

**NDOKWA: MY BELOVED
AND CHRISTIAN**
Activities

VOL.2



REV. DICKSON OZAH



NDOKWA

MY BELOVED AND CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES



VOLUME 2

NDOKWA: My Beloved and Christian Activities. Vol. 2

By: Rev. Dickson Ozah

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CHAPTER ONE

THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF NDOKWA

The Ndokwa nation holds three Local Government Areas in the present Delta State. On the map of Nigeria, Delta State is the heartbeat of the Nation carved out of the former Bendel state. The Ndokwa Nation stretches from Asaba-Ase area of the Niger Delta to Aballa-Utchi area along the length of the River Niger on the west side. It covers the entire area now called-Ndokwa East, Ndokwa West and Ukwuani Local Government Area. It is located between the $6\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ E, $6\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ N and $4\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ E, $6\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ N.

On the West it is bounded by Orhionwon and Ethiope Local Government Areas, East by the River Niger, on the south by Ughelli North and Isoko North and South Local Government Areas. It is the area that was called Aboh Division. The Traditional headquarters when it was a Division was Aboh located at the bank of the Niger River. However, Kwale later became the headquarters because of its nearness to Abraka. Today, we regard Kwale as the traditional headquarters of Ndokwa Nation.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NDOKWA PEOPLE

I am not going to delve into the history of origin, but from available records and oral traditions, the Ndokwa Nation is occupied by the people known before as Ukwuani before the coming of the Europeans. They have one ancestral origin, believed to have come from Benin and Northern Areas of Nigeria. There are controversies over the origin or from where

the first settlers came. Made up of many clans, similarity of customs, tradition and ancestral inclinations, Ndokwa people are one and ascribe to a common ancestor. The early European Missionaries, traders and administrators referred to them from Abraka (Ibalike) as Kwale. This has become the name of Utagba-Ogbe replacing what used to be Obetim (where the Europeans seated the government office to date). The origin of any group of people cannot be said with any degree of certainty. This was the assertion made by Barrister Ekwuenu in his book, Utagba-Uno History and Culture, 1998. According to him, “the Greeks, Romans, Binis and Yorubas to mention a few ancient places have different legends of origin, some conflicting. For instance, Rev. S. Johnson claims Oduduwa came down from heaven, while other authorities in Yoruba history claim that they migrated from Upper Egypt”. One thing that is very clear is that the people are not Ibos. Ukwuani Language may have similarities in pronunciations and meaning with Ibo but that does not make Ukwuani people Ibos or Igbo people.

Just as French cannot be English Language or Latin English because they have such similarities. Ukwuani is included in the list of 27 languages approved by The Federal Government for the purpose of mother tongue education. Barrister Chidi Ekwuenu still expressed himself in hard stance and I quote “I dissociate myself from the view expressed in Bryson report that Ndokwa (Ukwuani) people are Igbo speaking people.

He further stressed that though Ukwuani as a language and Igbo as a language have common ancestry like the various European Languages that have Latin ancestry but are referred to as Romans language among which are French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, etc. That does not make Ukwuani people Ibos or Igbos. I agree with him that such references to Ndokwa people as “Kwale-Ibos” should be disregarded because the British Administrators were uninformed about the

ethnicity of most Nigerian Minority Peoples, including Ukwuani people. This same misinformation made them to partition “Kwale” into Ndosumili and Ukwuani Districts and called the Ndokwa nation as Aboh Division. In 1976, both Ukwuani and Ndosumili were merged to form Ndokwa Local Government. This was the origin of Ndokwa which implies Ndosumili and Ukwuani.

In as much as it is proper to refer to it as Ndokwa people, we will not forget that we are Ukwuani People. It is Ukwuani when we talk of our Language and Ndokwa when we speak of the Nation with different Ukwuani dialects. Nigeria is the Nation made up of various ethnic groups. So let Ndokwa be so that Ukwuani is the people and language while Ndokwa is the Nation.

The People of Ndokwa are predominantly farmers. Fishing and hunting occupy their major day to day activities. Many today are getting employment to white color jobs and establishing private enterprises. Until recently the only government impact was the administrative office at Kwale, Amai, and Ashaka. As at today, the impact of the oil companies is being felt especially at Okpai where AGIP is prospecting, and producing petroleum products. Ndokwa people have peaceful co-existence with their neighbours.

They are quite loving and accommodating. They are scattered all over Nigeria in all fields of human endeavours. Progress thrive where there is peace and unity. This is why we have Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelisation and Ndokwa Christian Union gathering Ndokwa believers all over the nation for effective evangelization of Ndokwa people. Let us arise to build our Ndokwa nation. Every politics about name and origin should be compromised to enable us move on in spiritual and physical development.

Transformation of the land can only be possible in an

atmosphere of peace and unity. We in the church should therefore live with the name Ndokwa nation instead, so that one can move forward for progress.

RELIGION

Religion is the practice of looking for an object to worship. This object may be called a deity or god. What is important here is that Ndokwa people believe in the existence of the Almighty God. What our fathers failed to recognize was the truth expressed in the Holy Bible. They worshiped God through desire object called idol. A dead forefathers became an object of worship and medium to God of heaven. There are too many agents that are worshiped to the disregard of the only way Jesus Christ, the son of God. They engage in diverse religious worship that shows their ignorance of what they believe. One can conclude that they do not know who they worship as most of the demigods are not supreme. Their ignorance is manifested in the truth that they do not know where the dead goes finally.

The worship of water, tress, animal and molded object and the dead are common. In the modern days many are abandoning their gods for the God of the Bible. Many sons and daughters of Ndokwa are born-again, church ministers and missionaries across the word. Like all other ethnic nationalities, indigenous churches scatter all towns and villages in Ndokwa nation. This is why, I am proud to announce to you that Ndokwa is no more idolatrous nation. Though idle worshippers are there, but Jesus is reigning in every community. You need to arise and join this chariot of Jesus Christ worshiper in Ndokwa nation in particular and the world at large.

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES IN NDOKWA UP TO 1970

Available information, oral and written agree that Christianity as we know it and practice it today did not find its feet in Ndokwa nation until recently. As has been noted in the beginning, we cannot categorically give account of all that have happened before the arrival of those who placed Ndokwa nation on the pages of history. Ndokwa had early contact with the European missionaries and traders.

But this contact was not sustained as was observed by an unnamed “Oil worker” in Niger Oil Protectorate. European missionaries and traders came into Ndokwa nation earlier than any other community in the Niger Delta. It is regrettable therefore, that while places like Benin, Warri, Asaba, and Onitsha which saw the missionaries later came to flourish more in Christian activities than Ndokwa. According to Rev. Okolugbo, it was not until 1841 that meaningful church activities started at Aboh. While Benin and Warri were already acquainting themselves with the missionaries, Ndokwa was first to allow the arrival of the CMS of the Crowther Expedition.

On arrival of the Crowther team at Aboh, the Obi of Aboh embraced the gospel and wholly decided to move with the missionaries if that would bring the light which the gospel has to the people of his domains. For example, at Aboh, the CMS of the Crowther Expedition settled but did not stay long due to difficulties they encountered. The arrival of CMS was seen as a

welcomed development because it was to bring light into Christian activities in Ndokwa nation. This was because earlier effort attempted to take Christianity to the hinterland through Aboh was strongly scattered due to series of attacks, customs and traditional conflicts. The Obi of Aboh who had earlier believed the gospel died. This was so because the conflict resulting from attempt to move hinterland has negative effect on the Obi. This was the beginning of the activities that was going to place Ndokwa nation out from the devil's path that she had been trending all these years.

The Missionaries put up certain behaviours that discouraged the natives. The Aboh people promised that as soon as the church was settled, government of the Missionaries will plant industries or trading centers to provide employment for the inhabitants. It was, however, not possible for the promises to be fulfilled due to the problems of getting to the hinterland through Aboh. It was at this stage that disgust set in and the Missionaries went in search for an alternative. Onitsha, Asaba and Warri were found better settlement both for the church and trading stations. When the Catechist that was at Aboh was transferred to another station; Aboh was left without replacement.

It also became clearer that other promises were not going to be fulfilled. This further weakened the faith of Aboh people in the God of the European traders and missionaries. Thereafter every attempt by the British Mission was not welcomed. Hence, Aboh was finally abandoned for Onitsha and Asaba in about 1874. And so Ndokwa remained cut off from Christian activities. For over a very long time this rejection continued. When the British Administration and Missionaries eventually penetrated through Abraka, Ndokwa elders then rejected them and their school offers. It was not until 1897 that church

activities of any significant note surfaced again. C.M.S, Catholic and Baptist missions began to find their ways into the land. In fact, what we have today had its origin in the activities of the missionaries of these missions. Schools were attached to churches. Some Ndokwa sons and slave boys that were not allowed to go to school resisted the white man's God. This again attracted resistance at Utagba-Ogbe: the Catholic was denied the siting of what is now St. Joseph College, Ozoro at Kwale. This brought backwardness in education in Ndokwa nation. As it was the case, that rejection of Christianity was also rejection of the Bible. Ndokwa nation did not have any Secondary School until 1960 when the first two Secondary Schools were established at Obinomba and Ashaka by the Catholics.

Observers have traced this educational backwardness to the rejection of Christianity by our fore-fathers. The problem become more serious when each church was allowed to be established, but there were no indigene to act as Interpreters and Catechists both in the layman and clergy. There were no Ndokwa persons that could read the Bible or interpret for the missionaries. They brought for us Clergymen and Interpreters from Aniocha, now called Oshimili (Asaba and Onitsha), and this was the beginning of the replacing of Ukwuani language with Asaba or Onitsha language (Igbo) as everything done in the church was through an interpreter who was not “heard “ in Ukwuani language. But for the similarity of Asaba and Ukwuani language, these Catechist and Interpreters delivered their message in Igbo.

In the schools, Igbo text books were introduced instead of the indigenous Ukwuani constituency's text. Such books like “Okeke and Azu Ndu” were used as vernacular in the primary schools. I noted in my book “Ndokwa my beloved”, Ukwuani

language was killed by the early missionaries' people in verbal and written communications. This was the Origin of Ukwuani-Ibo or Ibo speaking people of Ndokwa. God forbid, in Jesus Name! Thank God the Ukwuani people have an identity. We are Ukwuani people. Our mother tongue is Ukwuani Language. Christianity did not come to destroy our originality in any way. Rather, it is going to lead us to discover our originality and recover our interested Ndokwa people in all denominations. Catholic, Anglican and Baptist are today using Ukwuani language in their order of worship. This is healing to the sickness that infected us through those who ignored us using the gospel. Papa Omolu and, of recent, Sam Omolu pioneered the introduction of worshipping God in Ukwuani language. Chief Uli and Mr John played their part which however has not been done as schools were then used to make convert for the church. Teachers and pupils were compulsorily required to attend every activity of the church.

In fact, the school was the church and the church was the school; those who oversee the schools were those who oversee the churches. The Catholic, CMS and NBC were three missionaries that resumed the Christian work in Ndokwa after Aboh's failure. Between 1950 and 1970, Christian activities become permanent in the land. A great revival that broke in the West flowed down to Isoko and spread to Ndokwa.

CAC church was opened and Adam Preaching Society of the CMS and a great revival that broke in the Mission brought church planting again in Ndokwa nation. A more significant revival also broke in the land between 1966 and 1973. The influences this revival had manifested in the arrival of Pentecostal Churches. The Pentecostals began to arrive with the CAC and Grace & Glory Pentecostal Church with the headquarters at Abbi and Ogume respectively. "Uka

Halleluyah“ as these were called began to flood Ndokwa villages. At Ogume, the Baptist, CAC, CMS, and Catholic Churches were properly established as their schools were bringing members. The coming of the Pentecostals was a challenge as many of the earlier denominations have already become lukewarm as a result of combining customs, traditions and idolatry with Church doctrines. Church members began to worry through crisis. They postponed their salvation to after death as man was not going to be freed from sin until death. Pentecostals preached instant salvation using the scripture that says “He that believes shall be saved.” “As many that receive him, he has given power to be called children of God.” “Only Jesus can save you now.” “There is no salvation in the grave. It is only when you are alive you can believe and be saved.” These were statements used by the Pentecostals.

Missions like the Church of God Mission, Assemblies of God and Cherubim and Seraphim also came into the land. Church of God Mission was founded out of the “Alleluyah Church” at Abbi by Papa Emu of Inam-Abbi. He was working at Kwale, Okpai, Obetim-Afor and other towns in Ndokwa nation. Scripture Union came in and other freelance Evangelists started visiting Abbi. I will like to say here that other sects like the “Jehovah's Witness” were also busy spreading their own gospel. In 1972, Rev. Ezekiel .O. Nwogu came to Ndokwa in a national Evangelistic Crusade /Campaign and Ndokwa was affected as salvation, healing and deliverance took place in the lives of the people. He covered Ashaka, Kwale, Ogume and Obiaruku and all the interpretations were in Ukwuani. It was during that period the vision to evangelise Ndokwa /Aboh Division was caught by the author.

Since then, the preaching of the gospel in Ndokwa land has been his pre-occupation in company of numerous others.

When another Minister of God Rev. Etete came for another National Evangelistic Campaign at Obiaruku, sponsored by the Free Gospel Society, this author was also his interpreter. Who could have known that God was preparing a vessel for his use in the land? It is important to note that the Pentecostal Evangelistic Crusade brought great influence on Ndokwa land. Major towns like Aboh, Kwale, Abbi, Ogume, Obiaruku, Amai, Ēmu, Ashaka, Ossissa and Afor were affected by the Pentecostal moves of the 1970s. Today, there are over two hundred (200) indigenous Pentecostal churches in Ndokwa Nation. While every local denomination is doing her work of evangelism, Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelisation is the universal body housing all Christian denominations in Ndokwa nation. The evangelisation of Ndokwa nation is everybody's work and with all required team work and united effort of the various denominations. This is why one can look at the effort and the activities of Ndokwa Christian Congress, Ndokwa Christian Union and other evangelistic unit as the act of God.

CHAPTER THREE

THE COMING OF NDOKWA CHRISTIAN CONGRESS ON EVANGELISATION

Christian activities in Ndokwa land after 1970 and up to date cannot be complete without the involvement of the Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelisation. Having located Ndokwa on the map of Nigeria in an earlier chapter, I will go straight to talk about Ndokwa Christian Congress. History begins with event occurring and records of such event being kept. Ndokwa Christian Congress is the largest, single inter-denominational gathering of Ndokwa Christians in Ndokwa land. We may have Baptist, Catholics, Anglicans and other orthodox denominations. But Ndokwa Christian Congress has assumed the position of an apex Christian body in Ndokwa nation.

This position can be clearly seen in the name being all embracing. You may talk of the Catholic, Anglican, Faith Foundations, Baptist, Full Gospel, Christian Assembly, Church of God Mission and so on, but the Congress in her operations and composition includes all of them. All Christian denominations in Ndokwa nation are participating in the Annual Congress Camp Meeting. The activities of the Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelisation are spread out in the following articles that were amended in 1984 to streamline composition and co-operation. A brief history of the Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelisation for the first article table continued in next paragraph. The Ndokwa Christian Congress did not begin at any time as a one man affair. Neither was it ever operated as one man affair. Ndokwa Christian Congress has

officers from across the participating churches. These officers formed the programme directorate and the Executives. Every decision of the “Congress” was taken at an Executive Arm General Meeting held once every month or as often as the need arise. Whatever happened in the process of time in the operation and composition of the Ndokwa Christian Congress operations and leadership can be ascribed to the hand work of God. Growth is very fundamental to any living organism. So, Ndokwa Christian Congress being a living organism has been experiencing operational and organizational growth like in any other human institution. Some welcome these growths while others see it as a weapon to fight the Congress. From the above hand book article establishing the Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelism from one town /village to another through the Annual Camp Meeting degenerated into ten towns: Abbi, Obiaruku, and Kwale in 1986; there was good reason for such change. Although so many came but what followed was not their interest.

But now Camp Meetings of the Congress provides an avenue for Ndokwa Christians to discuss, train and equip participants on how to evangelise Ndokwa land and contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints; this has been on since 1977. Before 1977, there was no Christian body of this kind in Ndokwa land. What we had were individual denominations operating in their own way as Baptists, Catholic, Anglican and Christ Apostolic Church. Unity among the Orthodox Church was far from reaching its magnitude. Jesus prayed for the church in John 17.

Since 1977, the Congress has played several roles to prove its contribution to the transformation of the three local government areas. From the beginning of the Congress till now, those who attended the camp meetings, the General and Ministers Conference have attested to the kind of unity we now enjoy among believers. The various denominations that

attended the Congress programmes are now interested in this gathering of Ndokwa sons and daughter of Christ. This is why after the Camp Meetings we still come together on the same single purpose of evangelism. The Ndokwa Christians outside Ndokwa land, Ndokwa Christian Union Lagos avail themselves for Annual Crusades or Retreats also. Activities of the Ndokwa Christian Congress are highly complimented by Ndokwa Christians in diaspora. In fact, the Ndokwa Christian Union, Lagos and the Congress are one. Changes in any form bring opposition. Challenges usually follow such oppositions. This was the case of the Ndokwa Christian Congress. The significant roles played by Faith Foundations Evangelistic Ministry in her mobilisation of the Ndokwa Christian Congress course generated opposition which have brought the Congress to its available position today. We are very grateful to God that what we now have on ground was not just an effort of man and woman, but a vision from God to transform Ndokwa land.

EFFECTS OF CONGRESS CAMP MEETING

The beginning of any movement to a large extent determines how far that movement will reach. The Annual Ndokwa Christian Congress Camp Meeting has had significant effective areas of impact on the people of the land. These people are not necessarily in the church. In this chapter, we examine:

- (i) Effects of the first congress camp meeting
- (ii) The annual congress meeting up to date and,
- (iii) The congress and transformation of Ndokwa

It is very significant as it still lingers in the memories of those who attended to this day. All who attended that Camp Meeting still remember how good and pleasant it was for brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalm 133:1). There was no discrimination as every institution that called herself church

was invited and allowed to register. The organisers knew that they were after the salvation of any group (s) or person(s) that would attend but not saved. Messages that came through the Bible Studies, Seminars, and Talks centered on **SALVATION**. The result was that many of the participants answered the altar calls to give their lives to Jesus Christ. This had double effect and influence on the land of Ndokwa especially in the churches. First, many church goers were born again during the camp meeting and after. The orthodox churches began to clap hands, shout *hallelujah!* and praise God. Such was not the case before the Camp. It was unusual to the orthodox churches who before the Camp had ex-communicated their members who manifested such “sacrilege” during worship services.

Across the Christian group “only Jesus can save” became a popular song or chorus in every church. Chief and permanent members of Orthodox Church dominations experience salvation and Pentecostal ways of worship: singing and praying started creeping into all the Ndokwa churches. Born again language started all over the church dominations with standard. It was from this point that the effect of congress began. A second significant effect of the Utagba-Uno Camp was the persecution that arose across the various local churches. The new experience like “*Praise God! Halleluiah*” and born again language attracted negative reaction from the authorities.

These authorities were against those who have introduced Congress ways of preaching, living and singing into their mission. Shouting, “*Praise God!*” and singing “*hallelujah!*” were openly disdained by the leadership especially at Abbi from where the Congress started. This brought a new breed of Christian to the land, every year the Congress was attacked even by those who were pioneers and participants in the early days for the interest of their mission. Many withdrew on their own and other denominations. The Faith Foundations became the target of the attackers because members did not let go of

the Congress vision as the Coordinator and the Program Directorate that drew up and organised the activities and program of the Congress Camp Meeting are members of The Faith Foundations. In all of the happening events, these members persisted, preaching and praying others to join as the Congress body belonged to all Christians in Ndokwa. Some members of the fellowship - The Faith Foundations were called then to withdraw to accommodate those who saw them as monopolising the Congress. The fellowship members that withdrew included those who decided to be loyal to their Missions (local denomination) as fellowship was not having Sunday Service like the orthodox mission.

It became clear that the Evangelistic Vision of the Fellowship was at stake. This writer damned the consequences and integrated the Congress into the vision of the Fellowship (prayer and witnessing). By 1984, it was clear that Prayer and Witnessing Group had incorporated the Congress Activities into her program. Lagos Ndokwa Christian Union came out in full to support. This led to increase in number of participants in 1984 at Emu-Uno. It is vital to make this observation.

When it appeared like the Congress was going to collapse from 1982-1984, The Faith Foundations Evangelistic Ministry intensified her Annual Evangelistic Movement to campaign for attendance to the Congress Camp Meeting every year. And what was more, Faith Foundations became synonymous with Ndokwa Christian Congress. The program directorate was made up of The Faith Foundations and thus the administration of the activities of the Congress was entirely resting on the program directorate. Those that understood the reason for the above structure encouraged and participated in the congress activities.

But many more went back like the disciples of Jesus in John chapter 6:66. The Faith Foundations came under more serious

attack, in 1986, at Ossissa when again the activities were reorganized.

EFFECT AND INFLUENCE OF THE CONGRESS

Camp Meetings in the transformation of Ndokwa Nation can be seen in the large roles she is playing in the lives of believers and physical structure of the towns and villages. Since 1977, Congress has been providing teaching, preaching and activities aimed at “removing believers from customs and traditions that conflict with the Christian faith”. The bible study at Utagba-Uno, in 1994, Congress was to educate Congress men and women on how to face the customs discussed. After many fight, criticisms and open attacks, the Congress has evangelised almost all communities in Ndokwa today except for the towns in Ndokwa riverine areas in Ndokwa East like Okpai, Onyah, Akara-Obodo, Umuolu, Aballa-Uno.

The programs of the Program Directorate have reached towns like Iselegu, Inyi, Onuaboh, Aboh and Ashaka in Ndokwa East in one form or the other. Many indigenous Ministers and Missions in Ndokwa today are partakers of the Congress effect and blessing. Every year Christians of Ndokwa origin at home and abroad are looking forward to the Annual Camp Meeting called Congress Camp. 1998 was a year of great achievement and fulfillment by the Ndokwa Christian Congress. The Congress Camp Meeting was turned to a crusade of a higher magnitude as Rev. (Dr) Uma Okpai was the guest speaker. A beloved son of Ndokwa stock sponsored it all with little financial support from others. It was another turning point in the Ndokwa Christian Congress. The Congress, instead of the usual August - September, was held in November 1998. Ndokwa nation witnessed changes as God openly spoke to us saying: *“Ndokwa shall no more to be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but*

Ndokwa shall be called my DELIGHT, and thy land MARRIED for the Lord delighted in thee and thy land shall be married...and thou shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name”.

The above statement or prophecy implies that, our past notwithstanding, God will make Ndokwa a PRAISE on earth. It is true that before now this land has been infested with the works of darkness, manifested in wide-spread of idol worship, gross immorality, celebrated cultic practices, fetish covenant with the gods of the rivers, lands, animals and trees, ancestral worship of great dimensions, evidence of curses placed on the land and people by the early Missionaries as a result of stiff resistance to the gospel by our ancestors etc. These have resulted in great under development of the land and people, educational backwardness, premature death, fear of evil power by prosperous indigenes leading to self-exiles from the land, disunity among community leaders, various community retarded growth of Church, lack of basic social infrastructures and also total absence of the presence of the Federal Government. Government presence in matters is important but absence of this delayed establishment of secondary school or Teachers Training College until 1960.

This was the beginning of the brain drain which Ndokwa sons and daughters are suffering today. The truth that there is nothing to keep young and old at home is clear for all to see. Educationally, there is no higher institution of any kind, industrially nothing to provide employment for school leavers. The only available occupation which is agriculture cannot provide the needed employment for the ever-increasing population. Government is not even remembering Ndokwa nation in appointments and distribution of industries and other investments that can provide employment for school leavers. It was in the search for a solution that this book emerged.

Having identified that the mistakes of our fore-fathers created this neglect, one decided to seek solutions using the word of God as our mirror according to Exodus 20:4, man, not only the Israelites, was instructed not to make or worship idols or image. But our fathers specialised in this. Obi Ossai of Aboh was made to commit suicide because he abandoned idols for the God of the Missionaries. While our neighbours: Isokos and Urhobos embraced Christianity, we rejected the God who made the world and Jesus Christ, the only beloved and begetting son of God.

It is true that our culture has elements of idol worship but when our fathers refused to embrace the God of Abraham after they have heard the gospel message, curses resulted. Other Nations served idols, but when the God of light came with her blessing of education, they embraced it. Ndokwa people first went to school at Abraka (Ibaliki) or Aragba and even Oleh. If our fathers did not drive the white man and his religion away, Ndokwa (Aboh) would have been an educational center along the Niger-Delta region of what is today known as Delta State. This became clear when one realised that Bishop Crowther and his team visited Aboh before Onitsha, Asaba and some other towns of what was known as Warri division. Ndokwa was supposed to be the leader among her neighbours, but with the rejection of God who makes leaders, the position was lost. However, it is not going to be so forever. We have a consolation from God's word from the book of Isaiah the Prophet: ***“The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light was shined” Isaiah 9:2.*** The transformation of the Ndokwa nation has been hinged on the people of the land repenting and returning to the God who created heaven and believing in his only begotten son, Jesus Christ. People do not agree that they do not know the Almighty God. They worship Him through idols which are images in form of trees, water, dead ancestors, animal and every other man-made object one

refer to as fetish gods. Until we accept the God of the Bible and worship him as its contents demand, stories of woes would continue to be told by Ndokwa people. A time of ignorance God usually overlooks, but when the people deliberately reject him to other gods which are man-made, his anger brings the kind of experience Ndokwa people are passing today.

Notice that Israel was God's template for other races or tribes on the earth surface. Sin, evil practices, and rejection of Jesus Christ are among the things that removed God's favour from the people. This is not a time to compare ourselves with the Urhobos, Isokos, Ika or Aniocha and Oshimilis. Rather we should position ourselves to see the root cause of our problems. Why are we lacking leaders and followers? Urhobo Progress Union is over hundred years old, while Ndokwa people have not been able to organise themselves in like manner. We need to explore ways and means to overcome whatever is making us not to have one voice through effective leadership and followership.

We have talked it religiously and have the confidence that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the father of our Lord and Savior Jesus has answered us. The land that was in darkness because of idolatrous inclination has now seen light. God spoke to me in 1975 and 1976, that I should go with the gospel to open up Abbi and then Ndokwa nation for him to demonstrate His salvation, healing and deliverance. It was not going to be easy He said but "I will be with you" to make it come to pass. This commission was first carried out with the gathering together of believers at Abbi by 1977, the first Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelisation was born. It was going to be through this body that salvation, healing deliverance and prosperity would come.

The details of how it all started and where we are now is what forms a great part of this book. The Ndokwa Christian

Congress had influenced Ndokwa Christians outside our fatherland. In 1982, Ndokwa Christian Union was formed in Lagos. Today, branches of Ndokwa Christian Union operate all over Nigeria and the world as sons and daughters have embraced God through his son Jesus Christ. Many are pastors sincerely involved in the business of bringing salvation to the Ndokwa people. This is what has led to the writing of this book; also we are not going to settle in the mistake of our fathers.

We are not going to sit down and weep all through life while our neighbours oppress us and deny us our right. Instead, we must awake and use the available manpower, spiritually and physically to transform Ndokwa nation. It is on this decree that the Ndokwa Christian Union, Lagos came up with the move of transforming Ndokwa land through the gospel of Jesus Christ. There may be other means of achieving this, but unless we identify with God through his Son, we may not be better than real animals. A people without Jesus Christ have no hope; as it is in our world. He is the light of the world. He is the light that lightens every man (Nation) that cometh into the world.

We need him in Ndokwa nation if we must enter into our promised position in life (in Federal and State Government). In this book, I am deliberating on how to transform the Ndokwa nation for our good and God's glory through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why I am examining and determining what Christianity has done and will do to transform Ndokwa nation in areas of education, technology, commerce and science.

It is the level of our spirituality as Christians that will determine our input in the spiritual and physical development of our fatherland, Ndokwa. Hence I will deeply examine the influence and effect of decision making on the part of mankind in providing leadership both in the community and the Church

within Ndokwa Nation. How such decision making have and would have influenced and affected development in Ndokwa Nation or the world forms the center of this book.

It is my prayer that those who will read this book will be blessed and be used by God to transform Ndokwa to a land that will never be called forsaken, desolate and unprogressive. Because of this I employ you to be at alert to the promoting of the Holy Spirit of God as you might be chosen by God to support the Christian work in your own town or village. You will notice that Ndokwa Christian Congress on Evangelisation is one place you need to feature to bring this to pass. As you go through activities of Ndokwa Christian Congress you will also notice:

- (i) That God is on the move to transform the land, and
- (ii) That God is interested in using you to contribute to the proper growth of Ndokwa Nation and her Churches.

Therefore, be prepared to contribute your quota in the crusade for the transformation of Ndokwa nation to wipe away idolatrous activities that retard our progress. Until we see it as a duty and take the necessary steps required for the transformation of the land we will wait for another generation. But that is not our dream. It is not the vision of the Ndokwa Christian Congress. However, God is the decider or the Judge of every activity of his creatures. He will definitely make *Ndokwa a PRAISE* in our time.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NEW APPROACH

The new approach is going to be easy. The new strategies are being incorporated into the Congress vision. In other to mobilise the various denominations and other Christians, there is now a Ministers' Conference creating a forum for Ndokwa Pastors to interact and equip themselves together for the total evangelisation, de-marginalisation and prosperity of Ndokwa nation. Knowing that you are not reading this book for just reading sake or to acquire academic knowledge but to be motivated with the burden to preach the gospel until Ndokwa becomes a praise on earth. You should be prepared to join in the actualisation of the vision of the Congress which is transforming Ndokwa through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is not going to be easy but like it is written in Matthew 11:12, "*...the kingdom of God suffers violence and the violent takes it by force*". All of us need to contribute what it will take to transform Ndokwa nation into praise on earth. How this will come to pass is all that this book is geared towards. It will be great if when you go through this book, you believe in its content and go ahead to practice them.

This was why during the *Jesus is Lord in Ndokwa* crusade, traditional rulers and opinion leaders of Ndokwa Nation were invited. For the first time in the history of the Congress, a representative of the Elders' Council was at the crusade ground. He stood in for the Elders of Ndokwa to confess the sins of the land, denounced, and broke covenants made by our fore-fathers with demons, and the effect of innocent blood shed

upon Ndokwa land. In fact, curses upon Ndokwa nation were broken and prayers were made to God to release his blessings upon Ndokwa nation. This took place at Kwale, our traditional headquarters, in 1998. Today, there is the belief that curses upon Ndokwa land and the people have been broken and, therefore, settled. We are already reaping the harvest of that Congress crusade.

THE TWELVE ALTARS IN NDOKWA

I have earlier mentioned that in year 2000, twelve (12) altars were built to affect the breaking of the curses and covenants that have held back Ndokwa for many centuries. These altars are being serviced every year to counteract them being reactivated through annual festivals and other sacrifices. For example, during the Congress Camp meeting 2003 at Obiaruku, the following strategies were employed to facilitate Congress activities that would transform Ndokwa nation spiritually and economically.

Because we believe that the progress of any Nation depends so much on that Nation's relationship with the God of Abraham and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus offering himself on the cross for that Nation.

Identifying with Jerusalem is identifying with progress and prosperity. Hence the spiritual state of Ndokwa nation reflecting in her relationship with Jesus Christ is the basis upon which Ndokwa Christian Congress is doing her best to bring about the transformation Ndokwa nation. It is on this basis, that the following activities were put in place in 2003:

1. Prayer mobilisation of all churches through prayer bulletins.
2. Strategic daily prayer for three days during the Congress Camp Meeting.

3. Servicing of the twelve (12) altars through strategic follow-up prayer crusade from now on.
4. Consolidation of all the above and equipping participants annually to evangelise the towns and villages within their altar.
5. Evangelism strategy for idolatrous communities.
6. Family deliverance ministration.
7. Developing co-operate prayer life among Ndokwa Christian brethren.

In order to achieve the above, Congress designed workshops to motivate participants in carrying out the battle for the transformation of Ndokwa nation.

Topics like the:

- “Lord shall arise upon thee, Ndokwa”,
- “The Glory of the Lord shall be seen upon thee, Ndokwa”,
- “Taking the battle to the scene of attack”
- “The power of corporate intercession”
- “The blessing of corporate intercession

were expanded to sensitise all Ndokwa Christian brethren and the Gospel Ministers.

Since 1998, as earlier mentioned, the Congress has engaged in violent spiritual warfare against satanic settlement. In Ndokwa, God has answered our prayers and changes are surfacing in all dimensions of Ndokwa peoples' lives especially in the church. When godly altars were raised, demons in the land of Ndokwa were strategically displaced and God has been manifesting his Grace and mercy upon us all.

In the midst of that entire work, God spoke to us as written below: *this generation of God people will not suffer nor experience the hardship our earlier father passed through in*

Ndokwa. How God is going to accomplish that we may not know or is past finding out. But that “new things” are beginning to come to Ndokwa is clear. The Gas Plant of Okpai is just the beginning of the gigantic industries that are going to be set up in Ndokwa Nation. Government and individuals are coming to tap the resources of Ndokwa nation and it will lead to setting up of other industries in the land of Ndokwa. This is why there is need to position ourselves to flow with God's tide of industrial establishment and expansion in Ndokwa. We would not close our eyes again to give Satan and his agents the opportunity to oppress and marginalise us in our fatherland.

CHANGES IN THE SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE

To the churches, recall that since after 1998, things have not been the same in Ndokwa land. The place that was once called hard ground for the gospel is receiving the planting of many indigenous Christian Churches and coming in of other missions from all over the world. It was not so twelve years ago. At Kwale and Obiaruku alone, there are over one hundred Pentecostal Churches and the orthodox churches are opening more branches even within towns, the arrival of many new denominations is an indication of good things happening in the land of Ndokwa as far as the Church is concerned.

This expansion and growth of the gospel in Ndokwa nation and the activities of the Ndokwa Christian Congress are making significant impact on Ndokwa nation. Church and community relationship is beginning to enhance mutuality in such a manner that both can grow independently. In order to address this issue, the author has adopted the questionnaire method to estimate the influence of Christianity on Ndokwa Nation. This will enable us to enhance the transformation of Ndokwa. It will take some time because Rome was not built in a day. East or west, north or south the gospel is the instrument that will

promote ideals that will transform Ndokwa. The various prayer strategies and the caliber of gospel indigenous ministers and non-indigenous ministers in the land today is a clear indication that honest leaders will emerge from the Church. Knowing fully that Ndokwa Nation's number one problem is leadership and followership, the Church is equipping and training her members through Ndokwa Christian Congress for this long need for functional leadership of Ndokwa people.

I quite believe that church and community can live in harmony with each other. The community is the father and the host while the Church members are the sons and daughters. It only needs simple understanding from the point of view of the father to know that their sons and daughters have found a new way of living. They should not only accept zinc sheets to roof their houses, but should accept the change of belief of the sons and daughters. On the other hand, the sons should know that they were once dwelling in darkness (11 Corinthians 4:4).

The *“Iyi-enwe”* festival and other traditional festivals in Ezionum community were once celebrated by those who have become Christians. It, therefore, requires spiritual warfare and consistent Christian living among the members of our community before any visible change will occur. Church and community need to understand that tolerance is required of them. However, Christianity will always attract opposition because she claims superiority over everything man accepted as god and worshiped.

Christianity is superior to the idols of the land. Our elders should try to accept and accommodate by leaving their god to “kill” whoever transgresses its laws; or on the other hand, the grieved can take the constitutional means of protection by reporting to the police or any government agent that would be able to settle the matter. We are in a new world where jungle

justice cannot solve any kind of problem, especially the one between the Church and community. Burning

down the Church building and banishing zealous, faithful and none-compromising Christians from the community is illegal. It is no solution to whatever may come up between Church and community. It does not give those who burnt such Churches any solution to whatever is disagreement between Church and community. A close observation will reveal that only idolatrous traditions are at conflict with Church doctrine.

A proper examination will show that there are many more good traditions which are not idolatrous which the Church is keeping than traditions which are idolatrous which the church is fighting against. It is important to note and emphasizes that church and community will not have any conflict if the community will realize and admit that Christianity does not compromise with idolatry, *“thou shall not have any other God” Exodus 20.*

Since all these years, the Ndokwa Christian Congress has taken bold steps to teach the brethren how to approach separation from idolatrous traditions without conflict. But in many communities, the church and members of the church are still being attacked for not obeying instructions that will mean worshipping of idol to them. For example, asking a church and her members not to beat drum because an idolatrous worship is going on is like asking the church and her members to submit to idol. The spiritual implication is very high and cannot be taken lightly by both parties.

THE WAY OUT OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY CLASHES

In addition to the tradition mentioned above, the church and the community should accept each other as separate entity. Compromises and hypocritical attitude of some members usually add trouble in situations like this. But knowing fully that it is a matter of belief and individual choice, there should be no open or secret fight against one another during the festival, sacrifices and communal labour. The church and her members should not be compelled to stop their own worship activities. Let it be like the Christian festival of Christmas and Easter where everybody does his thing including idol worshippers. I am strongly educating us on freedom of worship as it is contained in the Nigeria constitution of 1999.

Our fathers should allow us to propagate our new found faith and the accompanying prosperity among our local brothers and sisters without limitation during “*Ukwata or Ikenge*” festival. In fact, preaching the gospel should not be determined by the Onutu-Uku or Okpalu-Uku in council. Where this is the case, there will be opposition and conflict as the authority of the church is from heaven above, Jesus Christ the redeemer. The church is anointed to resist anything that would want to hinder her from carrying the work out or fulfilling the great commission as contained in Mark 16:15-19 and Matthew 28:19-20.

Members of the Church should also bore their relationship with the community on the principles and guidelines given to them by the Master trainer, Jesus Christ. Addressing the disciples before He ascended to Heaven, He said, “*I come not here to bring peace upon the earth, but sword*”, “*In the world you will have trouble but in me you will have peace.*” “*Follow peace with all men*”, “*seek peace and pursue it*”. Where all the above measures failed to stop the clashes, follow the

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 which allows freedom of worship for adults from eighteen years old. From experience, the Police have always failed to provide the needed protection for the Church with legal backing from the constitution. Instead, they usually advise the members of the Church to comply with the demands of the community leadership. The advice fails to recognise the position of the Church in matters of idolatry. There is nowhere the Bible allows the Christian to obey unrighteous decrees or answer calls to worship gods that are made by man.

DAVID, MESHACK, SHEDRACK AND ABEDNEGO

There is nowhere in the Bible the Christian is allowed to pledge allegiance to idols. It is an abomination for the Christian to meddle with the customs, traditions and cultural activities of the land that are idolatrous in form and operations. Like the above four Hebrew boys, members of the Church in any community cannot and should not be included in the laws of the community that have to do with idols. Community elders and idol worshiper should know (and practice it) that the Christian has been delivered from all forms of relationship with the spirit of dead fore-fathers and their gods. Whatever were their aims and objectives in setting all their festivals as long as idols are involved publicly or implicitly, the Christian should be left out. In as much as the

Christian does not want trouble and any evil to befall the community, any attempt to force him to do otherwise will attract God's anger upon the community. This is the reason of many troubles or hardships the Africans are having today in all aspects of human life. We rejected and killed many Missionaries who brought the gospel to us in Africa. They cursed us and it is affecting every generation that has not experienced liberation by Jesus Christ. The educated or

literate members of our community in council should understand that it is not God that has placed us in the third world or developing nations, but our attitude to life. We have failed to embrace the Church as did the developed nations. “Give Caesar's to Caesar and God's to God” they usually quote out of context, is enough. Idolatry and Christianity (the Church) are never in any kind of romance. Nebuchadnezzar did not find it easy in dealing with the four Hebrew boys. Our community leaders should learn from these examples. If the Church decides to react or reply them with the opposition they mete out to her, another unholy war will erupt.

The effect of such war will be to the disadvantage of the community. Burning of churches or asking the members to quit the community are uncivilized way of solving church and community clashes. If the church resists, the effect will not be good for our land. Therefore, when disagreement occurs the community, should as a matter of principle, leave their god to fight whoever disobeyed her orders. It does not matter whether you believe in the Bible or not. The issue is that Satan knows that the Bible is the truth; and the only way she can keep you and all who rejected the Bible as the Word of God in her custody is to make you act the way you acted.

NDOKWA BELIEVERS' COUNCIL (NBC)

The issue of conflicts and clashes which are common in our communities between the church and the traditions, customs, elders of our land need serious attention. If Ndokwa will become praise on earth, the church has to be given a place in the land. Our elders need to know that they are under the church as the church is the representative of God on earth. This is not a matter of proving who is who among what we worship. Until the church is given her rightful place in the running of the communities' affairs, the transformation of the

Ndokwa nation will take long and it will be slow. The Ndokwa Christian Congress is not a denomination. It is just the largest single body that is coordinating all believers in the land. It is not constituted of only indigenes as some think. It is composed of all Christian denominations and Corporate Christian Fellowship groups operating in the Ndokwa nation.

The largeness of the Congress body and the absence of the Orthodox Churches in attendance is creating some problems resulting in using the Congress as a forum for resolving conflicts and clashes between the church and community. The Congress should be the last bullet to be used in any problem that arises between the church and the community. Notwithstanding, we should have a standing Council in the form of “Peace keeping” that will be solely and only in charge of resolving conflicts and clashes between the church and the community. This body which I propose to be called “Ndokwa Believers' Council” should among other things liaise with all the various denominations within and without the Ndokwa nation in resolving conflicts and clashes. I will not fail to state it clearly that these clashes are mostly between the community and churches that do not accept mixing up Christianity with idolatry. Where a church does what the community wants, there will be no clash. But how can you be the light and salt when you compromise the standard of biblical Christianity? How can a church member combine traditional titles, participates in idolatry through allegiance to festivals and please God? Marriages, birth, burial ceremonies and other social practices in the society have church and community views.

Any true believer, who has “come out from among them” according to 2 Cor.6:14-18, he or she cannot obey the laws and cultures that conflict with his or her faith as a Christian. To him or her, anything that has idol inclinations overtly or

covertly is not to be carried out or participated in. For example, he has nothing to do with any aspect of the *Ukwata, Ikenge or Iwa-iji festival*. To the Church-goer, nothing is wrong but to the true bible believer, they are dumb idols where demons operate. Nze shrine, Elishi, Igba shrines are fetish gods that the devil uses to manifest its counterfeit powers. Therefore, the Christian cannot and should not be forced to participate in any of their activities. *Iyi-enwe Festival or Ewolo or Ndu-uku* festivals are abominations as far as the church is concerned. It will be wrong to tell the church not to preach with loud speakers or beat drums because these festivals are going on.

The involvement of certain less concerned denominations and the failure of their Priests or Pastors to shepherd them home should not be taken as a standard for the church. That Catholic Church allows, permissively or otherwise, her members to be conferred with traditional titles does not mean that all Church members should do so. No! It is to streamline these kinds of issues that bring clashes and conflicts that Ndokwa Believers' Council shall focus on. Again, majority of the Missions have their headquarters in the large cities, but greater number of churches in Ndokwa nation are indigenous with headquarters at “home”. Let us know that we are one before idols or Church. Difference in what we choose to worship should not destroy our UNITY/LIFE.

IN UNITY WE STAND

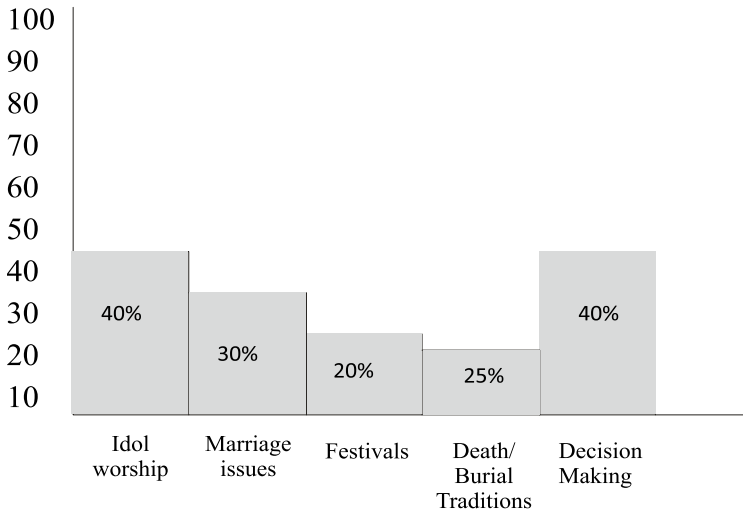
We cannot hide the fact that one broomstick cannot sweep the house clean. God, Himself, recognises the force or power of unity. In Ps.133:3, its importance in fellowship was emphasised. In Gen.11:1-7, the usefulness in industry, battle and achieving anything was emphasised. No single indigenous Church in Ndokwa will be able to face the community and achieve any result. When we are united, according to Math

18:18 and Mark 11:20-24, then the truth of the saying that **“one shall chase a thousand and two shall chase ten thousand”** will manifest. Most of the indigenous churches are made up of sons and daughters of the community. They are well known from birth to where they are now. Most churches have only one branch which is both headquarters and branch. Our people are well aware of this fact; and because a prophet is not recognized in his own country, they treat the Church anyhow. This is the common thing. There are very few Churches that are taking their stand through their members on the matters being discussed in this book. The only way to save the situation is to start the Believers' Body that “will go” for us. What I am talking about happened at Ogume, some years ago, and at Abbi too.

When there was a case between one local Church and the community as regards the burial of one of its members, all the churches went to the Okpala-uku's Palace. On seeing the Pastors, the trouble makers said they did not call all of them. But the Ministers said we are all one, for what affects one Pastor or Church affects the others. That made the case simple. The Okpala-Uku in Council resolved that the church should bury their dead members according to their doctrine. The need to establish Ndokwa Believers' Council to organize and guide the churches in times of conflicts and clashes is now.

A case study on the impact of Congress on the Ndokwa Nation reveals that Christianity is already transforming the land. From the sample statistics and its analysis below, the influence of the Church in some areas of our traditions and customs can be seen at a glance. It is painful that since the beginning of this 21st century church and community are blending together instead of the Church giving light and being salt to the community, the Church has allowed the traditions of the land to infiltrate it. For example, someone worshipping juju can now sing Christian songs and even go the extent of saying “Praise the Lord!”; praising Jesus Christ in the presence of the idols.

The implication of this is that we are all serving the same “god” but in different ways. This is not true. Consider these examples from the table below:



The above statistical display shows the levels of idolatry, marriage, festivals and death in relation to effects of Christianity on them. Ceremonies that have to do with all of the above data displayed above received responses from members of the Church in Ndokwa nation. Twenty questions were used and grouped into four (4) as summarized on the table above.

The analysis shows that forty percent (40%) of Ndokwa sons and daughters have denounced idolatry and do not participate in any kind of idol worship in form of sacrifice or otherwise. It can also be seen that marriage matters are still dominated by traditions, customs and other idolatrous practices by up to seventy percent (70%). Those who responded that

Christianity is influencing marriages in Ndokwa nation claimed thirty percent (30%). But all around and within the Ndokwa nation we see the church compromising with the world during traditional marriages. What is going on is like conducting two different marriage ceremonies. One for those who by tradition will not be in the church such that all the activities that take place during the white wedding ceremony are also done on the day of what they call “traditional marriage”. The Church should only follow the usual tradition of dowry payment where just a few members of the family are involved so as to remove the temptation of using alcoholic drinks or money to replace the other traditional rites. What we are saying here is that marriages are still very much under the influence of idolatrous traditions even where many are joined in holy matrimony in the church. I wish to recommend that every Church marriage should do away with traditions that conflict with Christian values or traditions. That more marriages are carried out in the church rather than in the usual traditional way of “*idu onyeye*”; taking the woman to the husband in the evening /night has not reduced involvement of idolatrous traditions even among Christians. This calls for serious prayers both for the Church and our elders.

Customs and traditional festivals on the table have the lowest percentage, twenty percent (20%) and twenty-five percent (25%) respectively. The area of conflict in death is the burial ceremonies. The Church has not been given the full authority to bury her dead members the way it deems fit. This is manifested in the compelling of many Christian women to go through all the idolatrous traditions like drinking of water used to wash the dead body of the husband. While some others are made to stay away in isolation for a number of days either in the bush or any place that may be chosen customarily. Until the Church is allowed to bury her dead without any condition from the family of the dead compelling them to performing

traditional rights that conflict with Church beliefs, conflicts will keep on arising. The Church and indigenes who are believers should be allowed to bury their members according to Christian burial rites. Children of the dead or relations should not impose traditional burial rites on the Christians among them. At the time of writing this section of this book, a burial was attended by this author at Aboh, Umute Quarters where the children of the deceased were given the free hand to bury their father according their belief. This author gave the funeral message and other Ministers of God conducted the interment. Though this man died without Christ, but his son who is a Christian was allowed to bury his father without compromising his faith.

What I am stressing here is that the Christian should be allowed to bury their dead members according to their beliefs. Burial will not make the dead a Christian but the living burying the dead should not be forced to do what he would not do as a Christian. It is wrong for Church to combine traditional rites with their Christian faith or join the unbelievers to celebrate their festivals. Such is in great contrast of what the Bible says 1Cor. 6:14-18. “That the believer should come out from all activities of the unbelievers that are idolatrous like *Ukwata* festival, *ikenge* and all others that have been mentioned above.

Furthermore, the above analysis revealed that five hundred and fifty-eight (558) persons admitted that there is freedom of worship in their community while seven hundred and twenty (720) disagreed. The result was near the assumed position of the author, knowing that freedom of worship allows that either parties should operate in their own mode. It is when those concerned are brought together by issues such as burials, festivals, marriages and other traditional ceremonies that conflict usually occur. Neither the Christian nor the unbelievers would allow the other to do as his beliefs demands.

The superiority of Christianity over every other kinds of worship is the bone of contention. Christians will never agree that idolatrous practices be carried out in the things of God, and the unbelieving elders usually see this as an insult. But this situation started while Jesus was on earth. He did not come to establish peace on earth, but came to instigate trouble between the devil and believers, parents and children. Mother will be against daughter and so on, in matters of what we believe or do not believe. This is not to be misinterpreted to mean physical combat as do some families and communities. Differences in beliefs, diversity in worship are to be seen in one family or community, between mother, father and children. At such times neither should force the other to worship each other's way. There can be a time of allowing the gods to fight it out for supremacy. We cannot destroy each other's property or kill ourselves because of faith in a god we are seeing or that cannot fight for itself.

The analysis, further, shows that seven hundred and thirty-two (732) persons admitted that Christians are involved in the decision-making process in their communities. Making decisions that are not idolatrous is what we are considering here. Nine hundred and forty-six (946) persons disagreed saying that Christians are not being called upon when decisions about their community are being made by the elders. This disparity comes from the fact that almost ninety percent (90) of community decisions have links to traditions and customs that involve idol worship. This is where the Ndokwa Christian Congress is working hard to educate our community leaders on how church and community can live together and work together without conflict. This author has received the mandate to go from one community to another to conduct seminars on how Church and Community can live together at peace. He needs your encouragement. You can contact him on No. 1/33, Dafe Road, Obiaruku, Delta State, Nigeria. The

entire dream is set out in a book published also by this author titled *“Ndokwa My Beloved”*.

THE NEED TO INVOLVE CHURCH IN COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The above analysis tells us clearly that Ndokwa Nation has not embraced Christianity fully as it has not entered the palace of the Okpala-Uku in Council. Until the Church becomes a member of the Obi-in-Council the transformation of the Ndokwa nation will still be far. Until members of the church recognise their role as priests and kings and start to practice the same in their communities, the blessings of God will not be fully released upon Ndokwa nation.

The community leaders should recognise the traditions, customs and ceremonies that the church can or cannot participate. The Church should also recognize the traditions, customs and ceremonies of the community that they can live with, but not compromising on them as they practice their faith.

Our fathers in the Orthodox Churches should recognise that the new breed of believers coming out as Pentecostal, Charismatic and Evangelicals cannot compromise their beliefs as the people of old did. “The give Caesar's to Caesar” they quote is not stated in the Bible the way and manner they try to portray.

Decisions made in the Kings/Okpala-uku's palace that has to do with idols should by a matter of right and freedom of worship exclude the Church (Christians). General labour that involves idolatry should also exclude the Christians. For example:

- (I) Fixing general labour on Sundays (whether morning or evening is wrong)
- (ii) Asking Christian farmers to contribute yam for whatever thing that has idolatrous inclination,
- (iii) Compelling Christians to perform birth, death and other social ceremonies that have idolatrous marks,
- (iv) Such statements like whether you go to church or not everybody is required to come out for this festival or sacrifice.

Okpala-Uku-in-Council and Church leaders in our communities should come together to agree on areas of “dos and don'ts” according to our traditions. That our fathers worshipped idols does not mean all of us will do so until death. Appoint Church members as Community leaders and allow them to operate without involving them in areas that have links to idol.

I wish to suggest that Christians can be the Okpala-Uku of the community if the community will allow him or her to rule the community in his time using the Bible as its staff of office instead of the *ndichie* or *igbachi* or *ofor* gods. Let us try the God of the Bible in the administration of our traditional affairs. After all, the only thing that is not in the Bible way of life is idolatry. Corruption is everywhere.

So, I am not saying that those in the Church are not being found guilty of corruption, but the only difference is idolatry. Remove idolatry, the good Christian can be the Obi, King or Okpala-Uku of the town and rule or lead better with his Bible. The Church is in the community. Community development is a programme and concern of the church. When matters of town or community development are going to be discussed, the Church should be involved that meeting.

Do not take it for granted that the members of the Church are children of the community. For even your wife who is a member of the Church has a higher master, Jesus Christ. A true christian will obey Jesus Christ first before father or mother, husband or wife, parent or friends. So, if you assume that decisions taken in Okpala-Uku's palace affect those in the Church where it is idolatrous, you will stir up conflict. Christians will never like to be involved in contributing money or materials for a sacrifice that is idolatrous, even if it is for the development of the community. As long as it will by implication or otherwise involve idol worship, the christian will not and cannot take part. This is why it is important to meet with both parties: the elders of the Church and the community. We are one family but two different governments - the government of God in the Church and the government of men in the community. The conflicts that destroy our properties and sometimes brings death can be avoided if we approach our differences this way. Notice that the various nations of the white men worship idols, too. Yet they live together in relative peace. We can accomplish this in our Ndokwa Nation. The Church (Christians) and the community (unbelievers) can live together at peace.

The new breed of christians are not ready to compromise their faith which they profess even though they are sons and daughters of the land. They have no other homes or parents to claim on earth. They should be allowed to practice their beliefs in their fatherland. They are preaching and teaching the gospel all over Ndokwa with theme: Ndokwa bu ke Jesu meaning Ndokwa must be saved. This class of individuals armed with fresh zeal to preach, educate and disciple Ndokwa people are working under very hard living conditions; with very mean financial and non-human response to the gospel environment to see that Ndokwa is transformed by the gospel

of our Lord, Jesus Christ. With the coming of these indigenous Ministers, many families, communities and age groups are beginning to back out from insisting on traditions and customs that are in conflict with their beliefs.

Many fathers and elders of communities are inculcating Christian beliefs into their lifestyle. Although, many churchgoers and sometimes serious but ignorant church members participate in idolatrous festivals like *Ikenge* dance at Abbi and Obiaruku, for example, and *Ukwata and Iwa-iji* at Umutu, Utagba-Uno and Emu communities. We need to know that everything about an idol happens during celebration. Whether you only danced and did not eat the food or bow down to idol, you have in the spirit participated. Going to watch them dance the Olie Ikenge dance is participation, too.

The church needs to teach and educate her members on all that so that the present persecution that comes from the Community to particular denomination or Pastors will be reduced or eliminated completely. As was mentioned above, the Church can be mobilised for community development activities in areas that will not involve members in idol worship. For example, at Abbi churches contribute during launching organised annually on Abbi Day. At Oliogo and Ogume, churches contribute to electricity developments while at Akoku, a Christian brother is in-charge of the community water pump. This is true in every other community where such amenities have been brought. What is more, many churches are putting up beautiful and magnificent structures that will attract tourist attention. Schools are being run by individual Christians and ministries in the land. From all of the above cases, Christianity remains the only instrument that will transform the Ndokwa nation to a glorious state.

WHAT THE CHURCH CAN DO

The slogan Ndokwa Must Be Saved reveals that the transformation of the Ndokwa Nation using the gospel is a must for the church. Until churches in Ndokwa and any other community realises that her primary function is the transformation of her immediate host community, her role as the salt and light will not be felt within the same town. No single denomination or person or christian group will be able to carry out this colossal task. Only the Church can deal with demonic forces and powers of darkness operating within the Ndokwa Nation. This is an opportunity to call on every member of the body of Christ, at home and abroad, to come all out for the end-time evangelism in our land, Ndokwa. We have stayed alone to pray, evangelise and had crusades in our individual groups and denomination. We have toiled and laboured for the salvation of our Ndokwa people, especially the men folk through our local churches and fellowships inside and outside Ndokwa.

Let us come together, all out, with one accord to possess the land which God has given to us to dwell. Except we begin to apply these God's given methods of working together as a team, we will delay the harvest of souls in the land; and the transformation of Ndokwa through the preaching of the gospel of Christ. All who love this transformation should join the company of those who apply the following strategies:

- (i) Team working through the Congress, Christian Missions and Ministries at home.
- (ii) Operation of Ndokwa Believers' Council at home and abroad.
- (iii) Providing moral and financial encouragement to one another.
- (iv) Giving home support by the brethren outside.

(I) Giving Home Support by the Brethren outside the Ndokwa Nation

God has blessed many sons and daughters of Ndokwa with salvation. For over two decades many such sons and daughters who have definite salvation experiences have come home for crusades and breaking of curses and faulty foundations in their communities. I hear of many of them with dynamic growing Christian Ministries. Others are progressive Christian Businessmen and women and Civil Servants. A visit to any living church in our cities will reveal many Ndokwa persons of these categories. Many more indigenes of Ndokwa are church workers, Pastors and active members of dynamic churches in the city like the Pastors of Victory Bible Church, Abeokuta, Ogun State; Pastor of Pentecostal Mission, Alagbado, Lagos State; and many more that come to mind immediately. These men of God are concerned about what is happening in the area of reaching Ndokwa with the gospel. Such concern and vision has led them into the founding of Christian organizations that can assist home-based Pastors in the preaching of the gospel.

- (i) Ndokwa Christian Union
- (ii) Ndokwa Christian Fellowship, and
- (iii) Others like Ogume Christian Movement (Mission)

Evidences abound that many more of these organisations are all over Nigeria; with one vision to reach the people at home with the gospel message. The Ndokwa Christian Union, Lagos, Warri, Abuja, Sapele and others come home for crusades. Although they are scheduled for different times, they end up using the same venue due to communication gap. Sometimes, they engage and involve the home-based pastors while other times they organise it independently. They have stories to tell regarding events that what happened during and after their evangelistic programmes.

Having been at home and intervened as well as participated in these outreaches by brethren in diaspora, I share their burden, sufferings and blessings. Their efforts have gone a long way to compliment that of the Pastors and Christians at home in the evangelisation of the Ndokwa nation. Many of them are asking for the best methods to actualise the vision of winning Ndokwa for Christ. This is why this author has provided home support both in cash and kind as a way of encouraging and participating in the home-mission. Their financial and human support of the Annual Ndokwa Christian Congress is also worthy of note. However, I wish to strongly suggest that every one of us should help build each other through participation.

TEAM-WORK

When believers, the Church, as a body work together the devil is usually displaced. Unity is a strong tool in the gospel ministry. If all the local churches within a community can agree to work together at specific times, the enemies of the gospel will be disorganised. If we can join hands together to promote the gospel through the Ndokwa Christian Congress Programmes and Ndokwa Christian Union programmes put together for us all, unity will come. I am grateful to God for those who have come all out to embrace the Congress. There are those who by their location of Ministry have become indigenes of Ndokwa, and are deeply involved in Congress activities. God will richly promote them. I wish to stress this further: there are Ndokwa sons and daughter, gospel ministers who have not embraced the Congress. Yet some others persons who are not from Ndokwa, by birth but are serving and working with God in Ndokwa, have wholly devoted themselves to the cause of the Congress. The advantages of team work far outreaches the disadvantages that keep some pastors and their members away. Fighting alone may not favour small churches that form the larger group in the Ndokwa nation. Take for instance, when there is a clash or disagreement between one

local church and the host community, and all the other churches in that community join forces together, attention will be given. A case study was at Ebedei-Ogo in the year 2007. They all fought together and won. The idea that I am putting up here requires that all denominations in Ndokwa (perhaps anywhere), irrespective of doctrinal issues should come together under the umbrella body of the Ndokwa Christian Union (members of which are in CAN) to plan and execute total evangelisation of our fatherland. The task is enormous and it will require our combined efforts (team) to do it.

POOR FINANCE IN THE CHURCH: A MARK OF SPIRITUAL POVERTY

In the first edition, I attributed the spiritual backwardness in the Church to poor financial status of the members. In this edition, I have come to see that the backwardness is a result of lack of men and women dedicated and committed to the course of the gospel. There are not enough men in our Churches which is causing apparent backwardness. This is seen in the fact that men force their wives to obey them even in matters of idol worship regardless of whether they go to Church or not. Because of this kind of treatment from the male folk, women do not fancy going to the church since many of the customs that are idolatrous are forced on them, especially at death, birth and festive ceremonies. The women do not want to be seen as hypocrites as it will appear to be if they are faced with a test of their faith, they are usually forced to compromise. Only very few have been able to withstand such pressure from the men folk. Such women have been banished from their legitimate homes and towns because of their failure to observe idolatrous burial rites in honour of their late husbands. This low commitment and dedication to the gospel affects the church in the production of producers. Only very few as at today have seen the need to sponsor the church.

On the other hand, lack of industries and government presence in the land also affect members' financial status. Even, when God is working wonders, those affected do not have the financial power to back their testimony. This is another front where the church is being affected adversely. For example, a member of the church at Obiaruku was healed of a very severe sickness through the prayers of a man of God. Another woman was healed by the prayers of a man of God at Warri. Both went to appreciate and thank God through the man of God. He (God), used to effect their healing. The one at Obiaruku had nothing, absolutely nothing, in cash other than the words of her mouth. While that one at Warri bought a V-boot Mercedes Benz for her Pastor. This was in 1998. This true story captured by the author himself has been the true picture of the church in Ndokwa Nation. Members are not financially balanced to face the challenges of the gospel as far as money is concerned. The situation is changing today as breakthrough seminars and deliverance prayers are going on in the land. There is a call here for our brethren in diaspora to send financial assistance to indigenous churches in their villages. There shall be nothing too small or big. I am not in any way putting off the secrete disciples who are building churches in the local communities. Examples at hand are the Deeper Life Bible Church and the Baptist Church at Owah-Abbi. I personally thank the two sisters who carried out these two projects. What I am advocating here is that the poor financial situation in Ndokwa churches needs the attention of the brethren in diaspora. It is the only way poor financial situation in the churches in Ndokwa Nation can be minimised.

POVERTY MENTALITY

The widow who gave her best in the ministry of Jesus Christ got Jesus' commendation because she gave her all. The story implied that all that she had was that half penny. It is painful to

observe that many believers, today, see the widow's mite as the pattern for a holy offering: only in the small. Even, those outside the church are hardly convinced that the best offering is not in large sums of money. Any attempt to teach that offerings should increase above five and ten naira (N5 and N10) respectively, the Pastor will be tagged a “money making Pastor”. If Ndokwa will be transformed by the gospel this poverty mentality should be purposely done away with from the church by those who have truly embraced the gospel in its fullness. The time has come for those in the church to face the fact that *“the more you give the more you receive”; or whatever you sow is what you reap* Gal. 6: 7-10. The time has come for the christians to know that the size of your offering determines the quality and quantity of your soup in your pot. Thankfully, the situation has begun to change, especially with the new generation of believers who worship in the Prosperity Teaching Ministries or Churches. It starts with the provision of electricity and advent of GSM as almost every village has access to amenities equivalent to those in the cities like Warri, Lagos and Asaba. Churches that held services with hurricane lights are beginning to use electricity with the aid of generators now. Some brethren from a community have gone ahead to bless the local churches in their communities with generators as was the case at Faith Foundations Church at Abbi. While I seriously commend those who are supporting churches in their communities, I pray those who are yet to realise the need to do so become convinced to join them in encouraging the home based Churches.

The New Ndokwa and Ndokwa Believers Christian Council Appellations are not always welcomed by many individuals. I know that Ndokwa Christians' Council may sound new and strange to some of my readers. But I do not care what name it is going to be called. What matters to me is the understanding and acceptance of the message for implementation. In 1998, I

put up a proposal to form an inclusive leadership team in the Ndokwa Christian Congress on evangelisation to see about proper and more embracing strategies that will include all categories of Christians and our fathers who are not yet in the church. The proposal is presented below.

LOVE AND PATRIOTISM

*Love is God. The characteristics of love are the characteristics of God. Anyone that loves manifests these characteristics. The Bible gives the most accurate definition of love and outlines its characteristics in love-provoking language. For example, writing to the Corinthian believers, the apostle Paul said, “**Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal... understand all mysteries, all knowledge, and have not love, I am nothing. 1 Cor 13: 1-13.** All of the above stress on the importance of love. In all human relationships, love is supreme: it is the determinant of all human responses to God or man.*

Anyone that does not love cannot serve because service not based on love cannot have tangible value. Whether it is service to God or man, love is the motivator. And the characteristics of love as recorded by the apostle proves that the supremacy of love in the role we play in our society. If we love our land and its people, selfless services will be one of our conducts. Love is kind, patient, suffers long; love is not envious, is not proud, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in evil. It is not selfish. No proud man would want to suffer for his fatherland. It is only love for our fatherland that would compel us to sacrifice for her development.

Most Ndokwa indigenes hide their identity as many living outside our native land prefer to speak English and identify

with other tribes rather than their own people. This has nothing to do with religious acclamation. Whether they are educated or uneducated, sons and daughters of Ndokwa hide their identity. They do not want to be identified nor associated with Ndokwa. While people from other tribes such as the Igbos, Urhobos, and Binis speak their languages freely and with elements of pride, the Ndokwa man would hide himself by not speaking his language at all. This attitude has contributed to the many hardships being faced by the Ndokwa people today. For instance, a lot of Ndokwa people who have been at the top in civil service and private or government companies failed to plant their Ndokwa persons who would have succeeded them upon their retirement. While the Igbo and Yoruba man would fill such position with his tribes' men, the Ndokwa person will prefer other tribes to his own. It does not matter how you explain this, there is no good reason why we should not be our brother's keeper.

There are cases of Ndokwa persons who are managers today but no single Ndokwa person is working under them in that company. It is ridiculous. If we love Ndokwa, we will love her people. Let us repent from this attitude because it does not tell well of us. Take example from others like the Yorubas and Urhobos alike. It is sheer selfishness.

Patriotism means active love for one's land; that is my layman's definition. It is a strong love for one's land and her people's welfare. There can be no true patriotism without true love. Patriotic actions are motivated by love.

Consider Awolowo Obafemi, Major Nzeogwu, Chief Odumegwu Emeka Ojuwu and others who for the love they had for their fatherland fought gallantly, some even to death. Who has fought for the good of Ndokwa land? Can we identify anyone who has fought with his life both nationally and locally for the

good of Ndokwa people? What do we see? Men and women who are selfishly gathering wealth for themselves. Patriotism and love remove selfishness when in operation. If Ndokwa must come out of her marginalised position, her people including you must start our patriotic responsibilities towards the land. We must not hide our identity. We should do like one of our dear daughter of Ndokwa, who on assuming office of note, dawned the consequences to make Ndokwa sons and daughters arise to principalship posts. She indigenised the post thereby making many Ndokwa people become qualified. Thank God for her life, she will rise always and to the highest position in her career, Amen.

Thank God for our son, who indigenised the defunct Fortune Bank. What I am approving here is their attitude towards the welfare of Ndokwa and her people. Brethren of Ndokwa, children of one father, let us arise to UNITY and LOVE, and thus fulfil our PATRIOTIC roles. Let us learn to employ our brothers where we have the opportunity to do so, for in due time our land will receive the blessing. If Amai is developed, and Aboh, it is Ndokwa that is developed. Therefore, there should be no reason good enough that will make Onicha-Ukwuani person to refuse helping Amai man and so on. Let us overcome this satanic bondage and stamp out that which has held us captive for so long, now is the time for us to unite and be one in all that will prosper our land, Ndokwa nation.

NDOKWA AND HER SUFFERINGS

The challenges of Ndokwa are not new. It started in the distant days past of the colonial masters, when Africans including Nigerians were partitioned. In the bid for the Europeans to have their motives of colonization met, Nigerians were partitioned into ethnic regions. The Niger Oil Protectorate enjoined the loyalty of the tribal chiefs as long as it satisfied their quest for

our raw materials and human labour. This further made them to diplomatically enslave us by putting us under the rulership of chiefs who were only interested in their personal gain rather than the interest of generality. Many of the chiefs were enriched by their European trade partners with such luxurious and intricate jewellerys, and household properties. They introduced the capitalist spirit into our society that existed in "communalism" everything before their coming.

This was the case when the land area and people that were partitioned out of the then Edo or Bini trade centres became Aboh Division. From the Niger River, the European explorers, missionaries and trades entered Aboh and saw the need for a trade settlement. This made them befriend the Obi of Aboh and when the relationship was favourable to them they left Aboh and her people for Asaba and Onicha. Today we can see the remains of the Europeans trade centres at Ashaka, Isellegwu and Aboh. The U.A.C. trade centres that once flourished are now an eye sour that reminds us of those good days. Because the Europeans were not interested in our good beyond that, that could make us better labourers for them, they did not see the need to open up centres that will survive the approaching economic changes from Europe.

It was only to become clerks and farmers that their training provided for us. No industries of note were opened from Achaia to Aboh, Kwale through Obiaruku, and Amai to Umutu. The British man was only interested in how to manage Ndokwa (Aboh Division) for her own good. It is not surprising that one-time chief of Abbi rejected the siting of Ukwuani District Council headquarters, at Abbi. According to him, it would be too burdensome to entertain visitors. All that he could see in his relationship with the British master was entertainment of visitors. Ridiculous! The British continued to make us feel that as one ethnic entity we would thrive better, This spirit made us

not to see the need of partitioning the then Aboh Division. While other divisions were being partitioned, Aboh Division only succeeded in changing their name to Ndokwa. God help us to recover.

Ndokwa, my beloved, was given birth to in trouble. As in all cases of life, one's birth place, geographical location, usually plays a significant role in his success and/or failure. Ndokwa, meaning Ndosumili and Ukwuani was thought to be a more embracing name for all the people of Aboh Division. It was hoped that it would give political strength and economic empowerment. As such, for a long time, we refused its being divided into more local government areas. A development that was exploited by the authorities who have marginalised us greatly. They concluded that whatever is done for one Ndokwa person is seen to be done for all of us. But this is not the case with the Urhobos, Isokos, and other ethnic nationalities that make up Delta state.

By the time we realised the need for more local governments, it was too late for my beloved Ndokwa. But thanks to the Abacha government that further threw us into what I would call "troubled blessing". Ndokwa was finally split into East and West while West was further divided into West and Ukwuani. Since this event, serious battles have been fought because of conflicts that arose as a result of the name given to one of the newly created local government.

Ukwuani, is the ancestral name of all Ndokwa people in a general sense; calling one of the three local government areas, Ukwuani, is confusing to the uneducated. By the uneducated, I mean the one who is not aware of the fact that those who agitated for the creation of the local governments were less concerned about the names assigned to them.

All they cared about was the creation of more local governments in Ndokwa. But for the intervention of God, my beloved Ndokwa would have lost the battle because instead of asking for more local governmental areas, we were fighting to see how and why the other group's interest should not be met, but ours. What would have been the result if the Abbi group, Utagba-uno group and Obiaruku groups fought in one spirit, asking differently without using each other for their selfish interests? What would have been the case if we asked and continued to ask for as many local government areas as it would be possible to partition Ndokwa west without contradicting or more correctly condemning and castigating one another?

It pains me when I hear that we petition one another to the government because of our selfish interests. For Ndokwa's sake, let us repent and turn up for unity. Only unity for the sake of Ndokwa will help us to come together for the transformation of the land. And it is NOW! NOW!! NOW!!!

Disunity has crippled development in Ndokwa land. Ndokwa people know how to write petitions against one another; individually and at community level. There is no central body through which Ndokwa people usually comes or can come together. It has become very difficult for us to come under one sovereign government. Even within one community, every family head is the chief of his community. Consider the case of Abbi, Obiaruku, Utagba-uno, Amai, Emu and many communities in the land. Selfishness has not allowed us to enthrone one man as the head of Ndokwa Nation. Many towns have different Okpala-Ukus.0

Recently, as I was gathering information for this book I saw what made me to weep. The railway line passing through Ika communities passed through Obiaruku in Ndokwa. At Ika

towns, compensation was paid to a single chief who later disbursed what was paid to his subjects.

But in Ndokwa, there were six chiefs from one town and the company became troubled. Ndokwa's example of disunity and selfishness was clearly portrayed as the company had to pay from one family to the other to effect the compensation. The constitution of traditional rulers in the state, and the representatives of Ndokwa is another clear indicator of our selfishness and disunity. Obis, Okpala-ukus and Ezes had of recent created bad blood in many communities. My beloved Ndokwa is being torn into pieces more and more by the day, the incessant crave for selfish interests at a time when unity and patriotism are needed for our survival. At a time other ethnic groups are gathering themselves together for their common good and development of their individual communities, my beloved is witnessing more disunity and selfishness among the children. In fact, love and peace, oneness and good rulership are all swallowed up by the unlearned, among the children of my beloved Ndokwa. It is among the rank and file of her citizenry. It is among the elders, the youths and the market women, it has entered into the constitution of the traditional shrine priests as well as the churches in the land. How difficult is it for us if not impossible, for light and darkness to dwell together? This appears to be the case in Ndokwa land, but I know that our God has not abandoned us. He will make a way where there is no way. Ndokwa my beloved will definitely be delivered from the hands of her oppressors in Jesus name. Amen.

Not long ago, I gathered that the spirit of disunity and selfishness made our oppressors to rob us the post of Vice-Chancellor at the Delta State University. Our oppressor exploited us through the petitions, which we Ndokwas wrote against our qualified son. They schemed us out and awarded the post to their son. Even in the political parties we fight one

another in different ways. Petitioning and quarrelling over which road to be developed, whether to carry (Utagba-ogbe Technical College) to another community are symptoms of our disunity and selfishness. Why can't those concerned ask for another tertiary institution and another road better still? Why not agree on one today and ask for another tomorrow?

In a situation where we petition ourselves, the government will leave us to settle our differences first. Ndokwa, this is one of the pains you have been suffering from so long. Disunity, loose your hold on Ndokwa land in Jesus name. Amen.

In the appointment of individuals into government offices, the monster, north senatorial district has been a severe instrument used in the marginalisation of Ndokwa people. Let us consider the educational sector where the posting of principals has never favoured the Ndokwa people. As I pointed out earlier, one of our illustrious daughters in her bid to indigenise the appointment of principals to schools, in Delta state, created many opportunities for qualified Ndokwa sons and daughters to be appointed as heads of school but this was vehemently fought against by our oppressors as it denied them the opportunity of becoming heads of school in our local government. Some persons saw it as abnormal while I saw it as sabotage, revengeful, an aggressive action over many decades of denial of our rights and privileges.

Ndokwa had for a long time suffered several denials and rejections of all kinds to the "Anioma, Ika-ibo or Delta-Ibo and/or Delta North Senatorial District Syndrome." Until we realise the injustice these other ethnic groups that always feel the need to marginalise us are meting out to us, we will never be free or be allotted appointments into government posts. Note that, no Ndokwa son or daughter has ever been appointed as a Federal Minister or even made an ambassador. No federal

*institution of any kind has been created or even situated on our soil. Why? Asaba, Agbor and Ogwashi-uku always get to fill up the quota allotted to Delta North Senatorial District. Oh Ndokwa! What a shame? **Arise! Arise!! Arise!!! And shine! For your time is NOW! NOW!! NOW!!!***

Our people are always at disparity whenever we are faced with the choice of who to join forces with. Our neighbours in the South, Central Senatorial district are less oppressive, but east or west, we are ridiculed and turned into errand boys by the south, central and North Senatorial District politicians. God has not made us so. We are only being swallowed up by our own attitude. We quarrel and devour one another before our neighbours for no just cause. For example, the case of us not having a single town group for the singular purpose of pursuing the cause of our people long before now. Thank God for the Ndokwa Students group and a few others that are springing up now. Sometime ago, a cooperative leader in Ukwuani Local Government area claimed that people from Obiaruku are not from Ukwuani in order to satisfy his selfish motive from despondence. What a shame!

ARISE AND BUILD

The time has come for us as Ndokwa people to rise up and build our fatherland rather than pulling it down with our own hands. Let us come together, irrespective of our religious, cultural, and communal differences, for one single aim; to build the Ndokwa nation. If the federal and state government, other ethnic groups refuse to recognise us, let us through self-emancipation arise to pursue social values that would put us in the limelight of the present global villages. We can start by grouping ourselves as:

- 1. The Onuosa of Ndokwa nation*
- 2. Ndokwa Peoples' Congress*

3. *Ndokwa Elders Forum*
4. *Ndokwa Elites Forum*
5. *Ndokwa Youth Movement*
6. *Ndokwa Christian Congress*
7. *Ndokwa Development Union*
8. *Ndokwa Voice*
9. *Ndokwa Patriotic Group*
10. *Ndokwa Political Forum; and many more.*

For the single objective of reaching the powers that be on behalf of our Ndokwa nation to attract self-development projects. This would also shine the light on us thereby drawing the attention of the authorities in our state or the nation at large to pay heed to the plight of the Ndokwa Nation.

We cannot continue to watch our land decay while we are alive. Enough of this stealing of our allotted political positions by individuals who are not bonafide Ndokwa indigenes. They have exploited us enough to the detriment of the masses. They assume the office of commissioner, and other government appointments as Ndokwa sons/daughters but execute the duties of the office to the detriment of the Ndokwa nation, one of such commissioners once said, “the people who come to identify with me and tell me what their needs are, I will listen to them.” This was just so he could cover up his shady deeds of diverting the resources or positions meant for the Ndokwa people to indigenes of other ethnic groups living on Ndokwa soil. We agree to the fact that they were born in Ndokwa and may have no other place to call home. But let this ideology be in principle and practice too. Such that when, by virtue of being born in Ndokwa, they are given government (political) appointments based on Ndokwa allocation, they need not wait for anyone to come lobbying before they address the age-long existing social, educational, industrial and developmental challenges being faced by the people. To say our people did not

come to lobby as such our share of amenities would be given to your (other) people is a slap on the face of the Ndokwa people you have claimed to belong to and represent. Enough is enough with this “Ethnical robbery.”

It is necessary to emphasis here that, “this treatment may not stop until we know who-is- who in Ndokwa.” We need to identify the real “Ndokwas”. Enough of taking in infiltrators and “sojourners” who have no claim, stake (or anything to lose) on Ndokwa land. There are those who have no other homes than Ndokwa: and there are others who have the option of accepting to be called the sons or Pharaoh's daughters. May God Almighty deliver us, in Jesus name. Amen.

LET US PROMOTE OUR IDENTITY

The time has come for Ndokwa people to discover their true identity. We wandered away for too long in the identity of the Ika Ibos, as we are called. We have buried well and long enough our language in Igbo instead of Ukwuani. Let us arise now or never. If we will not make use of the available opportunity, future children will not forgive us. We allowed ourselves to be colonised as Igbo people. Even if it was done in ignorance, has it not been long enough for us to realise ourselves? When are we going to be serious with evolving Ndokwa language to portray our identity? When shall we embrace modern trends of life into our culture to move together with these other ethnic groups that are oppressing us because we do not apparently have identity? If you are annoyed with me for saying we have no identity so far, tell me who you are. You are either Utagba-Uno person, Ogume, Abbi, Umutu, Onicha-Ukwuani, Aboh, Afor and many more. What we call ourselves, (Ukwuani People) is under serious attack. Who are Ukwuani people? Is it those in Ukwuani Local Government Area or those in the two Ndokwa

Local Government Area? Are Ndosumili or Ndokwa people, the Ukwuanis? Who are we?

I am proposing a search for an ideology of these people called Ukwuani or Ndokwa people. Let us come up with one out of the two. Ukwuani or Ndokwa. And start developing a common language, or theological ideology, that will enhance our oneness. Notice that the Isoko and the Urhobos have gone a long way in these areas. They have their languages written. There are Urhobo and Isoko textbooks in use in Delta State Schools. Why can't the Ukwuanis improve on what has been done? Why stop at the primary or secondary levels of education? How many Ndokwas can write or read Ukwuani language?

The need for our identity to be projected is enormous. We are looked down by our neighbours because we have nothing to show, as it apparently is, for our identity. I am not going into research or much talk about this. But notice that many of our educated few are not able to speak or write Ukwuani language fluently. It is in Ndokwa we consider visitors or non-natives when we have opportunity to demonstrate our language identity. What I am saying here is that at our burial ceremonies, naming ceremonies and such gathering that would bring Ndokwa sons and daughters to where they can show the "Ukwuaniness" in them, we speak English for the benefit of our visitors. The Yorubas and even the Urhobos do not so when it concerns them.

What about respect for constituted authority? We have jeopardised everything. No respect for elders. No respect for traditions that will demand our loyalty and service without monetary reward. We need to arise to prove that we have an identity by consciously it taking upon ourselves to write, speak and do all things as Ukwuani or Ndokwa people.

There should arise an Ndokwa National Body with the full power of overseeing all Ndokwa affairs especially "King making" and "Kingly activities" as it applies to politics. What we have now as the Ndokwa National Union is exactly what I am suggesting. But leadership challenges have not allowed this Union to stand or function effectively. On the other hand, we the followers have not been able to follow and give the leadership the impetus it needs to succeed.

The leadership of Ndokwa National Union is failing because the follower-ship is also failing. I have attended up to five meetings of the NNU but failed to see all our honourable members in full attendance. It is either one or two who come with an agenda to attack the leadership of the union. The leadership also becomes intimidated and displays a sense of no focus by not being able to preside over the meetings.

God said in Genesis 11:1-7 that with unity we cannot be stopped in anything we set out to do. History has it that leadership among our people has always been in "units" with the eldest man as their leader. As was observed by Professor Steve Okecha, let us stop waiting for the coconut to fall. Leadership is no longer by age. We need to look for the man that possesses all it takes to provide good leadership. Leadership in Ndokwa has not succeeded because of the twin challenge of "a leader" and "a follower" not being available. I am likely to tie this to two character traits exhibited by the Ndokwa man. On one hand, we appear "too humble" that we shy away from exhibiting the attributes that a leader needs to succeed thereby making us fail to show the leader in "us". Similarly, we manifest the "oversabi" kind of attitude so much that nothing a leader among us does is seen as good. Except the leader does what "you" want, followership is denied him. On the other hand, those in leadership develop a combatant attitude towards the followers; they see everyone that comes close as an

enemy. Foresight, good planning and execution that brings about development are in short supply as the available time most leaders have is given to defending their decisions and actions; this deters progress.

We can learn from our neighbours. There can be other small bodies that can still unite us. The Urohobos have many of such but none of them can override the Urohobo Progressive Union. Let us place the NNU in that status. Let us entrust the leadership of the NNU to anyone who will agree to be made a leader even though he is not born to be one. What is of utmost importance is you and I agreeing to follow no matter the cost. We must be ready to follow in wisdom and in foolishness, depending on what the leadership provides. Knowing that a people without a leader cannot progress. Let us arise to install a leader in our communities and the Ndokwa Nation. We can forget the past and provide the needed support to 'make' one of our "Kings" or any of our prominent sons, the president of the NNU. We will succeed as we build him up for the purpose of possessing our possession. Similarly, royal fathers or traditional rulers should be installed in all our communities or towns. This will enable them to play their role of representing us among other traditional rulers within our state and the entire nation. **We are not going to wait until the ball is in our court before we strike. Rather, we will go and bring the ball to our court and then strike harder. It is time for Ndokwa to arise.** Listen to what God says about Ndokwa Nation and her people in the prayer below: God speaks Today, I was sleeping one day(night) in the month of June 2002 when God woke me up and asked me to write down what you are about to read. Before I slept, I was carrying the burden of the Ndokwa Nation as regards her emancipation-salvation, healing, deliverance and prosperity. My prayer before I slept was what God said! Concerning Jerusalem, I was caught up with a similar intensity for the future of the Ndokwa Nation. So when I woke up, I began to write in the following manner.

“For Ndokwa's sake I will not rest. I am compelled by the love for Ndokwa to seek her peace, salvation and deliverance from oppressions, reproach and lack of unity which have so long dwelt in the land; that one wonders whether God made my beloved Ndokwa to be so. Dear Lord, come and save us from our enemies within and without. We occupy no place in the land of our habitation. We are shared by our oppressors as a prey before the lion. They devour our God-given goods and take over our seats in all sectors of our national and state economy. We are grossly marginalised. We have need for your salvation, Lord. We have no hope in our leaders because they are not united to fight our cause. We have no hope in the masses because they are ignorant of our sufferings. They think that is how God made us to be: slaves to our neighbouring ethnic groups.

Dear father, pardon us for our ignorance and sins of inferiority complex. We apologise for the sins of our forefathers. Have mercy upon us, O God. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities, and attend unto our prayer. For you have been a shelter for us and a strong tower from our oppressors and save us from the hands of those who have for so long marginalised us. For Ndokwa's sake, I will not cease to cry unto thee, Lord, and for her being marginalised, faced with disunity, involved in idolatrous worship and total neglect of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will not rest until the righteousness of Ndokwa and her total deliverance from all she is lacking now come forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

Ndokwa will definitely arise out of her backward state. Her righteousness, prosperity and supreme position in the nation's economy will exalt her above those who before now oppressed her. Her oppressors and those who mocked her during the days of stagnation and spiritual darkness shall see her glory and

Ndokwa shall be called a new name, which the abundance of her rich resources from God shall call her. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens O Lord for Ndokwa's sake and rain down your righteousness upon our land for the rein of your son Jesus." Yes, Jesus is Lord and Saviour in Ndokwa Nation. He has come to give light and progress to the people who before now dwelt in darkness and poverty, I hear the voice of God saying: "Ndokwa is no more forsaken. I have heard the cry of my servants. I have come down with my blessing. I am jealous of Ndokwa." Ndokwa was denied all that a people need to be prosperous. She has been marginalised for so long. I am now come to deliver her and to exalt her to an enviable position. Ndokwa shall no more fight nor beg any people for developmental projects. I will rain industries in showers upon Ndokwa Nation. Her people will no longer wonder in destitute in lands that they are strangers. My people of Ndokwa land will settle in their fatherland and drink the milk and honey that I the Lord alone will supply by my power!"

It is my prayer O Lord that the prophetic statement above come to pass in my time.

Dear Lord, I want to enjoy out of the blessings of Ndokwa my beloved. Father, I plead with you today that you forgive our ungodly acts and heal our land of Ndokwa. Listen to me, O God Almighty and give attention to my supplication: Dear Lord, have mercy upon Ndokwa, according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out Ndokwa's transgressions. Wash Ndokwa through from her iniquity and cleanse her from her sins of idolatry, immorality, and wickedness. We Ndokwa people today acknowledge our sins. We are not clean in your eyes, and even our hearts condemn us. Against thee only have Ndokwa sinned, and done all these evil in your sight. Amen.

Beloved, our Ndokwa was founded in iniquity. Her foundation was laid on human blood, and her walls were built upon strife and idols. Purge Ndokwa with the blood of Jesus and she shall be free from idolatry. Make Ndokwa to hear joy and gladness, that her people which have been neglected for so long will see development and rejoice.

Father, hide your face from her sins and blot out all her iniquities. Create in Ndokwa a new desire for a true God. O God, renew a right way of worship in all families of Ndokwa. Restore unto Ndokwa her lost glory and uphold her with thy righteousness. Then Ndokwa will teach other nations your ways and her sinners will be converted unto thee, o Lord. Deliver Ndokwa from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of our salvation and, and her sons and daughters shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. Do well to Ndokwa in the good pleasure, build thou the walls-economy, industry, technology, education, petroleum etc. of Ndokwa nation. Cause Ndokwa people to rejoice in the land of their habitation O Lord. Give ear to our prayer O God, and hide not thy face from our supplication.

"The Lord loveth the gate of Ndokwa My Beloved more than the dwelling of Nigeria. Glorious things are spoken of Ndokwa, the nation of God. The "Tulsa of Nigeria". The Lord God will make mention of Ndokwa and her people to them that know him not. Beloved America, Asia and Europe will come there for their salvation. And of Ndokwa shall be said, a people who before dwelt in darkness, lack of progress and disunity, without leaders among them, have been visited by the God of Abraham. Then shall her seed scattered all over other nations will seek to return home. The highest himself shall establish this. Many shall come to say I am born in Ndokwa land.

Then it shall be said, in Ndokwa is God known, His name is great in Ndokwa land. In Kwale, Obiaruku, Abbi, Amai, Utagba-Uno, Ogume, Emu, Aboh, Ossissa, Ashaka, Akoku, Ebedei and Afor are his tabernacles and his dwelling places in all Ndokwa Nation. These broke the altars of Satan, the thrones and kingdoms of idolatry, customs, traditions and cultures. Thou art the God that doeth wonders, thou had declared thy strength among Ndokwa people, God alone has redeemed us from the hands of our oppressors and those who have marginalized us for so long.

I give you thanks O Lord for thy visitation. This great work you have done in Ndokwa will abide from generation to generation. Our children will serve you with all their hearts, spirit, soul and body. They will handover to their children and the children of their children. And so will your kingdom continue in Ndokwa nation. Amen.

From the above prophetic prayer, we consider the necessity for adjustment in our leadership structure to accommodate the prosperity God will shower on Ndokwa Nation.

- 1. Ignorance of what leadership is all about.*
- 2. Building up one another instead of pulling down each other.*
- 3. Promoting Ndokwa Ideology instead of town or community.*
- 4. Readiness to accept changes in culture that will bring developments in the modern sense of the word-development.*
- 5. Readiness to resolve conflicts for the sake of achieving developmental objectives and goals.*
- 6. Adventuring into Nigeria large society with a view of attracting government attention in form of education, industry and others into Ndokwa Nation.*

7. *Providing accommodation in all our communities for developments-especially for none-indigenes.*
8. *Realising the importance of SECURITY in its all-embracing meaning.*

I am not going to attempt a rigorous comment on all the eight proposals above. However, I will try to bring out what are my intentions in making the proposals in the next chapter.

THE TYPE OF LEADERSHIP NDOKWA NEEDS

Leadership has been defined by many to mean "a guide" or "to direct". For purposes of clarity and also to be less academic, I will accept this definition of leadership to address the issue at hand. Ndokwa needs a leader who will guide, direct and take the first position in all matters of the Ndokwa Nation in governing the land. This leader will 'go not sit down' to present (and represent) Ndokwa opinion anywhere the need arises. He will be the Voice of Ndokwa people. If he has not spoken, Ndokwa has not spoken. If he speaks, Ndokwa speaks. This means he must be lettered and versed in community, local, state, national and international politics. In short, he must be educated in the true meaning of the word "education". This rules out the old age-system whereby the eldest man is the leader, and the subordinates are men of the same age group, elders of units or Okpalas. I need to sound a warning here, Education alone does not provide all that it takes to be a leader. One's circle of association, those you mix up with can determine your leadership potentials. A retired policeman, or a retired court judge, or a retired bank worker has different dispositions in his life views that can affect him in providing leadership.

A university Professor cannot be compared to a socialite

who never saw the four wall of a university. What I am saying is that some are born leaders and others are made. All we need to do is to search out one whether born or made. It is not enough to concede that because X is a retired professor or justice therefore he is a good leader. His place of work might have restructured him. A man working with corpses of "Kabada" may not be good in dialogue. His reasoning in public issues may be correct but his 'silence mood' will not be taken for his ideas. He will need to speak out!

The leader we need in Ndokwa among other qualities should be vocal, fearless and accommodating. He will be ready to use criticisms, oppositions and other difficulties that confront leadership as ingredients to progress in his dally input to leadership challenges that confront him. He should be prepared to be focused no matter the odds. He must be prepared to project the interest of the Ndokwa Nation and not his family or town or community. A leader that is ready to pay the cost and put up self-sacrificing attitude. A leader that will be diplomatic and not antagonistic in dealing with those who have been oppressing and marginalising us to their benefits. A leader that will be all out in all kinds of human traits that can be used to fulfil his objectives to get his goals accomplished. A leader that will be tireless as an "errand boy" for the Ndokwa Nation. He will pay all the price it will demand to mobilise his distant and immediate followers. Especially those who are executive members.

THE NEED FOR TEAM BUILDING

Building up one another instead of pulling down each other. One bad characteristic that almost all Ndokwa

persons exhibits is lack of cooperation. We need to support each other no matter what the situation may be. In politics without bitterness, what we do is to stick only to your own. How can only you be in that position for eight (8) years? Senate or House of Rep... Is not for your family alone. What have you done that deserves you a third term? Give others chance to build themselves in the leadership of the nation. You failed to empower Ndokwa people while were there. How justified it is for you to be the Governor, Chairman or Councillor for three years when there is nothing in your consistency that shows your impact. Become a king make and project another person!

On the other hand, many Ndokwa people fail to support their brother while in the office. And sometimes, where we have the privilege to work together in one office, we pull down ourselves right before our neighbours. Thank God for the modern generation that our brother's attitude displayed in the bank where he was CEO or GM. Thank God for our Redeemer whose records show that he helped many Ndokwa sons and daughters into the Navy. The time has come for us to build one another. Stop petitioning one another and allow time to fight for us. Records abound that Ndokwa people do not support their brother's organisations. Many Ndokwa pastors in the cities like Warri, Lagos, and Benin 'complain' that our people run away from their churches. But what do we see among the Isokos, Urhobos, Yorubas and Igbos? Ninety percent (90%) of the members of Redeemed are Yorubas, Ninety percent (90%) of CPM are Igbos. Also, in Obiaruku where I live, sixty percent (60 %) of worshipers in CCDC are Isoko indigenes as well as God's Grace Ministry. As it is in the church, so it is in other enterprises; Ndokwa people, our attitudes towards each other should change. Let us rise up to support one another. Let us rise up to build each other.

There is no harm in trying and failing. The record will be there that you did it. Many of us do not attend the indigenous churches in our town. When we come home from Lagos or Abuja, instead we bring home our branch of CFM or Redeem to our village so that we can get our friends, families, church members to attend. What stops you from building up your brother who had ignored luxuries of life to combine Pastoral work with farming in other to survive in the village? Like I stressed this point in my book, The Transformation of the land, your contribution to the local indigenous church in your village will encourage your brother or Pastor to keep on standing at the gate for your village. It is this kind of building up we need if the Ndokwa Nation Union will meet the demands of leadership we envisage.

This writer is not saying that evil should abound or be encouraged. But whatever wrong your brother is doing, forgive him and join him to overcome, progress: effective progress is built upon tolerance in any community or association. Where there is no forgiveness or attitude of allowing things go ahead for success sake, there can be no positive growth. That is exactly what I am driving at in this section. Either as a leader or follower. What our neighbour's do which we have failed to do, is disagreeing to agree. In house they will disagree and sometime in public come out to exploit our inability to agree in our own case. As we have been observed earlier, they tell us to go and settle among ourselves and by the time we reach a compromise, they would have shared the 'elephant' we all killed leaving nothing for us; not even the ears. You politicians know what I am talking about. Since 1999 till date, our neighbours, north or central south, have been using this strategy to sideline us. They instigate some of us to create such unconducive atmosphere in the politics of

the Ndokwa Nation with the promise of becoming the Governor of Delta State and even the President of Nigeria?

Are you sure it is not your selfish motive that is driving you? Expecting to get the timing of God only when they give you assurance of your becoming the governor? It is God's time, and Ndokwa time because you are now the candidate? Let us stop this selfish and self-centred politics and go in for "ours" instead of "mine". Records shows that whenever Ndokwa man fails, it is Ndokwa man that made it happen. Many of us join the Ikas or Aniochas to destroy ourselves. You fail to see them as enemies who exploit our 'divided ignorance' for their success. I have talked volumes of this in the beginning of this book. Let us arise to build up each other so that Ndokwa my beloved can develop like her neighbouring ethnic nations.

NOW IS THE TIME

It is time for us to promote an Ndokwa ideology in all sections of human activities. We have the likes of Ikime Ubaru who will publicise the history of Ndokwa people. A people with history have ideology. We can start with whatever we have and develop until it is perfected than to continue in darkness. What we may refer to now, as Ndokwa politics is dirty and unprogressively. It is self-centred and unpatriotic.

That is why those who are practicing it cannot provide us good leadership. It will take us to agree to develop and promote "our ideology" which will speak Ndokwa instead of my town or my family as I have noted in an earlier section of this book.

Ndokwa or Ukwuani terminology is not our problem, but lack of ideology of who we are in our ethnic Nationality is

one of our greatest challenges.

Let me call on all and sundry in the Ndokwa Nation to provide an atmosphere that will enhance physical, spiritual and marital development. We need to "put off" in other to "put on" those qualities that will make our oppressors realise that we are a people who are as intelligent, industrious, social and religious as they are.

Every element of timid behaviour that makes us beggars or "God deys" in our father's land should be taken away without a second thought. Let us adventure into the new ideology of "united we stand, divided we fall". As we unite in all our enterprises, the God of heaven will back us up to achieve our goals. This new ideology will be devoid of "Aniomaism " or " Ika-Iboism". It will be solely built upon our Ndokwa identity - the Ndokwa people of Delta State. Arise! Oh Ndokwa My Beloved. But "who shall go for us?" You, the reader may be the one to answer this "big" question.

MANAGING OF THE CONFLICT OF TRADITIONAL BELIEF AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

INTRODUCTION:

Man is created in the image of God. Bible tells us that God created man and blessed him. Man is a product of God's blessing. He is full of wisdom. He has the ability to do whatever he desires and chooses to do. When he makes up his mind to do anything, nothing but God alone can stop him. This attribute of man has enabled him to conquer his environment and has brought the entire creatures of God into one global village.

As it is, “...with God all things are possible...” so it can be said of man that “...with God all things are possible...” to him. To live together with fellow human beings and all other creatures of God is a product of bringing so many things to blend. Animals, plant and other creatures exist together under controllable environment. In the same manner, human beings live together with animals and other creatures within one agreeable and controllable environment. Therefore, anything that affects “man and man” can be controllable.

We are living together with each other today because we agreed to do so. Whatever reasons that have made it possible for us to live together as “white and blacks” and whatever complexion, we are able to make people of the same ancestry or community to live together in peace. It is on this ground that I wish to attempt an examination of traditional beliefs that conflicts with the Christian Faith and also attempt to provide possible solution needed for the management of such conflicts.

There are two things. Firstly, one cannot rule out the possibility of these conflicts but we can do our best to minimise them. While, secondly, it is possible to recognise these conflict areas and take permanent decisions on them and thereby “closing our eyes” when the traditionalists or the Christians see what would cause conflicts. You may say that it is not possible. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and it delivers from evil. If the traditional belief adherents would do

like the Christians when they see their gods defiled or participate in what they are not to accommodate and pretend not to have seen or known about them, there will be no conflicts.

If the traditionalists that worship idols do not force the Christian to serve idol in any way, there will be no conflicts. If it ends with just telling each other why the other should accept “his belief”, there will be no conflicts of the type we see today in our society. Imagine when idol worshipers would want the Christian to clear roads to the farm only during the time of serving the altar of a particular “god”. It does not matter the explanation you may give, as long as the collection of yam tubers to Okpala-uku or whatever is done at the time of the festivals only is to be forced on the Christian. One thing the traditional beliefs adherents do not know is the fact that the Okpala-Ukus, Okwas, Onotus, Ogbuimisi, and all others in authority do not rule over them alone. The elders and leaders in the community oversee all the affairs of the community.

The Christians and the Christian leaders and Church Pastors are members of the community together with those who do not go to Church. We live together, drink the same water, and use the same market and roads. If we are able to marry ourselves in the society and use the same amenities without classifying ourselves with our religious beliefs, we can also do everything else without conflicts. We can as well serve whatever we choose and leave others to serve whatever they choose. A possible area of conflict is when one prefers his as the best. In life, communication is very important. Man is a social creature.

The process of socialization involves human interaction, sharing of experiences. The Christian faith is such a wonderful experience of God's love for man. It is so strong and real that whoever receives it cannot as a matter of expression of love fail to tell the next person he meets even if he is his or her enemy.

Christianity is an expression of divine love. Idolatry is an expression of wickedness, hatred and destruction. It is so clear that while an idol worshiper can afford to keep malice and live at peace with his god, it is not possible with the Christian. Jesus said give your enemy whatever you have, involving water to drink. For fear of being harmed diabolically, the idol Worshiper will not like to do that.

I am not attempting to discredit anyone's belief; it is living with us that traditions exist that make us to forbid certain animals. God of the Bible has given to us for food. Anyone's religion that forbids “such and such” should learn to understand that one man's poison is another man's meat. There should be no such cases as making it compulsory that anyone living in the community should not eat such animal or food all because tradition says it is a taboo.

On the other hand, this kind of case should be handled with decency and caution on the side of those who know that the freedom of what to eat is also human right. Neither idol worshiper nor the Christians faith should violate each other's freedom of worship. The idol worshipers, free thinkers or persons of other religions should not violate one another's freedom of expression. We should be free to talk to one another of whatever we think is good for the other person. The only exception is the application of force as is idol worshiper or those who claim to be custodians of traditions or customs of our land do to people of other religions, who fail to comply with their Tradition. This is outright uncivilized behaviour. Traditional belief custodians should know that the customs and cultures of any people are affected by civilization or what I may call the coming of “new ways of life” into the society. We are no longer living with or in thatch houses. We are using the best of modern technological inventions; modern communication gadgets are all over the places in our society.

Why it is that everything that has to do with God through Jesus Christ is highly resisted by idol worshippers? The traditional beliefs that conflict with Christian faith are those that are idolatrous. Good Christian products like formal education, industries, means of transport and scientific discoveries are accepted. If we have accepted modern ways of doing things that make life worth living like clothing, shelter, and food, why do we reject the God of those who brought these “things” to us? Someone may say we had these things before the coming of the whites, but know for sure that we did not have the know-how to transform them into such things like Petrol, Gas, Plastics plates and what more. It was those who brought Christianity that brought the know-how to do and produce the good things like Roofing sheets we are using today.

If our traditional beliefs custodians will tolerate others who do not accept what they claim to believe, conflicts will be eliminated. As noted above, such situation like forcing people to accept or participate in programmes that are considered idolatrous is the issue at stake. It is good that community labours should involve sons and daughter of every community. Those who are in-charge should be able to categorize the community by what they worship. The idol worshippers should not think that the town or village belong to them alone. Respect others. Accept the fact that all of us are born natives of our town or village. The truth is that we have deliberately decided to abandon the “gods” of our fathers to serve the God of the Bible. This decision should be seen as personal. It should not be taken for rebellion and self exile from the town, community or family. The Christian should not be treated as an outlaw because of his or her choice to serve the God of heaven who created all things. The native, born Christian should be allowed to suffer the consequences of his or her decision to abandon the gods of his or her fathers. Those who call themselves custodians of cultures, customs, traditions and the

protectors of the land should leave the gods to fight whoever abandons them by themselves. If this is done, there will be little or no areas of conflicts between the traditional beliefs and the Christian faith. Who offends the gods let him or her suffer the consequences. It is on this, The God of the Bible operates. Those who believe in the God of the Bible, Jesus Christ allow God to arise and scatter His enemies. It is the God that fights for His worshiper.

Those who abandon Him to worship other gods do so at their own risk. They are allowed to suffer the consequences of their decision. Nobody fights for God nor defends His name through fighting or compelling “rebels” to serve Him, Jesus Christ.

Instead, greater love is shown to them so that they can see reasons to come back to serve the living God. This is the Christian faith in practice. The Christians are “never” to fight with any physical weapon in protecting what they believe.

The Christian is not ready to hate in any way. Fighting and destroying of properties are not part of the Christian faith. He is always looking for way to eliminate conflicts as he prefers or practices the Christian faith. It is on this background **Pastor Dickson Amaliwom Ozah** delves into the examination and exposition of ways and means both Christians and idol worshiper will manage themselves to accept each other irrespective of their different beliefs and the Christian faith has attempted provision of what would make idol worshiper and Christians live together without fighting in the presence of all. These conflicts can be avoided. It is achievable.

Both the traditionalists and the Christians should use the laws of our Nation Nigeria to resolve whatever conflict that results as they live together in the same country, Nigeria. Taking laws into their hands especially among the rural dwellers is a case to be seriously frowned at by all who desire the development of

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CHAPTER FIVE
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**THE SOLUTION OR LIKELY REMEDY THAT WILL
MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE SUCH CONFLICTS**

The gods of our fathers are not different from the gods of the other nations that do not know the God of the Bible. The truth remains that our fore-fathers worshiped gods they could physically locate and so every possible creature was seen as a way to the destination of their god. Trees, rocks, forest and other objects of different kinds are sacred objects of worship. They are regarded as the medium or way to the god they claim to worship. Strange enough, they claimed that God is everywhere and therefore, can be worshiped with a physical object representing his abode. So, their god can be contacted through the above creatures like animals, trees, stones and even the earth. This exactly was the case at Athens where Paul saw the temple dedicated to the Unknown god. This biblical record proves that even Europeans worshiped and are still worshipping idols.

It is not only in Africa or Ndokwa land that idols are worshiped. As it can be seen, in everyday life of the present generation, idolatry is everywhere in the cities and villages, whether in Africa or Europe or other countries of the world. It is in this note that I challenge traditional believers of Ndokwa nation to learn from the other Nations of the world. Lagos, Benin City, Onitsha and other tribal cities of the nations still worship idols; the difference is that other worshipers are not disturbed. It may have happened before but civilization, education and global challenges in national development have minimized emphasis on such areas that will bring conflicts. For example,

in Benin City, the Oba does not stop Churches during festivals and I quote “During the burial of my mother in one of the villages in Benin Kingdom, I insisted on Christian burial without any combination of traditions that harbour “*juju*” elements that will conflicts with my Christian belief. The Oba and the traditional Palace Chiefs to which my mother belonged permitted me to go and do as I wished. Every Chief that attended the burial had a bible in his hand in other to flow with the spirit under which my mother was buried”. The above uncommon event is quoted to show my readers and those who fight for their gods to know that one can “compromise” without sinning against what we believe on. Forcing the people of other beliefs to accept your belief in anyway and through any means can cause conflict. As has also been noted above, the Community belong to all of us and the traditions, customs and whatever is “ours” not “yours”. The only thing is that we the Christians and those of other religions have willingly and voluntarily decided to serve the God of the Bible. It is our right from the Nigerian Constitution to worship whatever we choose. No one is to be forced to serve what one did not choose.

Traditions that certain elements in them conflict with the Christian faith/belief include:

- (i) Marriage
- (ii) Birth
- (iii) Burials
- (iv) Foods
- (v) Feast
- (vi) Dressing patterns

In all of the above, there are areas of possible agreement to avoid conflict. There is no problem without solution in life. Every challenge that occurs in human society provides opportunity to invent possible solution to that challenge.

Those who are involved should have this in their mind and be cautious when implementing their decision against any offender of their belief. For example, if an individual did not go to clear the road to the farms because he considered his participation to be idolatrous, fixing another work or the same work for him at a time of his choice is a civilized way of respecting each other's beliefs. Thereby minimizing or eliminating possible conflicts.

Different cultural beliefs and customary activities are practiced in different societies in different styles. In Ndokwa Nation, different clans and families have their ways of practicing cultures, traditions and customs within the same ethnic nationality. This is allowed to happen because they must live together in peace. I want to observe here that many of our objects of worship oppose each other. The masquerade called “*Nmawu*” for example is always angry to see another masquerade. It is the same with the god of war called “*ochu*” which wants to show the ability of cutlass or gun not being able to cut or penetrate human flesh respectively by use of Cutlass and Gun charms!

Peaceful co-existence should be the objective of ethnic collaborations. Except we agree to accommodate and tolerate one another no matter the extent or level or height of disagreement, peaceful co-existent cannot be achieved. The Church and the Community can co-exist only when the adherents, dwellers of the Community agree with themselves as one people.

In this book, I shall attempt suggestions and possible steps that one need to take to achieve it. To be able to provide social and spiritual aspects of our cultures, customs and traditions that will enhance peace among believers (Christian) and the unbelievers (idol worshippers) in our communities, we need to examine, discuss and compromise those areas, practices and

dos and don'ts where conflicts occur. Therefore, as stated above in this chapter, traditions and customs that have to do with marriages, beliefs, dressing, worship, deaths, births, foods, festivals, and many others shall be considered in this section.

- (i) Marriage customs/tradition vs. Church
- (ii) Death-burials vs. Church
- (iii) Birth-Naming ceremonies vs. Church
- (iv) Food/taboo/totem vs. Church
- (v) Festival vs. Church
- (vi) Age Grades/Town or Community Leadership vs. Church
- (vii) Kingship/Titles vs. Church

In order to provide the required information both for the Church and those who out of not knowing that there are many differences that are attached to those aspects of our life engagements after one has been converted from idolatry to Christianity, I need to examine each one of them.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE VS TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

In every culture, marriage is an honourable estate. This is why anyone not married in our community is looked upon as not a serious person, man and woman alike. There is great difference between what marriage is and impregnating a woman. A man can out of sinful relationship impregnate a woman but they are not married. This is a common occurrence in our society especially among non-Christians. When it happens among those who are not Christians, it is usually treated as a blessing. But among believers in the Lord Jesus Christ it is abomination, fornication or adultery depending on those who are involved. There is Christian marriage as there is customary or traditional marriage. Custom or traditional as

used above is defined as the way of (life) marriage of our community before the advent of Christianity. It should be taken as such because in the near future the Christian way of marriage- contracting and living together – in every family is gradually becoming a tradition in our community. This is true because tradition/custom simply put is accepted values, pattern and ways of doing things among a people in a given geographical location for a long time or over a period of time. Marriage values, patterns and practices form such traditions. It is the tradition of the Church to have only one wife. This wife is contacted through Christian traditions as recorded in the bible – finding the will of God, which comes through prayer and studying God's word – Prov. 3:5-7; 18:22. All marriages are recognized by God. But God requires the Christian to conduct his or her marriage ceremony in a Christian way according to the bible, 2 Cor. 5:17; 6:14-18; Deut. 7:3-6. Though, customs and tradition denomination and communities may differ, God does want His children to contract their marriages differently. No custom, tradition, denomination or parents, family and community should interfere with God's will in marriage, no matter how it affects them.

Having believed in Jesus Christ, the Christian is no more entangled to traditions, customs and practices that conflict with his or her beliefs in God. Therefore, whether in marriage or burial or any other kind of ceremony families or communities should not put any condition on the how-to-do it on the Christian. Just like he or she no longer involves himself or herself in all idolatrous activities, so should he or she not be made to contaminate his or her marriage with customs or traditions that are idolatrous. There are customs or traditions that do not conflict with the bible. These can be allowed to come up during Christian marriages and after. But where such customs that link the marriage to idols are insisted by the family or community to be practiced, conflicts or clashes will arise. As was suggested above in another chapter, families

should respect the *new faith* of their children to the letter. Compelling your son-in-law to buy alcoholic drinks especially for purpose of dedicating their marriage to idol is infringement on his vows made to God according to the Holy Scriptures. Yes, you may not believe or share this option with me, but know that your child or daughter has adopted a new lifestyle which you see him or her live daily. Why must you be forced to buy or do what conflicts with your faith?

Our tradition allows divorce, yes. But the Bible says "...what God has joined together, let no man put asunder..." Math. 19:1-11; Mark 10:2-12. As Christians, we need to obey Jesus Christ. It does not matter what Paul says, what Jesus says is the RIGHT THING TO DO! FORGIVE YOUR WIFE OR HUSBAND as only in death you can part, Rom. 7:1-6. I repeat here that our different interpretations of these Scriptures do not remove the activities that go on in our hearts and consciences when matters on divorce and re-marriage come up anytime. Tradition that allow divorce, whether in or outside the Church or community are against the truth of God's word. Christian marriage is in direct conflict with our traditional marriage practices before and after the ceremonies that established the union.

For peace and harmony and a good son or daughter-in-law, father-in-law or mother-in-law relationship let us differentiate how to contract the marriages in our communities and families, Christian or non-Christian apart. The Christian should be allowed to establish, celebrate or contract or covenant his or her marriage according to the Bible way, while the non-Christian should also be allowed to do the same. By so doing, there will be peace, love, togetherness and God's blessings.

This is not an exhaustive treatment on this topic, as there are many areas of Christian marriage and that of the non-Christian

I may not be able to discuss here. However, all of us need to practice freedom of worship to include our social, finance, education, religion, family, festivals, deaths and births, and things we eat or do not eat. As stated in one of the chapters above, let us stop fighting for our 'gods'. I think we usually say in Ukwuani language “nmor gbu e” meaning “*juju should kill the offender*”. Anyone who says he or she is a Christian and would not get married in the way our “tradition” allows should not be forced to do it as we demand. The soul that sins, it shall die. Finally, let our parents, families and communities stop forcing Christians into their idolatrous practices or refusing Christians to do what God allows them during the solemnisation/covenanting of their marriages.

T R A D I T I O N A L F E S T I V A L v s . C H U R C H / C H R I S T I A N S

For the purpose of peaceful co-existence, I am writing to educate the believers and their families and communities on how to handle conflicts that usually arise in times of these festivals. Christians celebrate feasts as the non-Christians do. But the truth is that Christians do not compel the non-Christians to celebrate with them. The problem between traditional festival celebrations and the Church arises from the assumption of the non-Christians in the same community that they own the land, the Christians, sons and daughter of the same land are excluded. That some son and daughter of the land have found a new faith, belief, and way of life does not make them strangers in their fatherland or motherland. If this is so, let the non-Christians tell the entire world which of the idols or juju, where it is worshipped, is a native of any community or member of any family? New idols or fetish gods are being introduced to our communities on daily basis. Why should Christians be a problem and those who practice Christianity be treated as strangers in their fatherland? That one is a Christian does not make one to lose his or her family

and community biological identity. What is changed is only religion or way of worshipping God or belief. It is painful to notice, therefore, that in our communities the Christians are not allowed to be in the leadership of the community unless they join in the worship of or pay allegiance to the fetish gods or belief. This is abominable! Denial of the right of the Christian needs to be addressed in our clans or families or communities. By virtue of my early upbringing in the idolatrous traditional and customary way, I have questioned why a Christian should not be allowed to become *Onotu, Okwa, Okpala-uku or Onotu-uku* and most importantly become a member of the council of Chiefs without idolatrous initiations or incantations with native chalk or powder? To my view, the Bible is more than enough for the Christian as his or her staff of office instead of *igbechi, ndi ichie, or ikenge* or whatever you may choose to call it. His or her wisdom and age, where age is used, is enough criteria for him or her to be installed as the *okwa, okpala-uku etc.* Our Christian fathers of old made certain mistakes which we should not allow to continue. *Okpala-uku, Okwa* titles is by age chronologically chosen by God implies that you have something to offer in the administration of your community. That one is a Christian and that anyone that becomes the *okpala-uku* must serve *ndichie*, is not RIGHT. For peace in our community such should be removed so that anyone who does not wish to serve *ndichie* can be *okpala-uku*. Yes, the Bible is more powerful than *ndichie!*

Our people need to try it by risking abandoning the spiritual life of the community to the Church to manage in a time when the King or *Okpala-uku* is a Christian. Oba, Obi, Eze and most of those occupying such seats today have compromised their faith in Christ. Until recently, Christians refused to be in or head community leaders because they wanted to remain in faith till they die. Those who agreed to lead entered to serve two masters. No! There are Christian Kings in some Kingdoms today who are not worshipping or serving idols on their throne.

But I am advocating a total separation from King and Priest or *Okpala-uku* and *Ogo nmor*. Let a Christian be *Okpala-uku* that will not serve *ndi ichie* in his time or *Ada* in her time be allowed to rule. When festivals come, those who think they could participate should do so. But where the Christian is forced to participate directly or indirectly is against freedom of worship. I go to places where I am free to do what will glorify God. Idolatry is a direct slap or insult to God of the Bible. Hence, we need to re-examine cultures or traditions that conflict with the Bible – Christian Faith.

DEATH and BURIAL vs. CHURCH

When I was a child, burial took different forms according to the belief of my people concerning what disease caused the death. The kind of sickness that results in a person's death determines where the dead body was buried. For example, anyone that died with swollen body: legs or belly was assumed to have been killed by the gods or *juju* or whatever. So, the dead body must not be buried in the 'house' but in the evil forest. So, also if any woman dies in the process of child delivery, especially with still birth, she must be buried in the evil forest. We can no longer keep this kind of tradition.

The sickness that caused a person's death should not be the determinant of where the dead body should be buried. Even non-Christians will not like their dead to be buried outside their own compound. Our community leaders should know that such beliefs are outdated and therefore should be allowed to be practiced by those who may wish to do so. If you use force, it is against freedom of belief.

In this chapter, therefore, I propose freedom for all as to what to do with their dead. Where there is a central cemetery as a way of civilisation, there is no trouble. All will know that it is a common burial ground for the community. As for ceremonies,

any idolatrous tradition should not be forced on the Christians. In fact, there should be Christian burial or what I call let the families decide how to bury their dead. If they are Christians, let them do it accordingly.

There is no one in any community that should claim ownership of all the traditions, customs and cultures. All of the terms mentioned above are not constant, but some are. It will therefore be wrong for anyone to punish another person for not keeping or observing any kind of assumed way of life. We are living in progressive culture, therefore we should be ready to welcome new ways of life different from what our forefathers kept or lived. For example, it was not difficult for us to accept 'handset' or 'ekwe nti" even where and when we do not understand its workings. We have accepted good dressing styles and building types different from the ones our fathers used without negotiations.

It is expected that the same should happen when it concerns our destiny or eternity. I have come to see that any tradition or way of life that Christianity opposes or refuses to adapt brings controversy. Why? My answer is because it is a battle between *light* and *darkness*. I have given some of these reasons in the earlier chapters. What I have said will lead me into examining how we solve or eliminate conflict between the Church and community. As we consider age groups, community leadership and those who embarrassed Christianity but are authentic sons or daughters of the community, I do not think my faith in any thing that I claim to believe in should be a determinant to my taking position among any age group in the community. Age group is chronological and biological. It is without any reference to any kind of worship or belief. If that is true, then it is wrong to disenfranchise anyone in becoming a leader among age group in the village or community as the case may be. For example, the various age groups that exist in any Ndokwa or Ukwuani Nation is not a product of any idol or object of

worship. Leadership involves application of knowledge and wisdom. No object of worship except the CREATOR has any power to impart knowledge or wisdom to its adherents. It is therefore obnoxious for anyone to prevent anyone from becoming a leader in the community because such a one did not taking *traditional title*.

This has been the reason for power tussle in leadership and governance in our community. Many who took these titles do so for selfish reasons. Hence, their government in the community has always been visited with recklessness, abuses and wicked activities that do not allow progress and development in the community. Most of the times, those who commit crimes have a direct link to these traditional bad leaders. As at the time I was writing this section of this book, cultic activities escalated in the community I lived. The community leadership gathered to find solution to the cultic activities. It was suggested that since these cultic persons are involved in robbery and killings, anyone caught should face capital punishment to bring sanity. The Police proposed it but because many of these cultist were children of these titled leaders. These leaders chose alternative of every parent cautioning their children, knowing the result of the proposal. I am saying that people should not be killed because they are cultist. No! The point I am making is this: ***when the righteous is in position of authority, the people rejoices but when the wicked is in position of authority the people are afflicted and they suffer.*** Leadership in the community should not be tied to titles that anyone can buy because he or she is rich rather character and integrity should be the mirror with which those who would lead in the community are examined.

Having said all that let us now examine the titles and positions that exist for anyone in the traditional community because of AGE whether biological or chronological.

OKPALA-UKU vs THE CHURCH

For the short time I have lived, I have seen many Christian fathers who did not occupy the *Okpala-uku* seat because they were Christians. Why was it so that a Christian will not like to sit on *Okpala-uku* seat because he or she goes to Church? Why is it that in some other community you are almost irrelevant because you did not take the idolatrous *Onotu* title at the time, age and as tradition demands? There are so many questions why do our people use idolatrous traditions to enthrone leaders. Is it the **idols or fetish gods** that administer the community? Are there roles in the community that Church and other faiths including members of the Church can play in our communities?

Why is it that we do not allow other persons with their beliefs and objects of worship like the Bible notwithstanding to ascend the *Onotu or Okpala-uku* seat instead of the *Igbechi* as the staff of office? I think it has come to the point that whoever attains the chronological or biological age of becoming *Onotu or Okpala-uku* should be allowed to occupy the seat, religion he or she belongs notwithstanding. The time has come when we should allow the gods to fight for themselves as the God of the Bible does. When Moses and Aaron were challenged, they shifted the judgment to God. When God appeared in the scene, Abihu and his men were punished. The rod of Aaron also was used to prove that God enthroned him as Moses' companion. Our Christian fathers of old did not see the truth and facts I am stating in this book. It was not right for them to have rejected or had a *liaise-affair* attitude towards their community governance or leadership because of idolatry. All traditions, institutions and activities that go on in our families and the general community are not all idolatrous.

I mean that not all aspect of our tradition and cultures are idolatrous. We did make mistakes in tagging everything called

tradition as not being right for the Christian to be involved in. Some of the mistakes we made include kola nut presentation (*iche orji*), and wedging of kola nut (*ifi d 'orji*). When the early Missionaries came they made us to see things done in the family outside the Church as evil or idolatrous. Our names were changed during baptism, may be from *Onyeka* to *Jacob* or *Peter*. There is nothing wrong having *Onyeka* as baptismal name, of course. It was so devastating that almost every baptized member of the orthodox Churches has a new English name instead of his or her local indigenous name. This has gradually been changed such that the *Ossai*, *Nmor*, and *Eke* etc local indigenous names can be used as baptismal names. The point I am addressing here is that there should be no limitation on anyone because he or she is a Christian. No one should be made to serve or do rituals in order to qualify for leadership in the traditional villages or towns or community. The question shall be “is the intending person of age? Does the person possess the physical and conceptual capacity to make input in the leadership as *Okpala-uku* or *Onotu*? He should be tried by giving the chance to lead with his God as the case may be.

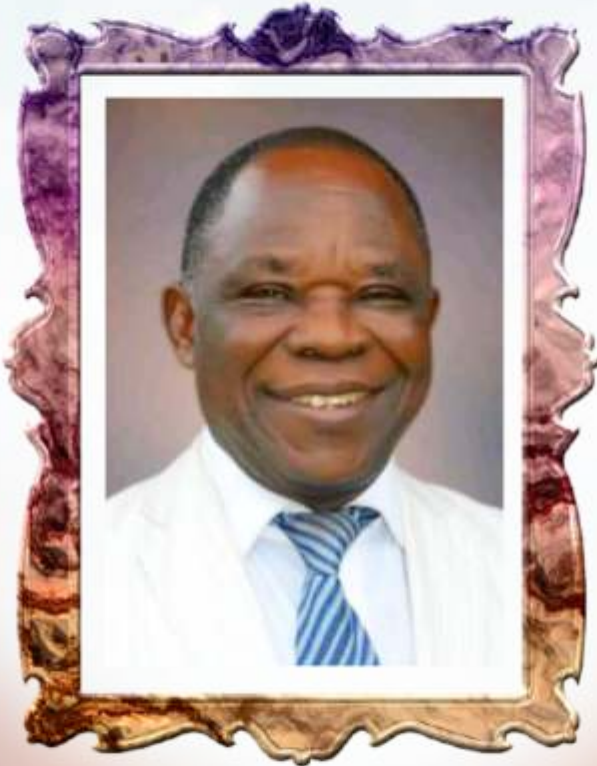
In conclusion, *Okpala-uku*, *Ada*, *Okwa*, *Onotu* and other titles that are the distinguishing boundaries in assuming leadership should be without any form of idol worship or incantation that are not in the beliefs of the one going to occupy that seat or position. If on the other hand, the person yields to idolatry, no problem. Whoever is qualified to occupy the leadership position let him or her enter the throne. I, as the writer, am saying if it is my time to be the *Okwa* or *Okpala-uku*, even the eldest in my extended family as the case may be at Abbi, my home town and the community or family serves *juju* or idols like *ndichie*, *Ukwata*, *Ukpalabo* and many other idols of the land, I will never participate nor give consent to another to operate in my capacity. I know the entire community or family will be afraid observing such feast without my approval. Let us remember that there were years that some of these idolatrous

feasts were not observed people in the community did their farming and had bounty harvest and no man died. When the Christian is in position of authority, his or her God will be in control. A Christian can be *King, Okpala-uku or Onutu* without serving idol. Nobody should hinder fellow indigene.

As a way of concluding this book for now, I wish to propose that leadership in our traditional society should be divided into physical and spiritual facets. Priest should exist for the fulfillment of the spiritual aspect, while certain academic or natural abilities should be considered for other aspects of the community governance. The Christian can make for the spiritual side of the community governance, even physical side. In our community, Christians should be allowed to be *Okpala-uku, Ada, Okwa, Onotu* and other leadership positions using their Bible as staff of office, especially when he or she is chronologically or biologically qualified age wise.

If Ndokwa will be TRANSFORMED developmentally, the Church must be allowed to operate without limits.

TO BE CONTINUED.



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