means: Almighty, El-Shaddai, the Creator, the Supreme Ruler of Heaven, the Owner of Heaven, among others.⁷ According to Ọ̀dòwú, *Olódùmarè*, also known as

⁵ See Fúnsọ Afọláyan, “War and Change in 19th Century *Ìgbómìnà*”, in A. Akinjogbin (ed.), *War and Peace in Yorùbáland, 1793-1893* (Ìbàdàn: Heinemann, 1998), 77-78.

⁶ Afọláyan, “War and Change” .

⁷ See Olúṣolá Owólabí, *Ajagunlà Kingdom of Òkè-Ìlá Ọ̀ràngún* (Ìbàdàn: Setoprints Global Investment Ltd., 2012), 61.

Olórun, is the Supreme Being, with the attributes, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, among other attributes of *Olódùmarè*. He further submits:

What the Yorùbá have in mind when they speak the name, *Olódùmarè* call upon the Deity in prayers, or approach Him in worship, is expressed by all descriptions taken together. The name *Olódùmarè* has always carried with it the idea of One with Whom man may enter into covenant or communion in any place and at any time, one who is Supreme, superlatively great, incomparable and indisputable in majesty, excellence in attributes, stable, unchanging, constant, reliable.⁸

However, the Yorùbá believe that *Olódùmare* is “considered too mighty and colossal beyond human accessibility”.⁹ Hence, He could not be contacted or served directly except via intermediaries, such as deities, spirits and divinities.¹⁰ These divinities include *Òrìṣà-ńlá*, also known as *Ọ̀bàtálá*, *Èlà*, *Ọ̀rúnmilà*, *Ọ̀gún*, *Èṣù*, among others.¹¹ There are also deities. These were humans deified at death and venerated as the intermediaries of *Olódùmarè* in *Òkè-Ìlá* kingdom. They included *Ajagunlà*, *Amotágesì*, *Sàngó*, *Oya*, *Ọ̀gún*, among others.¹² From the foregoing discussion, it is indisputable that the *Òkè-Ìlá* people in particular and Yorùbá in general have had the idea of *Olódùmarè* from time immemorial.

Another major aspect of Yorùbá rich and creative culture could be seen in their clothing tradition. Obviously, this involves the production, design and use of textile materials before their contacts with the other cultures. Studies have shown that between the 16th and late 19th centuries,

⁸ See E.B. Ìdòwú, *Olódùmare: God in Yorùbá Belief* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1962), 36. See also, J.O. Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorùbás* (Lagos: CMS Bookshop, 1948), 34.

⁹ See Owólabí, *Ajagunlà Kingdom*, 64.

¹⁰ Owólabí, *Ajagunlà Kingdom*.

¹¹ Owólabí *Ajagunlà Kingdom*.

¹² Interview with Oba Adédòkun Omoniyi Abólàrì, Aróyinkéyè, 1, the *Òràngún* of *Òkè-Ìlá*, 63 years, at *Òkè-Ìlá* *Òràngún*, 11th December, 2019.

a thriving textile production took place in Yorùbá Kingdoms of Òyó, Ìsẹ̀yìn, Ògbómòsò, Ìlòrin, Ìjàyè, Ìlá, Abẹ̀òkúta, Ègbádò, Èkìtì, Òwò and Ìjẹ̀bú.¹³

More importantly, the Yorùbá as a race, are generally known for their stylish fashion which they put on at diverse times, especially during special ceremonies and other festivities. This tradition can be divided into two, viz; “textiles – the design and production of clothes, and dress – the use of cloths in making apparel in its varieties and its actual use to adorn the body”.¹⁴ The most common then was *aşo òfí* (weaving cloth) or *aşo òkè* as its being fondly called by the Ègbá and Ìjẹ̀bú sub-groups of the Yorùbá. There are varieties of this Yorùbá *aşo òfí*. There were *àlààrì*, *sányán*, *òlòmólángidi*, *alààngbá*, *ónjávùú*, *ihò*, *eyá*, *alábẹ*, among others.¹⁵

Further, there was also *Àdìrẹ* (tie dye cloths). There were different types of *Àdìrẹ* cloths. They included *àdìrẹ oníkò*, *àdìrẹ ẹ̀lẹ̀kọ* (corn-palp batiks), *àdìrẹ alábéré* (stitching), among others.¹⁶ Essentially, the men’s dresses consisted of outer garment, known as *dàndógó*, *agbádá*, *òyàlà*, *gbàriyẹ*, etc., and *dànsíkí* or *bùbá àwòtẹ̀lẹ̀* (underwear) with *şòkòtò* (trousers) of *kènbẹ* or *şòpòpò* and a matching cap of *órìbì* or *abetí-ajá*, always put in diverse styles.¹⁷ Women on the other hand, adorned themselves with *bùbá* (blouse), *iró* (wrapper) *gèlè* (headgear) and *iborùn* (shoulder adornment).¹⁸ Also, women put on accessories and jewelry to complement their dressing. For instance, they put on *ilẹ̀kẹ̀*, or *iyùn*, *àkún*, *sẹ̀gi*, *lágídígbà*, *bèbè*, *ẹ̀gbà*, among others. This was also complemented with various types of hairstyles, plaited in diverse forms, such as *bíba*, *dídì* or *kíkó*,

¹³ For more details on Yorùbá Textiles and Dresses, see Babaşéhíndè Adémúlẹ̀yá, “Textiles and Dresses” in Tóyìn Fálólá and Akíntúndé Akínyemí (eds.), *Culture and Customs of the Yorùbá* (Austin, Texas: Pan-African University press, 2018), 281-294.

¹⁴ See Adémúlẹ̀yá, “Textiles and Dresses”.

¹⁵ Interview with Pa samson Afólábí, Community Leader, 80 years, Bodija, Ibadan, 25th March, 2022.

¹⁶ Interview with Alhaji Jímòn Àdìgún, Community Leader, 77 years, Fàjé, Abẹ̀òkúta, 22nd April, 2022.

¹⁷ See Adémúlẹ̀yá, Textiles and Dresses, 291.

¹⁸ Adémúlẹ̀yá, Textiles and Dresses, 291.

ranging from *şùkú, pàtẹ̀wọ́, kòlẹ̀sẹ̀, ọ̀lọ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀, ipàkọ̀-ẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀, korobá* and so on.¹⁹ The Yorùbá believe in the saying that *ìrínisí ni یشه ni l'ójó* (the way you are dressed is the way you are addressed). Hence, the Yorùbá textiles and dresses are being regarded as “cultural emblems and indisputable symbols of Yorùbá identity, which was later tagged primitive by the Christian missionaries and the colonialists.

In addition, there is Yorùbá language and sub-groups of the language among the Yorùbá sub-units. Before the advent of Christianity, this was the language widely used for communication purposes. A child was supposed to pick this language during socialisation processes. The same can be said of food items in Yorùbáland. There were indigenous food items. For instance, Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún people are known for the consumption of *ẹ̀kuru, ẹ̀ko, یشه*, among others.²⁰ However, the advent of Christianity and the attendant colonialisation of Nigeria changed all these indigenous practices among the people.

Christian Faith: The Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún Experience

The first group of Christian missions landed in 1842 at Badagry, en route to Abẹ̀òkúta.²¹ According to Ajayi “they came in the wake of the liberated slaves returning home to Nigeria”.²² These liberated slaves known as *sàró* had already been Christianised when they were under captivity in Brazil or Cuba. They were later granted freedom from there or in Sierra Leone. After the abolition of the slave trade by Britain in 1807, the British government became anxious with a view to seeing the liberated Africans engage in some useful activities. Although some were gainfully engaged in farming, trade or evangelism. However, a greater number of these liberated

¹⁹ See adémúlẹ̀yá, “Textiles and Dresses”, 291.

²⁰ Interview with Chief Jímọ̀n Ọ̀láníyí, 74 years, a trader, Òjé, Ìbàdàn, 13th April, 2022.

²¹ For a detailed account of Christian Missionary in Nigeria, see J.F.A. Àjáyí, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891* (London: Longmans, 1965).

²² See T.G.O. Gbàdàmósí and J.F. Adé Àjáyí, “Islam and Christianity in Nigeria”, in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibadan: HEBN Publishers Plc., 1980), 349.

slaves could not be employed due to the scarcity of farmland and markets. Hence, it was necessary to key into other ways of making use of their “newly acquired experience”.²³ Many of these freed slaves were also impressed with the idea of taking them home in order to join their kith and kin.

As noted earlier, Badagry became their first base. Badagry, later became unsatisfactory due to the loss of its former status as a slave depot, which had affected it negatively.²⁴ Indeed, the Badagry people were not ready to receive Christian missions, and, therefore, gave the missionaries little or no cooperation. This attitude of the people in Badagry made the missionaries to look further to Abèòkúta and entered into agreement with the authorities there. At this period, Abèòkúta was a new town under the leadership of Şódeḱé, who did not want to be friendly with the Missionaries, but he wanted the missionaries for their help in the political crisis against Lagos and some other hostile neighbouring kingdoms, such as Dahomey and Ìbàdàn.²⁵ Therefore, the missionaries were accepted in 1846 in Abèòkúta, and became “their main gateway into Yorùbáland and regions beyond”.²⁶

Moreover, the return of the liberated slaves brought about the introduction of Christianity into various Yorùbá towns, such as Lagos, Ìbàdàn, Ìjàyè, Èḱe, Ìrágḃìjì and Ìlorin. In fact, from these places, Christian missionaries got to other towns in Yorùbáland, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. Essentially, between 1842 and 1892 eight Christian missionaries were able to plant themselves in different parts of southern Nigeria.²⁷

²³ Gbàdàmòsì and Àjàyí, “Islam and Christianity”.

²⁴ See gbàdàmòsì and Àjàyí, “islam and Christianity”.

²⁵ For more details on this, see E.A. Àyándélé, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1843-1914: A Political and Social Analysis* (London: Longmans, 1966) Chaps. 1-3.

²⁶ See Gbàdàmòsì and Àjàyí, “Islam and Christianity”, 350.

²⁷ See E.A. Àyándélé, “External Relations with Europeans in the Nineteenth Century: Explorers, Missionaries and Traders”, in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian*, 371.

Regarding Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún, studies have shown that the Seventh Day Adventist Church was the first Christian mission to have got to Òkè-Ìlá. Christian faith got to this kingdom in 1922 as a result of the activities of an American missionary in the person of David Babcock. He brought the Adventist Faith to Nigeria in 1914.²⁸ In this ministerial work, Babcock frequently went to Ìpoti-Èkìtì, passing via Òkè-Ìlá in the 1920s.²⁹ It was Chief Adáramólá Owólabí Òşúndínà, who later invited his bosom friend, Ọdẹdùnmóyè by name, from Ilé-Alápinni in Òkè-Ìlá, and the duo went to Ìpoti-Èkìtì on a visit, where they saw David Babcock holding a crusade. They then became attracted to Babcock's preaching, thereby inviting him to Òkè-Ìlá. Consequent up this, the Seventh Day Adventist Church was established at Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún in 1922.³⁰

Similarly, the Baptist denomination in Òkè-Ìlá came out from the Nigerian Baptist Convention, which became an offshoot of the work of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA.³¹ The Baptist mission got to Nigeria in 1850.³² The missionary enterprise of the Baptist began to spread to Yorùbáland up to Ìrẹ̀sì.³³ It was from Ìrẹ̀sì that the Baptist as a denomination, got to Òkè-Ìlá via the late Chief Emmanuel Adékéyẹ Babalọlá, the Ọbàalà of Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún, who brought the Christian faithful to found the Baptist church in the early 1930s in Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún.³⁴

Apart from these two denominations discussed above, other churches that could be found in Òkè-Ìlá today, include Christ Apostolic Church, Anglican Church, Christ Apostolic Mission Church, Celestial Church of Christ, Deeper Life Church, among others.³⁵

²⁸ Interview with Oba Adédòkun Ọmọ̀niyì Abólàrìn, the Òràngún of Òkè-Ìlá, 63 years, Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún 10th December, 2019.

²⁹ See, *Owólabí Ajagunlà Kingdom*, 76.

³⁰ Owólabí, *Ajagunlà Kingdom*.

³¹ See also, Tóyìn Fálọlá, *Politics and Economy in Ìbàdàn 1893-1945* (Lagos: Modelor Publishers, 1989), 9.

³² See Àyándélé, "External Relations", 371.

³³ See Owólabí, *Ajagunlà Kingdom*.

³⁴ See Owólabí, *Ajagunlà Kingdom*.

³⁵ Interview with Oba Adedokun Omoinyi Abolarin, the Orangun of Okè-Ilá, 63 years, 11th December, 2019.

Influence of Christianity on Indigenous Practices in Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún

As stated earlier, Christianity got to southern Nigeria as a result of the liberation of slaves from the New World towards the end of the eighteenth century. Indeed, these freed slaves, who had accepted Christianity, upon their return to West Africa, preferred to continue Christian worship rather than return to the old way of worship. The return of these emigrants led to the introduction of Christian faith into different Yorùbá Kingdoms. In fact, from these centres, the religion spread to other towns in Yorùbáland in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁶

However, Christian missionary activities in Yorùbáland were not only limited to evangelism that centred on a higher level of spirituality or religious superiority over the indigenous or traditional religion. Also, there were some “materialistic ventures inherent in education, medicine, administration, architecture, sports, etc.”³⁷ Falola opines:

The adoption of Christianity was not without its advantages, mainly the association with the symbols and power of Europe. It brought Western education, medicine, and opportunities for work in the formal economic sectors. It enabled a number of African Chiefs and Kings to use religion to promote international trade and consolidate their power. To the elite produced by the missionaries, it led to an assumption that they were equipped with knowledge to transform Africa. It provided an avenue to build social networks in the new cities: the elite and church members could share and circulate information about jobs, social services, public policies and things beneficial to them.³⁸

In spite of all the above good deeds, the activities of the Christian missionaries left behind certain adverse effects on Yorùbáland in general and Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún in particular. One of these

³⁶ See Gbàdàmósí and Àjàyí, “Islam and Christianity”, 350.

³⁷ See Şégún Ògúngbèmi, “Traditional Religious Belief System”, in T. Fálolá and A. Akínyemí (eds.), *Culture and Customs*, 314.

³⁸ See Toyin Falola, *The Power of African Cultures* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 201-203.

consequences on Yorùbáland was the move “to eradicate their cultural values and identity”.³⁹ The missionaries looked down on everything African, ranging from African art, music, dresses, dances and songs, systems of marriage and naming ceremonies. They made their converts abandon all of them. This attitude has contributed to division in Yorùbáland and retarded its development of indigenous culture and customs.⁴⁰ Àyàndélé writes:

Where the explorer had been cautious in his remarks about the cultural heritage of the country and had been submissive and differential to the rulers, the missionary was rash, regarding Nigeria’s cultural heritage as the product of the devil and the rulers as spiritual and social inferiors.⁴¹

The western educated elite in Yorùbáland, upon their conversion to Christianity, took European names as Christian names. While the “uneducated” converts continued to participate in traditional festivals, the educated elite shunned and regarded with contempt most African traditions. Even, at home, children are being encouraged to speak English language only, to the detriment of Yorùbá language till today.

More importantly, the introduction of Christianity and Western-style education has grossly affected the continued relevance of traditional belief system in Yorùbáland, generally.⁴² This birthed contradiction between traditional morality shown by the celebration of traditional festivals and the new morality preached by the new religion – Christianity. In other words, Christianity and Western-style education undermine traditional belief systems and practices of Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún people. In fact, the Yorùbá people, Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún society inclusive, became westernised and got separated from their traditional religious milieu. Today, they prefer to be identified with

³⁹ See Ògúngbèmi, “Traditional Religious Belief”, 314.

⁴⁰ See Tóyìn Fálolá and Àkànmú Adébáyò, *A Summary of West African History (1000 A.D. – Present)* (Ilé-Ifè: University of Ifè Press, (1983), 50.

⁴¹ Àyàndélé “External Relations”, 379; See also Barkindo, Omoṣewà and Babalolá (eds.), *Africa and the Wider World* 3, 54-61.

⁴² See Fólolá, *The Toyin Falola Reader*, 271.

Christian faith and Western education. In fact, the educated sons and daughters of Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún believe that they can no longer take part in indigenous practices, regarding them as fetish, evil, primitive, barbaric, among others. Missionary activities in Òkè-Ìlá as a society produced many Christian adherents and church “goers”. Many became attracted to Western culture, with the resultant effects on their culture, traditions and customs.⁴³

Furthermore, the introduction and the spread of Christianity have also dealt a deadly blow to the *Omólúàbí* ethos of the Yorùbá.⁴⁴ Christian missions, as said earlier, laid the foundations of the modern formal educational system in Africa. Western-style education encouraged the spread of Western culture at the expense of the indigenous ones. This later brought about the political and economic conquest of Africa, followed by “cultural subjugation and the imposition of an imperialist cultural tradition whose dire effects are still felt today”.⁴⁵ Christianity and Western education introduced individualism against collectivism in Africa. Most African societies had a communal approach to life.⁴⁶ In other words, they were their brother’s keeper. But this changed to individualism due to the introduction of Christian faith and Western-style education to Africans.⁴⁷

Culture and Customs of the Òkè Ìlá Òràngún: Retrieval and Sustenance

Culture can be defined as a total way of life, ideology and philosophy of a people. It has been a focal point of scholarly research in the fields of history, sociology, language, literature, among others. In fact, the findings of existing research have shown that culture is dynamic.

⁴³ See S.O. Ìjàolá, “Islam and Christianity”, in T. Fálolá and A. Akínyemí (eds.), *Culture and Customs*, 929-930; Also see Owólabí, *Ajagunlà Kingdom*, 78; Also, see Àyàndélé *Missionary Impact*, 25.

⁴⁴ On Omólúàbí ideology of the Yorùbá, see A.O. Dosylva, “Glocalisation of Yorùbá Omólúwàbí Ideology”. *Yorùbá Studies Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2016), 65-85.

⁴⁵ See, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, “*The Writer in a Neo-colonial State*”, *Moving the Centre (Struggle for Cultural Freedom)* (London: James Curney, 1993), 42-43.

⁴⁶ For details on African Socialism, see Tom Mboya, “African Socialism” in Gideon-Cyrus Mutiso and SW Rohio (eds.), *Readings in African Political Thought* (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1975), 603-604.

⁴⁷ See also, Matthew Atiládé, Adérójú and Olúṣégún Olákúnlé oláníyì, *Omólúwàbí in Yorùbá Worldview: Lessons for Contemporary Nigerian Society*. Forth-coming.

Findings have also revealed that African or Yorùbá culture is not static as opposed to the claims of the Christian missions and later the colonialists.⁴⁸ The imposition of the two foreign religions, Islam and Christianity has brought an attack on African local customs and culture. And this has affected Africa's developmental trajectory.⁴⁹

Colonialism changed various aspects of African identity and introduced many new ways to "patterns of inter-group relations and the linkages between Africa and the wider world".⁵⁰ The imposition of colonial rule in Africa brought about subjugation, exploitation and loss of sovereignty. There were many aspects of colonial policies that created problems. For instance, the disparity in social and educational provisions birthed dissension and conflicts".⁵¹ Cultural disintegration happened basically due to the disruptive effects of religion (Christianity) Fálolá submits:

... the imposition of alien languages, movement to the cities, and the spread of wage income. Colonialism was destructive of culture and identity. Either by crushing what was opposed to its agenda or by modifying what was supportive, colonialism was a process of damage and disruption.⁵²

For Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún and Yorùbáland by extension to get out of the yoke of underdevelopment, this paper, therefore, recommends the retrieval and sustenance of culture and customs of the Yorùbá. The use of culture here is regarded as the most creative way to forge an identity. That is, we need to identify and promote the culture of Òkè-Ìlá in particular and Yorùbá in general; determine the aspects of the past that are still relevant, among others. Òkè-Ìlá culture

⁴⁸ See Fálolá, *The Tóyìn Fálolá Reader*, 271.

⁴⁹ See Chinua Achebe, *An Image of Africa and the Trouble with Nigeria* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 19.

⁵⁰ See Fálolá, *The Tóyìn Fálolá Reader*.

⁵¹ Fálolá, *The Tóyìn Fálolá Reader*.

⁵² See Fálolá, *The Tóyìn Fálolá Reader*.
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and Yorùbá by extension should be kept alive for developmental processes. We need to keep the memory of folktales alive, readapted to the television age. The cinema and other media can be employed as powerful agencies of cultural liberation and change. Here, culture needs to play a strategic role for social, political and economic purposes. In other words, culture must proffer some solutions to dependency. Fálolá captures it thus:

New cultural industries that emerge should, in turn, affect the economy. As simple as they appear, the crafts industries remain the best of the African cultural industries because crafts can be practised everywhere, the technology is accessible, the capital requirement is low, a large population of youth can be absorbed, the final products are authentic, and these industries form the basis of an indigenous technological revolution.⁵³

This would go a long way in reducing the rate of crime in Òkè-Ìlá in particular and Yorùbáland in general, as some of these youths will be fully engaged.

Writing from the same point of view Akínjogbìn submits:

Therefore, if we want a rapid technological advancement in this country, we should look into the history of our technological growth and build from there. So far, the impression one gets is that none of the planners places any particular premium on such a history ... unless we look into our past and take our traditional base seriously, there is very little hope of a real technological advancement.⁵⁴

Òkè-Ìlá or Yorùbá people can borrow a leaf from societies that are struggling to develop, or from those that have employed alternative models of development. Examples of such cultural retention and adaption to foreign changes are China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, among others.⁵⁵

⁵³ See Fálolá, *The Tóyìn Fálolá Reader*, 278.

⁵⁴ See I.A. Akínjogbìn, "History and Nation-building". An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ife, 28th November, 1977, 3-23.

⁵⁵ For more on development models, see Tóyìn Fálolá, *Decolonisation and Development planning in Nigeria* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996); K.M. Asante, *African Culture: The Rhythms of unity* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1996); Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ali A. Mazrui, "Perspective: The Muse of Modernity and the Quest for Development", in P.G. Altbach and S.M. Hassan (eds.), *The Muse of Modernity: Essays on Culture as Development in Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1996), 3-6.

Finally, Fálolá is of the opinion that, “culture, ideology, and the interrogation of past history are the essential ingredients in the package(s) of solutions for the African crisis of development”.⁵⁶ Hence, there must be an enormous investment made in capacity building with a view to implementing significant cultural and developmental programmes in Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún and by extension, Yorùbáland.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the introduction and spread of Christian faith in Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún and its attendant consequences on the indigenous practices among the people. The introduction of Christianity gave birth to Western education, which promoted Western culture at the expense of the indigenous Yorùbá culture in Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún. The paper contends that retrieval and sustenance of the culture and customs of the Yorùbá would go a long way in proffering some solutions to the developmental challenges facing Òkè-Ìlá Òràngún, and by extension, Yorùbá as a race, for no nation can develop outside her cultural heritage.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ See Fálolá, *The Tóyin Fálolá Reader*, 280.

⁵⁷ See Olúfémí Omòsini, “Evolution of African Historiography: An Overview”. An Inaugural Lecture delivered at Oduduwa Hall, Obáfémí Awólówò University, Ilé-Ifè, 5th February, 1991, 18. See also, Ibrahim Oládàpò Muheeb, “Culture: Exploring Asian Vital Success Booster”. *Ifè Journal of History*, Vol. 4, No. 3, August, (2008), 53-75.