

**CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM AND VIOLENCE ON TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS
ARTIFACTS IN IGBOLAND, 2000-2017: A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE**

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ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND
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**FACULTY OF ARTS
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MAY, 2019.

CERTIFICATION

I, ADIM SUNDAY EUSEBIUS, with Reg. No: 2014097014F, hereby certify that this dissertation is original, and has been written by me. It is a record of my research and has not been submitted before, in part or full, for any other diploma or degree of this University or any other institution or any previous publication.

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Date

APPROVAL PAGE

We ratify that this Dissertation carried out under our supervision, has been examined and found to have met the regulations of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. We therefore approve the work for the award of Ph.D Degree in Religion and Human Relations.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the Churches by extension Christians and members of traditional religion adherents distressed by violence during Christian evangelism and crusades in some parts of Igboland, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental obligation of Christianity is for Christians to preach the gospel for the purpose of conversion. In Igboland, the quest for evangelism has been on the increase with Christians becoming more passionate to carry out the work of evangelism. However, one thing that is very disturbing is that some crusades organized in Igboland are characterized with stories of violent attacks and destruction of traditional religious artifacts. The reasons adduced for these attacks on traditional religious artifacts include, the belief that traditional religious artifacts are instruments through which satanic stronghold attack the people, bringing on them misfortune, ill-luck, backwardness in business, sickness and even untimely death. Crusades organized in some parts of Igboland such as Amansea, Umuaji-Aguobuowa, Achina, Ugbenu, Oraukwu and so on, lend credence to the believe among some Igbo Christians that traditional religious artifacts are antithetical to the people's progress. Evangelism in itself is not the problem but the way and manner the act of evangelizing the people is being done by some Christians without allowing the people own the choices they make, hence the need to rewrite the narratives that associates Christians with violence on traditional religious artifacts during crusade evangelism in Igboland. Data were collected from books, articles, journals, internet publications, oral interviews, participant and non-participant observations. Interpretative phenomenological approaches were used to analyze the data. Using the frustration aggression and non-violence theories as working tools, the study discovered that Christian evangelism in Igboland would be much more effective if the principle of tolerance and respect for custom and tradition of the people is taken into consideration. The study, therefore, submits that Christians' understanding of the basic evangelical principles and its application during evangelism remains vital for a coherent and effectual evangelism free of violence.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Christianity all over the world has remained one of the most popular religions with a fundamental obligation to preach the gospel. The truth is that everyone who is a Christian knows the importance of evangelism. However there is a great deal of difference between knowing that evangelism is important to Christianity and knowing what evangelism is all about. And knowing also the requisite character and purpose of evangelism will help to determine how evangelism is to be done and whether or not one is on the right track for a successful adventure while undertaking evangelism. In Igboland, the quest for evangelism has been on the increase among the Christian circle of today, with churches and Christians becoming more passionate to carry out the work of evangelization. One thing that is explicitly observable is that some crusades and evangelical outreaches organized by Christians in some parts of Igboland often times are suspected not to be driven by the application of appropriate tenet and evangelism ideology.

This evangelism ideology, according to Scott (1997) entails “the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to Him personally and so be reconciled to God” (p. 57). Apart from announcing the gospel of Christ to non-Christians with a view to making a conversion, some individual see evangelism simply as getting people to come to church. Just as it is the thinking of some persons also that evangelism involves having people conform to a particular pattern of religious belief or behaviour identical to their own, using certain pressure and brutal force with coercive techniques to attain success. This of course could be said to be antithetical to the work of Christian evangelism.

The above statements lend credence to the fact that the term evangelism raises different definitions in the minds of the people especially Christians that ought to know what evangelism is all about. The failure of most Christians to understand the basic concept of evangelism often leads them to digress from the biblical standard of evangelism into associating acts of violence with Christian evangelism. This happens because of the wrong ideas they have about the critical components of evangelism, which are based on their human understanding rather than the biblical standard. In Nigeria today and by extension Igboland, violence on traditional religious artifacts, the symbol of worship and religious expression of the traditional religion adherents during Christian crusades, has been identified to be a common episode. Different reasons have been adduced as to why traditional and cultural paraphernalia, objects of worship and artifacts must be done away with. Some Christians maintain that these objects are instruments through which satanic stronghold is used to keep the people under attack, bringing to them all manner of ill lucks, misfortune, and even untimely death.

These acts of wanton destruction of traditional religious artifacts which cut across Igboland are alleged to be committed by Christians from various denominations in their attempt to Christianize and evangelize the people. The accusations and counter accusations and contradictions concerning the involvement of Christians or otherwise in the act of destroying traditional religious artifacts, the symbol of religious worship of the traditional religion adherents no doubt demand an investigation. Christians and traditional adherents always try to excuse themselves from the act of violence against traditional religious artifacts during evangelical crusade, and if that is to be the case, one wonders who does. Whether it is the Christians that carry out violence during evangelism or not, is not to be much emphasized upon at the expense of the fact that there are already established instances that convey in actual sense a larger picture of destruction and cultural cleansing during Christian evangelism which clearly blow open the intrigues that surround such gatherings as would be seen in this work.

In the year 2014 at Umuaji Aguaobuowa community in Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria, the people witnessed a crusade organized by a group of people known as the indigenous Christians of the town to bring the gospel of evangelism to the community. According to Uzodinma (2014), on 7/1/14 in the early hours of the day, a group known as Indigenous Christians of Umuaji led by one Joseph Nnaeme, alias 404 gathered themselves and went on rampage during crusade in the community, during which different sacred shrines of the community was burnt down and other valuable items damaged. Another point of reference is the crusade that was held in Amansea community, Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria in the year 2000 as organized by the Amansea Catholic community. The crusade was meant for the evangelization of the people, as well as for the liberation of the people from the seemingly lack of progress in the community. The evangelism programme took off on the right footing until traditional religious artifacts such as shrines, Ikenga (the symbol of traditional deities), masquerades, traditional wooden stools, ofo sticks and some other religious values of the traditionalists were destroyed and burnt to ashes an act which was believed to have been carried out by mobs suspected to be Christian youths who are embittered following lack of progress in the community and the bad economic situation of things.

The insinuation is that the apparent harsh economic concern of the people remains the main reason for the action of the youths in a bid for them to find an end to the scourge. And this could be seen as the main thrust for the transfer of aggression by crusaders on traditional religious artifacts in some Christian evangelism which results in violence on traditional religious artifacts. Arguments are rife on whether physical destruction of material artifacts, symbols and other traditional values would bring about a positive change in the economic life of the people.

However there is an existing view that this act of violence on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism or crusade is never masterminded by Christians, just as

Christians try to exonerate themselves from the act. Suggesting that some miscreants, charlatans and unscrupulous elements masquerading themselves as Christians oftentimes take advantage of such programmes as crusade or evangelical outreach to cause mayhem so as to loot precious artifacts and material symbols for sale to the museum houses. The implication is that some miscreants may intentionally join crusades and avail themselves the opportunity to destroy traditional and cultural artifacts as a way to carry out vengeance over one grudge or the other held against someone that happen to be in possession of such materials. There is this suggestion that persons who dread the powers of shrine having flouted its laws and that of the land and knowing the consequences of their deeds may take advantage of the crusade to aid destruction of the shrine. Either to escape the wrath of the deities or the shrine or in total retaliation to the shrine for having served one punishment or the other assumed to have been meted out to them by the deities.

Even though the ability of miscreants and charlatans to hijack such crowded events as evangelism cannot be overemphasized, the common truth suggests that, from the beginning, the way and manner some missionaries carried out their Christian evangelism in Africa by extension Igboland to an extent is to say the least very much surrounded with high sense of violence against the people, their culture, religion and tradition. The insinuation is that they left a legacy which is today copied by Christians. An illustration of this violent conduct of some missionaries on traditional religious symbols was clearly portrayed by a Capuchin missionary in Congo, according to Hasting (1966) thus:

On my way, I found numbers of idols which I threw into the fire. The owner of these idols seemed very annoyed. To calm him down by humiliating him, I let him know if he persisted in anger, I should see that he himself is burnt with his idols. (p. 58).

Just as it was in Igboland some missionaries devised an arm-twisting method of evangelism so as to achieve their purpose of evangelizing the people, their culture and religion. Really the

approach was not something less than that since some of the missionaries' method was in themselves faulty in line with their actions towards Igbo people they are to evangelize. Iwe (1979) reminds us that many missionaries considered African culture and religion to be primitive and pagan. Consequently, such missionaries tried to force African Christians to reject most of their cultural and religious beliefs and practices. A critical observation of Onunwa's (1986) statement shows that:

The early Christian missionaries behaved like social revolutionaries, but while trying to achieve the goal of their mission; the conversion of Africans to Christianity, their attitude and approach did not produce a wholesome result. They thought that by plunging into condemnation and eradication of indigenous religious traditional values, social and political means of control, they would produce a new man, born in a new faith. Traditional music, dance song, drama, even names were totally denounced as heathen and immoral. Unfortunately, the new man produced became a split personality who could neither go back to the old nor firmly hold the new. (p. 80).

In the light of the statement above, some of the early Christian missionaries' behaviour and conduct in the attempt to sale the idea of Christianity to the people in African by extension Igboland was most antithetical. In line with the observation made by Nmah (2008):

The problem is not planting Christianity in Igboland, but the method which is characterized by envy, hatred, jealousy and covetousness by which the missionaries carried out their evangelism. This in turn affected the moral and spiritual growth of the Church in the midst of the people they describe as the mundane. (p. 67).

As pointed out in the above assertion, the problem is not the planting of Christianity through what we know today as evangelism, but the way and manner it was carried out. An instance was the violent destruction of Aro-Chukwu deity, the traditional religious symbol of the people, following the 1901- 1902 military expedition as instigated by the missionaries. A

similar case of military expedition also occurred in 1904 at Awka following the destruction of the symbol of the town's deity known as Agbala-Awka, which positioned the missionaries for an access to evangelize and get hold of the town for Christ as further highlighted in Ekechi (1972) thus:

And with the destruction of Oka oracle during the 1904 dry season expedition, the CMS was in a better position to entrench its religious dominance. One good thing the expedition accomplished at Oka, wrote Dennis to his mother, was to put an end to the Agbala which brought much gain to the Oka people. Its reputation is second only to that of Umu-Chuku destroyed a few years back. (p. 140).

The above instances as aforementioned go a long way to show that various actions taken against traditional religious artifacts and symbols are based purely on wrong interpretation of the Holy Bible which says "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and only the violent take it by force"(Matthew 11:12). Therefore the sayings that the great evangelical command is to be seen as a divine command to evangelize as soldiers, perhaps could be of no sound logic for attacks by any adherent to a belief system against the material artifacts, symbols and as far as body of values representing another belief. Objectively speaking, artifacts, images and the symbolic aspect of every religion are considered to be the main characteristics of religious expression. And such a religious system contributes to the maintenance and the strengthening of the relationship between human beings and the realm of the sacred. This, to a great extent, has added value to the general notion that every one of the religious symbols is on the same page of religious importance as it is to each adherent.

Noteworthy is the fact that Christians utilize the symbol of the cross of Jesus Christ, the Holy Bible, communion (the body and blood of Christ), chaplets, portraits of Saints and Blessed Virgin Mary for the Catholics, as symbols. According to Roberts (2011) for the Christians the cross on which Jesus was executed some 2000 years ago has been a symbol for

his followers from the very early period. Antithetically, the cross is a symbol of suffering and defeat and also of triumph and salvation. The cross is the universal Christian symbol, acknowledged by all denominations as the single visual identifier of their faith. In addition to Roberts' assertion, it is a common knowledge that down the line, the traditional religion adherents also make use of artifacts, works of arts in the likes of human or animal as symbols of their own religious expression.

In every religion, images, icons or symbols are in effect the mediator and real representation of the divine (the transcendence) in certain conventional and standardized form for knowing and expression of religious facts as it concerns the adherents. It has been a clear fact in history that allegations kept soaring that there are cases where mobs, often in the course of regular Christian religious revival gatherings such as crusades do descend on shrines and other traditional religious values to destroy them. In the late 1960s/1970s with the waves of Christian evangelical explosion in Igboland, immediately after the Biafra and Nigeria civil war, the act of Christian evangelism did not go beyond persuasion on the people to accept the gospel of Christ. History has it also that the practice then was not to burn and destroy shrines, artifacts and other traditional religious values in the name of raiding the camp of the devil as a result of evangelism crusade. The practice rather was to persuade someone to conversion and privately approach the new convert and convince him or her of the need to get rid of any traditional worship object in his/her possession in order to make his/her deliverance complete. In most cases, it is the convert that would approach the evangelist or the priest as the case may be for such confiscation of the said traditional worship material or object.

Some Christians of today seem not to read between the lines to build on the events and experiences of the past as stated in the above paragraph so as to envision a serene way for an effective evangelism not to be associated with violence. The situation of things these days portend evangelism to be a concern instead of a reason for confidence for a serene and friendly

disposition through rational evangelism. It is even scary that Christians and the church are oblivious of the inherent danger that lies ahead of time in a situation like that. In some communities of Igboland, Churches have been attacked by traditional religion adherents in retaliation for the damage done to the artifacts of the land. According to Agina (2011), one of the notable conflicts, which degenerated to setting ablaze, and complete destruction of a local church building happened in a community known as Nsirimo Village in Umuahia Town; Abia State of Nigeria on December 1st 2007 was as a result of violent evangelism in the area.

St Patrick's Anglican Church Awba-ofemili in Awka north local government area of Anambra State in 1999 also witnessed a reprisal attack from the traditional adherents on church buildings. These actions are taken as an aftermath of Christian evangelism organized in the affected communities. The truth is that character and conduct have a role to play in every act of evangelism, according to Webster (1961) "the power of example can reach where words can never go. This must always be the central content of the Christian witness, without it words do not count" (p.144). We are all called to love our neighbour as a foundational Christian principle (Mk. 12:28-31). And spread the web of cordial relationship and respect for the dignity of human person. As Christians, there is of course a theological foundation that appeal for the dignity of persons. The most fundamental reason for respecting the dignity of the human being is that human beings were created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27). Everyone has an inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected even in religious matters. To this end, it is extremely possible that religious conflicts during Christian evangelism would not have arisen if evangelical ideologies are put together to reflect ethical evangelism.

Given the account of Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts, the striking thing is that it speaks for itself and one needs nothing more to justify the fact that it is perhaps a dangerous signal. The implication of this situation if allowed to move

on unaddressed is that it would serve as a breeding ground for hostility, hatred and disunity in the society. The common truth is that the act of violence often impedes the pace and the quality of evangelism in some parts of Igboland thus Christians that dare to engage in evangelism are today almost viewed with a lot of suspicion and resentment especially where violent evangelism has been witnessed. There is the fear that the society might become skeptically dispositioned to religious activities especially Christian evangelical outreach.

It is even more worrisome that in as much as members of the two religious bodies, Christianity and traditional religion, trade words and throw accusations on each other in a blame game, on who the culprits are that carry out violence on traditional religious artifacts. The situation could pose a great threat to the work of Christian evangelism with some community leaders in Igboland having to develop cold feet in sanctioning the hosting of crusade or any form of elaborate evangelism in their vicinity for the fear of the unknown. In respect of this, it is imperative that the church put up an adequate measure to perhaps checkmate the infiltration of miscreants during crusade or evangelism, as well as raising the mindset of Christians of this era to be re-directed to imbibe and put to practice the early church ideology and standard of evangelism that revolves on persuasion, tolerance, exchange of ideas, sharing of concern and respect for human dignity and so on so as not to widen the animosity. There is the need for today's Christians to understand and imbibe the basic biblical approach for an effective and coherent Christian evangelism crusade.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Christians are called to proclaim the gospel or good news and make disciples of all nations. But how does one defend Christian evangelism to an unbeliever, in other words, a non-christian as a good thing when Christian evangelism activities encourage violence, coercion and intimidation? Evangelism is a divine initiative, no doubt, but one is to note that

among the essential features of the messianic mission of Jesus while calling forth His disciples who believed in His teaching was for them to follow the pattern of his life embedded in non-violence as a divine template for evangelism. The synoptic evangelists such as Matthew, Mark and Luke and other fellow disciples placed more emphasis on the very core of Jesus' proclamation of God's gospel to the people with the promise of salvation, repentance and acceptance of the gospel without compulsion. It is worrisome that some Christians today that have chosen to subsist for God and carry out the unfinished work of Christ's evangelism on the earth appears not to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ as it concerns non-violent evangelism.

In the words of Ayandele (1966), "No society could be Christianized without its being upset to a considerable extent" (p. 330). If this is to be true, one would now ask, to what extent is today's violence on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism upsetting the society? The truth is that it is somewhat mind-boggling the way and manner some Christian evangelists are associated with violence, without recourse to the religious plurality of the world to accord respect and be open to embrace and accommodate the vision of other religions.

The researcher recalls with every sense of fright the dramatic tension that happened at Okukwa village Amansea during the year 2000 crusade held in the community, when the crusaders embarked on a house to house destruction of traditional religious artifacts. It became a moment of anxiety as crusaders move towards the compound of Mr Nkwoemeka Ezechukwu Okoye a traditionalist who suddenly appeared with a gun loaded with bullets on sighting the crusaders surge towards his compound. And threatened to gun down anybody that would attempt to destroy or remove any of his traditional religious object or Masquerade costume from his compound. As a result of the threat, the crusaders rescinded their advancement into his compound and left without removing or destroying any artifact there. However, it is something to seriously wonder about, on what would have happened had the crusaders defied

the man's warning and went on to remove and destroy any of his traditional religious belongings. The obvious is that the tragedy that could have occurred that day would have been very disastrous and injurious to some persons. To this end, it is worrisome that Christians have to expose themselves to such a hazardous approach to evangelism and conversion.

Nevertheless, association of Christian evangelism with violence on traditional religious artifacts in recent time in Igboland, which is a different approach from what evangelism use to be in Igboland before and immediately after the Biafra-Nigeria civil war, makes one to wonder the reason behind this new trend in evangelism of today. Just as one would also ask, is there no way this common narrative of Christian evangelism being associated with violence on traditional religious artifacts is to be tackled for the good of all and sundry? It is therefore an overall concern as a problem of this study on how to explore an approach that would bring about a peaceful and coherent Christian evangelism in Igboland that is to be void of violence.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this research is to survey Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts in some parts of Igboland which include Amansea, Awba-Ofemili, Achina, Ugbenu, Aguobuowa Ezeagu in Enugu State, Nsirimo Umuahia in Abia State, Oraukwu and Igbo-Ukwu, while the study specifically aims to:

- a.** Investigate the recent evangelical revivals targeted at forced conversion of traditional religion adherents and their religious artifacts in some parts of Igboland and ascertain the actual culprits (whether the crusading Christians or miscreants) their motives and effects.
- b.** Examine the extent of violence on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism in Amansea, Awba-Ofemili, Achina, Ugbenu, Aguobuowa-Ezeagu,

Nsirimo, Oraukwu, and Igbo-Ukwu. And as well assess the value of the destroyed items to the people and their culture.

C. Explore the way and manner coherent Christian evangelism would be achieved in Igboland without recourse to violence or forced conversion.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The research is actually of immense importance because it would educate the Church and the general public more on the need for an ideal ethical Christian evangelism. Secondly, this study also gave a clear picture of what is believed to transpire during Christian evangelism especially in some parts of Igboland.

Thirdly, the research highlights the need for an evangelical ideology that centres on tolerance, persuasion, dignity of persons and so on. Furthermore, the research would help to underline the fact or otherwise that blanket condemnation of evangelism or claims that evangelism is inherently violent is quite untrue and inappropriate. Finally, this research will serve as a document which researchers can always consult in matters that have to do with Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts or other related issues.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research is concerned with the conducts of Christians of various denominations during evangelism in Amansea, Achina, Ugbenu, Aguobuowa, Nsirimo, Oraukwu, Mbaise, Igbo-Ukwu and so on. The study concentrates its discourse on the issue of violence on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism in Igboland with Amansea in Anambra state, Igboukwu in Anambra state, Ugbenu in Anambra state, Aguobuowa-Ezeagu in Enugu State, Nsirimo Umuahia in Abia state, Mbaise in Imo state selected to represent the states of Igboland as a case study. The researcher also took notice of the time factor to cover

the period from 2000 to 2017, being the period of the revival witnessed in these aforementioned communities of Igboland under our discourse.

1.6 Methodology

In carrying out a research on a topical issue as this, the materials used in this research were gathered from the primary source which includes oral interviews from both the Christian crusaders and the traditional religion adherents whose religious symbols were destroyed in the course of these crusades. Other primary sources include participant and non participant observations, Church diaries and relevant archival materials. Textbooks, journal papers and internet article publications were consulted for various views of scholars on the theme of study as secondary sources.

The Revised Standard Version of the English Holy Bible was of value in expounding the course of the study. Interpretative phenomenological method of data analysis was used as a guide to give further detail and explanations of the data of the study. Frustration aggression theory was employed as a base for the explanation of the actions of these Christian crusaders while non violence theory served as a guide for further Christian evangelism in Igboland.

1.7 Definition of Terms

In this section we gave definition of key words which form the theme of this dissertation as well as some other words used in the study. In keeping with making some clarification with the terms used in the study, the researcher also presented its working definitions.

Traditional

The term tradition according to Green (1997) is a belief or behaviour passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Tradition can persist and revolve for thousands of years just as the word tradition itself

derives from the Latin tradere or traderer literally meaning to transmit, to hand over, to give for safekeeping. Horner (1990) is of the view that tradition refers both to the process of handing down from generation to generation, something, custom, or thought process that is passed on over time. An insight from Idowu (1978) shows that traditions now extant are deposits of earlier men's faith. At best, they can be the sufficient cause of faith of men of today.

For Graburn (n.d), Tradition is the means of making a living, the symbols, stories, and memories which gives one both identity and status. According to him tradition remains the name given to those cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost. For this study, the word traditional represents the established standard belief of religious practices of a given society, and this definition would serve as the working document in this study

Religion

In our world, religion is known to be a formidable factor that provides man with a guide to the dos and don'ts of life towards ensuring a serene and an orderly society. Religion according to Madu (1996) is "an institutionalized system of symbols, beliefs, values and practices focused on questions of ultimate meaning" (p.20). Geertz in Scharf (1973) defines religion as:

A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting mood and motivations in men by formulating concepts of a general order of existence, and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (p. 33).

Omoregbe (2000) is of the view that etymologically, religion is derived from Latin words namely, Ligare (meaning to bind), Relegere (meaning to unite or to link) and Religio (meaning relationship). This etymology of the word religion shows that it is essentially a relationship, a

link established between two persons believed to exist. It is something that links or unites man with a transcendent being, a deity, believed to exist and worshipped by man. Durkheim (1947) puts it that Religion is a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things” (p.37).

William (1960) also defines religion as “the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine”(p.50). In his opinion, Okereke (1983) opines that religion is a link between man and God. According to him, it is the sum total of man’s relation with God and the transcendent. Anyanwu (2004) believes that religion is human interaction with the supernatural in order to cope up with life’s crises. For Nichols et al (2006) “religion is a socially organized pattern of beliefs, values, and practices that bind people together in the efforts to address the deity (or deities) to give them guidance, sustenance, and ultimate meaning in life and hereafter” (p. 438).

In Mishra (2014) religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems and worldviews that relate mankind to the supernatural and spiritual. In giving a definition to religion, Idowu (1978) observes that, “Religion in its essence is the means by which God as a spirit and man’s essential self communicate. It is something resulting from the relationship which God established from the beginning of (human) life between himself and man” (p.75). For this study, the word religious represents the manifesting of a faithful devotion to a particular religious belief in certain objects with the total adherence to its being spiritual, sacred and holy.

Artifact

The term artifact according to the New English Thesaurus (2000), is a product of human craftsmanship, especially a simple tool or ornament typically one of cultural or historical

interest. According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (2003), an artifact is a usually simple object (as a tool or an ornament) showing human workmanship and modification as distinguished from a natural object. In the words of Kathy and Nicholas (1993) "human artifacts are objects that have been modified by humans, either intentionally or unintentionally" (p.49). Hilpinen (1993) states that "an artifact has necessarily a maker or an author; thus artifact and author can be regarded as correlative concepts" (p. 156-157). This is to say that an object is an artifact only if it has an author with a targeted goal.

The concept of authorship here is assumed to revolve around the degree of intentionality as the concept of an artifact. An illustration from Weir et al (2002) states that in a recent experiment a new Caledonian crow called Betty bent a piece of straight wire into a hook and used it to lift a bucket containing food from a vertical pipe. Really, it can be said that Betty's hook can be regarded as a simple artifact made for the purpose of gaining access to the food bucket. Dipert's (1993) "theory of artifacts includes the condition that an artifact (in the strict sense) should be intended by its author to be recognized as having been intentionally modified for a certain purpose" (pp. 29-31). Therefore, an artifact defined in the context of this study is a symbolic object intentionally made or produced for a certain religious worship. Therefore artifact strictly represents a particular tradition or culture and is more restricted to such tradition as its known symbol. To this end, an artifact is an object made by a human being but fashioned to reflect a certain popular culture, religion and tradition of a specific set of people. This definition would serve as a working guide in this study.

Violence

Violence is a global phenomenon and human society is ever surrounded with continuous strife, struggle, coercion and intimidation which underscores the restive and violent temperament of man. Apparently, neither individual nor the society can achieve much with the

use of force and violence on fellow human. Tanner (2007) cites the definition of violence in the Oxford English Dictionary as ‘far beyond (the infliction of) pain and the shedding of blood’. He argues that, although violence clearly encompasses injury to persons or property, it also includes ‘the forcible interference with personal freedom, violent or passionate conduct or language (and) finally passion or fury. Similarly, Nayak (2008) stated that the word ‘violence’ can be defined to extend far beyond pain and shedding blood. It carries the meaning of physical force, violent language, fury and, more importantly, forcible interference.

But according to Fretheim (2004), for many people only physical violence truly qualifies as violence. But certainly, violence is more than killing people, unless one includes all those words and actions that kill people slowly. We must insist that violence also refers to that which is psychologically destructive, that which demeans, damages, or depersonalizes others. In view of these considerations, Fretheim said violence can be defined as follows: any action, verbal or nonverbal, oral or written, physical or psychical, active or passive, public or private, individual or institutional/societal, human or divine, in whatever degree of intensity, those abuses, violates, injures, or kills.

Therefore religious violence is a term that covers phenomena where religion is either the subject or object of violent behaviour, motivated by or in reaction to religious precepts or doctrines. This includes violence against institution, people’s objects as the case may become. Also, violence is defined by the World Health Organization in Krug et al (2002) as the intentional use of physical force or power threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation; although the group acknowledges that the inclusion of the use of power in its definition expands on the conventional meaning of the word.

A further insight from World health Organization report shows that violence can be divided into three broad categories namely:

- Self-directed violence
- Interpersonal violence
- Collective violence

Explaining these types of violence Krug states that self-directed violence is subdivided into suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. This includes suicidal thoughts, and attempted suicides. Interpersonal violence is divided into two subcategories: family and intimate partner violence which is, violence largely between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not exclusively, but taking place in the home.

He went further to explain that collective violence is as well subdivided into structural violence and economic violence. Unlike the other two broad categories, the subcategories of collective violence suggest possible motives for violence committed by larger groups of individuals or by states. Collective violence is committed in order to advance a particular social agenda, crimes of hate committed by organized group. Really an act of violence committed by larger groups can have multiple motives.

Christian Evangelism

The word evangelism to the eyes of many no doubt connotes a lot of meanings to a lot of people. Evangelism according to Thiessen (2011), is announcing the gospel to non-Christians with a view to faith and conversion. For Webster (1961), evangelism is introducing people to Jesus Christ just as they are, not creating an artificial sense of sin or excavating an area of need before this can happen. From Babalobi's (2008) point of view, evangelism is defined as spreading the good news of salvation with the purpose of ensuring the conversion of unbelievers into Christianity. In the words of Stiles (2014), evangelism is teaching, heralding, proclaiming, preaching the gospel, the message from God that leads us to salvation

with the aim, hope, desire, goal to persuade, convince, convert. In the complete Christian dictionary for home and school (2001), evangelism is “the zealous proclamation of the good news about Jesus Christ urging men and women to repent of their sin and put their faith in Jesus as their only saviour and to make him the Lord of their life” (p. 156).

In a broad definition of evangelism Miano (n.d) observes that evangelism is the announcement, proclamation, and/or preaching of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4), the good news of and about Jesus Christ. Therefore, the gospel is a communicated message, communicated in verbal (Luke 7: 22; Romans 10:14-17) and written (Luke 1: 1-4) form. For Halverson (n.d) evangelism is not salesmanship. It is not urging people, pressing them, coercing them, or subduing them. Evangelism is telling a message. Evangelism is reporting good news. Akinwele (1998) is of the view that:

Christian evangelism therefore may be defined as the act of presenting the gospel to the lost with the sole aim of bringing them to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Christian evangelism is communicating the gospel to a person or persons. (p. 81).

On the part of Harold (1985), evangelism is the presenting of Jesus Christ so that men will accept Him as their Saviour from the guilt and power of sin, and declare Him Lord as they seek to follow him in their daily lives. Going further with his observation, Jesus evangelized. He preached the good tidings of the kingdom of God (Luke 8: 1). Paul evangelized. He said, ‘I have preached to you the gospel’ (2 Corinthians 11: 7). Philip evangelized. He preached unto him Jesus Acts 8: 35. Evangelism in the Bible then was a ministry of the spoken word. Evangelism means to make known the message of the gospel.

Evangelism based on insight from Parker (1999) occurs:

When and by whatever means the gospel is communicated with a view for conversion, there you have evangelism. Evangelism is to be defined, and not institutionally, in terms

of the kind of meeting held, but theologically, in terms of what is taught and for purpose.
(p. 57).

For Taylor (1967) evangelism, “is the work of preaching Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that men and women may put their trust in Him, and serve Him in the fellowship of the church in their daily lives” (p. 167). Maynard-Reid (2000) says, evangelism has been traditionally defined as the verbal proclamation of the good news of salvation. This announcement, and the verbal dimension of the concept, is based on the Greek word *evangeliz/evangelizomai*, with its emphasis on proclamation. In the words of Packer (1961):

Evangelism is a work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouth pieces of God’s message of mercy to sinners. Anyone who faithfully delivers that message, in a small meeting, from a pulpit, or in a private conversation, is evangelizing. The way to tell whether you are in fact evangelizing is not to ask whether conversions are known to have resulted from your witness. It is to ask whether you are faithfully making known the gospel message. (p. 37.)

According to Scott (1975) “evangelism is neither to convert people, nor to win them, nor to bring them to Christ, though this is indeed the first goal of evangelism. Evangelism is to preach the gospel” (p. 39).

Having had the series of explanation as proffered with regard to what Christian evangelism is all about, for the purpose of this study and in contribution to knowledge as well, Christian evangelism simply put, is the reaching out to the people of other faith to share and discuss what one knows about Jesus Christ with them with an intent to make a conversion of faith.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the world of research, literature review affords one the opportunity to study and objectively carry out an evaluation of other research works with the aim to serve the purpose of offering improvement on such work. On this note, it is self explanatory that Christianity is a religion entrusted with the obligation for a continued spreading of the gospel and making of more disciples for Christ through evangelism. But right from the time of the missionaries, the way and manner they went about planting Christianity in Igboland from the beginning is believed to have been trailed with some blemish relationship with the homegrown religion, following some of their conversion tactic. In this contemporary era, claims are rife that Christian evangelisms are associated with violence on traditional religious artifacts. This no doubt has been a subject of interest to most individuals especially those in the academic world. Many scholars in their scholarly texts have come out to lend their opinions and views as it concerns the evangelical approach of the early missionaries and the present day Christians alike in their quest to Christianize the people.

This chapter will place its review within the existing body of literatures and some theories relevant to the research. Conspicuously the literature review is structured within the following sub-headings:

- i. Conceptual Framework
- ii. Theoretical Framework
- iii. Empirical Studies
- iv. Summary of Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

In giving a definition of the concept of religious violence, Wellman and Tokuno (2004) states that the term covers phenomena where religion is either the subject or object of violent behaviour. Religious violence in the context of this study refers to violence on traditional religious artifacts in Igboland. While discussing violence on traditional religious artifacts, Mbachu (2015) notes that more than 500 traditional worship sites have been burnt down, stating that fundamentalist Christians and Boko Haram share a common hostility to ancient African art. For him Nigerian Christians borrow Boko Haram tactics, to destroy traditional African religious shrines and arts.

The violence on traditional religious artifacts as an everyday thing is to be aligned to what Akuoma (2014) described as zealot Christians being accused of destroying African traditional artifacts, stating that in crusades and conventions, Christians continually make it an enduring mission to destroy traditional religious shrines and relics. Citing an example, Akuoma is quoted as saying that in Imo State, a sect of Christians called the United Congress of Mbaise Christians purportedly destroyed 100 shrines and were even boasting about their acts,

promising to destroy more. Opoku (2015) therefore posits that violence on traditional religious artifacts demonstrates the idea of the Churches of Europe that regard people in Africa as heathens whose traditions, cultural and religious systems should be destroyed and replaced by Christian European religion and culture so as to de-africanize Africans and make them amenable to European domination.

But while discussing violence on traditional religious artifacts as it involves the Igbo people during the missionary era, Ekechi (1972) described it as a situation in which:

Before the people were baptized they were required to burn or throw away such symbols of their traditional religion such as Ofo, Ikenga and others. The destruction of idols (in the case of those who possessed them) was a necessary prerequisite for baptism. From the missionary point of view, the imposition of this rule was a calculated attempt to induce the Africans to lose faith in their idols. (p. 148).

In an attempt to make a clear depiction of violence on traditional religious artifacts as it happened in Urhobo Delta State, Erivwo (1986) described it as the provocative attitude of Christians when new converts, apparently carried away by the enthusiasm of the new faith, carried out iconoclastic activities: images and sacred objects are often destroyed, and shrines attacked, totemistic animals were killed and eaten, and various taboos, like the observance of rest days, when traditionalists had their rest, and worshipped their gods, are broken by the Christians.

While discussing the act of violence on traditional religious artifacts, Adewale (1986) captioned it as a condemnation of beliefs and practices of other religions stating that the error as committed by the mission churches in taking negative approach to religions of other people has been committed by the members of the African Church Movements of the Aladura group. Pointing out that the violence takes the form of their having to ridicule the African Traditional

religion and its objects of worship, the divinities and ancestors are described as nonentities. They reveal the secrets of masquerades to women and defy the rules of the worshippers.

Having looked at the related concepts in relation to the research problem of this study which hinges on violence on traditional religious artifacts in Igboland, some scholarly view seemingly did not essentially represent the context of violence on traditional religion. For instance, the concept as put forward by Mbachu that Christians have loaned the method of the dastardly Boko Haram members in their violent act on traditional religious artifacts is one of them. The activity of the Boko Haram group is believed not to have no religious sentiments attached to it, hence, they have not been evidence of them destroying traditional religious artifacts rather than bombing and killing of innocent people. Neither has Christians taken up firearm against the traditional religion adherents during evangelism in Igboland.

Therefore, in as much as other concepts expressed are in line with the research problem of the study, the violence on traditional religious artifacts represent harm done to the symbol of worship of the traditional adherents at a given time. However, the existing gap in all of the literature reviewed which the study intends to fill is the inability of the texts to trace the motive behind various violent acts on the traditional religious artifacts by Christians during evangelism.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this section, the researcher tends to examine a number of theories relevant to the act of Christian evangelism and violence on the traditional religious artifacts. The theories that will be discussed are expected to investigate the basis of the violence and also put forward a nonviolent recipe as what will underpin peaceful evangelism as an alternative to violence approach for a belief concession.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

The Frustration-Aggression theory is a theory proposed by John Dollard, Neal E. Miller et al in 1939, and further developed by Miller, Roger Barker et al in 1941, and Leonard Berkowitz in 1969. The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a certain goal. It also attempts to give an explanation as to the cause of violence. It appears to be the most common explanation for violent behaviour stemming from inability to fulfill needs. The basic assumption of the frustration-aggression theory is that all aggressions, whether interpersonal or religious have their root causes in the frustration of one or more actors in the achievement of their goals.

That is to say that violence could be traced to the unfulfilled personal or group objectives and the frustration that this breeds. Since the demand for basic human needs have always exceeded the supply, every human violent act can be traced to the actor's failure to obtain certain needs. This is where and the very reason theorists believe that most of the people actions rely so much on frustration and aggression.

Anifowose (1982) is of the view that in an attempt to explain aggression, scholars point to the difference between what people feel they want or deserve to what they actually get which refers to the want-get ratio and difference between "expected need satisfaction" and "actual need satisfaction". Therefore, where an expectation does not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions. An insight from Gurr (1970) shows that, "the potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity" (p. 24). Gurr's hypothesis on relative deprivation explains the term as that, which is the discrepancy between what people think they deserve, and what they actually think they can get. The obvious remains that the greater the discrepancy, between what is sought and what seems attainable, the greater will be the chance that anger and violence will result.

From the basic, the source of human capacity for violence is the frustration-aggression mechanism. To this end, the frustration-aggression theory provides that aggression is not just undertaken as a natural reaction or instinct as realists and biological theorists assume, but, it is the outcome of frustration in a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual or group is denied either directly or indirectly by the society. The feeling of disappointment to achieve a goal may lead a person or group to express anger through violence on person, persons or something thought to be a stumbling block on to them from achieving a targeted goal.

In a situation where feelings of frustration have spread among the populace and the general feeling being that people are getting less than they deserve remains the main issue. And with a situation like this, people can become inured to bad state of affairs that remediable path way would be sort out. It is to be said that the events that normally happen in some communities during evangelical crusades absolutely gave a vivid display of the way frustration could lead to aggression and violence. A situation wherein the experiences of backwardness or harshness of things eventually convinced the people to erroneously consider the economic hardship of theirs to be as a result of the practice of traditional religion in the community.

For instance in Amansea prior to the crusade, there was this belief, especially by the youths, that the Traditional Religious adherents and their Traditional Religious artifacts are responsible for the economic backwardness of the people, hence their aggression and subsequent attack on them during the crusade in the community. Likewise in other communities as Ugbenu, Aguobuowa, Achina and so on the people also perceived their economic backwardness as a result of the activities of the traditionalists. And following life frustration and aggression already built up in the heart of the people mostly the youths, as they vented their anger violently on Traditional Religious artifacts in these communities of Igboland during various evangelical crusades and destroyed the Traditional Religious artifacts.

The point to be emphasized upon here is the explanation of frustration-aggression theory as reasons for most anger and violent conduct in human attempt to achieve a specific need or want. In this case, a transfer of aggression by some persons that were frustrated by economic life challenges on the Traditional Religious artifacts as the identified cause of their problem.

Gandhian Active Nonviolent Theory (Satyagraha)

Mohandas Mahatma Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) is a proponent of nonviolence and with him the notion of nonviolence attained a special status. He not only theorized on it, he adopted nonviolence as a philosophy and an ideal way of life. According to Shepard (2002), nonviolence was not Gandhi's invention. He is however called the father of nonviolence because he raised nonviolent action to a level never before achieved. He made humanity to understand that the philosophy of nonviolence is not weapon of the weak; that it is a weapon, which can be tried by all. As the proponent of the nonviolence satyagraha theory, he coined the word 'satyagraha' meaning sat: truth, agraha: firmness. Satyagraha implies working steadily towards a discovery of the truth and converting the opponent into a friend in the process.

It aims also to attain the truth through love and right action; it demands the elimination of violence from the self and from the social, political, religious and economic environment. In a further analysis of the theory, Gandhi (1961) maintains that:

It is not used against anybody but is done with somebody. It is based on the idea that the moral appeal to the heart or conscience is more effective than an appeal based on threat or bodily pain or violence. (p. iii).

For Gandhi, it had to be creed as a way of life for it to be truly effective. This according to Naess' (1974) statement demonstrated the fact that in the theory of satyagraha, the following propositions are kept in mind:

- i. The aim in group struggle is to act in a way conducive to long term, universal and maximal reduction of violence.
- ii. The character of the means used determines the character of the results.
- iii. Violence is invited from opponents if they are humiliated or provoked.
- iv. A violent attitude on the part of would be satyagraha (advocates of satyagraha) is less likely if they have made clear to themselves the essential elements of their case and the purpose of the struggle.
- v. Opponents should not be judged harder than the self.
- vi. The property of opponents should not be destroyed.
- vii. Unwillingness to compromise on non essentials decreases the likelihood of converting the opponent.
- viii. The conversion of an opponent is furthered by personal sincerity.
- ix. A position of weakness in an opponent should not be exploited, for satyagraha is concerned with morality over and above 'winning'.

Gandhi believes that nonviolence is not for the cowardly, the weak, the passive, the apathetic or the fearful. It is not a method of stagnant passivity. While the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong. The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. Nonviolence according to Sharp (1973) is an umbrella term for describing a range of methods for dealing with conflict which share the common principle that physical violence, at least against other people, is not used. Its focal point is the good of the society, which includes the good of the individual as well.

To be nonviolent in the Gandhian sense shows that it is not enough to refrain from committing acts of violence; it is equally necessary to take positive steps to remove the causes of violence wherever they are found, whether in the political, social, economic, or religious

arena. Therefore, in Gandhian's Satyagraha nonviolence theory, nonviolence does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent but to win friendship and understanding. And this points to the fact that in pursuit of any human objective, a total elimination of violence is paramount. For Gandhi, perpetrators of violence (whom he referred to as criminals), are products of social disintegration. Gandhi feels that violence is not a natural tendency of humans. There is need for a perfect weapon to combat violence and this is nonviolence.

Through Gandhi, we have also come to understand that the philosophy of nonviolence as seen in Satyagraha can be applied in religion as well as in other fields to bring about useful changes. Some set of people who accepted to engage in nonviolent practice who were activists however belong to the Society of Friends known as Quakers. According to Weber and Burrowels (n.d), Quakers believe that there is something of God in every person and that in the face of evil, as Christians, they are called upon to act in a way that is most likely to reach out to God in order to change an evil mind into a right mind. And this is not something that can be achieved by violence. Some Christian nonviolence activists include:

a. Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

An American Catholic Monk probably the best known of the recent ideological Christian nonviolence theorists. While his nonviolence closely resembles that of Gandhi, the focus of his writings was the evils of war and particularly the Vietnam War and nuclear armaments.

b. Martin Luther King Jnr (1929-1968)

An Alabama Pastor who achieved prominence as one of this Century's most celebrated nonviolent activists following his Organization of the Montgomery bus boycott in the mid-1950s. Inspired by the example of Rosa Parks, blacks, who were obliged to give up their seats to white passengers, started boycotting the bus system entirely. Under king's instruments to sustain 'Christian love', the blacks maintained nonviolent

discipline in the face of terrorism from white extremists. Within a year the bus system had been desegregated. King (1958) declared that “nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but also refuses to hate him. At the centre of nonviolence stands the principle of love” (pp.103-104).

c. Martin Buber (1878-1965)

Martin Buber is famous for his thesis of dialogical existence, as he described in his book *I and thou*. His works dealt with a range of issues including religious conscience, modernity, and the concept of evil, ethics, education and biblical hermeneutics. In *I and You*, Buber introduced his thesis on human existence. He explained his philosophy using the word pairs of Ich-Du and Ich-Es to categorize the modes of consciousness, interaction and being through which an individual engage with other individuals, inanimate objects, and all reality in general. Buber favours noncoercive, non manipulative communicative influence. For Buber nonviolence can be characterized as defining a relationship, even in a conflict situation, in terms of ‘I-You’ rather than ‘I-it’. While the way of violence works as a monologue, the substance of nonviolence is a dialogue; the aim is to convince the other party (while remaining open to being convince oneself) and to bring them to discover another person like themselves rather than a mere adversary. It is a simple fact that nonviolence, therefore, precludes the concept of an enemy, of relating to another as a thing. To sum it up, Martin Buber favours non-coercive, non-manipulative communicative influence in the evangelism milieu.

d. Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu (1931 – Till Date)

An Anglican Bishop that became famous for his position on nonviolent approach to issues of life, especially during the apartheid regime in his home country South Africa. Despite bloody violations committed against the blacks, as in the Sharpeville massacre of 1961 and the Soweto up rising in 1976, Tutu strictly adhered to his nonviolent line

of principle. In the words of Boulay (1996) it is important to remember not only that most of his sermons were of a purely spiritual or theological in nature, but that even his pronouncements against the system were desperate appeals for peace and justice, wherever possible couched in reconciliatory terms. Time and again he would declare that even both he and the South African Council of Churches (SACC) were committed to finding and using peaceful means to bring about change. He was honoured with the Noble Peace Prize for his opposition to South Africa's brutal apartheid regime. The Noble Peace Prize Committee saluted him for his clear views and fearless stance for justice, peace and reconciliation based on nonviolent approach. However there are indications that Tutu's Noble Peace Prize in 1984 helped to pave way for a policy of stringent sanctions against apartheid South Africa in the 1980's. And this no doubt led to the end of apartheid regime in South Africa with the conduct of non-racial election in the country for the first time in 1994.

From these backdrops the essence for the practice of nonviolence is that it seeks to liquidate antagonistic disposition towards a strong sense of unity of all life. This means it is ethically wrong and self-defeating to treat another with less dignity than is warranted by a share humanity or divine inheritance. To this end, nonviolence therefore precludes the concept of an enemy, which entails relating with one another as a thing of less importance.

In other words the struggle to overcome violence is important not only in order to achieve justice and religious orderliness for a smooth exchange of faith in the world but also to end violence per se. Violence does more than maintain structures of oppression, for it also prevents the fulfillment of human potential by blocking one important prerequisite: the honest appreciation of share humanity. According to Dutt (2006) violence is a human rights issue. Human rights are fundamental to values of dignity, equality, non-discrimination and non-

interference. Based on the explanation of Dutt, we are to observe that nonviolence remains the turning-point to what violence denies human society.

The Ogoni people of the Southern Nigeria remain a case in sight that carried out a campaign for social, economic and environmental justice often seen by many as a human right struggle in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. During this period, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) mandated the people on the use of non-violent methods to promote democratic principles. And this really helped and assisted Ogoni people to pursue environmental issue of cleaning oil spillage that have endangered life and properties in their communities, the struggle once described by late Ken Saro-Wiwa as an ecological war. The nonviolent approach eventually paid off with the flagging-off of the cleaning up of Ogoni land by the federal government of Nigeria on 2nd June, 2016 as recommended by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) an agency of United Nations that coordinates its environmental activities, assisting developing countries in implementing environmental sound policies and practices.

It is therefore very appreciating that if such a wonderful goal could be achieved by the Ogoni people through the instrumentality of nonviolent approach, the possibility of Christians achieving the same accomplishment with their evangelism drive when embedded in nonviolent approach is most likely. It is certain in the sense that with the violent and chaotic evangelism that oftentimes characterize some Christian evangelism in our society, it is reminiscent that the nonviolence theory remains the perfect approach that is to guarantee a serene and inexhaustible conversion of non-Christians to Christianity during the time of evangelism. And this would have eliminated the cycle of violence and chaotic form of evangelism that surrounds Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts during evangelical crusades.

From every indication it is in truism that with the destruction of Traditional Religious artifacts during crusades in Igbo land in recent time, and the way and manner Crusade

evangelism is being conducted in Igboland. It is gradually becoming a colossal conflict between Christians and Traditional Religious adherents in some parts of Igbo land following the destruction of Traditional Religious artifacts. And in order to avert this conflict from spreading further, the use of nonviolent theory in Christian's conduct of Christian crusade evangelism in Igboland is suggested.

The essence of the practice of nonviolence as earlier stated is that it seeks to liquidate antagonistic disposition towards a strong sense of unity of life. With the understanding that it is ethically wrong to treat another fellow as an enemy with less dignity bearing in mind that the possibility to change perhaps an evil mind into a right mind is not something that can be achieved by violence. Therefore Christian evangelism and the work of conversion of faith and belief system are to be approached with nonviolent strategy.

The Human Needs Theory

Among the proponent of the human needs theory, John Burton (1915-2010) was of the view that human needs theory is theory of human behaviour based on the hypothesis that human needs are powerful source of explaining human behaviour and social interaction. For him, since every individual has needs that they strive to satisfy, it furthermore recognizes the existence of negotiable and nonnegotiable issues. Human needs theorists such as Abraham Maslow, Marshall Rosenberg, Manfred Max-Neef and so on, all argue that one of the primary causes of protracted or intractable conflict is people's unyielding drive to meet their unmet needs on the basis of individual, group, and societal level. For Christie (1997), human needs theory offers insights into a range of peace building processes that are involved in the reduction of both direct and structural violence. According to this theory, in order to live and attain well-being, human beings need certain essentials. These are called human needs or basic human needs.

Human needs theorists therefore argue that conflicts are caused by unmet human needs. They are of the opinion that violence occurs when certain individuals or groups do not see any other way to meet their need, or when they need understanding, respect and consideration for their needs. In Rosenberg (2003):

Violence is a tragic expression of unmet human needs, implying that all actions undertaken by human beings are attempts to satisfy their needs. If we are able to connect with our needs and those of others, we will therefore be able to look at other ways of meeting such needs, avoiding violence and destruction. (p. 7).

In Rosenberg's approach, human needs are universal and meeting them is essential to human survival and well-being. Rosenberg groups the needs in sub-groups, and is open to the existence of needs beyond what he has defined. He states that our education and culture often alienated us from connecting with our real needs, and through nonviolent communication, with our own and others' needs, an approach he applies in all levels of the society and which he has in mediation in several countries.

In line with Burton and Rosenberg position, Max-Neef agrees that no need is superior to other, and that they are all complimentary and essential to human life. According to Max-Neef (n.d) the main contribution that Max-Neef makes to the understanding of needs is the distinction made between needs and satisfiers. Human needs are seen as few, finite and classifiable (as distinct from the conventional notion that 'wants' are infinite and insatiable). They are also constant through all human cultures and across historical time and periods. What changes over time and between cultures are the way these needs are satisfied.

Commenting on the usefulness of the human needs theory in working with violent conflict, Marker (2003) enumerates it thus:

Firstly, it has wide application. While some see it merely as a tool to be applied in prevention or post-conflict peace building, practitioners like Marshall Rosenberg also

use human needs theory in mediation in violent conflicts. It has also been useful in reconciliation efforts, and nonviolent communication (NVC), is being used currently in restorative justice structures in countries like Brazil and the US. Equally, it can be applied in all levels of society, for intra and interpersonal conflict and in an international setting. Secondly, it focuses on the source of conflict, looking at how best the parties can have their needs met, and those of others. Finding strategies to meet underlying needs, we may be able to reduce the use of expensive peacekeeping, peace enforcement and creating of buffer zones. Thirdly, human needs theory emphasizes common humanity. In a world context where differences are accentuated, human needs theory attempts to unify human beings from different regions and cultures, creating a common understanding of who we are and how others need and feel the same way we do. (pp. 13-14).

The truth of the matter is that one theory which looks at the roots of conflict and can offer valuable insights into the sources of conflict, and provide possible resolutions is human needs theory. In a world where differences are accentuated, human needs theory attempts to unify human beings from different regions and culture, creating a common understanding of who we are and how others need and feel the same way we do. This really informs the reason emphasis on human needs theory emphasis remains on common humanity.

Violence is not human nature and no one is violent by birth. Therefore the importance of human needs theory with regards to the Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts during evangelical crusades is that it would expose Christians to a better insight on the roots of conflict and violence in the course of evangelism. The idea of human needs theory hinges on its usefulness to avoid violence and conflicts while looking for the best way of getting their needs and that of others met. The organizers of Christian evangelism in Igboland ought to put human needs theory into use during their crusade by using the message

of hope and patience in the scripture to assuage its suffering members of a better tomorrow with God. The world today is engulfed with an excruciating poverty and the prosperity message of evangelism is fast convincing people into accepting Christian religion as a solace to their needs for possession. And that is the reason the concept of human needs matters.

The common truth is that human needs theory can be applied in a post violent era so as to quell future occurrence as was the case with violent Christian evangelism. It has the ability to unify different opinions, cultural beliefs and needs of the people. And by so doing they have created a common understanding concerning the need of the people as against their traditions, religion, cultural values, ideas and concepts of Christianity which no doubt would also be accorded respect and recognition by all. The truth is that such an approach has the tendency to reduce conflict of interests in attainment for the targeted goal of conversion of traditional religion adherents into Christianity.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Oftentimes the conflict that exists between Christianity and Traditional religion has remained the undercurrent which propels violence. The seemingly intolerant and super superior posture of Christian religion has been identified as the source of violent evangelism in Igboland. Takaya (1992) notes that religious intolerance is a product of fundamentalist fanaticism where a dominant religious group or an emergent revolutionary sect refuses to accommodate the view, rights or practices of adherents to religious faiths in the same community. One is not in doubt that a situation like this breeds conflicts and brings distortion of evangelism.

Christian evangelism and the issue of violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts during evangelical crusades is quite becoming a norm in our society. These could be traced to various incidents of abuses and violent attacks meted out on the traditional religious

artifacts without regard to the adherents by the Christian faithful. While stating the incident of Christian violent act on traditional religious artifacts as it happened in Umuaji community in Enugu State, Nigeria. Akuoma (2014) pointed out that in the early hours of the day some Christians stormed some shrines located in Umuaji community in the heat of their crusade, the Christians, known by the title 'the indigenous Christians of Umuaji, wreaked havoc in the place of worship.

They trespassed the land, destroyed valuable items and burnt down the shrines. Yet what was their excuse for this? No, the traditional worshippers hadn't kidnapped their children and sacrificed them, no, they hadn't gone around destroying farms, burning homes, or causing any sort of trouble to anyone's means of livelihood. What had they done then? Nothing, and absolutely nothing. The shrines were burnt all due to a ridiculous wild claim that they were somehow hindering the progress of the community. On the destruction of traditional religious artifacts in Achina Town, Mbachu (2007) stresses that Achina is among the typical towns and villages in the ethnic Igbo dominated Christian belt of southeastern Nigeria where this new Christian fundamentalism is evident. The old deities are being linked to the devil, and preachers are urging not only their rejection, but their destruction.

Citing an example of what happened at the town, Mbachu (2007) further pointed out the case of Ibe Nwigwe born into a family of traditional priests and converted into Christianity who gathered the paraphernalia of ancestral worship, a century-old stool, metal staff with wooden handle and the carved figure of a deity and burned them as his pastor watched. Citing Nwigwe, 'I had experienced a series of misfortunes and my Pastor told me it was because I had not completely broken the covenant with my ancestral idols. And now that I have done that, I hope I will be truly librated'.

It is equally believed that one who has denounced a religious sect should also endeavour to abandon or disassociate himself from any further entangling with such group or organization,

as the Igbo say, ‘onye juu ekwensu, oju olu ya n’ile’ meaning if someone is to reject satan he or she should reject it entirely. This is because, according to the belief, when one leaves the property of the devil in his house, the devil will keep coming for it thereby harassing the fellow. It then behooves on whosoever is keeping such property to discard it to avoid the satanic harassment.

Commenting further on the event on Christians’ violence on traditional religious artifacts this time around in Umuoji community of Anambra state, again Mbachu (2015) cites Samuel Nwankwo the chief priest of a traditional religion in Umuoji who said that he drove past a mob unaware that they were heading to attack his home. As the chief priest of a traditional religion in the area, he had become a target of a crowd of Christian youths who left a revival meeting where several preachers condemned the veneration of ancestral deities. They were bent on eradicating all symbols of such worship in the town of about 30,000 people. Accordingly, they ransacked the Udume Abor shrine where we worshipped, then went to my house where they took religious objects and burned them.

From the passages above, it is a widespread insinuation that many Christians in Igboland believe that a good Christian must destroy its culture, tradition and religion. It is very common in their belief that all elements of cultural and traditional religious artifacts of the people are all idol, and forever evil. Just as one may attempt to demand the reason some Christians must believe that it is not enough to denounce an idol and reject idol worshipping without categorically and completely destroying everything related to it, it is important to note that it is suspicion that people seem to be comfortable with the bringing in of bullying dimension in the Christian evangelization of the people’s rigid and classical culture. An insight from Gonzalez (1984) affirms that:

On the question of value of classical culture, Christians took two opposite backs. Some insisted on a radical opposition between Christian faith and pagan culture. Typical of this

attitude was Tertullian, who summarized it in a famous phrase: what does Athens have to do with Jerusalem? What does the Academy have to do with the Church? (p. 53).

The passage above is a clear cut position of some stringent Christians who insist on radical approach to the culture of Christian evangelism which underscores the religious stand for Christians not to consider any relationship between them (Christians), the light and they (traditional religion), the darkness. From the critic's angle, it shows clearly that violent remains the only viable option for a fruitful evangelism. Willems (2013) posits that many in the evangelical realm, especially pastors and lay leaders committed to church growth, believe that proclaiming the revolutionary vision of nonviolence and kingdom allegiance is antithetical to evangelism.

Taking it from where Williems stopped, it is not in doubt that the clear act of wrangling and conflicts that exist between traditional religion and Christianity which underscores the fact that violence on traditional religion has become the standard depiction of the marathon battle between good and evil from Christians' perspective. On the destruction of traditional religious artifacts in Achina Town, Mbachu (2007) observes that in the ethnic Igbo dominated Christian belt of southeastern Nigeria this new Christian fundamentalism is evident. The old deities are being linked to the devil, and preachers are urging not only their rejection, but their destruction.

Commenting on the issue of Muslim, Christian fundamentalism, Udoidem (1997) believes that impetus to this inter-religious violence is given by the basic philosophies of these religions. One can rightly say that the same thing apply to Christianity and Igbo traditional religion too. Under such a circumstance it is extremely baffling that Christians have the presuppositions that they are fighting the expansion or rather the continuous existence of traditional religion and culture. And these actions of theirs cannot perhaps be proven to be the true command or the wish of Jesus Christ who instituted Christian evangelism. In the words of Abraham (1989) "evangelism must be carried out in a spirit of love, showing the same kind of

compassion, patience, humility, and boldness that was manifest in the incarnation” (p. 229). This is perhaps not the case just as Onwuka (2002) laments the demolition of the shrines and deities in Ogidi, Anambra State on September 1st, 2000 by angry Christian youths of the town. Speaking in correlation to this, Ekwunife (2003) affirms that the destruction of traditional deities and shrines has been noted in parts of Enugu and Anambra States. Examples were the annihilation of the Efurū deity at Ukehe in Enugu State and demolition of Ikenga Statue at Owerri.

It is important to note that a rethink on how Christianity was handed over to the people of south eastern Nigeria suggests that it is not better off then with the scenario that plays out now with the Christian evangelism and the issue of violence on traditional religious artifacts. The hallmark of the Christian missionaries on their arrival in Igboland was the ability to force Christianity on the religion of the people. The violent destruction of Aro-Chukwu deity, the traditional religious symbol of the people, following the 1901- 1902 military expedition as instigated by the missionaries was their starting port of call. According to Kalu (1978):

It was, however, the Aro Expedition which facilitated the expansion into Owerri and Igbo hinterland. Reason for the Aro expedition was the official exaggeration of the inhuman practices of the oracle and the power of the Aro. Suffice it to say that the elaborate expedition did not destroy Aro commercial power, but it succeeded in opening up the Igbo hinterland. Missions pushed in behind the smoke of the guns. The C.M.S. moved through Owerri district and Awka into the outskirts of Enugu. The Presbyterians, who had muddled around the Cross River and Enyong Creek since 1846, now moved into Arochukwu and from there expanded through Ihe, Ututu, Ohafia, Abam, Abiriba towards Bende where the Primitive Methodists were poised. Between 1902 and 1920, these missions covered areas much bigger than they had in the previous

five decades. The defeat of Aro intensified missionary rivalry, frequency of boundary agreements and the pace of expansion. (p. 312).

Similar case of military expedition took place at Awka following the missionary's destruction of the symbol of the town's deity known as Agbala-Awka in their bid to evangelize and get hold of the town for Christ as simply attested to, in Obi (1984) that "During the dry season in 1904, the Awka oracle 'Agbala-Awka' was destroyed" (p. 73). Perhaps a more balanced view is that of Ekechi (1972) that says:

And with the destruction of Oka oracle during the 1904 dry season expedition, the CMS was in a better position to entrench its religious dominance. One good thing the expedition accomplished at Oka, wrote Dennis to his mother, was to put an end to the Agbala which brought much gain to the Oka people. Its reputation is second only to that of Umu-Chuku destroyed a few years back. (p. 140).

Even when one will say without mincing words that the missionaries had a good intention by bringing to the Igbo the gospel of Christ, one salient fault of the missionaries was their observance of the culture and traditional religion of the people as a threat. They made no conscious effort to study the customs and traditions of the people, to understand their core meaning, the reason for their existence and the purposes they were expected to fulfill but rather chose to destroy them. This actually gave the insight that what the Christian missionaries failed to understand as far as Igbo religion, tradition and culture are concerned. They violently destroy in the name of Christianizing the people and perfecting dominance. Corroborating this view, Ayandele (1966) affirms that the Christian missions were more than destroyers.

In line with the above passage, there are growing insinuations and allegations which suggests that Christian missionary activity in Igboland was a disruptive and destructive force, which rocked traditional society to its very foundations. And one would ask, is their idea of evangelism radical and wild. Looking at the event that lead to the violent attack on the

traditional value of Awka people during the Christian missionary era, Offodile (1998) notes what Offodile Nwamalifu envisaged as an anti-imoka education which the Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S) gave Awka boys, when some boys from Saint Faith Iyi-Okpu Christian Missionary Society School came to Nkwo Amaenyi and vandalized the imoka grooves. All these clearly portrayed the act of violence on traditional religious artifacts at the attempt of evangelizing them.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

Among the major challenges of Christianity in this present time has been the application of force in an attempt to bring the knowledge of Christian faith to the people. Evangelism in itself is not the problem but the way and manner the act of evangelizing the people is being conducted by Christians without regard to human right of allowing the people own the choices they made. The use of violence in Christian evangelism is therefore seen as an aberration to Christian faith and a threat to a peaceful societal mutual existence. The church no doubt is meant to bring the good news of Christ into all aspects of the human life and endeavours, having to influence its transformation from within itself in what should constitute evangelism.

Evangelism is all about the process of education which seeks to transform the religion of the people, their culture and their way of life with the intent to cause the adherents of the Traditional Religions to embrace Christian faith. People and their culture remains the subject of evangelism but with the incessant violence that trails the process of evangelism and conversion in our society it portends a very serious danger to the society. From the texts used in this study, the truth of the matter shows that violent evangelism taints and contradicts Christian values. The ultimate thing should be for violence to be far separated from every sphere of evangelism. And this would absolutely reduce the tension always associated with evangelizing Igbo Traditional religion, as was the case in some parts of Igboland.

To this end, it is therefore very apparent that the totality of human behaviour, in this case Christians, should be channelled towards a conduct that is meant to not only promote the growth and the expansion of the Kingdom of God, but likewise recognize the privilege and the right of others to worship in a communal society. A society in which irrespective of religious standpoint one should be able to evangelize and share one's religious beliefs and convictions with others without violent action or coercion. It places no one in doubt that the work of evangelism as a matter of fact seeks to arrange people to receive Jesus Christ in a fundamental and coherent manner.

In this study a number of theories which include Human needs theory, Frustration-Aggression theory and Non-violence theory, were promptly examined. But for the purpose of this work, the researcher is adopting Frustration-Aggression and Non-violence theories. Having been able to appraise the three theories, the aforementioned two theories were adopted to further explain some motives behind human violent conduct on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism. The Frustration-Aggression theory gives us some suggestion to the main causes of human violence either on fellow human or properties, as being promoted by frustration and aggression, all in desperation to attain a particular goal.

It has a good analytical impact in arriving at real causes of violence on traditional religious artifacts by Christians during evangelism as in discourse. The study on Non-violence theory suggests to us remedies to the growing tendency of evangelism violence in line with the fact that a constructive, progressive and productive evangelism can only emit from evangelism rooted on persuasion as against conversion engulfed with violence, forceful action or coercion.

Having critically reviewed some scholarly texts on Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts and given to the various evidences as shown in the empirical study, it is very glaring that not many people have written on violent crusades in Igboland in recent time. A significant observation has shown also that until now, researchers on Christian

evangelism have taken little or no recognition on the need to view holistically the issue of conversion and Christian evangelism as a process and not something to be done with coercion. This is the gap the present work of the researcher has filled.

CHAPTER THREE
A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM AND VIOLENCE
ON TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS IN SOME SELECTED PARTS
OF IGBOLAND

In this section, it is the expectation of the researcher to give more detailed account of Christian evangelism crusade and violence on traditional religious artifacts in some selected parts of Igboland as a study under our discourse.

3.1 The Amansea Year 2000 Crusade

Amansea is a community situated in the eastern part of Anambra state politically known as Anambra central geo-political zone. As a border community of Anambra and Enugu states, the community is borderline along Enugu – Onitsha expressway and Enugu – Onitsha Old road by Ezu River which serves as a natural boundary between the two states of Enugu and Anambra. Amansea community is one among the ten communities that make up Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The community shares a common boundary with Ebenebe community of Awka North Local Government Area in the West, Ezinator community of Awka South Local Government Area in the East, Awka town in the South, as well as a neighbouring community known as Ugwuoba in Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State in the Northern part of Amansea.

The Amansea Christian crusade of year 2000 was organized by the Catholic Church in Amansea was the first time such a Christian religious awareness campaign ever took place in the community. The organizers of the crusade were the parishioners of St Anthony’s Catholic Church Amansea which was led by a Charismatic Priest, Rev. Fr. Innocent Obidiegwu the then parish priest of the church with his prayer partners known as the Gideonite Brethren Roman Catholic Charismatic prayer group from Lagos State. The five day crusade which started on 25th April, 2000 with Rosary procession in the mind of the organizers was meant to further disseminate the gospel of Christ to the people of Amansea, so as for them to begin to live a new life that would propel the people to jettison their traditional beliefs to embrace Christianity. This is in line with the general thinking that evangelism itself is the proclamation of the

historical, biblical Christ as saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God.

The Amansea crusade 2000 was designed to be a time meant for the people to give their life to Christ and an opportunity to address the generational sins and evils committed by forefathers of the land through prayers. It was a popular opinion that the sins of the forefathers constitute a hindrance and impediment to the advancement of the community, and as a defining factor the crusade was given an inciting Igbo slogan that says “operation *nkpocha na nzacha*,” which depicts ‘operation total cleansing’. While recounting the reason for the caption, a participant S. N. Obi (Personal Communication, 23rd January, 2017), observed that the *nkpocha na nzacha* connotes the spiritual cleansing of Amansea community from all forms of generational curses which came about as a result of crimes and unthinkable ‘pagan’ practices the forefathers once performed such as human sacrifice, slave trade, slavery, among others. Stressing that following the magnitudes of the sin in the ‘eyes of God’ it demands that the people of Amansea should show remorse for the evil deeds of their forefathers and totally surrender and renounce their traditional religious beliefs and practices for the worship of the Christian God.

A further insight from the initiator of the crusade and the event Coordinator, H. C. Nchekwube (Personal Communication, 25th January, 2017) confirmed that organizing the year 2000 crusade in Amansea was viewed as very timely in order to save the people from a major concern of continued economic stagnation as a result of satanic forces and evils of the past. He gave a historical narration that some years back the forefathers of the community went on to prepare magical powers using human sacrifice as a part of the process in order to ward off the entrance of White people and their civilization into the community. This was known as *anyi achoro oyibo*, meaning the people in unity reject the Whiteman’s civilization and hence pledged their loyalty and commitments to the deities in a covenant pact of organizing a feast

in its honour. It therefore became a thing of concern that the covenant pact and the sacrifices of the forefathers to ward off civilization were identified as the brain behind the little or no development as witnessed in the community. And it was an issue the crusade was principally meant to deal with. For this reason the crusade was tagged, The Great Liberation: Amansea for Christ Crusade 2000. The crusade of the year 2000 in Amansea from the point of view of the organizers suggests a clear intention of using the event to introduce Christ in an all-embracing dimension to the people and have them grounded in the things of God rather than in traditions.

The crusade was a welcome development both to the Catholic Christians, other Christians and many lovers of the community that shared the same perception that things were not moving well in the community. It was the general notion of the people that the community lagged behind when compared with other communities around, in terms of infrastructure and economic developments. To this end, people were concerned and expectant that the crusade would remedy the situation and positively stir the tide of development in the community. The youths of the community having been frustrated with the situation in their hands whereby they have witnessed series of business setbacks as it concerns issues of business stagnations and failures with the inability of them to make a mark or excel in their various fields of endeavour was to say the least worrisome.

It is not in doubt that the basic assumption of the youths of the community as earlier stated revolves around the common thought that the traditional religious adherents and their instruments of religious worship were responsible for their predicaments. And the resultant consequence was the display of their anger on the instruments of traditional religious worships (Artifacts) as they trooped out from the crusade ground to violently attack traditional religious artifacts. According to one of the organizers of the crusade, H. C. Nchekwube (Personal Communication 26th January, 2017) the people were stirred into action on the 3rd day of the crusade after the Gideonite brethren of the Roman Catholic Charismatic prayer partners of the

parish priest from Lagos delivered a sermon that hinges on Judges 6: 25-27 which extol the valiant act of Gideon in destroying idols and the altars of Baal that was erected by his father without fear of any negative consequence from the idol. With this message in mind it then became clear to the people that just as Gideon and his men that smashed idols of the false deity to pieces with clubs in accordance with the Lord's wish, it is only fear that would hinder them from accomplishing the same feat as Gideon. Being influenced by the action of Gideon, the people were motivated into action to search for idols and deities in the community for destruction.

The Amansea experience of violence on traditional religious artifacts by the Catholic Christians, and the reason for the violent act as explained by a participant C. O. Nwokike (Personal Communication, 28th January, 2018) evidenced that following repeated wild claim and assumption that the activities and instruments of worships of the traditional religion adherents retards the progress of the community, the crusaders mainly youths moved from house to house of the suspected traditional adherents in search of charms, the magical powers and traditional religious artifacts. Relations of targets were strategically positioned in the forefront of the mob as persons to first break into their parents or relations closets and bring out charms and every traditional artifact. The tactic was meant to relax and weaken the temper of the targeted traditional adherents from taking any action or putting up any dangerous resistance, since such action would harm his or her relation. During this period, shrines, masquerade costumes, traditional religious artifacts such as ikenga, Ofo stick (the traditional Igbo symbol of authority), Ozo title paraphernalia such as traditional caps, traditional wooden seats and staffs (Ngwu-ozo) were all burnt to ashes.

It is crucial to mention at this point that various degrees of reactions were observed from the traditional religion adherents concerning the tragedy that came upon their traditional religious artifacts. For instance, Orebe village traditional religion adherents that include Ozo

Nwozu Nwokoye, Ozo Eukora Nwokike and Chief Chinwuba Okafor on behalf of Orebe village Community petitioned the then Executive Governor of Anambra State, Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju through their Attorney Ike Onyejiaka & Co, and copied the same to His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. S. A. Okafor the then Catholic Bishop of Awka Diocese. In the petition the people claimed the sum of 20,000,000.00 (Twenty Million Naira) as damages for the unlawful removal, burning and destruction of their artifacts, Shrines, Ngwu-ozo, Ijele and Mgbadike Masquerades paraphernalia and so on.

The Catholic Bishop of Awka on getting the letter invited the Parish Priest of Amansea Rev. Fr. Innocent Obidiegwu to clarify issues. Speaking on his personal reaction to the petition of unlawful and malicious destruction of the traditional artifacts of the people, the then Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Innocent Obidiegwu stated in his letter of defence to Our Lord Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. S. A. Okafor dated 7th June, 2000 that it was never an unlawful and malicious destruction as claimed by some traditional religion adherents but a willing act which was done by more than 95% of Amansea people. He stated that it was a willing removal of dangerous charms that have been causing havoc to the progress of youths and the entire town. The removal of the traditional religion worship items was done by sons and daughters or relations of the custodians of the items that moved into their various compounds and brought them out in the presence of their parents or uncles and surrendered same for destruction.

The catechist of St Anthony's Catholic Church Amansea, C. E. Onyechi (Personal Communication, 4th February, 2018) confirmed the statement of the parish priest that it was the youths of Amansea that personally brought out those artifacts and handed them over to the church as factual. Stating that for the fact that neither the priest nor the church ever broke into anybody's compound to remove anything strongly exonerated the church from the accusation of malicious destruction of traditional artifacts. And this established the impression that Amansea traditional religious artifacts were destroyed by Amansea people themselves and not

the Church or the parish priest as erroneously claimed. This consequently formed the official position of the Church leadership that the Church is not to be blamed on the destructions on traditional religious artifacts witness during the crusade.

3.2 The Ugbenu Crusade Year 2015

Ugbenu community is made up of seven villages namely Amaedem, Enugwu, Umuaneké, Omata, Umuoraukwu, Obuboo, Ugbenu Akpulu udor. Ugbenu community is one of the ten communities that make up Awka North Local Govt Area of Anambra State. The Ugbenu community shares a common boundary with Ugbene, Awba-ofemili and Ebenebe communities of the same Awka-north Local Govt Area. Ugbenu community is a very committed and religious people that have serious regard for their belief system. The community plays host to two prominent religions of Christianity and traditional religion, with Christianity being the dominant religion of the majority of the members of the community.

The Ugbenu crusade as organized in the year 2015 by St. Joseph Catholic Church Ugbenu was as a result of what the people perceived to be the need to awaken the consciousness of the people in the things of God. According to a member of the committee that organized the crusade, M. C. Anyadike (Personal Communication 26th November 2017) the reason for the conduct of the crusade was to sensitize members of the community on the need to embrace Christ and forsake idol worshipping and charm making which the people generally perceived to be forestalling the progress of the community. According to Anyadike, the crusade was not targeted at any individual's property for destruction stressing that it was very unfortunate that the crusade ended up the way it did.

Giving a vivid account of what transpired during the crusade that led to the violence, J. N. Agumadu (Personal communication 26th November, 2017) observes that the crusade which was conducted for three days was started with a rosary procession from ndi-uno en route ndi-

agu which transversed the entire seven villages that make up the community. It was on the third day that the crusade turned into violence following some attitudes at that particular point in time. According to further insight from Agumadu, the crusaders went on to destroy and burn down some shrines in the community namely, Ngene Ozo, Agwu-Amaedem, Obubu, Okechukwu and Uhihe Ebenebe. It was at the process of the crusaders entrance into the place housing the Uhihe Ebenebe shrine to destroy it that the entire traditional religion adherents organized themselves and attacked the crusaders.

In the words of Agumadu, the violence that erupted led to the physical attack on the parish priest named Rev. Fr. Fidelis Ugozor who was manhandled and seriously wounded at the process. During this crisis, many properties were damaged while many people received some degree of injuries as well. However, following this ugly incident especially the assault and injury on the parish priest, Reverend Father Fidelis Ugozor, the injuries as a result of the Traditional religion adherents attack, the Ugbenu Catholic community took the traditional religion adherents to court over the issue. The matter is at the Awka high court, Awka.

Though the matter is yet to be resolved but the traditional ruler of the community Igwe L. C. Egwuonwu (Personal communication 26th November, 2017), expressed concerned and regret for the unfortunate incident that happened while stating that no religion has any right to destroy the belonging of another without a mutual consent. He went further to appeal for peace as he called on the two warring religions to sheath their sword and allow peace to reign while advocating for an out of court settlement of the matter.

3.3 The Umuaji Crusade year 2015

Umuaji is one among the four villages namely Umudim, Ezema and Ozom that make up Aguobuowa community in Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Umuaji Community has boundaries with the following community: Umana-Ndiagu, Ngbagbu-Umuaji,

Ohandi-Agu, Oha-Imezi and Owa-Imezi. Umuaji community is a combination of both Christianity and traditional religion adherents. The community has a lot of committed Christians as well as a good number of religio-cultural votaries.

History has it that in the year 2014 an incident of violence on traditional religious artifacts happened at Umuaji community of Enugu State, Nigeria. Stating events as it occurred on that day, Akuoma (2014) pointed out that in the early hours of the day, some Christians stormed some shrines located in Umuaji community in the heat of their crusade, the Christians, known by the title 'the indigenous Christians of Umuaji' wreaked havoc in the place of worship. They trespassed the land, destroyed valuable items and burnt down the shrines. Yet what was their excuse for this? The fact remains that the traditional worshippers hadn't kidnapped their children and sacrificed them; neither had they gone around destroying farms, burning homes, or causing any sort of trouble to anyone's means of livelihood. What had they done then? Nothing and absolutely nothing. The shrines were burnt all due to a ridiculous wild claim that they were somehow hindering the progress of the community. Akuoma went on to affirm that the Umuaji episode is not the first time Christian zealots are being accused of destroying African traditional religious shrines and artifacts, which happens every day. He stated that in crusades and conventions, Christians continually make it an enduring mission to destroy traditional religious shrines and relics.

Speaking on the matter, S. E. Okafor (Personal Communications 17th March, 2017) gave a further insight that members of the Indigenous Christians of Umuaji led by Joseph Nnaeme alias 404 gathered themselves and went on rampage of destroying shrines and other cultural values during their special crusade in the community. According to Okafor, the group was of the view that the burnt shrines were responsible for the backwardness of the community and her indigenes, adding that they had the approval of the natives to destroy the shrines as part of spiritual cleansing of the area.

From C. N. Okoye's (Personal Communication, 17th March, 2017) view point, the crusaders destroyed and burnt to ashes the building that houses the shrine of the village known as Anaka Umuaji. According to Okoye, the evangelists went on to destroy sacred trees and grooves including other cultural values of the village. Giving his own side of the story, the Chief priest of Anaka Umuaji deity Chief N. Udeh (Personal communication 17th March, 2017) expressed grief on the extent of destruction as meted out to the traditional religious artifacts and the symbol of religious worship of the villagers. A further insight from N. Udeh, (Personal Communication 17th March, 2017), shows that the havoc as wreaked on the traditional religious artifacts in the village was baffling, colossal and unprecedented. Although the people that carried out the destruction were mandated to rebuild the shrine's house and contribute to the replacing of some items that were destroyed or which got missing after the raid. According to him, one of the people that masterminded the destruction of the Anaka Umuaji deity known as Okalu was killed by the deity. This was based on the backdrop of his alledged mysterious death a few months after they had carried out the destruction of the shrine in the community.

3.4 The Mbaise Christian Crusade

Mbaise is a known community in Igboland. According to Uka (2015), Mbaise community in Imo State is one of the most populous and popular tribal groups in Igboland. Even if you have not been to the community, which seats on a table land, you would have heard about the Mbaise people, their women, men and culture. Among the communities that make up Mbaise include Aboh Mbaise, Ahiazu Mbaise and Ezinihitte. In the words of Uganwa (2013) Mbaise shares boundaries with Ngwu community of Abia State, and Emekuku, Okpala and Ihitte Uboma, among other communities of Imo State. About 90% are Catholics while other denominations and religion comprise the remaining 10% percent of the population.

Being a Christian dominated community as statistically underlined in the above passage, some members of the community known as United Congress of Mbaise Christian's Association deemed it fit to organize a crusade in the community. According to one of the organizers of the crusade, K. O. Umeayo (Personal Communication 24th May, 2017), the crusade was meant to sanitize, cleanse and free the community from the worship of idol. According to Umeayo the worship of idol had done the community more harm in terms of setback in business, lack of progress in the community and other evil vices as dangerous charm making and so on. It then became apparent that such awful religious act should be put to a halt and discarded.

From the point of view of H. O. Nwagwu (Personal Communication 24th May, 2017), the crusade was very successful being that the people willingly surrendered their idols and charm for destruction. His statement was refuted by L. E. Okoroafor (Personal Communication 24th May, 2017) saying that the crusaders descended on shrines in the community and burnt them down. Corroborating the statement of Okoroafor, Ohanwe (n.d) hinted that in an already turbulent and disquieting Nigeria, further religious uprising will create more war fronts for the security establishment, and at the same time add extra volatile dimension to the already charged polity. The United Congress of Mbaise Christians in Imo State, Nigeria is said to have destroyed more than 100 shrines belonging to the African Traditional Religion (ATR). The destruction was alleged to have been done with impunity, and the sect is said to have vowed not to rest on its religious oars till every shrine within the region is done away with.

3.5 The Achina Christian Crusade

Achina is a community in Aguata, Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State Nigeria. Achina community is bordered in the north by Onneh and Agbudu and to the south by Umuchu, Uga and Akokwa in the present day Imo State, to the east by Enugu-Umuonyi and to

the west by Amesi and Akpo. Achina is part of the region where the famous Igbo-Ukwu bronze were discovered at a private compound in 1958. Achina is a community of mainly farmers and traders which are very typical of towns and villages in the Igbo dominated Christian belt of southeastern Nigeria. In the words of A. P. Ezeoffor (Personal Communication 3rd June, 2017), although Achina had few Christians over 70 years ago, but as of today Christians in the community now constitute more than 90 percent of the populace.

Looking at the relationship between Christianity and traditional religion in the area, allegations are rife that Christian fundamentalism is evident in Achina with the traditional deities and artifacts being linked to the devil. Preachers during Christian evangelism kept urging the people not to only reject the worship of idol but to also go for their destruction. This has led to the burning and the destruction of the main shrine of the community known as Ezeokolo. In one of the narration, Ezeoffor states that the attack on Ezeokolo shrine was preceded by a three-day revival crusade with the destruction taking place on the final day. The outcome was the destruction of precious artifacts that were hundreds of years old.

Giving a further insight of violence on traditional artifacts by a man known as Ibe Nwigwe, Ezeoffor affirm to the fact that Ibe Nwigwe was born to a family of traditional priest but was later converted to Christianity as a boy. Stating that under the sway of born-again enthusiasm one certain day he gathered the paraphernalia of ancestral worship, including some centuries old stool, metal staff with a wooden handle and the carved figure of a deity and burnt them as his pastor watched on. In the words of Nwigwe according to Ezeoffor, 'I had experienced a series of misfortunes and my pastor told me it was because I had not completely broken the covenant with my ancestral idols'. From the statement of Nwigwe it was obvious that he was motivated to take the decision he took based on the assumption that those traditional artifacts he destroyed were responsible for his misfortunes.

3.6 The Oraukwu Crusade Year 2016

Oraukwu is a town in Anambra State, Nigeria. Oraukwu town is among the ten towns that make up Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State which includes Abacha, Abatete, Eziowelle, Ideani, Nkpor, Obosi, Ogidi, Uke and Umuoji. Oraukwu town is approximately 40 kilometers east of Onitsha and around 20 kilometers southwest of the state capital city of Awka. Oraukwu town shares a common boundary with Abatete and Nimo in the north, on the south by Adazi-Ani, on the east by Ozu and Neni, and on the west by Alor towns. The town of Oraukwu is made up nine villages namely, Otta, Nkwelle, Ezennaja, Irukweleko, Dimubana, Amaeze, Amada, Urua-Amada, Ibenabo. Oraukwu community is known to be ardent Christians with the majority belonging to the Catholic Church denomination.

The Oraukwu crusade 2016 as organized by members of the St. Marys Catholic community Oraukwu was meant for the spiritual cleansing and the handing over of the community to God almighty. In the words of a parishioner, A. C. Nweke (Personal communication 12th November, 2017) firm that the crusade was a three-day serious spiritual event organized by the St. Mary's Catholic Church, Oraukwu with the major objective to ward off devil and all of its activities from the community, stressing that the majority of members of the community were passionate for the conduct of the crusade. Commenting further on the crusade, C. E. Nwose (Personal communication 12th November, 2017), observes that the crusade which started in earnest on the first and the second day got to its climax on the third day with the destruction of some traditional religious artifacts.

Some of the destroyed deities by the rampaging youthful crusaders include the idemobi deity located beside St. Mary's Catholic Church in the community. According to a further insight from Nwose the assumption that the deity retards progress of the people remains the prime reason for its destruction. On his part the Parish Priest of St. Mary's Catholic Church

Oraukwu, Reverend Father S. Ogbuebini (Personal communication, 12th November 2017) viewed the location and the proximity of the idemobi deity to the Church premises as being inappropriate stating that light and darkness cannot cohabit.

Following the destruction of the idemobi deity the place has been renamed Maryland the current domicile of Oraukwu primary school. However the destruction of another deity in the community known as Nwaocha deity (A river deity) was also carried out during the crusade, throwing more light on the matter, C. E. Nwose (Personal communication 12th November, 2017) pointed out that the destruction of the nwocha deity was centered on the belief of the people that the spiritual forces behind the deity impedes the progress of members of the community. A traditional religion adherent in the community N. C. Ibekwe (Personal communication 12th November 2017) while condemning the conduct of the crusaders in destruction of the deities as an infringement on their fundamental right of worship.

3.7 The Igbo-Ukwu Crusade Year 2017

Igbo-Ukwu town is among the twelve communities that constitute Aguata local government area of Anambra state namely, Achina, Agulueze-Chukwu, Akpo, Amesi, Ekwulobia, Ezinifite, Ikenga, Isuofia, Nkpologwu, Uga and Umuchu. Igbo-Ukwu town also have seven villages namely: Obiuno, Ngo, Akukwa, Umudege, Ezihu, Ezigbo and Etiti. Igbo-Ukwu town is surrounded by the following communities, Awka-Etiti, Aku, and so on. The town remains a historical and cultural significance for Igbo and Nigeria as a whole for the discovery of archaeological sites, where for the first time, bronze artifacts known as vessels, masks, sculptures were found. History has it that the early inhabitants of Igbo-Ukwu had a metalworking art that flourished as early as the ninth century. The three sites excavated in Igbo-

Ukwu revealed hundreds of ritual vessels and regalia castings of bronze that are among the most inventive and technically accomplished bronze ever made. It is important to note that the present day inhabitants of Igbo-Ukwu are known to be very religious with two prominent religions Christianity and Traditional Religion the major belief system of the people.

The year 2017 crusade at Igbo-Ukwu was organized by members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Nigeria (CCRN) of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church Igbo-Ukwu on the December 2017 at the Central Primary School field, Igbo-Ukwu. Among the reasons for organizing the crusade, according to P. C. Okonkwo (Personal communication, 13th February 2018) is for the spiritual cleansing of the community of evil and idol worship and to do that, Reverend Father Emmanuel Obimma, the spiritual director of Holy Ghost Adoration Ministry, Uke, (Ebube Muonso) was invited to pray for the liberation of the community.

Giving a further sight on the crusade the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church Igbo-Ukwu, Reverend Father C. Azolibe (Personal communication, 13th February 2018) affirm to the fact that the crusade was held in order to rescue the town from the worship of idol, and cleanses the community from the negative consequence of their forefathers worship of idol. Stressing that since it has become obvious that the act of idol worshipping retards development and impedes the economic growth of the people; the need to conduct the crusade for the spiritual cleansing of the community remains very imperative. The conduct of the crusade to save the future of members of the community especially the youths, in the words of a laity I. O. Okeke (Personal communication, 13th February 2018) cannot be overemphasize, pointing out that the people were very pleased with the success of the crusade.

However information at the reach of the researcher has it that the crusade being a 3 days event reached at its climax on the 3rd day being the 29th day of December 2017 with the alleged destruction of traditional religious artifacts in the community. According to one of the Traditional Religious adherent in the community, E. A. Chukwura (Personal communication

13th February, 2018) at the night of 29th December 2017 at about 2:00pm crusaders left their crusade ground at the Central Primary School field and went on rampage attacking and destroying traditional religious artifacts which includes, masquerade paraphernalia, mystical wands (offor), an ancient mammoth-sized wooden gong at udo nkwo and over fifteen deities that was totally destroyed.

Among the fifteen deities destroyed includes Ogwugwu onye kere onwe ya, Udo nkwo, Udo-akukwa, Udo oti, Mmuo Ubi, Ogwugwu osoro-okwunu'uka, Oda, Udo Akwari, with the wall and roofing of this sacred places of traditional worship abysmally destroyed. He went further to disclose that items lost to the crusade mayhem are to be put at the cost of ten billion naira. Bemoaning the demolition of various deities and other ancient religious artifacts in the community, O. N. Ezeokoli (Personal communication 13th February 2018) is of the view that what was done to the deities in Igbo-Ukwu remains unfair and warned the perpetrators of the despicable act of an imminent reprisal attack from the gods of the land.

Speaking on the matter, the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. C. Azolibe (Personal communication 13th February, 2018) while condemning the act, went further to exonerate the catholic community of Igbo-Ukwu from the act stating that since the act of destroying the traditional religious artifacts were carried out at night. According to him the likelihood that miscreants could have taken advantage of the night crusade to penetrate the programme and carry out the nefarious act cannot be ruled out. And the resultant effect is the accusing finger now being pointed on the church as the perpetrators of the act.

3.8 The Burning and the Destruction of Traditional Religious Artifacts During Crusade in some parts of Igboland and the Envisaged Benefit to the People

The recent revival in Igboland which hinged on the destruction of traditional religious artifacts in some parts of Igboland no doubt was a departure as earlier noted from the kind of

evangelism known to the people in the 1960s and 1970s or there about. In all the parts of Igboland carefully looked at in this study where this burning and destruction of traditional religious artifacts were carried out, it was a general claim and complain of the people that these artifacts which includes deities, charms, masquerades and so on were considered responsible for the ill fortune and socio-economic backwardness which the people often witness. It is of certainty that the destructions were massive both from the side of the Christians and the Traditional religion adherents with the latter perhaps heavily affected. The questioned remains whether anything have changed positively in these communities that witnessed the burning and destruction of the traditional religious artifacts.

For an instance, the effect of year 2000 crusade in Amansea, as it stands today most people in Amansea and the surroundings agree that the Crusade was a huge success, even though some persons still perceive the crusade as a tragic experience that ought not to be allowed to happen again. But from the point of view of H. C. Nchekwube (Personal Communication 26th January, 2017) the gain of the crusade cannot be overemphasized because the crusade brought about an immense economic benefit and upliftment to the people in the sense that it turned out to be a force that stirred up the financial fortune of the people of Amansea. Stating that the wave of development and financial growth as witnessed in recent time in the community captured the thinking of the people that the crusade has started yielding its gains. In a corroborating statement, C. O. Nwokike (Personal communication, 28th January, 2018) was quick to observe that from the time the crusade was held to this present day there are some tangible proof of developmental stride among individual members of the community. According to him, the spiritual benefit of the crusade in line with the religious reawakening the crusade brought into the community as well cannot be overemphasized, stating that the crusade rejuvenated the spiritual life of the people and brought about an earnest appeal for repentance of sin from the people.

Since the destruction of shrines and deities in the community it has been an open truth that the spirit of deities and idols has left the community. The Chief priest of earth goddess (Eze-Ajana), N. Anunobi (Personal communication, 26th July, 2017) is of the view that, the destruction of idols and shrines of deities in the community by Christians during the crusade actually banished the spirit of the gods from the land of Amansea. In his words, their suspicion arose following the non presence of Vulture (Udene) in the community that normally appears whenever animals are slaughtered during sacrifice in the community. Stating that on inquiry from the gods, it was revealed that the entire oracle, idols and deities in the community has relocated to other neighbouring communities. This speaks volume of an Igbo axiom that says *achu-aja ma afuro udene, amara na ife melu nabe ndi mmuo* meaning whenever sacrifice is made and vulture fails to appear to eat the victim of the sacrifice (mostly animal), it all tells the story that all is not well in the spiritual world of the gods.

Amansea community is not alone in this issue, some other communities of Igboland where this violent destruction and burning of traditional religious artifacts took place during crusade evangelism as highlighted in the discourse are not left out. In Ugbenu, Igboukwu, Oraukwu, Umuaji-Aguobuowa and so on, across section of people whose view were sort, though some with contrary opinion, but the claim that the crusade has been of positive impact to the people was all-embracing. In Oraukwu, C. E. Nwose (Personal Communication 12th November, 2017) was of the opinion that the crusade in the community was of great positive impact to the people, sighting the destruction of some deities in the community as something that have given the people a life-line for a rejuvenated Christian life following the annihilation of the seemingly powers of the deities. Stating that the economic lives of the people is gradually taking a new shape for the better.

The envisaged benefits of the destroyed religious artifacts to the people cannot be overemphasized following the way and manner the affected people have expressed the leverage

the destruction has aided their spiritual and economic recovery. Subsequently, the next page would be discussing the perceived ripple effect on Christian evangelism of this destruction of traditional religious artifacts in Igboland.

CHAPTER FOUR

VIOLENCE ON TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS ARTIFACTS AND ITS EFFECTS ON CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM IN IGBOLAND

In a topical issue as the association of Christian evangelism with violence on Traditional religious artifacts in discourse, there is the sameness of thoughts that the issue of violence on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism and crusades in Igboland cannot be totally detached from having negative or positive effects on Christian evangelism depending from which perspective one is to look at it. In this section, the researcher is to examine Christian evangelism work with the issue of violence on traditional religious artifacts during various crusades in some parts of Igboland and the envisaged consequence on the overall Christian evangelism.

4.1 Dangerous Awakening on Evangelism vis-à-vis Societal Acrimony

It is not in doubt that the general obligation of every Christian is to evangelize and make known to others especially the non-christians the good news about the word of God. But the

way and manner this candid obligation of evangelism is carried out remains important as the evangelism itself. The non avoidance of an application of the force of violence during evangelism could portray the act of evangelism as having missed its objective. Therefore such an act remains overtly capable to emit a dangerous awakening on Christian evangelism as an enemy to the prospective converts. It is not in doubt that the criticism that follows Christian evangelical works in recent times is traceable to the envisaged violence that characterize its activities on the people they intend to convert. In the words of Scott (1977):

Christian evangelism falls into disrepute when it degenerates into stereotypes. It is impossible to evangelize by fixed formulae. To force a conversation along pre-determined lines in order to reach a pre-determined destination is to show oneself grievously lacking in sensitivity both to the actual needs of our friend and to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Such insensitivity is therefore a failure in both faith and love. (p. 73).

Just as it has become in our contemporary era, Christians are seen as undermining the fabric of traditional society especially in terms of their involvement in various attacks and destruction of traditional religious artifacts. To this end, they are regarded as dangerous fanatics and these acts provoke fierce societal acrimony and irrational hostility. It is certainly without exception that there have been examples of reaction as this from the earliest days of the church when the Jews accused Stephen of preaching that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy their temple and will change the customs which Moses delivered to them (Acts 6:14). Although the allegation was totally false, the message to be drawn from it remains that it explicitly made clear the level of anger and tension it drew. The turn of events in this contemporary evangelical work has sent a wrong message to the traditional religion adherents to figure out Christian evangelism and conversion of faith to Jesus Christ as being tantamount to violence.

In a large scale, these developments laid the framework for people to perceive violent Christian evangelism as what could cause communal disharmony, and a potent cause of violent quarrels that often lead to bloodshed. It is a common knowledge that, with violent evangelism the cordial relationship between Christians and traditional religion adherents are severed which oftentimes results in a hot arguments that degenerates into violence. As a result of this the people most time incur on themselves great damage to life and property. It is no exaggeration to say quite literally that a battleline has been drawn between the traditional religious adherents and their Christian folks in some part of Igboland as Ugbenu, Awba-Ofemili, Amansea, Igbo-ukwu and so on that witnessed violent evangelism. Churches have been attacked by the traditionalists in some cases, in retaliation for damage done to their artifact and symbol of traditional worship during a Christian evangelism or the other.

One of the notable incidents of clash between Christianity and traditional religion adherents according to Agina (2011) degenerated to setting ablaze and complete destruction of a local church building in a community known as Nsirimo village in Umuahia Town, Abia State of Nigeria. This was in retaliation of the action of members of a Pentecostal church known as Charismatic Renewal Movement (CRM) that went on rampage against the culture of the land, attacking and destroying traditional artifacts. A further account from Agina shows that on that December 1, 2007 when the irate youths burned down the local church, the message of the youths was very clear saying, 'you destroyed our culture, and we destroyed what you claim to be your culture'.

The passage above is a clear expression of anger and an acrimonious conduct exhibited as a result of evangelical outreach which was upsetting to the people. It is understandable therefore that in the wake of this acrimony between Christianity and traditional religion as could be seen from the action of Nsirimo youths, the two religions became tensed up with each other. What this implies is that as far as the adherents of these two religions are concerned the

wall of hate and acrimony has been established. The resultant effect of a situation as this would be seen in continued antagonistic and opposing stand on Christian evangelism activities from the side of the traditional adherents. Following action and counteraction that occurred at Nsirimo as a result of the crusade fall out as held in the village; the truth is that a harmonious existence of the people has been tampered with seriously.

Worthy of note is the fact that the Nsirimo event is just one of the few apparent show of anger and the display of acrimony as a result of violent attacks and the destruction of traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism. The truth of the matter is that, people oftentimes vent their anger in disapproval and disgust as a protest of what happened in some Christian evangelism where destructions were carried out on traditional religious artifacts. For certain people, following their unpleasantness for the damage they incurred as a result of the destruction rather than carrying out a reprisal attack hence looked for a redress at the court of law. For instance, in Achina, according to Mbachu (2015) who noted that since 2008 that Ezenwa has been pursuing the criminal prosecution of three Catholic priests and several members of the congregation for their alleged involvement in burning and destroying the Ezeokoro shrine in the town of Achina, about 40 kilometers (25 miles south of the Anambra State capital, Awka). The charges filed against the accused priests and the six laymen at a court in a nearby town, Ekwulobia, as further highlighted by Mbachu include the destruction of a place of worship, stealing and violent disturbance.

In Amansea town, the dust raised by the last evangelical crusade as organized in the community in the year 2000 by members of St Anthony's Catholic Church, Amansea are yet to settle very well. The very much known issues of skirmish argument, bitter quarrels and animosity have continued to show up whenever Christian evangelism is mentioned to the hearing of traditional religion adherents. Although the situation has never degenerated to any kind of bloodshed in the community, but the use of hate languages and uttering of hate and

inciting speeches are not decreasing either. It is on record according to a traditionalist O. G, Onwuchekwa (Personal communication, 15th April, 2018) that after the destruction of traditional religious artifacts during the crusade, some concerned traditional practitioners gathered themselves and attempted to institute a law suit against the organizers of the crusade. But later had to renege from carrying out their threat after the traditional ruler of the town called them and gave them money to replace whatever they might have lost. Stating that they (the traditionalists) may have forgiven those Christians but they have not forgotten their despicable and wicked act.

It is a common knowledge that traditional religion adherents that lost their religious artifacts during the year 2000 crusade in the community still berate the conduct of the participants, in a show of deep anger and acrimony on their lost religious artifacts. Most of the affected traditional religion adherents have taken it personal by verbally attacking and continuously proclaiming curses on some persons they allege to be involved in the cutting down of their sacred grooves and burning down of their traditional religious artifacts on that fateful day. The acrimony that surrounded the fights, the quarrels and the bad blood generated as a result of the crusade between the people of Amansea themselves is yet to abate. The concern is that despite the intervention of the traditional ruler of the community, peace still seems not to have been established between the two religion adherents.

A look at the crusade jointly organized in Awba-ofemili in the year 2014 by Catholic and Anglican churches in the community that later culminated into a serious bloodshed. According to S. N. Okafor (Personal Communication 26th January, 2017), the crusade as organize by both St Paul's Catholic Church and St Patrick's Anglican Church in 2014. It was the acrimony generated in the course of the crusade that brought about the clash of the night masqueraders with the Christian worshippers of St Patrick Anglican Church during their night progamme. M. N. Ekwenugo (Personal communication 26th January, 2017) made reference to

what he observed during the crusade when it was alleged that Christians among other things demystified the status of the masquerade as human being and not a spirit.

According to Ekwenugo, this stand of the Christian faithful on the status of masquerade may have been justified with the church allowing their crusade programme stretch into the night which made it to clash with the night the traditional religion adherents usually organize their night masquerading activities. The traditional religion adherents (in this case the masqueraders and its members) saw the stand of the Christians with the concurrent running of the night crusade which includes women with the outing of the night masquerade as a destruction of the masquerade sacrilege. It was an attempt to stop the programme from going on by members of the masquerade group that fracas then broke out which resulted in bloodshed following the free use of dangerous weapons such as guns, cutlasses, axes and so on.

Giving a further insight on the matter, A. N. Ngene (Personal Communication, 26th January 2017) observes that the attackers wounded a host of worshippers which included the mother of the traditional ruler of the town, Mrs Oyidia Maduaguna who suffered a gunshot in her leg while the attackers went on to set the church on fire. However following the degree of injury on the people and the arson so committed by the traditional religion adherents, the matter was reported to the Nigerian Police Force that made a good number of arrests and charged them to court. Ngene went further to confirm that the matter is still ongoing at the Awka High Court. Stating her own side of what happened on that day in question, the woman who suffered a gun wound during the incident; O. E. Maduaguna (Personal communication 26th January, 2017) confirmed to the fact the traditionalists attacked them on that fateful day with guns, cutlass, and so on burning the church, injuring many people including herself that was shot on the leg.

While analyzing the situation in the community, G. E. Okoye (Personal communication 26th January, 2017) is of the view that the bitterness the incident has generated so far is affecting the peace of the land, with the entire community being prone to acrimonious behaviour and

conducts in almost every aspect of the community's activities. According to Okoye, the community has been sharply divided against each other especially along religious line. This as well is equally affecting the general peace and the mutual existence and unity of the community as a whole with lots of acrimony, bitterness and discord among the people.

Looking at what went down at Ugbenu crusade, it shows that at Ugbenu community, the crusade as organized by the Ugbenu Catholic community known as St Joseph's Catholic Church in the year 2015 also resulted in violence. According to J. N. Agumadu (Personal communication 26th March, 2018) the three days crusade became violent immediately the participants started going round the entire community destroying shrines and traditional religious artifacts of the traditional religion adherents. In the words of Agumadu, some members of the traditional religion adherents having been alerted of the destruction hence organized and equipped themselves with some dangerous weapons such as machetes, axes and so on. As they moved in to stop the crusaders at the point of their entrance to destroy the Uhuhe ebenete shrine. The confrontation that ensued between the two religious group members of the Christian faith and the traditional religious adherents got many people seriously injured, including the parish priest that was manhandled and wounded.

Going further, Agumadu explained that following the level of destruction and injury that precipitated the confrontation as done by the traditional religion adherents, the Ugbenu Catholic community lodged a formal complaint to the Nigerian Police and some persons suspected to be involve in the attack were arrested and charged to court. As at the time of this study the case is not yet determined but still in session at the high court of Awka division. Speaking on the extent of the cordial relationship, harmony and co-existence among the inhabitants of the community, S. O. Anigbo (Personal communication 15th March, 2018) has this to say: on a normal circumstance it is always rare for two people that are in court with charges against one another to claim to remain the best of friends no matter how they might try

to fake or pretend about it. Their friendliness to one another in terms of sociability and good human relation is always in doubt. Stating that acrimony and bitterness of the heart have taken a centre stage in the life of the people following the conflict that led to the court case the community is into.

In Igboukwu the violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts by the evangelism Christians during a crusade in the community generated enormous acrimony and tension in the area. Information has it that following the destruction of so many deities and artifacts in the town, some traditional religion adherents in the community mainly youths wanted to carry out a reprisal attack and arson on the churches around. According to E. A. Chukwura (Personal Communication 13th February, 2018), when we learnt that the Omenala youths were planning arson, I summoned the main chief priest of the community and some elders of the town to come which they obliged. With them, we were able to beg the youths to desist from reprisal attack and listen to the voice of negotiation, which they also obliged. Before then the youths had organized six 50 litre jerry cans of petrol to burn down Our Lady of Fatima, St Michael's, St Martin's, St Patrick's, St John's, and St Flannan's all Catholic Churches in Igboukwu. And one wonders what the entire community would have turned into if such was allowed to happen.

The common truth remains as earlier mentioned that acrimony which often follow the association of Christians with violence on traditional religious artifacts during crusade and evangelism is believed to be triggered by Christians being seen by the traditional adherents as undermining the fabrics of traditional society. To this end, Christians in the time of evangelism or during crusades were regarded as being dangerous fanatics that are not ready to let any breathing space for any other religion. As a matter of fact a situation as that usually provoke fierce irrational hostility in the community. Corroborating this view with the reaction of traditional religious adherents at the face of incidences of iconoclasm by the early Christians evangelists in Igboland, Kalu (2003) posits that "Iconoclasm worked both ways, when the

traditionalists felt pushed to the wall, they reacted as they did in Bende and Aba Districts, 1949/50, 1951, and burned schools and churches” (p. 319). In essence the acrimonious reaction to Christians’ attacks on the traditional religious symbol of worship by the traditional religion adherents in Igboland did not just start today. And this therefore conveys the message that it is a thing to be careful about, that violence on traditional religious artifacts in any disguise as far as Christian evangelism is concerned remains a dangerous awakening to evangelism in relation to the level of anger and bitterness it spreads to the church and the society.

4.2 Increases in Resentment and Evangelical Disrepute

Following the issue of violent attacks on traditional religious artifacts as witnessed during Christians evangelical crusades in some parts of Igboland. The growing fear is that there are traces of increase in resentment as well as low esteem held by some individual on Christian evangelism in recent time; especially in places where there had been a clash between the two famous religions in Igboland, Christianity and traditional religion. In the words of Abraham (1989), we can construe evangelism as converting people to the Christian faith. But it seems that in carrying out this conversion claims, respect were not shown to other people’s religion which results in evangelical bigotry, narrowness and violence as an end point. This kind of action has therefore continued to whip up sentiment and resentment from the side of some traditional votaries that are neck-deep in their religious beliefs and practices.

The assumed feelings of displeasure, hate, anger and resentment on Christian evangelism is born out of the general perception of some traditional adherents in referring to violent evangelical outreaches as an insincere and unreal conversion. The point that stands out to be mentioned is that no matter how sincere one tries to be in the mission of evangelism, if he/she tries to impose his/her faith or extract a decision from another person the action is bound to generate resentment and evangelical disrepute. And this has been the case in recent time of

Christian evangelical violence on Traditional Religious artifacts. Indeed it is apt to say that no religion ever accepts to play a second fiddle to another religion of its kind. And this has been the problem between Christianity and Traditional Religion during the time of evangelism. It is very important to note that in every display of religious superiority and often time misguided form of evangelism lays the main reason for resentment and a revulsion against evangelism from the overpowered religion.

Giving a vivid insight on the prospect of evangelism in Africa, Igbo land inclusive, Tienou (1985) explains that some have described Africa as the most fertile soil for Christianity in this century. Others have predicted that Africa will be largely Christians by the year 2000. How credible are such statements? First, it is worth noting that the prediction of complete success for Christianity in Africa is not as recent as some believe. Back in 1956, Roland Oliver was very optimistic about Christianity's prospect in Africa. In a broadcast talk, he indicated that there had been a geometrical progression of Christianity in Africa south of the Sahara since 1912. And he added: if things were to go on at the same rate, there would be no pagans left in Africa after the year 1992. But we must remember that social institutions do not function according to mathematical formulae. There are factors which can increase or decrease this rate of growth.

Looking at the above passage there is no doubt that this sort of statistics would encourage people to get interested and therefore seriously be committed for the success of Christian evangelism. But in as much as this would prompt most Christian faithfuls to develop the zeal for evangelism, the fear is that they may go about it in a wrong way. In Igboland, a situation as this has made Christians that participate in evangelism to apply forceful conversion with the violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts of the people as a means for conversion. As rightly pointed out in the passage, there are factors which can increase or decrease the rate of the growth and success of evangelism. Therefore, it is a clear cut fact that

just as coherent evangelism would make for the growth and expansion of conversion. The truth remains that it is obtainable that violent evangelism which entails attacks and violent destruction of traditional religious symbols of worship of the people can as well bring about an increase in evangelism resentment and disrepute. A situation as this shows that traditional religion adherents have drawn a line of conclusion of what Christian evangelism is to them.

It is very clear that the consequence of it all rests on the existence of wild, fanatical and unnecessary opposition. This of course aptly states the obvious that community rivalry although always existed before now but following the violent attacks on traditional religious artifacts, this time has assumed a more virulent disposition. Communities affected with this violence on traditional religious artifacts have witnessed an increase in name calling and aspersions on Christian evangelism by the berated traditional religion adherents. In one of such occasions a traditional religion adherent from Amansea town, S. N. Okafor (Personal communication 26th January, 2017) questioned the value of violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts as an assurance for a true conversion of the people whose symbol of religious worship were forcefully taken away from and destroyed. Pointing out that the crusaders may have succeeded in the destruction of their traditional religious artifacts the religious worship symbol of theirs, but may not have succeeded in destroying their faith in Traditional Religion and its practices.

It would appear that the various attacks on traditional religious artifacts no doubt determined the type of response which people give Christianity and their act of evangelism. The chaotic situation that often surrounds violent evangelism in some parts of Igboland as highlighted in this discourse cannot be overemphasized. The position of some of the traditional religion adherents in the affected areas tilt to the view that the genuine intention for establishing evangelism has been marred by the adoption of violence against traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism. It is not in doubt that this equally attracted the traditional religion

adherents' resentment, anger and decision to continue the backlashing of Christian evangelism at any given opportunity.

The altercations that usually surfaces when mention is made of crusade evangelism in the midst of traditional religion adherents according to O. P. Ibe (Personal communication 13 July 2016) attests to an impression from the traditional religion adherents that with Christian's act of violent evangelism it has failed and that the failure has dented the reputation of Christian evangelism. One may argue with Ibe, on how much the reputation of Christian evangelism has been dented. Yet it has become an undeniable fact that the clash of members of Christianity and traditional religion adherents following violent attacks on traditional religious symbols of worships, no doubt, had its toll in the increase in resentment and evangelical disrepute by the traditional religion adherents and its sympathizers. It is understandable that the lackluster approach of Christians during evangelism with the resultant attacks on traditional religious artifacts must have informed the traditional religion adherents rage over Christian's interference in the symbol of their religious worship.

The message from the traditional religion adherents directly affected by the violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts as posited by A. N. Ngene (Personal communication 26th January, 2017) saying, in this contemporary era Christians are easily and wrongly influenced on the idea of evangelism. They are unnecessarily carried away during evangelism to the extent of staging a war against all known traditional religious artifacts the symbols of worship of the people. It is the presumption of the traditional religion adherents on whether evangelism is one and the same with an intoxicating stimulant that causes people to lose control of their behaviour and conduct. The anger of the traditional religion adherents increases having themselves perceived participants in the evangelical crusade as combatant warriors. For them, Christian evangelism is simply a war enterprise against opposite religions.

Although some persons would see it as a paradox and puzzling the claim by traditional religious adherents that Christian evangelism promotes warfare against traditional religion. But it has been the general perception of most traditional religion adherents that since the advent of Christian religion it has remained a threat to the existence of traditional religion. For them the inevitability of cultural conflict and the misunderstanding of traditional belief system as widely observed in some volatile crusades in Igboland speak volume of the highest level of militarization of evangelism. The traditional religion adherents is believed to have perceived the entire scenario as very degrading and a gradual impinging of a deleterious act of cultural genocide on the traditional religious artifacts, shrines and the people's symbols of religious worship. This perhaps may justify the claims that there is truly a war going on between Christianity and traditional religion and culture in Nigeria by extension Igboland. Just as Agina (2011) puts it, the holy war is executed on two separate battlefronts. On one front, the battle is raging between Christians and the last standing adherents of the Traditional African Religions who are protecting their traditional belief system against the foreign Christian principles. And then, there is the second battle that is internal among Christians themselves, who disagree on some basic principles of Christianity, especially as they affect the culture of the land.

It is noteworthy that for Christian evangelists to embark on massive destruction of places regarded by them to be the potential places where mysterious and wicked acts emanate is nevertheless to the traditional religion adherents mischievous and annoying. A look at Agina's assertions above affirms to the fact that some Christians no doubt are not in support of any manner of attack and destruction of traditional artifacts. The simple truth is that this kind of evangelical crusade has the ability to fuel much resentment from the people. For M. N. Odogwu (Personal communication 26th July, 2017) the contemporary Christians have actually dramatized the act of Christian evangelism and the drama has been taken too far with the reckless demolition and the shocking undertaking to destroy traditional religious artifacts.

Admittedly, the increase in resentment and evangelical disrepute, in other words the crisis of confidence in most Igbo land could be as a result of the kind of Christian evangelism that demands violence on traditional religious artifacts as a means of conversion. It is a common belief that every society has a common religious feeling of respect to its value and sacredness when neglected has the tendency to be the source of crisis. As Wieser (1986) put it “crisis situations are moments when traditional values and distinctions come under fire, break down and new values are advocated” (p. 37). From the passage above, one can easily denote that inasmuch as every society has a common religious feeling they should be allowed to operate on its own with the maximum respect they are entitled to have. The truth remains that anger and resentment always show up whenever one felt disrespected with any form of force and superiority from any of the opposing religion.

In the words of Loewen (1976) “the gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness and insists on moral absolutes in every culture” (p. 177). However it is fairly convincing that the events of the Christian evangelism and violence on Traditional Religious artifacts are the course of action that increases the anger and bitterness of the traditional religion adherents as evidenced in some part of Igbo land. It is to some extent a calculated action of most Christians during the course of evangelism to showcase their own religion as being superior to the Traditional Religion of the people. There is no doubting the fact that this has been the main reason for the traditional religion adherents’ resentment and antagonism on Christian evangelism coupled with the misfortunes which their symbol of worship suffers in the hand of Christians in time of violent evangelism and crusades.

For the traditional religion adherents, they are of the opinion that though they are not against Christian evangelism, but it should not be done at the expense of their own traditional religious artifacts and symbol of worship. However, it is inconceivable for one particular

religion to claim to be the only source of true salvation. The truth of the matter is that the influence of this thought has been increasingly felt among the Christians of today as could be envisaged in the violent evangelism and the destruction of traditional religious artifacts. The irony of Christian evangelism being associated with violence on traditional religion has certainly brought about malice, anger and evangelical disrepute. The traditional religion adherents having found it difficult to grapple with the issue of Christian evangelism and destruction of traditional artifacts may have drawn the conclusion that it is all about Christian insurgence.

4.3 The Loss of Evangelical Sense of Mission

Among the fundamental obligation of Christianity is the act of evangelism, which implies members of the Christian faith being entrusted with the duty of making conversion for Christ and the Christian faith. To this end, the primary task of Christians is to go into the world so as to preach the gospel of conversion to all creatures as commanded by Jesus Christ which is the great commission. On the other hand evangelism has been largely based on the great commission of Jesus given in different locations on various occasions between his resurrection and ascension. The use of the concept mission at this point denotes mandate or terms of reference as it concerns Christian evangelism.

Accepted that God through his son Jesus Christ gave his church the duty of evangelism, it therefore behooves on Christians to realize that evangelism has a sense of mission attached to it which constitutes the will of Christ about the work of evangelism. An insight from Forson (2014) shows that the scriptural reason for involvement in evangelism is because it is a 'mandate' from the Lord Jesus Christ. A mandate is a commission or order given from one person to another, in other words, it is an order or commission given from our Lord Jesus Christ to all believers. The great commission as far as Christendom is concerned is essentially

regarded as template for Christian evangelism as laid down by Christ as mission statement for evangelism.

Explaining the evangelical mission statement as sense of mission otherwise evangelical mandate as stated in the great commission, according to Young (2013) saying, it was five times that the lord Jesus gave us the Great Commission. Five times the Holy Spirit recorded the great commission for us in the scriptures as follows. Matthew 28: 19-20 ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age’; Mark 16: 15-16 ‘And he said to them, go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned’; Luke 24: 47 ‘And that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem’; John 20: 21 Jesus said to them again, peace be with you. As the father has sent me, even so I send you; Acts 1: 8 ‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth’.

From the insight as gathered from the above passages, one is made to understand that the Great Commission by extension evangelism contains the command which says “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28: 19), remains expressly of the fact that this command does not presuppose forced or violent conversion. Another account is in the book of Matthew in the course of sending forth the twelve apostles by Christ to evangelize to the people of his time the gospel with the mission statement saying, “And whatever town or village you enter find out who is worthy in it, and stay with him until you depart. As you enter the house salute it. And if the house is worthy let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town” (Matthew 10: 11-14). It is important

to note that looking at the above passages, the evangelical mandate as outlined to the twelve apostles by Jesus Christ essentially possesses not the impression for a violent or coercive evangelism. As a matter of fact it would have been difficult for any of the apostles to have deviated as a result of loss of evangelical mission into coercive and violent evangelism as is the case in this present day Christianity. It is possible that many Christians of today may have lost this evangelical sense of mission in view of the following:

4.3.1 Neglect of the Freedom and Dignity of the Human Person during Evangelism

When one talks of the loss of evangelical sense of mission, it speaks volume of the prevalent chaos and series of attacks and destruction on the opposite religious worship symbols during Christian evangelism. This has raised questions on the issue of freedom of worship and respect to the dignity of the person expected to be converted. In this era of great evangelical reawakening blowing in Igboland, it is a common thing to notice the flagrant abuse of some person's dignity and freedom of worship in a bid to force conversion. For instance, the violence on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism as seen in the denial of the affected traditional religion adherents their dignity of religious self actualization and the freedom to keep their religious symbol of worship in some parts of Igboland, gives the impression of a loss of evangelical sense of mission. The truth is that most Christians who are involved in evangelism usually fail to draw inspiration from the scripture as a guide.

Looking at this illustration of Webster (1961) which says:

There are two roads open to a man and a woman who love each other: that which leads to transparency and that of the calculated effects, that of the person or that of the formation of the personages. Sooner or later they will find out that they are less alike than thought. Either, one will dominate the other, and there will be no longer a dialogue

because one of the persons is 'eclipsed, his power of self-determination paralyzed. (p. 115).

If this is to be applied to the act of evangelism, the implication is that people are no longer free to make choices on the kind of religious faith they are to practice or imbibe. One cannot successfully argue that the unperturbed attitude of most Christians not to seek to accommodate the diversity of other religions is in the end not an insult to the other. The truth is that giving credence to the act of violence on traditional religious artifacts basically widens the restrictions on individuals' religious freedom and the right for a respectful dignity. Among the bad sides of the violent evangelism as it is in this era is that Christians during evangelism in a bid to effect conversion go into what is to be easily perceived as warfare on Traditional Religious artifacts and symbol of worship of the people with little or no concern for the freedom of worship or dignity of the person to be converted.

Accusations of flagrant abuse and total absence of freedom of worship, of making choices and respect of human dignity are common among the people following Christian evangelism being flooded with attacks on traditional religious artifacts. And this supposedly has been a perennial difficulty that confronts Christian evangelism from a smooth sail outreach since someone cannot believe without course to reason. The pointer is that Christian evangelism that is conducted with an attachment to violent destruction of person's belonging in this case traditional religious artifacts without regard to respect the dignity and freedom of worship of an individual suggests a clear loss of evangelical sense of mission or mandate. This is assumed to be the case especially in a situation whereby the prospective converts, the custodians of such religious items did not consent to its destruction.

It is not far from the truth that Christian evangelism could lose its value to make conversion of non-Christians to Christianity with any crux of violence. The truth is that as long as there is an application of force as one carries out the work of evangelism, it is tantamount to

one being disrespectful to the fundamental freedom of worship and the dignity of the human person. And these are not known to be part of the evangelical mission statement as enshrined in the Great Commission. It must be emphasized that the statement oftentimes ascribed to some Christians as an injunction to the traditional religion adherents during or before crusade to surrender their religious artifacts or risk them being destroyed does not respect the dignity of the person. True freedom of worship means that at any time the people have the freedom to walk around and worship what or who they like with dignity devoid of any molestation or force.

4.3.2 The Physical Coercion in Evangelism

Physical coercion as a matter of the truth could be equal to an act of physical attack, threat or compulsion. In other words, it is a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim's liberty or freedom and strip away their sense of self determination. Looking at the mode of Christian evangelism in this contemporary era with emphasis on some parts of Igboland it gives a picture of an evangelism work characterized by violence. One can easily find out that some of the Christian evangelism these days tilts towards physical attacks which involves compulsion and stripping of someone's freedom of worship. These acts are evident in violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts, the symbol of worship of the traditional religious adherents; during Christian evangelical crusade and outreaches in some parts of Igbo land in a bid to make a conversion.

The use of physical coercion and threats ought not to be part of Christian evangelism when trying to convert non-christians into Christian religion. The freedom to make choices remains central and integral to the dignity of the human person. It should be highlighted that in the absence of freedom and dignity of the human person during crusade and conversion it makes falsehood of the work of evangelism. The open truth is that Christian evangelism as

conducted in some parts of Igboland in discourse to an extent is believed to be characterized with falsehood because it failed to allow persons with regard to conversion to make a genuinely free and uncoercive choice. And the result of such conversion is that it promotes the production of Christians with dual allegiance to both the God Almighty and deities at the same time.

Quoting the position of the Catholic Church in condemnation of coercive evangelism at Vatican Council II, Robeck (1996) notes that:

The Church strictly forbids that anyone should be forced to accept the faith, or be induced or enticed by unworthy devices. No one should be forced to act against his convictions nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his convictions in religious matters. (p. 4).

Robeck went further to state that it is noteworthy that the council wished to safeguard people from coercion, inducement, and enticement, it did not wish to discourage mission. The point is to be made clearer with this understanding that the mission with regard to evangelical mandate abhors physical coercion as an inappropriate form of evangelism and equally a loss of evangelical mission, just as it is the case with the stories of violent coercive attacks on traditional religious artifacts by Christians during crusades and evangelism.

Physical coercion and the use of force when evangelizing to an extent is as good as one having to write laws that God did not make regarding the mission of evangelism. And this would portray one also as applying an extreme approach as could be envisaged in series of forceful attacks during conduct of some Christian evangelism. To this end, Comer (1997) therefore warns that “extreme removes you from the sphere of biblical evangelism” (p. 12). The biblical evangelism being talked about in the above passage is not far from the Great Commission as the laid down mission statement on the way and manner the act of evangelism ought to be conducted. The association of violence with Christian evangelism as it is in this present time has watered down evangelical sense of mission.

The Church in other words Christians, therefore, have been given a specific mandate known as the Great Commission to carry the gospel of evangelism to every part of the world without condemning, physical coercion or threatening anybody. It needs to be recognized that this evangelical mandate has not been followed judiciously in various day to day evangelism crusades which results in fracas and violence on traditional religion. Considering the total effect of this conduct, it therefore raises some concern that those behind the conduct of coercive evangelism anywhere have lost grip of what evangelical mission is all about.

As Thiessen (2011) rightly pointed out, it would obviously be wrong to try to convert someone by threatening him or her with physical beating. In support of Thiessen allusion one is to find out that looking at cases of physical coercive evangelism from individualistic and communal approach. It has been a common knowledge that persons are beaten up for failure to surrender his or her traditional religious symbol of worship during crusades and evangelism. The obvious is that evangelism in most times is not carried out in line with much pluralistic objectivity. The implication of this suggests a loss of evangelical sense of mission by the Church, organizers of crusades and evangelism participants.

The truth is that the early apostles did not use force or gimmicks to either compel or attract the interest of the people. Evangelism was done by regular people who share the gospel with those they usually come in contact with. The apostles were able to locate a cultural entry point for the message of evangelism especially where the culture and the tradition of the people is seemingly the stumbling block and being sensitive to the religious conviction and culture of the people in accordance to the book of (Acts 13: 16-41). Rather than engaging in forceful and physical coercion in an attempt to evangelize the people which has sadly become the other of the day in most Christian evangelism in some part of Igboland in recent time.

4.3.3 The Psychological Coercion

There is a general and accepted agreement that the church, in other words Christians have been mandated to the task of preaching the gospel for the conversion of souls to Jesus Christ as made clear in the book of Matthew which says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and lo I am with you always to the close of the age” (Matthew 28: 19-20). However, questions are continually being raised on the way this act of conversion is to be carried out. For Hollinghurst (2015), “The overarching concern would be if evangelism was done in such a way that it undermined its own aims by using methods that were ethically suspect. This might be most commonly through the use of force or deception” (p. 2).

The above assertion validates the fact that evangelism all over the world including Africa and by extension Igboland most of the time is noticed to be carried out in such a way that portrays it to undermine the reason for establishing evangelism in view of the method put in use in pursuant of its intention. The use of force or coercion either physical or psychological is known to be very much pronounced and actively noticed in some violent Christian evangelism in some parts of Igboland. These methods are believed to have the tendency to not only weaken the due process of evangelism but as well as make nonsense of Christian evangelism. What many people have noticed is that these acts are fast becoming common in Christian crusades and evangelism activities.

Looking at the psychological coercion dimension of Christian evangelism method, it is one form of expression used to engage the process of conversion of faith. This psychological coercion often comes in the form of threat in a bid to force another person to ones point of view. It is not in doubt that we live in a world filled with psychological coercive attitudes and conducts. It usually manifests itself at every place and at every point in time including in Christian circle during some evangelical crusades and outreaches. Evangelism being something

dear to the heart of the Christendom, Christians likewise wants others outside of their faith to be converted. The use of the instrumentality of psychological coercion which involves as earlier noted things as threat and instilling of fear on the people by being beaten for any contrary opinion or outright refusal to comply has remained very visible during crusades and various evangelisms in this contemporary era.

This attitude even when it points to the direction of loss of evangelism sense of mission Christian evangelism and crusades organized in some parts of Igboland still results in violent attacks and the destruction of traditional religious artifacts. In some communities of Igboland, some persons during Christian evangelism are threatened of being reprimanded or physical assault if they renege from surrendering their faith, their traditional religious symbol of worship in their custody for destruction. The resultant effect of this threat is that it blossoms the fear of the unknown on the traditional religious adherents who then are compelled to comply with them without their own freewill. As Singer (2011) puts it:

Psychological coercion overcomes the individual's critical thinking abilities and free will, apart from any appeal to informed judgment. Victims gradually lose their ability to make independent decisions and exercise informed consent. Their emotional defenses, cognitive processes, values, ideas, attitudes, conduct and ability to reason are undermined, and decisions are no longer through meaningful free choice, rationality, or the inherent merit or value of the ideas or propositions being presented (p. 3).

From the above statement, it is not in doubt that psychological coercion is not a healthy phenomenon because it is a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim's liberty or freedom and strip away their sense of self determination. To buttress this point further with an instance of what happened in one of the Christian crusades that took place at Amansea community in the year 2000, C. O. Nwokike (Personal communication 28th January 2018) observes that, the year 2000 crusade in Amansea town witnessed the crusaders while moving

from house to house of the traditional adherents in search of traditional religion artifacts, perfected the game plan of using the children and relations of the custodians of traditional religion artifacts as they put them in the forefront with the definite instruction to move into their fathers or uncle's apartments and forcefully collect his traditional religious artifacts.

A further insight from Nwokike shows that the game plan was to first and foremost weaken the resistance ability of the custodian of the artifacts and calm the nerves of their victim from violent reaction and shield them from eminent attack. This has to compel the custodians of these traditional religious artifacts to surrender unwillingly without putting up any form of resistance of any kind. The traditional religion adherents' emotional and physical defence against the conscription of their traditional worship materials was undermined by the fear of harming their child or relation in the process of violent resistance. The passages above have shown the extent psychological coercion could get to in making person's independent decision ruined. It is interesting to note that with the psychological coercion, imposing fear or other emotional tactics to manipulate people in the guise of pursuing a divine mandate of evangelism suggests it to be diversionary and a loss of evangelical sense of mission.

The truth of the matter is that many Christian evangelism techniques as could be seen in this discourse such as psychological coercion tilt towards confrontational curiosity. The stripping of the inalienable right of every person to choose and belong to a different belief system has a damaging effect on the true nature of Christian evangelism and the mandate for conversion. This is to say that the attitude of psychological coercion, physical coercion and neglects of freedom and dignity of the human person used during Christian evangelism cannot be said to represent the truth about Christian faith not even compatible with Christian evangelical mandate and therefore a loss of evangelical sense of mission.

4.4 The Distortion of Jesus' Message on Evangelism

Evangelism is the highest priority for both the Church and Christians alike. But it would become weakened and even lacks credibility if the message of Jesus on evangelism is distorted. With the trend of events this day one might not be confused on whether the message of Jesus Christ on evangelism has been distorted or not. The stories that associate violence on traditional religious artifacts the symbol of worship of the traditional religion adherents with Christian evangelism have to an extent invariably authenticated the distortion of Jesus message on evangelism. In the words of Billups (n.d.), Christian evangelism is the mandate (an authoritative instruction or command) of Jesus Christ for the Church. Because man's soul is valuable to the Lord, the gospel, the message of Jesus Christ must never be tampered with.

An insight from the above assertion clearly indicates the stand of Jesus Christ as it concerns Christian evangelism being the mandate of Christ for all Christians to evangelize and save souls. The message of Jesus Christ on evangelism reads thus, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and lo I am with you always to the close of the age" (Matthew 28: 19-20). In the book of Mark, the mandate for evangelism also reads "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16: 15). The implication remains that this message must be told as it is by every Christian, if the world, including the traditional religion adherents is to be saved for Jesus Christ. It is an understandable fact that one of the main thrust of the evangelical mandate is that the gospel message on evangelism must not be tampered with or distorted.

The truth as known to all and sundry is that the activity of Christian evangelism and crusades in some parts of Igboland has continued to be under attack and of serious condemnation. The critics are of the view that most Christian crusades and evangelism organized in some parts of Igbo land were unethical and a distortion of Jesus' evangelical message. This position is based on the use of violence which usually results in the destruction

of traditional religious artifacts during Christian crusade and evangelism. For sure, some individuals find it difficult to merge together the issue of violent attacks and destruction of traditional religious artifacts with evangelism mandate that commanded Christians to simply “Go and preach the gospel” (Mark 16: 15).

Christian evangelism as the soul of the Christian faith is good but the way and manner it is to be conducted must be in accordance to the mandate of the great commission. But it seems not to be the case with the evidences of violence, fights and destruction of properties and belongings of persons to be converted. This attitude truly makes a case of the fact that coercive Christian evangelism is a distortion of the message of Jesus on evangelism. The emphasis on the coercive and violent Christian evangelism is because of its seemingly absurdity in every sense of evangelical mission. The suggestions that the distortion of Jesus’ message as it concerns Christian evangelism being oftentimes hijacked cannot be overruled abruptly. Hence insinuations are rife that the individualistic approach of personalized interest and motives in the running of evangelistic activities and programmes are responsible for the bickering and violent attack on opposite religion during Christian crusades and evangelism.

An insight from Webster (1961) shows that:

Evangelism must never be confused with individualism. It will often necessitate a great deal of individual initiative and imagination, but if it becomes divorced from the larger Christian fellowship, it is no longer true evangelism. St Paul was sent like the rest of the apostles, his evangelistic work was not the result merely of his own bright ideas. He never allowed himself or his work to become isolated from the life of the church as a whole. (p. 98).

What this really means is that Christian evangelism experiences problem the moment the work of Christian evangelism fall off from following the stipulated mission statement of the great commission. The unfortunate thing about the distortion of Jesus’ message on evangelism with

regard to attacks on traditional religious artifacts is the picture it shows that points to the fact that it has fallen into the hands of the self-centred persons. For this set of persons there is no known single rule or pattern for Christian evangelism for them which means any method found usable to them remains possibly valid.

This goes contrary to the great commission mandate if one should have the course to remember that Jesus Christ while commissioning the twelve apostles namely Peter, Andrew, John, Philip, James, Simon and Judas Iscariot in the book of Matthew account of the gospel, was apt by going down to pin-point to them the modalities and the pattern of evangelism He expects them to carry on with as they preach the gospel, declaring to every household and persons that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus went on to admonish the apostles on the way and manner of operating the evangelism saying, “And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay with him until you depart. As you enter the house salute it. And if the house is worthy let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if any one will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town” (Matthew 10: 11-15).

It is therefore not far from the truth that the work of Christian evangelism ab intio is supported with a perfectly stipulated command that should be looked upon as a guiding principle in time of evangelism and crusades. These principles in other words the command or the mission statement on evangelism are clear ingredients that would smoothen the work of evangelism. Since evangelism as far as Jesus Christ is concerned is all about preaching the word of God so as to make conversion effortlessly with peaceful conduct, the less emphasis on peaceful conduct of evangelical outreaches and the association of Christian crusade and evangelism with violence on traditional religious artifacts remain a clear divorce from evangelical command. This therefore provides the basis for the general thinking on violent

Christian evangelism as demonstrated repeatedly in some parts of Igboland as a distortion of Jesus' message on evangelism.

It is noteworthy that the apparent confusion, strife, attack, violence and the destruction of traditional religious artifacts as witnessed during some Christian evangelism in Igbo land is certainly at the expense of evangelism ethics and its mandate. The argument is that crusaders and organizers of evangelical outreaches in areas where there had been violence on traditional religious artifacts during crusades may have disregarded Jesus' message on evangelism and substituted it with their own idea. The perception is high that what might have informed the apparent disregard, distorting, or substituting of Jesus' message on evangelism hinges on either individualistic self centredness, misinterpretation or out of context interpretation of the message of the great commission the laid down mission statement for Christian evangelism.

The fact, however is that the great commission which stands as the template for evangelism on which every Christian is expected to follow in carrying out evangelism from the outset never asked anyone to destroy any tradition or its symbol of worship. As a matter of truth, it is neither in the character of Jesus Christ nor in his great commission mandate to encourage violent evangelism. The violence against traditional religious artifacts as observed in recent years in some part of Igboland is diversionary from what true and ethical coherent evangelism stands for. The book of Mark account on Christian evangelism which says "Go into the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16: 15-16), speaks volume about the central focus of Christian evangelism as what should be engulfed with the main objective to save souls. The message did not add any feature which bothers on the use of force to enhance belief or submission of someone to be saved.

In the words of Bright (1987) God does not hold you responsible for result only for sharing the message. Our heavenly father asks not more of us than this: that we obey his

command to 'Go and preach the gospel to every creature'. His command is not to convert anyone. But as we obey, we can spread the message to all who will listen and then trust God for the results. Really, Bright in the passage literally explained the problem of Christian evangelism as the failure of the people to understand that the medium of evangelism remains the preaching of the message. While the end result of conversion and the saving of soul are left out for God to accomplish on his own. The understanding is that, it is the quest to make conversion of souls of persons from some other faith to Christianity by all means is the cause of deaf ear given to the principles of evangelism.

If what matters is for man to obey the call in the great commission to evangelize and preach the gospel for souls to be saved, and bearing in mind that God himself is responsible for results. One only needed to declare the message as it is without any form of deduction, inputting or generally tempering with the message of the great commission. The distortion of the evangelical message of Jesus as suggested in the violent attack on traditional religious artifacts during Christian evangelism in Igboland. By simplest guess, is an act brought into use during Christian evangelism as a strategy adopted by some individuals or group to achieve a short cut to conversion of faith. It does however pin-point a moment when charlatans and miscreants rode on the floating of Jesus' message on evangelism to exhibit an irresistible compelling force on the opposite faith during crusades and evangelical outreaches.

One noticeable fact about organizing crusade and evangelism activities in Igboland for instance, is that the people are inclined to feel anxious and overzealous in being part of the evangelism team. And because most of them are neither knowledgeable nor experienced about the provisions as stipulated in the great commission with regard to how one is to behave during evangelism, they are hence trapped in avoidable pitfall of the use of force and violence in proposing Christian faith to the non-christians they intended to convert. A rethink shows that, it is the presumptuous and wrong presupposition attitude of some Igbo Christians that parades

the idea that those traditional religious artifacts, the symbols of worship of the people remain the launch pad for evil practices. This may have informed the general assumption that violence, and coercive approach during Christian evangelism would force the rigid and strict traditional religion and its adherents to surrender.

The act of violent attacks and the destruction of traditional religious artifacts, the symbol of worship of the people in the course of Christian evangelism, no doubt, remains a slide into distortion from the core message of Jesus on evangelism as embedded with self decision. While stating the obvious, Walls (1996) notes that “One of the hallmarks of western Christianity from the time of the reformation and the industrial revolution is the concept of faith as a matter of individual decision and individual application” (p. 21). This could equally be linked to what Taylor (1963) calls the “isolated man with his intensely private world” (p. 93). On the contrary, for the organizers of crusade and Christian evangelism in some parts of Igboland, the issue of isolationism and the concept of faith as a matter of individual or personal decision is unimaginable to them. Despite the fact that it is part of the great commission mandate for the conduct of Christian evangelism as permitted by Jesus Christ as given to His apostles and the entire Christendom for evangelism to be none coercive.

By way of consequence, association of Christian evangelism with violent attacks on traditional religious artifacts without recourse to allowing personal decision of faith is certainly a complicated form of evangelism. The truth remains that to conduct Christian evangelism at any society then, it should be guided with having to refer to the great commission as its foundational base of operation. The stories of attacks, violence and destruction of traditional religious artifacts in some parts of Igboland during Christian evangelism are to be addressed as an unnecessary tampering with Jesus’ message on evangelism. The Christians’ enthusiasm for the proclamation and sharing of the gospel for the salvation of souls during crusade and evangelism must match it up with their quest for the truth.

The truth being emphasized upon here is found in Jesus' message on evangelism which calls for an appreciable level of patience, tolerance for someone's decision in things as it concerns faith and belief. The great commission and the message of Jesus on evangelism is not short-sighted of the chances of evangelists coming in contact with traditional and cultural votaries that are neck-deep into the system and are at variance with their gospel of conversion. The truth is that the message of Jesus Christ in a situation as this directs Christians for them to quietly leave the person to his or her faith (Mark 16: 15-16 paraphrased). What this means is that for one to think outside the template of the evangelical mandate as stated in the great commission as shown in some violent Christian evangelism and crusades in Igboland remains inappropriate. The effect of such conduct as violent evangelism on traditional religious artifacts points to a distortion of Jesus' message on evangelism.

4.5 The Danger of Evangelism Reluctance

Evangelism as convened through the words of Jesus Christ in the great commission no doubt is full of interest. This interest of Christian evangelism is not only geared towards a targeted goal of making conversion of non-Christians to become Christians. It goes further than that to include the attitude exhibited towards the realization of the said objective of saving souls for Christ during evangelism. There is also the implicit assumption that Christians regard for other religions in the likes of Igbo tradition and culture as inferior is so much indicated by the nature and the furious circumstances that pervade Christian crusades and evangelisms. A situation as this creates an instantaneous power imbalance in the relationship that could be hard to overcome. This power imbalance is seen clearly from the widely acknowledged narratives that Christian evangelism organized in Igboland has tales of violent attacks on traditional religious artifacts.

The fact remains that Christian evangelism has a template as stated in the great commission on the way and manner the act of evangelism is to be carried out. But this template

perhaps seems not to have had any effect on some Igbo Christians intolerance about Igbo traditional religion. It could be suggested that the contemporary Christians in this era may have turned a blind eye in respect of patterning their evangelism activity in line with the great commission template.

Speaking on his understanding of the basis of evangelism, Piatt (2012) noted that there are lots of scriptural bases for doing it, making disciples of all nations, expanding territory and so on. Also there is a great feeling that comes with bringing someone over to your way of thinking and acting. Piatt further states that there are plenty of potential pitfalls in the process of evangelizing too. Depending on how you approach folks, there is the potential that you will turn them off to a relationship with you all together, or what is more, a relationship with your faith.

One has to understand that the use of the phrase, ‘potential turn off’ to a relationship with faith could clearly depict the resultant response of the people against forced and coercive evangelism. The fact is that sometimes one’s zeal to go extra mile to share something important to another person could make one to exclude the havoc that would be wreaked in the process. And this can be aligned to the mood of some Christians during evangelism in some parts of Igboland whereby the sole intent of these Christians were on the end result being targeted which involves converting the person to Christ through any means available to them. In doing this, the evangelists are tempted to say and do lots of things they should not have done including unleashing attacks on the traditional religion adherents’ symbol of worship all in a bid to get their desire of making conversion accomplished. A situation like this for certain individuals is absurd and simply of no evangelism based on which the issue of evangelism becomes very disgusting to the people and therefore is approached with reluctance in attitude.

Speaking on his disgust for evangelism, a senior Pastor of the Embassy of God Ministry Ukraine, Adelaja (2016) made it clear saying, I have been a minister and a Pastor for the past

25 years and from my experience as a Pastor, who has built the largest evangelical charismatic church in Europe, I want to declare that our church does not do evangelism anymore. If I tell a Nigerian church to stop doing evangelism I would be declared a blasphemer. Some people will even say I am an agent of the Islamic agenda but experience has taught me that the way we do evangelism traditionally only ends up infuriating representatives of other religions or outright unbeliever.

It is not in doubt that Adelaja's assertion is based on experience of what he has seen happen in Nigeria, by extension Igboland on the frustrating way of evangelism in that part of the country. It is a clear pointer to the much talked about danger of evangelism reluctance as far as Pastor Sunday Adelaja in a situation of infuriating and violent evangelism by Christians in some parts of Igboland in recent time is concerned. The truth is that if the stand of Adelaja represents the opinion of the majority of the people in Igboland following the association of Christian evangelism with violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts the much talked about danger of evangelism reluctance remains very possible. This has the tendency to slow down as well as set back the work of evangelism and the spread of the gospel for the conversion of the people in Nigeria and by extension Igboland.

This is significantly important as one traces the evangelical hiccups that trail the early Christian history as it concerns the wall of division that existed between Jewish Christians and the Gentiles, Webster (1961) explains that our contemporary world has many rifts just as deep as anything known to those first Christians. If evangelism is to take place, all reluctance to enter unfamiliar situations must be banished and overcome. Webster went further to allay his fear for the conversion of the Gentiles believing that until the ingrained psychological attitude was changed there could be no evangelism of Gentiles. The above statements clearly depict the situation on the ground as far as Christianity and Igbo traditional religion and anything evangelism is concerned. The common truth is that in some communities of Igbo land the

violent destruction of traditional religion artifacts during Christian evangelism has heightened a deep rift between Christian evangelism and Igbo traditional religion.

Going by the verdict of Webster on Gentile conversion in the statement above, it is obvious that until the ingrained psychological attitude of coercive evangelism is changed there could be no true evangelism for non-Christians in Igboland. The truth of the matter is that with the continued rift and violent attacks on traditional religious artifacts by Christians during evangelism, the wall of division and hatred are being strengthened. The point of it all would be that acceptability of Christianity or the transference of faith from traditional religious belief to Christian faith could be very slim. The perceived truth is that people may not feel repulsive towards evangelism, but participants in these crusades and evangelism on the way they disseminate the message of conversion. Of course the evangelical mandate and practices vis-à-vis those in other faiths are consistent with the Christian evangelism template as outlined in the great commission.

In the words of Yong (n.d.), we have one set of doctrines regarding the religions that mostly emphasize the disjunction between Christian faith and other traditions, while we have another set of practices related to mission and evangelism that are (perhaps surprisingly to some) much more friendly and dialogical in multifaith context. Most of us would agree that it behooves on us to align our practices with our beliefs and vice versa. On this matter, I believe part of the problem is that evangelicals have not asked hard theological questions about their missionary practices.

It is perfectly clear that the way Christian evangelism has been allowed to go before now with the trend of violence on Traditional Religious artifacts without much effort to checkmate it remains very unfortunate. The failure of the concerned Christian crusaders and evangelists to ask questions on the rightness or otherwise of their evangelical mission, action and practices is quite unbecoming. The danger of this failure to ascertain whether one is on the

right track with the mission statement of the great commission is seen in the abnormal conscription of faith and watering down of the act of Christian evangelism with violent acts. The truth which every person should ponder at as it concerns Christian evangelism and violent attacks on traditional religion is the fact that although it fights the opposite faith to standstill, it still does not truly and firmly convert the person. In a situation like this, it would be hard for either the crusaders, evangelists or the work of evangelism to become relevant to the person that passed through such process.

When this happen the tendency for crisis of confidence on the germaneness of coercive Christian evangelism which for many remains a contradiction of evangelical template in the great commission for conversion is very much pronounced. This then is the background against which the explicit show of evangelism reluctance in organizing such crusades or evangelical outreaches is perceived. One can certainly choose what seems appropriate to him so as to achieve a particular objective as seen in violent Christian evangelism on traditional religion. But this strategy may not guarantee that the person would convey his or her full consent to it even when it has been forced on him or her.

One is not to lose sight of the fact that among the reasons alluded for the violent destruction of Traditional Religious artifacts by evangelical Christians is that these traditional religious symbols of worship are sources of evil to humanity. Part of this being talked about includes financial stagnation, hardship and lack and so on, which a crusader believes can only be remedied by the total destruction of the traditional religious artifacts. The perception is that Christians in other words the crusaders have created a real problem because in some occasion despite the destruction of traditional religious artifacts with regard to making a conversion; it is disturbing the claims from the traditionalists that some years after the destruction of these Traditional Religious artifacts nothing perhaps changed with regard to experiences of hardship, lack and financial stagnation.

When something as this happens, there are growing feelings and permutations that nevertheless life is always beset with struggles, sufferings, lacks, financial inadequacy, bumps and brokenness with or without Christianity. That is the point where Christian evangelism and association with violence on traditional religious artifacts could be seen as much of a false premise sold by desperate crusaders and evangelists. The common truth is that for such an indelible dissatisfaction to exist, it would bring about poor receptivity of evangelism. The principle of permissibility and non-beneficial, if allowed will suggest that Christians use violence if, it will be beneficial to them. The fact is that in violence's own nature, the benefits it brings, more often than not does not match the disadvantages and destructions that accompany those benefits.

The assumed benefits the church might gain in the use of violence on Traditional Religious artifacts during Christian evangelism cannot be compared with the haul back it will bequeath on evangelism which would be traced to the danger of evangelism reluctance. It is worthy of mention that, to justify Christian violence on Traditional Religious artifacts could be easy and permissible to Christians. But the explicit fear is that such an act of violence on traditional religion artifacts during Christian evangelism would necessarily put away the relevance of evangelism in the mindset of the non-Christians. Mention is to be made that even if everything is to be permissible to Christians, the truth remains that still not all is beneficial to the faith. Evidently the case of Christian violence on traditional religion is definitely far from what Jesus taught and practiced.

The complexity and the strong feeling of intolerant rivalry which is seen in some Christian evangelism gatherings that climax into attacks and destruction of the symbols of worship of the opposite faith is a case of imbued attitude of cultural and religious superiority. In the case of the violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts in some parts of Igboland in discourse, there is a general assumption on the part of Christians among other things that the

traditional religion is far inferior. The general disregard for the sacred objects, shrines and sacred places belonging to the traditional religion during crusades were ways of demonstrating the supremacy of the Christian religion over them. The scornful way and manner these violations of the traditional religion were carried out in most cases are very provocative. The feeling of religious superiority and the pride of triumphatism by the crusade participants over traditional religion certainly ran deep and high in their perception.

In concrete terms, one is to note that the sense of religious superiority being a misguided form of evangelism remains the reason for the perceived revulsion against conversion and the work of evangelism. Moreso, the abuse of traditional religion has left an imprint in the mind of the traditional religious adherents on Christian faith as a religion that encourages bigotry and the use of draconian measures in a bid to make conversion of non-Christians. In the words of Hartt (1952) “the idealisms and the sentimentalisms which latterly ruled the life of the church have had a rough ride in the contemporary world” (p. 31). The position of Hartt in the statement above could be seen from the direction of the pessimistic sentiment based evangelism experience in some parts of Igboland. The desperation with which some Christians in that part of the country pursue evangelism is considered to be too harsh and stringent for the process of conversion. The idea of violent evangelism as promoted by these Igbo Christians during crusades and evangelism gatherings has remained a disputable technique for evangelism adventure. The truth is that this to an extent has placed the work of evangelism in a reluctant position as a result of its rough ride on the artifacts of the traditional religion of the people.

Noteworthy, is the fact that it is the lack of tolerant attitude to opposite religions that brings about antagonism during evangelism. Evangelism shrouded with threats, intimidations, violence and suppression of other religions, in this case traditional religion could potentially become a breeding ground for fear and unwillingness for evangelism as an end result of moral flaw. The standard for evangelism as set apart by Jesus for every Christian to follow in

evangelizing the people has run contrary to the way some Christians in Igboland choose to package and conduct Christian evangelism in the area. And this has undoubtedly remained objectional to the people. In the words of Thiessen (2011):

Some of the objections are empirical in nature based on experience. For example, it is argued that efforts at evangelism have had harmful consequences for individuals and society as a whole. Some critics argue that evangelizing leads to resentment, hatred, bitterness, religious persecution, disunity in the society and even holy wars. (p. 114).

Historically, and judging from some Igbo communities in discourse that have witnessed crisis emanate as a result of crusades held in their areas, it is obvious that some of the people are evidently averse to evangelism as what fosters resentment and hatred. For them the general perception has been that the message of evangelism comprises a threat, a demand and a promise. Free decisions on personal belief of the people are continually eroded with threats of attacks and destruction of their traditional religious belongings.

Speaking on the backdrop of the open denigration and destruction of traditional religious practices by Christians who saw their action as divine, Mbefo (1996) is of the view that:

From the Catholic side, we look at missionary work before the second Vatican council; part of our cultural renaissance has been to rehabilitate the religious beliefs and practices of our ancestors or at least to approach them with sympathy rather than arrogance. (p. 115).

Based on Mbefo's assertion, the question remains whether this has been the case among today Igbo Christians. In fact with the way things are done during various crusades and evangelism gatherings in some parts of Igboland, it is an open truth that non-christians, the traditional religion adherents are constrained from practicing the religion of their choice with the destruction of their religious worship materials. The mockery, the scorn and the humiliation as

suffered by the traditional religious adherents in the hands of the crusaders undoubtedly is something that sets the people thinking of Christian evangelism as being belligerent and irrelevant.

It is a situation as this that could promote Christian evangelism to gradually slide into an immaterial venture with the attitude of reluctance from the people in its activities. Hartt (1952) allays this fear of evangelism reluctance saying:

Where ever the church is authentically Christians the conviction yet lives that its sole reason for existence is to preach the gospel of the kingdom in Christ. The commission is then held to be still in force, the commission to evangelize the world. But great are the difficulties in holding this conviction purely and firmly and the difficulties multiply daily. Each day sees the task grown more complex, and the dangers grow with the complexities. Our world seems more deeply and systematically immunized against the gospel than ever before. (p. 9).

From the context of complexity where Hartt may have hinged the fear for Christian evangelism clearly manifests itself on the reason Christians must handle the process of evangelizing the people as a tasking complex venture, having to bear in mind that being still in forced conversion ie refusal to adopt the ideal of forced conversion would definitely stem the complex nature of evangelism from growing more complex. But that seems not to be the case as Hartt's assertion above suggests that the world seems more deeply and systematically immunized against the gospel than ever before. The reason is not far fetched following the divisive evangelism that is surrounded with force and coercion.

Nobody is left in doubt that the force of malaise and complexity in the contemporary Igbo Christian mode of evangelism that raised the flagrant use of violence on the traditional religion adherents, the non-christians has toughened some people's disposition against evangelism. The reluctance to accepting the workings of evangelism for their conversion by

certain persons in Igboland has its root on the irreparable damages incurred to their traditional religious paraphernalia during Christian evangelism in their areas. It may not be out of place to say that the persistence to hold on to forced evangelism by some Christians in Igboland negates the work of Christian evangelism. It is not only that the evangelism mandate as commanded by Jesus Christ may not be totally achieved, but the fear is concerning the danger of violent evangelism exposing the traditional adherents the more to continual evangelism reluctance and hatred. For this could have a negative effect on the smooth propagation of Christian evangelism in Igboland.

4.6 Evangelism at the Risk of Decline to Proselytism

With the trend of events today following the narratives that surround the association of Christian evangelism with violence on people's traditional symbol of worship. There is of course great chances that violence on traditional religious artifacts otherwise an infringement on the right of decision and worship of a person during Christian evangelism that evangelism runs the risk of a slide to proselytism. A clue from Webster (1961) on proselytism shows that, proselytism seeks to impose ideas on others and to extract decisions from them. For Webster, evangelism must be distinguished from proselytism for evangelism is actually a proclamation of the gospel which leaves men free to make their own decisions about it.

Another insight from Mirus (2008) affirms that, for Catholics, who have a highly developed spiritual vocabulary, the standard definition is not adequate. In the church's lexicon, proselytism typically refers to conversion efforts that fail to respect the prospective convert's freedom and dignity. High pressure tactics; telling of lies about the other person's current religion; comparing the weaknesses of another's religious community with only the strengths of one's own; attempting to convert children in opposition to their parents; offering world

inducements to change one's religious allegiance. These are what Catholics would call proselytism.

No wonder in the words of Marie (2016), proselytism among Christians, therefore, in itself is a grave sin, said Pope Francis, because it contradicts the very dynamics of how to become and to remain a Christian. Having said this, it would be proper to point out that as a matter of necessity, Christians are right to be sensitive about proselytism. It has become more necessary in this contemporary era when some Christian have taken up the use of violence while preaching for conversion of souls. And this has traces of proselytism in such an act of forceful evangelism. Clarifying this information, Farr (2010) affirms to the fact that proselytism has sometimes been socially disruptive and even rapacious, undermining the structures of families and communities.

On a further emphasis, Farr pointed out that the early Christians, mirroring the ways of the founder, spread the faith peacefully while suffering grave persecution, later Christian rulers such as Charlemagne sometimes employed coercion to command the adoption of Christianity. History has it that Charlemagne also known as Charles the Great was one of the greatest figures in European history and throughout the Middle Ages whose fame was celebrated in story and song. By his great victories as king of the Franks he extended the Frankish dominion in all directions. In the words of Guest (1980):

But Charlemagne was not only a warrior; he was also a great social reformer. It was his aim to weld all the Teutonic tribes into one great Christian empire. When the defeated Saxon chiefs knelt before him in token of submission, they were offered life and liberty on condition that they ceased to worship heathen gods and were baptized into the Christian Church. Many, however, refused to change their religion and were put to death. (pp. 69-71).

The message to be grasped from the passage above goes a long way to show that in reality proselytism even during the early Christian era remains highly controversial following its approach to conversion. Probably much may not be removed from the way and manner Charles the Charlemagne viewed and also conducted the work of conversion of faith during his time from the way Christian evangelism and crusades are carried out in recent times in some parts of Igboland precisely. It may not have gotten to the stage of condemning non-Christians that refuse to accept the message of the gospel to death for now. The fear is that the way things are going following the violent destruction of artifacts being the traditional religious symbol of worship of the traditional religion adherents as was the case in some parts of Igboland during Christian evangelism. The concern is that such an attitude not only runs contrary to the tenets of evangelism, but has the tendency to place evangelism crusades so organized in Igboland at the risk of a decline to proselytism.

The truth is that with the coming of Christianity in Igboland, there have been a kind of confrontation between Christianity and traditional Igbo culture, the struggle for the superiority or otherwise of each other has not failed to surface at any point in time. The violent attacks on traditional religious artifacts with the high degree of harassment and intimidation that accompany the act, has made it unbecomingly a wonder in the work of Christian evangelism. One is not to forget that the gospel ultimately is accepted and believed by the hearer only if God's message is effectively presented in its proclamation. The truth remains that it is impossible to force a decision on the non-Christian to accept the message of conversion unless with some element of proselytism in place.

One should not fail to understand that the problem with proselytism is that it is engulfed with high handedness and failure to understand that only the power of God can convince people of the truth of the gospel. This speaks volume of the reality in line with evidences of improper conducts as seen in some crusades and evangelism in Igboland. The crusades are characterized

with severe high handedness targeted at the imposition of religious belief and decision on the people. And this has continued to be a concern to as many people as possible who berates the way and manner crusades and evangelism activities are carried out in their area.

Much of the observed confusion, chaos, fighting and disorder that shrouded some communities in Igboland that were hitherto living in peace prior to the crusade and evangelism work in their community is as a result of the way and manner this evangelism was done. Many Christians that participated in various crusades and evangelism in Igboland oftentimes than not fail to approach the preaching of the word of God in a way it will make sense in the minds of the people they were meant to deliver the message to. The message as expected may not be acceptable to the people following the compulsive nature of the conversion and evangelism message. There is no point denying the fact that during evangelism it may take time for certain people to grasp the reality of the word of God and accept the gospel at the first hearing, it could take the second or even the third time of them hearing it to consent. Perhaps the urgency and compulsion on the prospective converts by the evangelists are ill-timed.

Buttressing this point further, an account in the book of Acts 19: 8-10 shows that apostle Paul spent a period of three months to two years pleading and preaching to the people to accept the gospel. It is clear that Paul, the apostle and the rest of the apostles did not use gimmicks or force to conscript people in having interest in their message of the gospel. One is to observe that unlike the early Christians the apostles, today Christians of Igboland find it difficult to take their time and deal patiently with their prospective converts neither do they see any reason to plead with them for conversion. The truth of the matter is that perhaps the commitment to evangelism indeed has taken many Christians that participate in evangelism to exactly move in the opposite direction of using force instead of pleading on the people for conversion.

In Christian evangelism of today there are clear evidences of conversion efforts by Christians that fail to respect the prospective converts' freedom and human dignity. The tales

of physical assaults on the persons of the opposite religion and their symbol of worship have remained common trends during some Christian evangelism and crusades in Igbo land. The telling of lies about the other person's or the prospective convert's religion is not seen as a serious infringement on the commandment of God. One may wonder whether the process of conversion in this context cannot be said to be tantamount to proselytism.

In a clearer term, it is quite necessary to observe that violent Christian evangelism as a result of some person's dreadful excesses in going about to destroy traditional religious artifacts is a moral baggage to Christians. And this no doubt has a ripple effect on the thinking and the receptivity of the prospective converts. But the most important outcome of these kind of violent crusades and evangelism as seen happen in some parts of Igboland is the effect as produced in the minds of the people. The plundering as wrought by the evangelism participants who are to be simply qualified as the soldiers of Christ have brought Christianity into disrepute.

The danger in a situation as this is that Christian evangelism is to be viewed by non-Christians as a perfection of holy war against them and their religion. The senses of non-Christians who are the prospective converts would serve them right if they go on to think of Christian evangelism as an instrument of persecution against them. A circumstance as this could make Christian evangelism in the eyes of the non-Christians a programme riddled with confusion. Confusion in the sense that its main thrust of activity is not clearly defined following the deceptive approach of some evangelism participants that portrays an act of saying one thing and having another thing in the mind. This actually depicts the situation on ground at some parts of Igboland where violent crusades and evangelical activities that destroyed traditional religious artifacts of the non-Christians have taken place.

From the way crusades and evangelism activities are being organized and conducted in some parts of Igboland which usually ends in chaos and violence. It would appear that participants in these violent crusades and evangelism do not have the intention of the gospel,

which they preach to reach the people. Ordinarily as preachers of the gospel Christians should deliberately be connected with their listener's mind and hearts through their speaking and proper conducts in order to help them understand the message of the gospel and the spiritual truth it brings. This connection should start with respect for the listener in every aspect far beyond the normal expectation of their society.

The truth remains that if these attributes are to be seen in the course of these crusades and evangelism activities, it would become obvious that the message of the conversion must be understandably relevant to the prospective converts. But this has not been the case in some of the crusades as organized in some parts of Igboland that are devoid of any attempt to accord respect to their prospective converts with the aim of getting them attracted to the gospel. One must take note of this fact that the prospective convert and the general public places much emphasis on the doctrine as well as the approach in use in disseminating the gospel during crusades than the message of the gospel itself.

Something one has to notice is the dual effect of the message which entails the action and conduct of the crusaders during crusades characterized with violence on traditional religious artifacts. The truth is that the traditional religion adherents being the prospective converts have at least two reactions to the scenario. Fundamentally, some would be amazed and perplexed, and desirous to actually comprehend the meaning and the implication of it all. While on the other hand some would liken the act as nothing but an action that portrays proselytism and not evangelism. Invariably, if there are multiple reactions as that, it means the genuineness of the evangelism is then in doubt and this gives room for suspicion that something is fundamentally wrong.

In the true sense of it all, something is fundamentally wrong with the association of Christian evangelism with violence on the traditional religious symbol of worship. Webster (1961) hence made it clear that:

It is quite possible for a Christian enthusiast to think he is evangelizing but in fact to be making proselytes by being overbearing. Possibly this may account for some of the lapses from faith. For whatever a man's ardour or sincerity, if he tries to impose faith on or extract a decision from another man he is proselytizing. Proselytism is a form of spiritual imperialism and it is based on an attitude of pride or superiority. (pp. 37-38).

One cannot therefore be oblivious of the truth that any act of evangelism that acknowledges violence on other religions in any form is not identical but antithetical with evangelism. It then behooves on Christians to clearly distinguish between evangelism and proselytism, more especially with the latter being viewed as unethical since it involves the abuse of people's freedom of choice and self-decision. If Christians of today would continue to allow aggressive and militant evangelism which entail coercive approach to conversion and dissemination of the Christian faith. Intimidation and attacks on persons of opposite religion together with the destruction of their symbol of worships are to exist unchecked, then the perception of evangelism in the eyes of the non-Christians would be greatly embroidered as a proselytism and a threat to humanity. In fact, the risk that Christian evangelism may result in proselytism is perhaps very massive with some Christians of this era being unenthusiastic to convince and plead with prospective converts. With the situation of things at the moment it is enough proof that this immense danger of Christian evangelism risk of decline to proselytism has been largely ignored by today Christians.

4.7 Trends of Criticisms and Accusations on Christian Evangelism

In all fairness, from the biblical understanding of Christianity, Christian religion is a religion of peace and tranquility. This peace phenomenon is believed to have rubbed off on the great commission mandate of Jesus, firstly to His apostles and to the rest of the Christendom to propagate the gospel message of conversion with the instruction to apply peace with all men.

This is in line with the fact that Jesus himself is the prince of peace who long before his birth, prophet Isaiah spoke of him as a wonderful counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and the prince of peace. Therefore as Christians they serve a king of peace and not that of chaos. In the words of Howard (2017), the mission of Jesus Christ is to bring peace to the world. God longed to transform chaotic and hateful world into a world filled with His peace and love.

Peace and not violence no doubt is what Jesus supposedly bequeathed to Christians to be their driving force in the course of their evangelism work. In the biblical account of apostle Paul's letter to the people of Ephesus as it concerns the person and the work of Jesus, he said, "For he is our peace who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2: 14). The catchy aspect of Paul's evangelism message to the people of Ephesus shows that the gospel of Christ is the gospel of peace and love, and not that of strive and hostility. In our time one soon becomes conscious of the imminent re-erecting of the once broken down dividing walls of hostility following Christians' approach to evangelism. The whole tempo of Christian evangelism entrenched on non-violent and non-hostility as represented in Jesus' personality by the early apostles during their evangelism is becoming a mirage in this era of Christian evangelism and crusades.

In this contemporary Christian era, evangelism and the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the conversion of non-Christians is gradually becoming a thing of desperation. In some parts of Igboland, the gathering of Christians for the purpose of crusade and evangelism most often turns out to be violent. The nature of the violence is traceable to the attack and deliberate destruction of traditional religious artifacts of the traditional religion adherents in a bid to force the conversion of faith. This action no doubt usually never went down well with some of the affected traditional adherents whose religious artifacts at their care were destroyed. The truth is that the extent of fury of the traditional religion adherents on the level of damage on their symbol of worship is better experienced than explained.

Given to this kind of evangelism, there are series of accusations and criticisms that have continued to trail this issue of violent approach of Christians to evangelism. It has become clear that most non-christians no longer hide their dislike for Christian evangelism and crusades. Critics therefore attack Christian's actions on the way and manner they conduct evangelism and crusades as a modern day terrorism and militancy. Some accusations against Christian religion with regard to its Christian evangelism include the supposition that it is a religion engulfed with violence and bigotry. This substantial criticism from a wide array of non-christians is based on the historical behaviour of some Christians in some parts of Igboland that have observed violent evangelism.

The brand of evangelical Christianity in some parts of Igboland is very much criticized by the traditional adherents as humiliating and being openly hostile to the traditional religion. It is the thinking of the traditional adherents that Christians in their work of evangelism finds nothing wrong with the violation of human sanctity inasmuch as their goal is achieved. Many of the traditional religion adherents in some parts of Igboland affected by the violent destruction of their religious artifacts have the feeling that the violent nature of Christian evangelism remains a deliberate abuse and insult on the religion, culture and tradition of the forefathers. For them there is no difference between what is called Christian evangelism and the warfare military operation or better still what looks as a bold army of Christian fundamentalists.

This development explains the many criticisms towards the conversion of people in some parts of Igboland in discourse. With the events of violent evangelism almost prevalent in most parts of Igboland, participants in Christian evangelism are accused of creating high emotional tension on their potential converts. With the issue of nominal Christians very much clearly noticed this day, it would be difficult to avoid putting the blame of insincere or unreal conversions, particularly those that result in narrowness and bigotry on the nature of evangelism characterized with force and violence. Some people have to surrender their faith in

exchange for Christianity not because they really wanted to do so, but out of fear of attack on refusal to do so. For Webster (1961), the proclamation of the gospel is not the same thing as selling someone an article they do not want to buy or making them join an organization they do not want to belong to. Anyone whose primary concern is to get someone else forced to agree to his religious outlook is in fact engaged in proselytism of one kind or another.

This of course does exactly describe the kind of Christian evangelism in some parts of Igbo land and the way Christians approach the issue of the propagation of the gospel by imposition of faith. In all fairness, the way Christians approach such matter as evangelism with the traces of violent acts mostly obscured the good aspect of the gospel itself hence inducing reactions from the people and giving the non-christians more especially the opportunity of attacking and criticizing Christian evangelism. These criticisms as mounted on Christian evangelism are as a result of its most unfriendly method of evangelism. And things as that create anxiety in what should have been self explanatory.

Pointing at the violent legacy of Christian evangelism with traditional religion and to what is perceived to be its contemporary manifestations in some parts of Igboland in terms of violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts. Critics of Christian evangelism in Igboland have frequently accused it of being a predatory, an imperialistic religion with absolutist tendencies and therefore criticize Christian evangelism as aggressive in its conduct. The common truth is that these critics rightly focused on moments when participants in Christian evangelism have clearly employed, encouraged or benefitted from the acts of violence and coercion in order to bring about conversion. This no doubt remains the crux of the matter and the central point of conflict and criticisms being the violent attacks and destruction of traditional religious artifacts during evangelical crusades in Igboland.

Following this conduct of Christians during evangelism and various crusades, Christians have been accused and criticized of having lost touch with the spirit of tolerance,

dialogue and integration of other religions. The problem as Oha (2000) notes is that many Christian narratives forefront the conflict between God's forces and the devil's in the affairs of human being. He says that secular human experiences are seen as reflections as well as aftermaths of spiritual warfare, stating further that the prominence of this logic in contemporary Christian evangelism in Nigeria is very significant.

Truly the high point in most Christian evangelism in Igboland is the general perception of the negative works of the devil in the affairs of the people. For them these works of the devil are evidently responsible for the hardship and various misfortunes which the people witness in their lives. It is assumed that idols with other traditional religious artifacts remains the means through which these evils are transmitted, hence the reason to clampdown on those items for destruction during Christian evangelism. While accusing Christians of executing a holy war on the culture and tradition of the people, Agina (2011) frowned at the fact that, mischievous Christians in Africa, Nigeria in particular, are gradually perfecting the art of turning Christianity into a business franchise. However, I probably would not have paid much attention to this, if only they left the African culture out of their mischief. But, no, they had to start annihilating the culture in the most ignorant way, all based on gross misinterpretation of the Holy Bible. And since Nigeria traditionalists are not sitting back and watching the assault on the culture of the land, there is truly a war going on between Christianity and culture in Nigeria.

One has to take serious cognizance of accusations often alluded to by most non-Christians of the ploy by Christians to start the annihilation of culture, tradition and religion of the people. The common truth remains that criticism, accusation and counter-accusations have continued to trail the mindless violence and destruction of traditional religious artifacts in some parts of Igboland. In one of such statements, Akuoma (2014) is noted to have said, I find it extremely amusing when those in the defence of the shrine destroyers say that the deities of the African traditional religions are dead, because if they were alive they would fight for

themselves and therefore no mercy should be shown. I'm amused because these people say these things while forgetting that the shrine destroyers have a God who they are trying to do the fighting for.

It is clear that as far as attacks on traditional religious artifacts by Christians during crusades are concerned the arguments attached to the action in defence of any god or party may not make a difference of what is believed to be the true position of things. Accusations are rife within the non-Christians that Christians use their numerical strength to force their way on them, the traditional religion adherents. These accusations and counter-accusations are one too many even as one critically looks at the mounting criticisms on Christian evangelism that degenerates into forced conversion in some parts of Igboland to be traced to impatience. With most Christian evangelists lacking in understanding that it would really take some time for a prospective convert to soothe the mind for a change of faith. Giving a run down of explanation on belief and what it takes to change a religion, Ajayi (1965) explains that "a change of religion necessarily involves a change of culture and the development of a new conscience" (p. 1).

If this is to be the case, some of these criticisms could be said to be justified on the evangelical Christians for their failure to apply patience in their dealing with the prospective converts allowing them some time for them to develop the willpower and brace themselves up for the new faith. There is some degree of facts in the general thinking of the people that most crusades and evangelism gatherings in some part of Igboland, which ended in chaos and violence, were devoid of patience that should have allowed the prospective converts a development of a new conscience for the change of belief. It is wrong and at the same time an act of deadening the conscience of the traditional religion adherents against their will following the use of force to coerce them.

The shared radicalism of participants in various violent Christian crusades and evangelism in some parts of Igboland really inform the accumulations of criticisms against

Christian evangelism as producing turbulent characters. There is an obvious fact that the very conduct of these Christians that engage in violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts has remained upsetting to the people. And it is widely an acknowledged fact that some traditional religion adherents are bitterly opposed to the use of violence to force them into conversion. It is the thinking of the people particularly the traditional religion adherents that Christians deliberately choose not to subscribe to the fundamental tenets of preaching the gospel and making converts without using force. In considering the violent attitude of some Christians in their approach to evangelism, one is left to wonder the yardstick for promoting such a conduct. However the truth remains that attitude is important in conversion.

It is not in the least a fascinating incident the uncharitable and unscriptural use of force for an evangelistic work. Just as the people accuse Christian evangelists of intolerance, the violent approach of them to evangelism makes it more difficult to present and explain Christian evangelism as a good omen before the people. It is not a thing to be argued about only that it is a concern that the thinking of the people towards violent evangelism determines their attitude towards the Christian message. And this actually explains the sphere of criticisms and accusations that have continued to trail on Christian evangelism in recent times.

Bringing into focus a similar case on what he tagged the rape of culture model during the missionary era in Igboland and the apparent criticism, Kalu (2003) notes that:

The power-encounter motif was quite prominent in the heydays of missionary incursion. Iconoclasm was rife, voluntary burning of the paraphernalia of traditional religion occurred frequently as a sign of accepting the new ways. The lines were clearly drawn. The evangelical strategy of the Garrick Braide people encrusted the tradition. It was more marked among the protestants. As a daring declaration of the defeat of the gods, it won the hostility of the traditionalists and the colonial government who

considered such iconoclasm as an invitation to public disorder. Iconoclasm as a form of Christian victory declined among the second generation Christian. (p. 319).

By every intent and purposes, the above assertion of Kalu has two or more parts to explaining the dimensions of Christian evangelism from the missionary's standpoint. What is to be grasped from the assertion is the power play and the missionaries exercise of power in muscling their way into snatching the people's religion off them.

On the issue of iconoclasm and the narratives of voluntary burning of traditional religious artifacts as underlined earlier in the assertion, it would be important to emphasize as rightly pointed out in the assertion of Kalu, the hostility that often greeted these act of violence on traditional religious artifacts which ought not to be if it were voluntarily done. For the fact that the colonial government and the traditional adherents themselves were critical of such conduct as something that would easily bring about public disorder really shows the level of skepticism on carrying out such act. History therefore has led us to understand that never at any point in time of iconoclasm being the violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts by Christians for the purpose of conversion was it not subjected to condemnation and criticisms.

This is why it is more imperative now for today Christians that participate in violent evangelism to have it at the back of their minds that criticisms would continue to trail their conduct of forced and violent evangelism. The traditional religion adherents are critical of violence for the purpose of converting people while maintaining that repentance and spiritual purity should be targeted in the heart of the person, and not in the physical demolition of religious artifacts. Traditional religion adherents no doubt are worried having seriously criticized the forceful dispossession of them of their cultural and religious artifacts and burning them amidst their protests. In this modern day act of evangelism, accusations and criticisms have continued unabated on Christians that engage in crusades or evangelism works, arguing

that they has no right to destroy another person's property without the person's consent to carry out such destruction.

The common truth is that with the pace violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts is moving in Igboland for an instance, it may not be out of place for one to suggest that Christian evangelism is hitherto placed at the altar of serious accusation of being an event set out for the settlement of personal rift and vendetta. Insinuations are rife also that Christian evangelism in some parts of Igboland where violent evangelism occurs was as a result of the purported hijack of the entire event by charlatans and miscreants that turn around to cause chaos and disorder. It is an inexplicable thing and hard to justify the narratives of charlatans' and miscreants' intrusion during crusades and evangelism works to cause mayhem. The conviction and accusation of the traditional religion adherents presents itself that the destructions were done by Christians being what they really wanted to do so in order to get rid of the culture, tradition and the religion of the people.

It must be emphasized that the act of violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts by Christians during crusades and evangelism work no doubt attracts so much criticisms and accusations on Christian evangelism. A critical mind will wonder if Jesus Christ as a mortal being while on the earth ever supported physical fight and destruction as an option for bringing about conversion. The act of doing it by Christians of today conveys much criticism that could portray Christian evangelism as a disdain and a contempt activity before the non-Christians. The truth of it all is that such disposition could be very inimical for the successful execution of the great commission task on Christians to reconcile all men to God by preaching the words of the gospel for the conversion of souls.

4.8 Wrong Orientation and Presupposition on the Essence of Christian Evangelism

There is no point stating the obvious that in Christianity, the fundamental obligation of every Christian is to engage in the work of evangelism. As widely known, this work of evangelism entails the preaching of the gospel to all and sundry for the conversion of souls for Jesus Christ. It is important to note that the way the act of evangelism is conducted is sequel to the orientation one may have gotten in relation to the workings of Christian evangelism. It is an open truth that one's basic attitude and feelings in relation to a particular thing would definitely determine the extent of his or her commitment to the course of such a thing.

On Christian evangelism, people are most time taught differently under different ideas and methods on how to go about the work of evangelism. The unfortunate thing is that some of these ideas are not at variance with what coherent evangelism demands. One therefore begins to find out that when wrong methods are used for things as Christian evangelism, it indoctrinates Christian adherents into religious obsession with the resultant use of force and violence to effect conversion. Violence on itself and at any sphere of life is considered a wrongful act and more wrong is the orientation that it is a genuine means for evangelism and conversion of souls for Jesus Christ. This may have necessitated the saying by Abraham (1989) that "our conceptions of evangelism have a profound effect on our evangelistic practices" (p. 164).

Abraham went further to advice that "Christians should recoil from much of what passes as evangelism in the modern world. Some forms of evangelism are so bad that they may dechristianize those subjected to them, or they may inoculate people from the gospel indefinitely" (p. 166). There is no disputing the fact that it is bad to assume that it will take violence and coercion to force conversion on the people. This is often noticeable in Igboland where in some crusades and evangelism organized in the area was marred with systematic force and attack on the people and their religious properties.

The truth is that people have been indoctrinated with this act that it is gradually becoming the norm for a Christian evangelism in the modern world. The concept is not only bad and dehumanizing but clearly a wrong orientation on the work of Christian evangelism. The issue of faith is the concern of every individual. Man therefore has the choice and the freedom to determine whichever religion to align his faith to and finds solace and tranquility. It is normal for one to canvass to someone for a change of his or her faith but not with harassments, violence, intimidation and some level of force attached to it.

These issues of violence and so on have remained the many-sided hitches that confront Christian evangelism and the act of propagation of the gospel that needed to be critically looked upon. Admittedly, the subject or objective of evangelism in a situation as this raises very fundamental questions about some variety of issues that would be of great importance for societal peace and Christian faith advancement. It must be said that issues as violence during Christian evangelism is a very serious and dangerous dimension in Christian evangelism that speaks volume of religious intolerance. A clearer picture on religious intolerance in Balogun (1988) shows that religious intolerance is a blind and fixated mental and psychological negative attitude towards religious belief and practices that are contrary to one's cherished beliefs and practices.

It is a clear fact in history that this kind of negative attitude is usually received with an outburst of violence during Christian evangelism. The failure of some Christians to recognize and accommodate views and opinions of other religious faith remains the cause of bullying during Christian crusades and evangelism. And this raises some major suspicions that somebody somehow is not telling the truth about the essence of evangelism and conversion of faith for Jesus Christ. It is a common perception that the biblical essence of evangelism is to tell the truth and make peaceful and love-oriented conversion of faith.

The concern is that some Christians usually adopt unbiblical methods of evangelism hence becoming functional imperialists simply because they desire to see people converted to faith for Jesus Christ. The wanton destruction of traditional religious artifacts in some parts of Igboland during Christian crusades draws more attention to Christians' non utilization of the biblical truth on the essence of evangelism work. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of peace and love without strife. It therefore must be a diversionary conduct and wrong orientation for Christians to participate in violent evangelism.

The fundamental reason this wrong orientation do take root is the failure of some Christians devoted to the work of evangelism to understand the biblical facts before they can even talk about going out to evangelize and preach to others about Jesus Christ. And because some Christians are yet to establish much knowledge about who Jesus is or able to understand something as it pertains to the nature of his saving work. Kim (n.d.) is of the opinion that, this is why Christians must be very clear in their own minds about the theological categories and presuppositions which frame their understanding of evangelism, and why it is so important to get it right, before getting it out.

From the above perspective, one cannot really overemphasize how critical it is for Christians that participate in evangelism to possess the right orientation and true knowledge about Jesus Christ and the nature of His saving work in evangelism before disseminating the gospel. The essence of evangelism is for Christians to communicate the truth of Jesus Christ and his gospel to the people of the other religions in other words non-Christians. In doing so Christians that are involved in this Christian evangelism are expected to communicate the truth about Christ's life with an eye to the fact that people are watching. The truth is that if people are to find out that during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ that His lifestyle never tolerated violence, one is permitted to wonder where the violent evangelism in our time is coming from.

This is to say that the violent evangelism and crusades so witnessed in this modern era of evangelism is in truism a wrong presupposition of what the essence of evangelism demands.

To this end, the act of undesirable attacks and destruction of traditional religious artifacts by Christians during crusades is seen by many as a miscarriage of the core essence of evangelism reflective of Christ's lifestyle. History has it that in the whole of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, Jesus communicated the truth of himself and his Father (God) to the people he came across without coercion. In today's crusade evangelism, many Christians in the course of their evangelism have digressed from communicating the truth of the gospel which is love, peace and nonviolence to the non-Christians. The work of evangelism has suddenly gone into a brawling thing and ability to perform violence on the prospective converts. In Igboland for instance, it is a common feature that during evangelism the message of the gospel most time happens not to be an offence to the people rather the people are gutted with the despicable actions of the people that are involved in Christian evangelism.

It is a common truth that people are so much disappointed by the shoddy and unbiblical practices by Christians during evangelism. Following the issue of violent Christian evangelism, it is not uncommon these days to hear non-Christians react in a rage in demand of what is literally wrong with Christian evangelism. Most of them are overtly not in doubt that the process of evangelism work has taken a new dimension. It is a common knowledge that participants in Christian evangelism are becoming critically rude in their behaviour and conducts during crusade evangelism that culminates into violence. The general thinking is that this conduct of theirs could become a stumbling block to non-Christians who may be desirous to hear the gospel.

The wrong presupposition most Christians do have on evangelism is to be traced to the failure of some Christians to be assertive on what they believe and submit self to doing it without digression. This means in situation as evangelism work they cannot adopt unbiblical

method of evangelism as Christians in some parts of Igboland have actually done. The reality is that the presupposition of some Igbo Christians for instance is not represented in the biblical context, but a conclusion of autonomous thinking of theirs. Giving a vivid classification of wrong presupposition, Frame (2016) affirms to the fact that, presuppositionalism alters the task of evangelism from presenting the apostolic case for Jesus as Lord to the task of persuading people to accept the general tenets of Christian belief.

A further insight from Frame shows that presuppositionalism as a doctrinal mixture of philosophy and Christian reformed theology violates a cardinal principle which is perhaps most distinctive to that theology named sola scriptura (or scripture alone as the basis for our faith and practices). From the above premises, it is a clear fact in history that wrong presuppositions have been the brain behind the unbiblical approach of Christians to crusade evangelism that are inundated with violence, strife and chaos. Objectively speaking, wrong presupposition without doubt makes the gospel and the work of evangelism look bad.

A case in point is the violent attack and destruction of traditional religious artifacts by Christians during crusade evangelism in some parts of Igboland. Study suggests that these violent acts during Christian crusades were perpetuated as a result of wrong presupposition that objects of worship of the traditional religion adherents are responsible for whatever ill-fortune the people suffer. When a situation as this comes up, the orientation some Christians normally have is to jettison the issue of persuading and preaching to the people concerned for a change of heart and belief. And engage the suspects being the traditional religion adherents in physical molestation with the violent destruction of their religious symbols of worship.

This has been a common feature in some parts of Igboland where crusade evangelism was held which degenerated into forceful burning down of different idols, shrines, and masquerade costumes with some other artifacts belonging to the traditional religion adherents. The attitude and conduct of these Christian evangelists who engaged in violent attacks on

traditional religious artifacts is as a result of their wrong presuppositions that violates the Christian theology of making the scripture alone the basis for their faith and practices. It goes on to show the wrong orientation which historically the early Christian missionary attitude of iconoclasm may have transferred to Igbo Christians. One may candidly suggest that the same transference of wrong orientation as initiated by the early missionary on forceful conversion is perhaps still work in progress.

As at today and following the ugly narratives that associate Christian evangelism crusades with violence as a result of wrong orientations. It has become crystal clear that most of today Christians have continued to behave and conduct themselves in an unbiblical way. Their behaviour and conduct during crusade evangelism portray them as people that have totally moved away from practicing the words of the scripture. Their attitudes during evangelism present them as people that enjoy and practice the autonomy of their thoughts. They have allied themselves to the wrong presupposition which is in line with the view that ideas must align with the facts of the world and not with the truth of the scripture. And this really informs the wrong orientation on the workings of Christian evangelism characterized with violence. Noteworthy is the fact that charlatans and miscreants always fall back on wrong presupposition that traditional religion symbolizes evil as an excuse to carry out the act of violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE AND APPROACH FOR A COHERENT ETHICAL EVANGELISM IN IGBOLAND

The open truth about Christianity is that all and every Christian has been commissioned by Jesus Christ to carry on with the work of evangelism to all facets of the earth. In Igboland, the work of evangelism is not yet done and rested. But following the hues and cries that surrounded Christian evangelism in some parts of Igboland as a result of violent attacks on traditional religious artifacts during evangelism, it has become imperative to device a legitimate and effective means of doing it better. This section would be looking at the practical steps necessarily important to be engaged in for the realization of an effective, coherent and ethical evangelism as rooted in the basic principle of Christian evangelism in Igbo land.

5.1 Engaging the Principle of Ethical Evangelism

Evangelism is a divine call of God for every Christian to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ with the main purpose to save soul and effect conversion. It is imperative that Christians should understand what they have been called up to do and how they are to herald the course of evangelism. For many, Christian evangelism remains a straight-forward idea of preaching the gospel and the making of conversion without recourse to what it will take to make a viable ethical evangelism. The Bible is clear about the importance of our attitude towards evangelism. From Hollinghurst's (2015) observation, the overarching concern would be if evangelism was done in such a way that it undermined its own aims by using methods that were ethically suspected.

Fundamentally, Christians need to be guided by the fact that it is not just anything that goes in trying to bring about a conversion during evangelism. The emphasis should also be on conducting crusade and evangelism with utmost respect and recognition to beliefs, moral principles as firmly embedded in ethics. Ethics being the true nature of morality that should be shown by man, the problem with the modern day Christian evangelism is that little or no attention has been paid to the question that borders on whether people actually go about doing

evangelism and crusades in an ethical manner. Some people have become suspicious and nearly skeptical about Christian evangelism with Christians' failure to imbibe ethical principles in conduct of their evangelism. These ethical principles being emphasized upon here basically imply morality which in the words of Nmah (2012) "the task of ethics, according to the analytic school of philosophy is simply the analysis and clarification of moral terms" (p.37).

Because evangelism is the root of Christian faith, it is necessary that Christians should engage the fundamental principle of ethical evangelism when doing the work of evangelism as what is to closely bind together both their work and conduct. Ethics is rooted in God and in His word because it determines wrong and right as revealed by God through Jesus Christ to his twelve apostles in Matthew 10:11-15. In a nutshell, the ethical message Jesus passed on to his disciples for their evangelical activities mandates them to respect the opinion or the stand of the person they are to evangelize. Therefore for our present society, especially in Igboland to have a very coherent and effective evangelism, it is important that Igbo Christians who are engaged in evangelism would try to show non-christians that they are concerned about the ethics of doing evangelism which entails respect to their moral principles, beliefs and values.

By engaging the principle of ethical evangelism, Thiessen (2011) hence asserts that, in order to solve complex moral problems we need a gradation of moral principles, ranging from the very broad and abstract to the more specific and concrete. The point is that in order to convey a thorough evangelism in a given society that would be devoid of multifarious disputes as is the case with claims of attacks on traditional religious artifacts in Igboland during evangelism, a rough ride on the values, beliefs, and the religion of the people or the exploiting of power imbalances when evangelizing is unethical. There must be some degree of power control without exploiting the weakness of the people. Webster (1961) is of the view that evangelism will usually encounter opposition; all opposition has meaning and must be understood in the light of the doctrine of providence.

The truth about opposition to evangelism is that it develops from the clash of belief system and the failure of some persons (Christians) to understand the right to someone's beliefs, values and principles. It is possible for a Christian to think he is evangelizing without knowing that he is actually scaring potential converts by his conducts. In this regard, it is much more important that the issue of conversion and evangelism be seen as a process that is to allow for a gradual and unpressurized conversion. Webster (1961) summarizes hence saying, "the implication of this suggest that we should think of people in movement, taking a dynamic rather than a static view of human personality. This has direct bearings on the way we evangelize" (p. 26). One would add also that to impose faith on or extract decision from another person results in friction, narrowness and bigotry which points to an insincere and unreal conversion.

Speaking on avoiding misunderstanding and frictions during Christian evangelism, Anderson (1960) asserts that we are to recognize that the essence of true religion is that religion is based upon conscience and conviction. The truth of the matter is that the principle of ethical evangelism has a soft spot for an appeal to someone's conscience in time of evangelism for the conversion of faith. And it is one basic Christian principle that makes case for a coherent evangelism. The principle of ethical evangelism being talked about no doubt is centered on the demonstration of virtuous character. This entails tolerance, patience, humility and so on by persons engaging in Christian evangelism. It is worth mentioning that the general perception in some part of Igboland since the violent Christian evangelism in the area emerged has been that there can only be real evangelism when there are genuine alternatives. And one of the genuine alternatives for a coherent and real evangelism would be the engaging of the principle of ethical evangelism that would tolerate and value the other religions. Worthy of note is the fact that ethical evangelism avoids excessive physical pressure and psychological manipulation in order to bring about a conversion. The basic principles of ethical evangelism are further

stated in the following stages as the practical steps that would make for a coherent and effectual Christian evangelism crusade without any traces of coercion and violence.

5.1.1 The Principle of Rational and Dignity of the Human Person

The idea of rationality and dignity in Christian ethics is one of the characteristics of an evangelism ethics. Firstly in the issue of rationality, it is the state of the level-headedness with which one presents his claim to the knowledge of the truth that determines the response at his disposal either in the negative or positive. In Christian ethics and in evangelism precisely, rational ethics refers to a system that allows one to choose between different values by a method of comparison and want. One can also approach the notion and the principle of rationality in several ways. But in any case, one has to apply one's own type of analysis on human action and behaviour. For this reason, it seems worthwhile to look at the importance and the use of the principle of rationality in the day to day Christian evangelism in this era.

The ideal concept of rational ethics places moral demand on the choices an individual or group makes. In the thinking of Ulrich (2009) rational ethics sees the basis of morality in reasoning rather than in convention. Its concept of ethics is in this sense post conventional rather than conventional.

From Lumer's (2010) point of view ethics of rational moral value, unlike cooperation ethics, takes a moral value function to be central to morality. It is important therefore that as Christians engage themselves in the act of evangelism and sharing their faith with non-Christians. The use of rational ethics framework allows reasoned choices and the fundamental right of man to prevail as a common ground between the evangelist and the potential convert. The truth is that imposition of choice is at variance with the principle of rationality or rational ethics which in most cases negates coherent evangelism. For instance, in some part of Igbo land Christians that engage in forced and coercive evangelism seem to have lost grip of the

right of a person to either accept or choose not to accept a change of faith. The implicit truth is that in carrying out the work of evangelism in a given society such as Igboland in discourse.

It is of the essence that evangelism is conducted with the understanding of the need for the organizers and the participants in Christian evangelism to be fair. The fairness at this point is for the evangelists to display concrete evidence that they will respect the choice of the people. The truth is that if Christian evangelists are to tolerate the integration of rational ethics in their evangelism activities, the understanding is that it will give non-Christians the sense of fact that Christian evangelism would go a long way to coordinate a rational and coherent evangelism devoid of any violence and rancor. However since rational decision plays a vital role in ensuring effectiveness of the gospel, evangelism is to be anchored on the principle of rationality for better acceptance in Igboland and the society generally.

On the principle of dignity, Thiessen (2011) suggests that the dignity and care of persons are foundational ethics that is common to Christians and non-Christians. Christianity provided a theological foundation for the appeal to the dignity of persons. The most fundamental reason for respecting the dignity of the human being is that each person is created in the image of God despite individual religious beliefs. And this ought to reflect in Christian's day to day work of evangelism in the society.

Therefore in order to keep evangelism in harmony it is expected that Christian evangelism should always be done in such a way as to protect the dignity of the person being evangelized. This is to be achieved if Christians that participate in evangelism are to avoid attacks and violent destruction of the prospective converts' traditional religious symbols of worship without any respect to the value the prospective convert has for his/her object of worship. Noteworthy is the fact that it always amounts to lawlessness the moment the act of evangelism degenerates into reducing the potential convert to the status of an object. In so doing the people become a pawn in the evangelism program of the church or Christian

organization as seen in some parts of Igboland during crusade evangelism that culminated into chaos, violence and crisis against Christian evangelism.

From Arinze (2002-2003) point of view:

It seems banal to assert that there are many religions in the world. And yet there are people who appear not to accept this fact. They want their religion to be the only one in the world. They want every other believer to be converted into that religion. Let us begin by recognizing as legitimate desire to share one's religious conviction with other people. If I sincerely believe my religion to be the best thing on earth or to be the final religious revelation from God to humanity, I have every right to want to share my treasure with all my brothers and sisters. But the means adopted must be acceptable. They must respect the dignity of other human persons and their inalienable right to freedom of conscience and religion especially as spelt out by the United Nations in paragraph 18 of its 1948 universal Declaration of Human Rights. (p. 7).

Looking at dignity from the basic understanding, it is a kind of value as bestowed on every human person, his/her religion and the way of life. In essence, it is factual when one says that something has a dignity; it is to say that it has a certain kind of value. The implication therefore with regard to attitude and conduct is that anything that has dignity must be accorded respect and not to be eroded. An account in the book of Genesis says "so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" Genesis 1: 27. This account in the book of Genesis recounts how mankind was created in the image of God, in expression of the essential and the inherent human worth that must not be violated but rather protected.

Analyzing Immanuel Kant's theory on the idea of human dignity, Rachels (1986) observes that it is commonly assumed that Kant conceived of dignity as something that every human being possesses, simply by virtue of having the capacity for freedom and rationality.

Even more importantly humans have an intrinsic worth ie dignity, because they are rational agents, which are free agents capable of making their own decisions, setting their own goals and guiding their conduct by reason. Because the moral law is the law of reason, rational beings are the embodiment of moral law itself. The only way that moral goodness can exist at all in the world is for the rational creatures to apprehend what they should do and acting from a sense of duty, do it.

This view corresponds to the quest for Christian evangelism and the process of Christians' conversion of non-christians to be guided by respect to the dignity of the human person. Facts have shown that just as humans are rational moral free agents competent to take own decision as guided by reason. It therefore becomes necessary that human approach on the issue of Christian evangelism and the conversion of faith be tailored to respect the dignity of a person to own decision unchallenged or being coerced. The principle of according respect to the dignity of person is a prime ideology designed for a prompt coherent and effective evangelism. The fact that some Christian evangelism held in some parts of Igboland were confrontational, violent and crisis ridden is because the principle of respect to the dignity of person especially the target converts to an extent was not followed.

One needs not to overemphasize the truth that in organizing Christian evangelism aimed at soul saving for Jesus Christ with the convert having to abandon his/her faith for Christianity. The attitude of not violating the dignity of any human person by forceful conscription of his faith and instruments of religious worship as against the case in Igbo land in discourse is very paramount. Forced and violent evangelism should be replaced with the principle of dignity and consenting of the person being evangelized. The person being evangelized has the right to accept, decline or the duty to make choices which is all about the principle of dignity. This perhaps to a large extent was lacking in those evangelism crusades so conducted in some Igbo communities such as Amansea, Ugbenu, Aguaobuowa, Achina, Nsirimo and so on that

degenerated into chaos and conflict of violent destruction of traditional worship symbols of the traditionalists.

5.1.2 The Principle of Truthfulness and Integrity in Christian Evangelism

The principle of truthfulness and integrity is an ultimate characteristic of an ethical evangelism being the good news from God to men. Looking at the principle of truthfulness, as Christians it is an understandable fact that God himself is supremely the God of truth. It presupposes that God in establishing his Christian religion has it well established in truthfulness of His word for a genuine worship. Evangelism is a call for Christians to be witnesses to the truth of the gospel, but if the very notion of the gospel truth is in question, it diminishes and equally makes it hard for the acceptance of the faith. Dimitrov's (2017) observation shows that according to humanistic thinking truth progresses over time as societies and belief changes. In essence with regards to what one says about other religions in the time of evangelism ought to be characterized with the truth.

A Christian evangelism preoccupied by lying, deception, hidden agenda and failure to speak the truth is condemnable as unethical. The criticisms and the schisms against Christian evangelism are oftentimes traceable to the general assumption that the message of Jesus on evangelism has been watered down with sentiments and bias. The perception is that the truth for which evangelism was instituted is being stepped aside to promote personal objectives and intentions of the organizers of crusades or the participants. This in no small measure could raise the fear that people are to become skeptical about Christian evangelism when they can no longer be able to distinguish between telling of one's own story and the telling of the true story of Jesus Christ. For instance, the violent destruction of traditional religious artifacts as witnessed in some parts of Igboland during Christian evangelism crusades is predicated on the seemingly half truth told by the evangelists and the premonition held by evangelism

participants that the hardship, financial stagnation, ill fortune and so on that pervaded their lives were caused by voodoo and the black magic power of the traditional religion adherents. The truthfulness or otherwise of the assertion has remained contentious and this invariably is to be seen as the root cause of violent attacks on the traditional religious artifacts during evangelism crusade in some parts of Igbo land in recent time.

The crux of the matter is that the telling of one's own story in the course of Christian evangelism is apt and would be better understood if it toes the line of the truth and conspicuously in concurrence with the word of God. As Newman (n.d) puts it, the task of evangelism often includes telling our individual story along with the larger gospel story. The emphasis herein remains that, it is obvious that the individual story be told in the course of Christian evangelism as necessity demands. But the story should be truth, tantamount and of equal parallel with the principle as outlined in the great commission mandate.

In the great commission mandate, the principle of truthfulness during evangelism expects Christians to tell Jesus Christ's story as it were. When one look at the ethical response to the issue of duplicating or telling the story of Jesus Christ during evangelism, the result is that it clearly makes one to avoid the trap of fostering an attitude of religious superiority and violence. The pointer is that the perceived reason for the Christian evangelical conflict and violence with opposite religions such as traditional religion is pushed forward by individuals that choose to tell their own story in colouration of Jesus' true story as it concerns evangelism. Therefore it is imperative and suggestive too that today Christians in this case Igbo Christians should imbibe the character of truthfulness to the gospel on evangelism as they go about evangelizing and making conversion of non-christians as a practical step that would give support to coherent conversion in their area. Just as Gendron (n.d.) advised, we must avoid using half-truths and reducing the gospel to nothing more than a fire escape in order to manipulate people into making a decision.

On the issue of integrity in evangelism, the fact remains that the great commission mandate and the work of Christian evangelism as commanded by Jesus Christ has distinguishing features on integrity. To clarify the word concept, integrity alongside the main thrust of this section, Anderson (2000) observes that the word integrity comes from the same latin root as integer and it implies a wholeness of person. Just as we would talk about a whole number, so also we can talk about a whole person who is undivided, nor being a different person in different circumstances. A person of integrity is the same person in private that he or she is in public. As already indicated in the above passage, integrity connotes the state of wholeness and undivided in a given course of duty or endeavour. Bringing this to bear in relation to the principle of integrity in Christian evangelism, the suggestion is that as much as integrity is the characteristic of evangelism, Christian evangelists and participants must show high degree of honesty and strong moral principle to maintain the integrity of evangelical mandate as embedded in the true demands for a Christian evangelism.

Reflecting on integrity in evangelism as code of conduct for Christians, Lynch (2013) observes that Christians should seek to honour the Lord through an ethical and open approach in our attempt to persuade others to believe the good news about Jesus Christ. We disavow any approaches which depersonalize people, or that seek their conversion through manipulative, coercive, or overtly emotional means which bypass a person's critical faculties, or that mask the true nature and demands of Christian conversion. The main concern of every Christian is that Christian evangelism should aim to honour the evangelism template as commanded by Jesus Christ.

The need for Christians to profess an evangelism that is integrity-oriented without flippant abuses of humanity and distortion of the message of evangelism will be a welcomed development. It would be in the right direction for Igbo Christian evangelists to take practical steps toward understanding the basic principle for a coherent ethical evangelism to carry out

the work of evangelism crusade with integrity devoid of any offence to other religions. Noteworthy is the fact that an evangelism that is rooted in integrity and obedience to the evangelical command of God do not ruffle people's feather in the course of its duty of evangelizing them. For individuals or organizers of crusades in some parts of Igboland to think that the gospel cannot be preached without some element of coercion and violence is faulty and devoid of the truth. It is not only against Christian ethics but such an act of evangelism tends to suggest a loss of the sense of the great commission mandate.

5.1.3 The Principle of Humility and Liberalism in Time of Evangelism

Christian evangelism as commanded by Jesus Christ at first to His disciple and handed over also to every Christian no doubt is characterized by humility. The truth is that for anyone to accept the call of Jesus Christ to evangelize is an act of humility which likewise produces humbling experience. In explaining the biblical concept of humility, Slick (n.d.) is of the view that humility is that quality of a Christian that demonstrates a right relationship and position before God. This demonstration is manifested in attitude, words, and deeds.

This is to say that Christians that engage in the work of evangelism have it as a duty to uphold and imbibe the principle of humility in their evangelistic work. One of the several biblical facets to humility is seen in the book of Romans which says, "for by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him" (Romans 12: 3). The assertion speaks volume of the fact that humility from the biblical point of view, Christians who thinks so highly of oneself abhors God. Therefore, it is expected that Christians should get rid of arrogance when evangelizing. Evangelism could become blemished the moment it displays arrogant, condescending, and dogmatic in the claims of pride. This is one of the many sided reason of conflict between Christians and other religions during Christian

evangelism and crusades. Therefore concrete effort ought to be made by Christian evangelists in order to avoid such conduct during evangelism crusade.

The true story is that most Christians are not always ready to be exemplary in displaying virtue of humility as an evangelical principle in time of making conversion of souls for Jesus Christ. It then seems that Christians often forget that being honest and humble in their evangelistic intent would lure people, especially non-Christians to their faith. The pessimistic view held against Christian evangelism by some other religions as visibly seen in Igboland gives it an impression of poor human relation devoid of humility. For the fact that humility in evangelism also connotes respect for other person's desire to talk and decide about his religion or not, it is crucial for Christians of this era to de-emphasize being arrogant to people in the course of their evangelism. The truth remains that in spite of the religious differences, preaching of the gospel and the making of conviction and conversion of faith can only be couched in humility. Therefore, it is not in doubt that Christian evangelism would thrive so much in a given society such as Igboland if humility is made to be in place as a practical step to be taken during any Christian crusade evangelism in the area.

Looking at the principle of liberalism in evangelism, Raven (2010) asserts that liberal or progressive Christian evangelism is nothing less than changing the paradigm. In addition to the assertion, having had a closer look at the way and manner Christian evangelism is being conducted in the Igbo society specifically. The changing of the paradigm of violent evangelism which is fast becoming a trend among Christian members in Igbo land needed to be addressed. The truth is that Christians are to put in an open mind in their approach to difficult situations and challenges in their day to day activities as well as in time of their evangelism work.

While exposing this issue of liberalism in evangelism further, Raven (2010) again posits that the idea of progressive or liberal Christian evangelism may seem at first to be oxymoron, but consider the state of biblical literacy in the 21st century. Most people have little or no

knowledge of what the New or Old Testament actually says. Indeed outside of Christian churches few consider the bible to be relevant to any discussion about the tough issues such as human rights for women (i.e, the right to choose what happens to our bodies); climate change; corporate malfeasance; poverty; or war. The point is that a liberal approach in one's evangelical activities opens him or her up to the relevance of being biblically guided in a passionate propagation of the gospel.

One characteristic of the principle of liberalism in Christian evangelism is the ability to operate in the same line of thought as Maniac (2005) who said, "I see all religions as legitimate" (p. 2). The truth is that in liberalism understanding the reason to accept the flexibility of beliefs with respect to the fact that all religions are legitimate would put to an end implacable rivalry. As Saxbee (1994) puts it, liberalism can never be satisfied with a static Christianity, but one which as it discovers new things, develops, changes and with openness and honesty is ready to reject some of the traditions. Liberalism in theology is that mood or cast of mind which is prepared to accept that some discovery of reason may count against the authority of traditional affirmation in the body of Christian theology.

Therefore, it is expected that in changing the narratives of violent evangelism and the destruction of traditional religious artifacts during Christian crusade and evangelism, promptness is required for Christians to discover the reason to uphold the ethical content of general acceptance of every religion as being legitimate. And this ought to show on people's attitude towards other religions, a liberal-minded person exhibits disposition to adopt openness in mastery of the Christian evangelical principles and objectively takes the trouble to express ideas in such a way that the audience will willingly stretch a hand of genuine acceptance. This act when critically put in use in the work of Christian evangelism in Igboland for instance would redirect the approach of most Christians while carrying out their evangelism work to do so without bias and any sentiment or on the basis of religious bigotry.

Liberalism in Christian evangelism today will go a long way to showcase the level of biblical literacy among Christians and the Church. What it means is that the truth about Jesus message on evangelism is made clear and cannot be hidden from the wise and the intelligent. The message of Jesus on evangelism includes following all men with peace, which could be interpreted to mean following all religions with peace. For Raven (2010), the possibility that Jesus' message was one of radical fairness, and that following Jesus means creating and living in a world based on non-violent covenant instead of desperate selfishness, has certainly been hidden from the view of the people.

There is no gain overemphasizing the fact that with the liberalism evangelism, the Christian world especially the Igbo Christians no doubt are offered a viable alternative to violent, self-centredness and acrimonious evangelism which has taken a meaningful part of the people's evangelism activities as a true form of evangelism whereas it is not the right track. This is where liberal evangelism thrives as a non-violent democratic action, meaning that once Christians start showing liberal behaviour by the use of non-violence approach, and non imposition of faith, the skepticism about evangelism will begin to retreat. And the level of acceptance of Christian evangelism by the non-christians would soar following the perceived manifestation of laudable moral behaviour.

5.2 The Use of Dialogue and Tolerance in Christian Evangelism

In evangelical circle, the emphasis is on the proclamation of the gospel with the conviction that one has a message to pass on to another. The content of the message is nothing else than for non-christians to be converted to Christianity and be saved. But the way this obligation is carried out is very much of importance to Christians and the larger society in general. One must take an absolute cognizance of the fact that some religious votaries and sympathizers of other religions such as Igbo traditional religion may like to hold on to their

chosen faith without any likelihood to compromise. A situation as that therefore calls for prudence in any approach to be used in evangelizing individual or persons of stoic and unmoved character as that. This has been one of the greatest shortcomings of Christian evangelists of this era in the sense that methods used by some of them in order to effect a conviction and conversion of faith from other religion to Christianity is perceived by many as being harsh and intolerant to potential converts. To this end, Christian evangelism and crusades in many towns and communities of Igboland degenerated into crisis of confidence and a ding dong affair between Christians and traditional religion adherents.

Nevertheless it is widely believed that the ability to handle the problem of violence in evangelism and the vestiges of intolerance lies in the use of dialogue in the course of Christian evangelism activities. A thoughtful reflection on dialogue hence points to the truth that dialogue remains of immense value in sharing the gospel of evangelism with the people of other faith. A look at what dialogue is all about according to Scott's (1975) assertion is that "dialogue is a conversation in which each party is serious in his approach both to the subject and the other person, and desires to listen and learn as well as to speak and instruct" (p. 81). From the point of view from the above passage, one is to understand that dialogue is all about communication and deep thought interaction in order to prevent violent conflicts from arising in any course of action.

Therefore, the usefulness of dialogue in breaking down barriers and building connections across religious divides cannot be overemphasized. This is because it has the tendency to cement relationship in such a way that it would create a common ground for mutual respect and cooperation. Since the purpose of dialogue is to increase understanding, in the work of Christian evangelism dialogue is an enabler that is capable of promoting an effective and a serene evangelism in any given society. A biblical understanding of the evangelical mandate which says "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16: 15)

portrays evangelism as self definition as well as self determination process. If it is an accepted fact that evangelism is a process it becomes necessary that attempts be made to bring in dialogue techniques in communicating the message of conversion to the non-christians.

In the words of Arinze (2002-2003) “Religion is to be proposed not imposed. That for Christians would be evangelization” (p. 7). Arinze’s point of view suggests that even evangelism cannot be confused with an imposition of faith but rather with the proposing of faith in the spirit of dialogue. On this same issue Webster (1961) raised a statement saying:

Evangelism is dialogue and not monologue. This is not to say that the preaching of the gospel is itself dialogue, for in any case preaching does not exhaust the meaning of evangelism. But that effective preaching of the gospel can happen only after there has been intense dialogue between preacher and hearer, Christian and non-christian at other levels. (p. 114).

The truth is that Christians needed to explain to the non-christians what the gospel evangelism and conversion are all about. In doing this, evangelists are compelled to sit down and communicate ideas that would make sense in the mind of the hearer. Since evangelism is a process such a person should be educated and communicated adequately into accepting what he is expected to believe. One of these processes is the issue of dialogue consisting of discussion for mutual understanding of various views held among different religious faiths. The common truth is that in evangelism, dialogue is all about one standing alongside with the person being evangelized to look together at the truth without confrontational stance.

Naylor (2004) believes that dialogue is an essential prerequisite necessary to ensure accurate communication. The values and concerns of the hearer must be comprehended before we can phrase the gospel using the terminology and categories that resonate with their situation. The point to grasp from the above assertion speaks volume of the need for Christians’ work of evangelism to be structured to include dialogue with men of other faiths especially the

traditional religion adherents in discourse. The thinking is that such a move would create a good understanding within the parties rather than finding a common denominator between Christianity and traditional religion. Drawing up a strict line of separation from traditional religion as a divisor may not be very exciting, in the sense that it could pose the most difficult for a thorough penetration of Christian evangelism and should be avoided. Just as one will ask, is anything wrong with dialoguing in evangelism? The answer is certainly no. It is not far from the truth that many people of the other religions are looking for ears that will listen to them tell their own story. But they do not find it among today Christians, because these Christians are talking where they should be listening.

It is proper to therefore state that dialogue is not purposed to undermine any faith such as Traditional Religion, but to play the role as an essential component in people's approach to other faiths. Through dialogue, areas of agreement and disagreement are clarified and this leads to a change of attitude towards each other. Scherer (1994) believes that "by witnessing to our deepest convictions whilst listening to those of our neighbours, interreligious dialogue aids in Christian self criticism as well as critiquing other religions in the light of the gospel" (p. 183). This means that participants in Christian evangelism should be able to engage in constructive dialogue with the values of traditional religion devoid of bias. The same is applicable to Christians having to examine their own religion explore the gospel truth in their relation with the Traditional Religion during evangelism.

The hiccups witnessed in Igboland with Christian evangelism is the moment the people especially non-christians discovered that they are less alike than they anticipated following the seemingly ill treatment meted out to them at any given time of Christian evangelism crusade. The open truth is that it is a general belief that inasmuch as one dominate the other it is no longer dialogue, because one's view has been eclipsed and his power of self definition hence paralyzed. It could be said that this is not what dialogue in evangelism that should succeed in

sharing its faith with other religion is meant to portray. Coming from the backdrop that dialogue is not to be equated to an act of debate neither is the purpose of dialogue to attack nor to defend, Barker (n.d.) states that, instead, because the purpose of dialogue is to increase understanding, formal debate should occur outside dialogue. This does not mean that there will not or should not be open disagreement during dialogue, because hence differences points at an issue, there will be frequent disagreement. In truism, dialogue is not the forum for attempting to prove the superiority of one belief system over another.

The emphasis is that the principle of dialogue in Christian evangelism with other religions as Traditional Religion has the capacity to tame tension which the process of conversion generates among the two religions. A reflection on what it means to preach the gospel to the people of other faith, it is certain that one may be greeted with stubborn unbelief in the course of evangelism. The task is for one to understand that at the heart of dialogue is a commitment to listen and understand what the other party is saying, so that one might more objectively address the situation without any strife. This kind of dialogue is often not easy to attain following zealotry of some evangelism participants. But the end point of the principle of dialogue is that Christians have to learn not to attempt to dominate or even win at all cost.

To enter into dialogue with people of other faith tradition would afford Christians the opportunity to present the message of Jesus on conversion of faith through courteous conversation. In Christian evangelism, the purpose of dialogue is not to create the confusion of forcing Christian belief on other people but the purpose of dialogue in a Christian circle is to interact and share one's belief in Christ's message on conversion of faith with others and being willing to listen to what they have to say. The essence of dialogue is to give each and every person concerned in a given matter a voice to speak out his/her mind uninterrupted at all.

The same approach fits into the work of Christian evangelism whereby people are sincerely encouraged to add their voices on whether to accept a particular belief as against their

belief system or not. The fact that since the issue of persuasion or the act of convincing someone cannot be separated from the principle of dialogue, it is pertinent for one to understand that the eloquence of the participating evangelist and crusader in presenting the message in a convincing manner before the proposed converts remains very crucial for their decision. A historical account of Paul's evangelical mission in Athens as expressed in the book of Acts gave a vivid picture of Paul's use of dialogue in his evangelism of the Athenians, captures it all.

In Athens, Paul employed the principle of dialogue to explain to the Athenians the facts about their religion and the gods the people worship. In analyzing Paul's in-depth conversation with the people of Athens as written in Acts 17: 16-34, one would observe that Paul's ingenuity in his passionate conversation with the people on the daily basis helped them to understand the true nature of their god and hence became convinced to accept the gospel. It is therefore fundamental for one to grasp the fact that the purpose of dialogue is not to manipulate or intimidate. The purpose is nothing else but information communication. The ability of one to communicate information to another person and wait for the person to communicate back his own is dialogue. If in so doing the point of view of the other is altered, it is not as a result of manipulation or intimidation but as an act of free will on the part of the person.

This is the intended role of Christian evangelism, to communicate the great commission mandate by simply preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people through dialogue for a true conversion, and not coercion into acceptance. In the words of Sweet (2005), communication does not begin with being understood, but with understanding others.

To this end an effective evangelism can only happen after there has been an intense dialogue between the evangelist or the preacher of the gospel and the hearer, Christian and non-Christian. But the common truth is that one cannot dialogue effectively without exhibiting some sense of tolerance to either the personality involved or what the person believes in. The two are of much

importance to each other because the both can be said to complement each other so as to obtain result. Giving an insight on tolerance, Igodo (2009) states that:

The word tolerance is the direct opposite of intolerance which means the disposition or willingness of a person to accept or allow certain opinion or behaviour even though contrary to his views and beliefs to coexist with others for the purpose of peace and harmony. When used to refer to opposing religion, it means the accommodation of opposing religious views; beliefs and practices for strengthening inter faith dialogue and fraternity among religions. (p. 87).

This statement is apt to Christian evangelism for it is obvious that most of the evangelical bigotry witnessed in this contemporary era especially in some parts of Igboland was as a result of intolerance from participants during evangelism crusades. This is to say that the absence of tolerance in the day to day crusade and Christian evangelism in most communities and wards of Igboland remains the case of volatile evangelism in the area. In the eyes of Jesus message on Christian evangelism, tolerance remains the key to fostering good relationship during evangelism. Special note is to be taken by Christians of today judging from the much exploit Jesus achieved in making known the word of God to the people having tolerated the people He was sent to in spite of their background. Likewise Jesus Christ remains a model of tolerance since during His time he welcomed sinners and also ate with them (Luke 15: 2 paraphrased).

One needs not to argue on whether tolerance is a Christian virtue which has to be applied by every Christian in their day to day evangelical activities. Rather it is essential that Christians' attitude towards diversity in religion especially during evangelism has to reflect openness, respect and above all tolerance for other belief systems. The underlying fact about tolerance in relation to the issue of religion is anchored on the perception that all beliefs should be respected and accepted as valid belief since none is superior to the other. Of course

Christians and participants in Christian evangelism own it as a duty to establish a cordial and respectful relationship with the person they intend to preach conversion message to.

The position of Webster (1961) is that:

Evangelism cannot evade these person to person relationships. The progress or contagion of the kingdom of heaven is soul by soul. We cannot institutionalize the world into God's kingdom. Nor can we fulfill our ministry except by an intimate relationship with ordinary people. For they are the crux of the gospel. (p. 142).

The truth is that person to person relationship has far more bearing on evangelism if it is driven by tolerance and acceptance of each other's belief as legitimate. It is a common knowledge that the basic nature which controls human attitudes and behaviour invariably tilt to the way and manner people are treated. In things as Christian evangelism the inclusiveness of tolerance in approach with other religions is quite sensitive to the attractiveness of Jesus message on evangelism to non-christians.

Tolerance in the way and manner the message of evangelism is disseminated for the basic understanding and agreement of the people is very crucial. Simply put in the words of Nobles (2017), clear communication of the gospel must take priority in our lives. The common truth is that Christians should prioritize preaching and communicating the word of the gospel to the people without compulsion, knowing very well that every human is made in the divine image of God and each human being together with his religion is of incalculable worth to him. It therefore matters greatly how we treat one another especially when evangelizing non-christians.

Christians should sincerely understand the fact that the strength of Christianity lies in the ability of them to bring people into personal relationship with God through the knowledge of the message of evangelism, and this must necessarily involve verbal communication and not by physical attacks. The recent attacks on Traditional Religious artifacts in some parts pf

Igboland is not only uncalled for but as a result of intolerance to other religion adherents by Christians during evangelism. The lifestyle for an evangelism entails being open and of immense tolerance to every person and his religion without bias. This seems to be lacking among Christians that participate in Christian evangelism in Igboland in recent times. The truth is that the act or the message of evangelism should not be confrontational but rather convincing. This is to be the ideal thrust that should drive the Igbo Christian move for evangelism work that is effectual.

To this end, it is admissible that evangelists should take the lead in cultivating the habit of tolerance for those with differing religious views. Since tolerance relatively applies to the area of fundamental beliefs of a person, it is therefore clear that intolerance is incompatible with non-acceptance of the belief of others as true. The impact of this situation on the contemporary Christians with regard to evangelism is that Christians themselves are confused. This is because they thought that it would be difficult to be tolerant of those people whose views are outside their own religious belief. The unfortunate thing is that in this contemporary era it seems that tolerance has come to be associated mainly with ideas and no longer with persons. And this cannot be said to be the true position of the great commission mandate for evangelism which emphasizes on person and what he believes in.

The missing link at this point is that some Christians fail to understand they exist for the benefit of those who are not part of their faith. They (Christians) must make every effort to firstly tolerate them so as to understand why they are outside by having to engage them in a respectful and truthful dialogue. Even as tolerance might seem half-hearted, it is in fact the strength of coherent evangelism. It creates space for dialogue and at the same time allows people to hold a profound commitment to their understanding of the religious truth. It is clear that any acceptable religious truth must, according to Netland (1991) recognize that beliefs are integral to religion and that truth in religion, just as in other domains, must include the notion

of propositional and exclusive truth. An overview of this assertion buttresses the point that someone's truth is just as valid and acceptable as all others which when simply put justifies the fact that truth is deemed truth in the eyes of the beholder, in other words people do not see things as they are, but sees them as they want it to become. One would suggest that in the course of evangelizing other religions, there must be a good conversation which should consist of a careful consideration of opinions. The truth is that an increase in the level of tolerance of other religions during Christian evangelism is very much crucial for the acceptance of the message of evangelism among the non-christians.

With the respect for the conscience and rights of others and above all acceptance of others with their differences in religious beliefs, the truth is that all beliefs should be respected and accepted as valid beliefs since it has been a common thought that no belief system is superior to the other. The moral argument is that nobody has the right to force their beliefs on another, for such an act of forcing one's belief on the other remains a clear display of an act of intolerance. Therefore for Christians to promote evangelism that is ideologically based in line with a coherent conversion, Christians must find a way to sit down and talk one on one with people of other religions without despising their religious beliefs. This is where tolerance which is all about how we treat other people personally who are different from one's religious convictions is made to manifest.

In conclusion, for there to be a harmonious cooperation across religious front liners in Igboland during Christian evangelism, then the role of tolerance for a coherent ethical evangelism must be recognized as a practical step to be taken. It is of popular opinion that the act of tolerance in Christian evangelism which entails to treat person that holds contrary belief differing from that of the evangelist with respect and dignity remains an accepted norm. Ordinarily, tolerance is meant only to endure and to put up with something a person dislikes. Tolerance also represents the fact that respect for people is more important than fighting over

disagreement on ideas, even though it does not suggest that truth is no longer important. But today, such attitude is not perceived as being good enough that a truly tolerant person is required to fully accept what is different from own religion with another. Even at that, special note is to be taken that one has to bear in mind that though tolerance does not rule out fair argument and criticism of other religious beliefs, it is expected to treat those religious beliefs with respect as much as avoidance of hostile conduct or the use of insulting and abusive languages against them. This has to be the attitude of Igbo Christians in the time of their crusade evangelism.

5.3 Engaging the Principle of Love Motivation in Time of Evangelism

A prompt and ethical Christian evangelism ought to be distinguished by love motivation. The truth about the great commission mandate is that the primary motivation for every Christian evangelism points to the love for God and the love for humanity. Jesus once re-emphasized on two commandments which says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”. On these two commandments depend all the laws and the prophets”. (Matthew 22:37-40). The truth is that the two commandments are interconnected with the mention of the word concept of love as a bridge between God and man, and what is to connect man with his fellow man. Looking at it from the great commission mandate perspective, ordinarily speaking Christian evangelism should grow out of genuine concern for the other person’s well-being following the assumed need for the person to hear and understand the truth about God.

Admittedly, the work of evangelism is not always an easy thing to do following the human complexity of dealing with man and his attitude towards his religious belief. In such a situation, one thing that is to help internally encourage an evangelistic effort would be the

strong love motivation for evangelism and the person one intends to evangelize. Looking at evangelism as an enterprise of love, Packer (2013) states that:

It must never be forgotten that the enterprise required of us in evangelism is the enterprise of love: an enterprise that springs from a genuine interest in those whom we seek to win, and a genuine care for their well-being, and expresses itself in a genuine respect for them and a genuine friendliness towards them. One sometimes meets a scalp-hunting zeal in evangelism, both in the pulpit and on the personal level, which is both discreditable and alarming. It is discreditable because it reflects, not love and care nor the desire to be of help, but arrogance and conceit and pleasure in having power over the lives of others. It is alarming because it finds expression in a ferocious psychological pummeling of the poor victim, which may do great damage to sensitive and impressionable souls. But if love prompts and rules our evangelistic work, we shall approach other people in a different spirit. If we truly care for them, and if our hearts truly love and fear God, then we shall seek to present Christ to them in a way that is both honouring to God and respectful to them. (pp. 2-3).

Packer however went further to postulate that Christians in other words evangelists should not try to violate people's personalities or exploit their weaknesses, or ride roughshod over their feelings. What we shall be trying to do rather, is to show them the reality of our friendship and concern by sharing with them our most valuable possession. And this spirit of friendship and concern will shine through all that we say to them, whether in the private evangelism or otherwise. It is invariable that an attitude that exhibits love to the people we intend to evangelize remains a good thing for the excelling of Christian evangelism.

The concern is that contemporary Christians are noted to love God and the work of evangelism without extending any likeness to non-christians within their reach. As Stetzer (2015) put it, it's fascinating that a lot of Christians don't seem to like non-christians, often

referred to as the lost or the unchurched. The truth of the matter is that one's love or likeness for another reflects in his attitude toward the personality any given time. This speaks volume of the fact that, in evangelism mindset is what dictates the move of love motivation. Recounting his experience, Armstrong (2013) said, I remember sitting in a worship gathering and being told quite emphatically that if we, the congregation, weren't each leading five people to Christ every year; we were failing in our duties as Christians. The mindset was all about numbers and this makes evangelism become about me and not others.

This has contributed in no small measure to most of the major religious conflicts and violence witness during Christian evangelism in some parts of the society as a result of wrong mindset. Participants in Christian evangelism in this era have been polarized with wrong mindset and interpretation that evangelism itself is an end and not a process. And this makes it a principle different from the principle of love, for what really motivates the former is usually egocentrism rather than love for God and others. Egocentrism delights so much in personal benefit or reassurance resulting from being able to convert another person to one's own position. In this context it is whenever personal domination with total disregard to the dignity of the individual with his or her religious belief is paramount it speaks volume of self-centeredness devoid of love.

In evangelism, an approach as this has the disposition to create a Christian evangelism that is emitting violence against other religions. But reverse would rather be the case in a situation whereby love is placed at the front burner in every move to effect a conversion. In the words of Sommerkamp (2013), when it comes to Christian evangelical motivation, nothing is more fundamental than love. Love is what should get evangelism started and keep it going. In all times and in all ways, love is our foremost and guiding principle. In essence the common truth is that for Christians to carry out a coherent ethical evangelism they must concentrate on conducts that would showcase to the non-christians love in practical ways. This love should

not be just in words and talk; it must be true love which would show itself in action and in deed.

Of course, one of the duties of every Christian is to proclaim the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to other individuals for the salvation of their souls as commanded in the great commission, but Christians oftentimes find themselves lacking of love motivation while carrying out the obligation of evangelizing the people. Generally speaking, you may love evangelism and as a result have to put a lot of effort in evangelism or even like to make evangelism a primary service, which is great. Nevertheless, it would be of immense value if the zeal of evangelizing and sharing the gospel with the non-Christians is guided by the principle of love motivation as what drives one on. The message of evangelism is love, simple and powerful. And that should be what Christians should preach on and what should guide and motivate them in time of evangelism.

Copeland (2009) observes that, with the right motivation behind our efforts in evangelism, the job will get done. Whenever evangelism does not occur well, lack of motivation (or in some cases, improper motivation) is always at the root of the problem. Going further, he explained that motivation is an inner drive, an idea captured in the imagination. In other words motivation can be utilized as what would strongly drive the motive of man towards achieving a targeted goal. The truth of the matter is that motivation is essential to the course of any success in any endeavour one steps self into doing.

It is a public knowledge in the historical account of the book of Matthew that Jesus was moved with compassion when he saw the crowd of the lost souls, “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every infirmity. When he saw the crowd he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9: 35-36). The reality is that it is such a compassionate love which centres on the good of others that certainly motivated

Jesus to send his disciples and down the line Christians to engage in the work of evangelism to save souls for eternal life. This speaks volume of the need for Christians to extend the love standard of Jesus which centres on the good of the other person in this case non-Christians during Christian evangelism and crusades.

The lifestyle of any Christian that engages in Christian evangelism must be able to attract love and not hate by showing love at all times. One's conduct and attitude should be in line with some element of positive point of view towards everyone, both on and off the field of evangelism. The crux of the matter is that Christian's approach during evangelism should be to showcase God's love and as a result attract people to willingly convert. It is of no gain denying the fact that conversion becomes difficult to attain the moment the evangelist plays the hard one on the people he is meant to evangelize.

Evangelism is not a medium for argument, condemnation, proving theological points or instigating negative and violent reactions from antagonists. It is simply to preach and share God's love for the conversion of the willing souls, the appropriate behaviour and comportment of a Christian engaging in evangelism is love. The great commission mandate which is the gospel is not about whose religion is superior, the issue of propaganda or trivial thoughts and indefensible allegations should not come in at all. Christians ought to consider the motive and strategy of Jesus Christ while he was evangelizing as he went about doing good, attending to the people that are in need. That is actually a clear show of love motivation in evangelism. It will be apt to state that being motivated by love to evangelize which implies treating others as self attitude is to be one of the practical steps today Igbo Christians are to adopt in their crusade evangelism work.

Speaking on the attitude of love for true evangelism, a Nigerian-Ukraine based senior Pastor of the Embassy of God Church; Adelaja (2016) gives out this narrative saying, I have taught my people to take God's love to the world not through conventional evangelism, but

through wisdom. I will give some more practical ways our church uses to take Christ's love to the world below: firstly, we go where there are needs, not to evangelize, but to meet those needs. For example, I know that in Nigeria we have a lot of internally displaced people. If I were to advise the church in Nigeria, I would say despite the fact that these people are Muslims, if we as the church, would go there not to preach, but to meet the needs of the children and women there, this will be a better and more effective way of bringing them to Christ's love than going to evangelize.

From Adelaja's point of view, can you imagine the church meeting the needs of malnutrition in the camps? Giving them free education? Providing free medical care and facilities? Every mother would be happy no matter where this help is coming from. It is only love that can overcome hatred. We should all become carriers of the gospel of love and not the gospel of evangelism. Secondly, as a church in the Ukraine, we seek to meet the needs of the community. So, if the community needs a road, we fix it and then put our signboard, which will say, this is an act of love from this church or that church to the community. Furthermore, if a community has crime problem, we set up community patrol to provide security for the community. Thirdly, another way we carry God's love to the world is by ensuring that we encourage every church member to have a social responsibility, as a believer. This means that though they bring their tithes to church, they take their offerings to the society, community and the world, thereby meeting the needs of the needy anywhere they go. These are few ways we could learn to carry the gospel of love and of our Lord Jesus Christ to a world that is becoming more and more hostile.

It is convincing that Adelaja has spoken kindly on the principle of love as what it takes to motivate Christian evangelism for a coherent ethical evangelism at any place and at anytime. The truth of the matter remains that participants in Christian evangelism must subscribe themselves to the attitude of openness with the burning desire for the love of God and humanity

as what influences their zeal to evangelize. This should be the central content of Christian evangelism knowing very well that evangelism is not only a matter of preaching the gospel of conversion. It also takes place in the context of the human relations and conducts. The fact is that the prospective converts no doubt is desirous to hear the good news in as much as they would be more convinced to see the demonstration of love by Christians during the course of the crusade evangelism.

This also goes a long way to suggest that because one's temperament is placed at public glare in the time of evangelism, it is therefore important that Christians that indulge in evangelism take it upon themselves to remember Christ's love always, as very exemplary and the need for love motivation to take its rightful place in the forefront of their heart and mind as evangelists. It can be said without mincing words that love very well expressed during Christian evangelism will equally impact on others as one share, the good news of the gospel for the salvation of souls.

In making it realizable, every Christian needs to have a clear understanding of the message of the gospel and be willing to adapt to its fundamental principle of love. The truth is that in evangelism and the conversion of belief the ends do not justify the means; rather it is the means that always justify the end. As far as Christian evangelism is concerned, the use of love which centres on the good of others as a means to achieving an end objective for the conversion of faith is better off than the use of violence. In the principle of love motivation in Christian evangelism, Christians are expected to do God's will in God's way. Doing God's will in God's way develops with Christians having to establish a personal love relationship with non-Christians during evangelism so as to influence and win them over.

Many methods and approaches have been created to stir up an effective and a coherent ethical Christian evangelism, while some are absurd and capitulated to hate and violence, many are helpful and serve the necessary purpose for a coherent propagation of the gospel. Therefore

one cannot imagine how to evangelize and overlook the fundamental principle of love that remains a central theme in the scripture. It was love that motivated God to send his son Jesus Christ to save humanity. This means that as Christians, love should continually influence every Christian evangelistic effort and endeavour.

For Dimitrov (2017), no wonder John 3:16 is so powerful and meaningful. It communicates the message of salvation while simultaneously unveiling the sentiment behind it: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”. God’s love set in motion his plan of salvation and the declaration of his good news reveals his heart for humanity. Effective evangelism arises from love and is proclaimed in love. The gospel message without the attitude of God’s love and compassion equals to nothing but void.

It is not in doubt that the sphere of influence and success in Christian evangelism is of course the way one is motivated to fulfill his evangelistic mandate. Bearing in mind that love should stand as the driving force behind every evangelistic effort, evangelism must first bring about a measure of understanding of the people especially the non-Christians. The obvious is that Christians will never capitulate to the culture, religion and tradition of the people but evangelism should be done with love and much decorum. This is to say that, Christians in the course of evangelizing the people should ensure an avoidance of any unnecessary cultural abuse or offence with the people even without compromise of their belief.

The mandate for Christians to spread the good news to all nations remains a divine and non-negotiable ultimatum. But to a great extent the genuine commitment of Christians to that effect is tested in their display of love as the foremost motivation in their work of evangelism. Really the proactiveness in showing love consistently to the people without condition and being culturally flexible in time of evangelism, speaks volume of one taking a dynamic rather than a

static view of human culture and personality. What this means as earlier noted is not to colour Christian beliefs, but to first and foremost see every other religion as being legitimate.

Pace (2015) raised this pertinent question to Christians saying, “Do you love with Christ’s eyes? Eyes that don’t see condemnation for the woman caught in adultery, but eyes that see a lonely, confused woman in need of forgiveness” (p. 2). It is not in doubt that Jesus’ evangelical mission while on the earth was surrounded with love which abhors condemnation of any kind. But Christians sometimes forget that it is their character that makes the word of the gospel during evangelism so powerful and enticing to the non-christians.

Therefore for Christians to have an effectual and a coherent ethical evangelism in a given society, it is an acceptable fact that love should play a pivotal role in all of Christian evangelism. It is a decision worth taking for Christians to put together a kind of confluence of love sensitivity with the preaching of the message of conversion in their day to day evangelical work. This move has the capability to present Christianity as an acceptable and all embracing religion of peace and harmony for all. From this backdrop it behooves on Christians to see the principle of love motivation in Christian evangelism as what possesses a cumulative effect of bringing people especially non-christians into Christianity. It is very plain that because evangelism always breaks out beyond the borders of the Christian community, it is very fundamental that love should motivate Christian evangelism at any given time.

5.4 Reliance on the Holy Spirit for an Inspired and Effectual Evangelism

Evangelism is the mission obligation of the people of God which entails the mandate on Christians to spread and share the gospel with the people of other religions. The fundamental truth is that while evangelism is very much viewed as entirely of human endeavour, the Holy Spirit actually plays a big role in Christian evangelism. Ultimately, it is a general belief that the responsibility of the Holy Spirit is to turn people’s hearts back to God, which is the essence

of evangelism. Holy Spirit is given to empower people to evangelize just as it was the case during the time of the apostle after the death of Jesus Christ. This is in line with the fact that Christians that engage in evangelism are empowered to embark on conversion of a person or group from one belief system to Christianity.

Webster (1961) rightly points it out to Christians when he states, I would want to add that we need the guidance of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and knowledge, to discern what the right time is and the right place. Not every time, not every place, is right for particular form of evangelism. What we can say and must say as Christians is that for every time, and in every place there is some appropriate form of evangelism. The truth that is to be grasped from the above assertion shows that Holy Spirit has a lot to offer Christians in terms of dictating the pace of evangelism. This goes a long way to mean that Christians have to depend or rely on the Holy Spirit for direction towards accomplishing an effectual evangelism. Detrick (n.d.) affirms that successful evangelism requires more than a program or strategy. It requires intentionality forged with compassion through the flame of the Holy Spirit. On the Day of the Pentecost, the spirit led believers from their inner focus in the upper room outside to the people.

Admittedly, Christians have a divine mission to accomplish in the world, which is evangelism. The successful accomplishment of the work of evangelism is tied to Christians' willingness to go all out to evangelize and proclaim the gospel to the non-Christians under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is not in doubt that the work of evangelism is most tasking and challenging as one meets people of diverse cultural and religious beliefs. The truth is not far from the popular concept that the Holy Spirit is capable of softening the heart of the people of such kind, leading and convincing them to conversion. Basically, it is not in doubt that God by means of the Holy Spirit does lead people supernaturally when it comes to evangelism.

Speaking on the role of the Holy Spirit on evangelism, Trehale (2008) is of the view that God has given believers great responsibility through the great commission. But he also gave Christians tremendous help to accomplish this task. He has committed Himself through the person of the Holy Spirit to come alongside Christians and help them evangelize the world. This approach involves revelation, equipping of the church, and preparation of the unsaved. All in all evangelism begins with and is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. From the assertion above, it would be pertinent to add that churches, Christians that are involve in evangelism are to be equipped by the holy spirit. In the sense that holy spirit guided evangelism would accordingly respect opinions and sensitivities of others and will not bring brutality nor violent destruction during the time of evangelism. The truth is that holy spirit when engaged by the evangelists would drive the people into charity rather than into violence hence making converts through it.

If one is to look closely with the kind of evangelism being organized and conducted in most communities of Igboland to be precise, it is a clear fact in history that participants in some of these crusades and evangelical outreaches perhaps seem never to have solicited the help of the Holy Spirit to that effect. The presumption is that some Christians somehow claim to know it all as it concerns the work of evangelism and the conversion of one person's belief to Christianity. One would say it is supposedly an act of ignorance that some Christians thought of evangelism as an individual or personal enterprise. To this end, this has made some Christians to concentrate passionately most of the time on one individual with a view to making him or her change his or her religious belief with duress.

Perhaps an evangelism that is driven in such thought pattern and conduct is believed to oftentimes result in failure because of nonengagement of the help of the Holy Spirit by the participants. Abbott (1970) made it clear that wherever the church of Jesus Christ has spread throughout the world it has been accomplished in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit.

Wherever failure in this enterprise has been experienced, it has been because of its absence. This is to say that every effective soulwinning (evangelism) program, whether undertaken by the individual Christian or by a body of Christians, should begin and be pursued with a proper recognition of the Holy Spirit.

The truth is that evangelism is not such a simple process. Equally men are not converted easily as facts and figures have shown all over the human race. There is of course this general agreement that evangelism is a proclamation of the gospel which leaves persons free to make their own decisions about it. Down the line it is naturally obtainable that some individuals or group of people as the case may be in their effort to retain their independence and integrity develop strong resistance to evangelism. One cannot deny the truth that in a situation as this, it will take the evangelist to engage the reliance on the Holy Spirit to conscript the heart and subject it to conversion.

This is certainly the area most Christians of today get it all wrong by not allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire and play a role in their evangelical endeavours. A historical book account of Acts of the Apostles has it concerning the early Christians whose footsteps Christians of today follow, that they hinged their reliance and inspiration for an effectual evangelism on the role of the holy spirit. Until the disciples of Jesus Christ received and were inspired by the holy spirit, persons like Peter and the rest of the disciples never stood up to preach the gospel (Acts 2: 14-41 paraphrased). Throwing more light on what would provide a relevant and an all embracing evangelism for Christians, Detrick (n.d.) posits that Christians' efforts at evangelism are often at best an exercise in recruitment. When energized by the Holy Spirit, however, evangelism becomes sharing the good news in a dynamic and comprehensive way as the Holy Spirit opens people's hearts.

In a situation whereby chaos and violence characterize Christian evangelism as is often the case in recent times, it becomes quite discouraging. This has left most Christians to ponder

on whether during the time of these conversions that ended in chaos if the Holy Spirit was made to be involved following which the result would have been different. The point to be grasped is that Holy Spirit has a major role to play in directing and redirecting Christians involve in evangelism on the guided conducts during evangelism. For instance, it is a general belief that Holy Spirit gives participants in Christian evangelism the spirit that so respects the opinion and the sensitivity of others not to trample on what they value with impunity. It is not in doubt that engaging the force of the Holy Spirit gives divine direction in the time of evangelism. Wisdom has always been the primary role of the Holy Spirit for Christians in discharging their responsibility, and in knowing the right thing to say and the right thing to do during the course of evangelism. Essentially, while it is the responsibility of Christians to speak the truth and also make themselves available for God's use in evangelism, the end point remains that it is God's responsibility through the Holy Spirit to convert non-Christians that intends to strongly maintain their religious belief.

More to this is that it is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to give the evangelists words to defend the gospel and to convince the people of the other faith to accept the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. In justification of the above assertion, Trenhaile (2008) pointed out that, on personal level, the Holy Spirit is always present to teach us and reminds us about Christ's completed redemptive work. He also teaches and reminds us about our present work of evangelism. Jesus said, "but the helper the Holy Spirit whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14: 26). In evangelism there is a wide range of incentives which the Holy Spirit avails to Christians that participate in evangelism which include unveiling to Christians what it takes to turn the heart of the non-Christians to God.

Speaking on the role of the Holy Spirit as what prepares the heart of the non-Christians for the acceptance of the gospel, Kenyon (1999) is of the opinion that:

The Holy Spirit today is making real to human hearts the work of the son of God. The spirit's teaching and communications are not his own, they are Christ's. The Holy Spirit's ministry is to reveal to men what Jesus brought about by his death and resurrection. To show every man that Jesus became sin on man's behalf so that they may become righteous. He also shows every man the tragedy of rejecting Christ's substitution sacrifice. (p. 265).

It is therefore essential that Christians that are committed to the work of evangelism are obedient to the great commission mandate, by carrying out this obligation should see reason to allow the Holy Spirit to teach them the rudiments of evangelism.

Noteworthy is the fact that Jesus himself went on to describe the revelatory work of the holy spirit as follows, "when the spirit of the truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the father has is mine, therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16: 13-15). The essence of the revelatory work of the Holy Spirit as made open by Jesus to every Christian is for Christians to be exposed to the truth of evangelism. And it therefore ought to be a guide for the contemporary Christians in their work of evangelism during crusades.

Many people will come to term with the fact that if there is evangelical truth which the Holy Spirit the custodian of the truth would point out to Christians, it invariably shows that there equally exist certain things that are not true about evangelism. The fact this statements tends to expose Christians to, is that in Christian evangelism, nobody should assume to know it all. This means that the Holy Spirit should be seen as the compass which directs Christians on the right word and conduct in the time of evangelism. The truth is that Christians' reliance on the holy spirit would guide them from being easily upset and other temperamental conduct

in their approach with individuals of diverse characters in their course of evangelism, bearing in mind that it would make for an effectual and coherent evangelism.

The problem with some Christians in Igboland of Nigeria is that evangelism has become an easy thing to them, in the sense that they can afford to ignore or make little of the role of the Holy Spirit for a coherent evangelism. It is very amusing that some Christians use to perceive the work of Christian evangelism as the ability of one to manipulate some person's religious belief. This method of evangelism is opposed by certain persons such as Webster (1961) who advised that "Evangelist must not be a manipulator, even though he also is concerned with persuading men to change their minds" (p. 41). It is therefore perfectly clear that the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelism is simply to persuade, convince or convict people of other faith to follow Jesus. This is not an assumption because the idea of the Holy Spirit convicting and convincing people certainly has biblical backing as the historical account on the book of John shows as follows, "And when he comes he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8).

The important thing therefore is for Christians to understand the convicting and the convincing role of the Holy Spirit and accepting it as factual. It is something that can be achieved through careful planning by doing the right thing at the right time as the evangelism standard requires. The concern is that many Christians fail to realize that their reliance on the Holy Spirit would empower them with an effective technique through persuasion for a serene evangelism. In circumstance as this, the Holy Spirit is to convince and nudge people in the right direction so that they will be able to make the right decisions and choices. From every indication, the fundamental truth is that evangelism is a hopeless undertaking without the supernatural regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

The clear fact in history is that most Christians are guilty of seeing evangelical work as an individualistic effort, without giving it a thought to cooperate with God in the work of

evangelism. Evangelism work is certainly Holy Spirit centred and Christians as evangelists are called to cooperate with God in the work of evangelizing the people for the salvation of souls. One notable fact is that man's effort without the cooperation or reliance in God (the Holy Spirit) for conviction and conversion of people in time of evangelism will make conversion a hard thing to attain. Therefore, if Christians will truly believe that Holy Spirit is ultimately the one that brings people to Christ, it should profoundly influence the way in which they view evangelism. They should be reminding themselves that evangelism is God's work therefore the Holy Spirit is to be trusted to direct human responses in time of evangelism and crusades.

It should not go without saying that evangelism is not all about man and his abilities. It is the Holy Spirit who brings people to Christ through his awesome power to convict and convince. The common truth remains that history beckons on Christians to approach and hold on to the fundamental principle of engaging the efficacy of the Holy Spirit for evangelism as some apostles of the old did. For instance, reliance on the power of the spirit was therefore a central theme for some apostles as Paul, as evident in his statement saying, "My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2: 4-5).

On the role of the Holy Spirit in the early church evangelism, Presley (2016) observes that the early church was an evangelistic church. From the least to the greatest, early Christians were serious about the regular proclamation of the gospel. At the same time, the nature of evangelism in the early church was both passionate and spontaneous. They did not have the freedom to gather publicly in large groups or plan highly involved outreach initiatives. Instead, the work of gospel proclamation was organically filtered into their everyday lives. The early Christians relied daily on the spirit and preached the gospel enthusiastically whenever afforded the opportunity.

To this end, it would be wonderful for today Christians to understand that their reliance on the Holy Spirit will not only promote an inspired and effectual evangelism. But will prevent people that participate in evangelism and Christians in general from slipping into dangerous pride, manipulation, intimidation and violent actions on opposite religions during evangelism and crusades. It is a biblical truth that holy spirit controlled temperaments eschews violence in all disguise which is good for a coherent, peaceful and result oriented Christian evangelism.

5.5 Engaging the Social Service Strategy in Evangelism

In evangelism, words of preaching of the gospel are noted to be the normal medium of evangelism but they are certainly not the only medium. The social intervention strategy or service is yet another medium of evangelism that attracts people's faith for conversion. In fact there are occasions where people will not listen to the words of preaching by an evangelist, only to be touched by his service of favour. In the words of Ross (2014), social services are defined as programs or assistance that addresses temporal needs. Social services do not in their essence have an intentional or overt religious discipleship component.

Consequently, social service streamlines the fact that the poor and the needy in the society deserve to be helped by the haves. The truth is that evangelism being the work of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of soul, social service is to meet the need of the needy. The activities of the two can be said to be compatible and critical. Apostle Luke on the social concern of addressing the need of the needy for the love of Jesus as an inherent obedience to the law and the sharing of the faith, following the example of Jesus as written in Luke's gospel which says, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

Given that the greatest need of God for every human person is for man to be reconciled with him and being that this can only be met through the message of the gospel, it is logical therefore to say that among the priority of the evangelism is to preach to the poor, the needy the message of social service which entails meeting their needs. This also suggests that evangelism and social service which is all about helping the needy are inseparable as far as Christian evangelism is concerned. As Cameron (2000) puts it thus; one way in which the great commission instructs us to make disciples is by teaching them to observe all the things that I have commanded you (Matthew 28: 20). Observing all things would include the great commandment in Matthew 22: 38-39 with emphasis on love. Love is the fundamental principle upon which evangelism is built on. Love meets the total needs of an individual and cannot be limited to areas as spiritual, physical, social, or emotional.

Stott (1981) notes that, “our neighbour is neither a body-less soul that we should love only his soul, nor a soul-less body that we should care for its welfare alone; nor even a body-soul isolated from society” (p. 5). In a further insight, Stott states that God created man who is my neighbour a body-soul in a community. Therefore if we love our neighbour as God that made him, we must inevitably be concerned for his total welfare. This therefore speaks volume of the need for Christians to also apply the work of administering material things as succour to the needy just as they preach the words of the gospel to them. It is not out of place that some people would argue the workability of this seemingly distinct ideology. Nevertheless biblical insights have shown that the two together constitute evangelism.

To engage in social service intervention strategy in evangelism, one has to adopt the following practical steps:

5.5.1 Helping of the Poor, the Needy and Less Privileged

The fundamental motif of Christian evangelism is attached to the compassionate love to save souls from going to hell fire. That forms the reason preaching of the gospel to non-Christians or anyone is carried out with an utmost sense of love by an evangelist. And love being a very viable stimulant for the work of evangelism, it ought not to be restricted to the preaching of the words of God. This love should provoke another dimension of evangelism by which Christians are motivated to involve themselves in social services of helping the needy in their midst even as they also preach the gospel to them. However Christians are not to engage in the use of social services as an instrument of manipulation of belief, rather as an expression of Jesus Christ's own compassion.

In a historical run-up to the need for a social service, Jesus speaking in the book of Luke asks, "What does it profit my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has no works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed and filled, without giving them the things needed for the body what does it profit?" (James 2: 15-16). In essence the early Christians are noted to have preached Christ with words and powerful work. It became very clear that the words cannot be separated from work in the sense that words are directed to the soul and works are relief given to bodily ills and wants. This is what is expected of today Christians to engage themselves into social services of helping the poor, the needy and the less privileged overcome their challenges.

While analyzing the fact that Wesley's social services served a great evangelical purpose during his time, Ross (2014) observes that through Wesley's concern and compassion for the poor, vulgar, base, and outcasts to call sinners to repentance, the poor responded to Wesley's holistic evangelism and the Methodist movement spread throughout low-income earners in England and in America. A further insight from Ross shows that while the Church of England and its members participated in philanthropy, the church showed little interest in extending religious services to the poor. Wesley however would seek to connect the poor with

both the social services and religious services of the Methodists holistically. Wesley's physical presence with the poor was not limited to extending social services. Wesley also went to where the poor are to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The things to be grasped from the Wesley's approach to evangelism as embedded in social services of attending to the need of the poor, is for Christians not to neglect the moral bounding and the responsibility placed on them as Christians to have compassion for starving people and for those who suffer from any form of social deprivation or the other. The significance of this is that in today's society of diverse human suffering, the place of social service as means of helping the poor, the needy in the society for the sake of the gospel is to be encouraged. It has always been noticed that the poor, the needy, the hungry and the less privileged are the people that pay more attention to Christian evangelism. And the preaching of the gospel if it is being proclaimed by the same individuals that have shown them compassion either by feeding and providing for them or meeting of their needs it would aid their acceptability of the gospel.

Evangelism revolves around showing God's love through example. Therefore Christians should show their faith in God through kindness to others. The true position of things remains that this kindness which is committed to serving the needy, the poor and the less privileged is done in love and for Christ's name. But without making an explicit attempt to bring those they serve or help to Christ, any one that argues in this direction is perhaps justified to an extent, but one must bear in mind the sayings of Webster (1961) that "evangelism, if it is to be effective, must be carried out on the basis of equality and friendship, for as D.T. Niles has defined it, it is one beggar telling another where to get bread" (p. 150).

Suffice to say that evangelism is not only a matter of preaching the gospel as has been noted several times. Evangelism as well takes place in the context of friendship and social service. People are very much excited when practical steps are taken to preach to their hungry

stomach with their needs met. It is God's standard as stated in the book of Deuteronomy that the poor is to be looked after thus, "For the poor will never cease out of the land, therefore I command you, you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land" (Deuteronomy 15: 11). This certainly is seen as God's standard which every Christian is expected to be encouraged to always do.

Campbell (2014) is emphatic when he states that, in fact church history is replete with examples of Christians for whom the proclamation of the gospel is absolutely number one, and yet they are not therefore ambivalent about the poor. Stating that George Whitefield and Charles Spurgeon are two great exemplars, no one could question their gospel credentials. George Whitefield was arguably the greatest evangelist of the eighteenth century, having preached to hundreds of thousands of people in the UK and North America. And yet in 1740 he founded the Bethesda home for boys as an orphanage in Georgia, which still operates today as boys' school. Charles Spurgeon was one of the great preachers and evangelists of the nineteenth century, with a church of over five thousand people. Yet, in 1867 he founded the stock well orphanage in London, which still exists as spurgeon's child care. Campbell also went further to point out that these two men were outstanding preachers and evangelists, but they were not too busy to found orphanages. They were not so consumed by the gospel strategy that they failed to care for the disadvantaged.

In such communities as Amansea, Ugbenu, Awba-Ofemili, Aguobuowa, Oraukwu, Igboukwu and so on where violent evangelism crusade has taken place, if churches and Christian evangelists had been of help to the poor masses there by meeting their needs in such a way as sinking of water bore-hole to lessen the water problem of the people, by giving loans and grants to help the indigent ones in their business or agricultural production, they would have made a great success in their work of conversion. Since most of the beneficiaries remains the prospective converts they would therefore be favourable disposed to embrace Christian

religion which would render the issue of forced conversion and violent evangelism crusade inconsequential. From whichever way one is to look at it, social services in this context implies taking care of the poor, orphans, and the needy which is of evangelistic significance. Some people are converted through the reality of social services rather than the effect of preaching. As Christians, God tells us to care for the poor because He too cares for the poor. It is not just the right thing to do, but strategic for Christian evangelism and effective faith conversion.

5.5.2 Offering of Scholarships to Indigent Students

The year 1857 is regarded as the year Christianity was planted in Igboland following the penetration of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) led by one of the ex-slaves Rev Samuel Ajayi Crowther. The task of evangelizing and the growth of the Christian faith among the people were handed over to Rev Johnson Christopher Taylor by Rev Samuel Ajayi Crowther who went northwards to Idda from Onitsha. Anyabuiké (1996) is of the view that:

The work of evangelism in Onitsha was tackled by Taylor with the assistance of Simon Jonas, the catechist and some Sierra Leone settlers in Onitsha. King Akazua's yard served as a forum for preaching, teaching, singing and praying. Excitement and curiosity aroused outstanding interest among the Igbo people; they came and watched with stupendous fascination. Later, Taylor opened a school where he taught pupils the alphabets. The story of the new teaching of the missionaries spread all over the place. (p. 25).

It is noteworthy that following the arrival of the C.M.S, the Roman Catholic Church also arrived at Onitsha as led by Rev Fr Joseph Lutz in the year 1885. Fr Lutz on arrival at Onitsha is quoted to have said to the King, according to Ekechi (1972) saying, "we came to live near you, to open a school, to teach your children and your good people, all who may wish to come and learn knowledge from the white men of Europe" (p. 73).

One important thing about the attitude of the missionaries that brought Christianity into Igbo society was the introduction of western education in the area. True to it is that the people seriously wanted to learn how to read and write for their self wellbeing. The missionaries no doubt used education as means of evangelism. In the words of Uruakpa (1996), “it is quite clear that these missionary bodies had common aims, and especially shared the philosophy of education as the sharpest instrument for effective and result oriented evangelism” (p. 123).

The successful planting of Christianity and evangelism of the Igbo society remains sequel among other things. The missionaries’ use of education as their strongest arm of evangelism, corroborating the aforementioned assertion. Ilogu (1974) attests to the fact that:

The seductive approach of the missionaries in offering to the people, whenever they wanted to start missionary work, facilities for the education of their children and the manifest evidence of the benefit of education to such children when they were able to read and write, were attractive. (p. 76).

If one is to look at the attitude of the Igbo people towards education as something beneficial during missionary era and now, one is to find out that just as it was during the missionary era, the disposition of parents to see their children go to school in order to acquire western education has remained unchanged. The challenge some parents have today unlike during the missionary era when education was free is nothing but the inability for them to finance their children’s education.

Interestingly, this is the area Christians needed to set up their evangelical effort by offering scholarships to indigent students without limiting the work of evangelism only to the preaching of the gospel. Helping the children of the poor to attend school ought to be prioritized by the church and wealthy Christians as a means of making friendship that would lead to conversion. According to Webster (1961),

The Church and the Christians alike are committed to service as the expression of love and compassion of God in the name of Jesus Christ. Unless the church is at home in the sphere of service it is unlikely to be relevant when it turns to evangelism. (p. 150).

Among the sphere of the social service which Christians should engage themselves into, is for them to exemplify the compassionate love of God. It is admissible that love is at the centre of the great commission mandate and this love speaks volume when Christians give succour to the needy in areas as offering scholarship to help children of the poor go to school.

Since the aim of every a serious evangelism is to make conversion, the impact of some social services such as offering scholarship to help indigent children acquire education cannot be overemphasized. Even though such kindness must not have the intention to manipulate one's belief, rather should be seen to reflect a genuine expression of God's love with nothing attached to it. Ordinarily such a service as this would showcase Christianity as a responsive religion. Evangelism and the preaching of the gospel of conversion would make sense in the ears of the non-christians in line with the way social services appeal to them.

5.5.3 Rendering of Free Healthcare Services

Among the positive innovations introduced into Igboland by the missionaries that helped the planting and the cementing of Christianity in the area were the healthcare services. Before the coming of Christianity in Igboland, history has it that the people were bedeviled with some ordinary illnesses such as malaria, fever, small pox cases and so on. Supposedly it was a worrisome situation to the people until missionaries emerged with their social services in their course to evangelize the people. For instance with the arrival of the French Catholic Missionaries, the missionaries therefore saw the need to introduce medical services as a means of helping out and evangelizing of the people too. Among other things, Ilogu (1974) noted that, "other forms of social services were provided especially by Father Lutz of the Roman Catholic

Mission who used the supply of medicine to households as a regular means of winning friends whom to convert” (p. 76).

Even when the Church Missionary Society was initially skeptical of medical healthcare strategy as a means for evangelism, the missionary society later reversed itself to engage in the provision of social service of healthcare welfare as stated in Ekechi (1972) thus:

The missionaries of the CMS, by accepting medical rivalry as an instrument of evangelization, were fundamentally reversing their position on the use of temporal means to secure spiritual ends. In other words, this was a clear change of policy in respect to the views espoused by Bishop Crowther. To justify the change of attitude towards what was considered a materialistic approach to Christianity, the missionaries now hailed the work of mercy as something worthy of Christian pursuit. (p. 77).

The missionaries that came to evangelize the people of Igbo land saw the adverse health condition of the people they were to evangelize. The missionaries to an extent literally laid aside the work of preaching the gospel for social service work of distributing drugs to the people so as to lessen their health challenges. The truth is that this kind of humane conduct of the early missionaries as a matter of fact swayed converts from one side to the other. This was attested to in a report of CMS secretary sent to parent committee in London as noted in Ekechi (1972) saying, “In almost each case the means used to draw our people has been medicine” (p. 77). The point so declared here is that the rendering of healthcare services of the Catholic Missionaries actually enticed and attracted the people to them even those who were already Anglicans.

There is nothing stopping the contemporary Christians of today from getting the same result as the early missionaries if they would engage in social service that cares for the medical welfare of the people. The common truth is that many people in Igboland are suffering from one sickness or the other which they cannot afford payment for its treatment. The onus therefore

lies on the Christian faith as a socio-religious organization while preaching the word of God to equally pay attention to the medical needs of the people. Such benevolent attitude can easily predispose the people to acceptance of the message of conversion.

The early missionaries were trailblazers on the issue of free medical welfare to the people and it helped them to make good number of converts. Bearing in mind that the work of evangelism is continuous, nothing stops today Igbo Christians and Christians' world over from approaching non-Christians with generous provision of medicines for their medical needs rather than engaging in forceful and violent conversion. If churches and Christian bodies were to organize free healthcare services in towns and villages of Igboland; reaching out to the haves and the have nots with the gospel of free medical care services. The truth is that it will appeal to the conscience of the people, and knowing very well that it is conscience that extracts decision and not emotion.

The person that had the opportunity to be offered free medical care holds his or her conscience at heart to perceive evangelism to be relevant. This fact is evident during the activities of the missionaries who having adopted this approach of medical care. According to Ekechi (1972), "The Catholic missionaries fully recognized that the approach they had adopted was a powerful means of evangelization and conversion" (p. 75). The point is that it behooves on today's Christians not to think otherwise than to key into rendering of free health care services as what would give them a push for an effectual, coherent and non coercive evangelism. That is the simple truth.

5.6 Respect for Culture, Religion and Tradition of the People

Evangelism is a divine command for every Christian to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every one for the salvation of souls and the conversion of beliefs. It is expected that as Christians' honour this call of the great commission mandate and go about their

evangelism, their work of evangelism should be in accordance with the way and manner Jesus Christ carried it out when he was on earth. For instance, when Jesus was on earth, He displayed a very high sense of maturity and respect in His approach to the culture, religion and traditions of the day. In one of the occasions Jesus said to the people, “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets, I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5: 17). The law in this context should be the guiding principle of the people on the way they do things in terms of their culture, religion and tradition.

One can rightly and safely say that as Christians engage in the work of evangelizing the people, they should respectfully go about it. When Christians go about preaching the gospel message of conversion to other religions they have to be culturally sensitive. Sensitivity in this context is Christians being able to respectfully position their mind to understand other people’s feelings concerning their culture, religion and traditions. Explaining this further in the attitude of the Catholic Church towards other religions and cultures of the people in time of evangelization, Arinze (2014) declares that:

The attitude of the Catholic Church towards people of other religions and cultures who embrace the faith has been one of openness. The congregation for the evangelization of peoples (earlier called “de propaganda fide”), in sending its first missionaries to Indochina (today we would say Vietnam) in 1627, admonished them to respect the cultures and traditions of those peoples and to reject only that which is diametrically opposed to the Christian faith. (p. 13).

In all that concerns evangelism the supremacy of the scripture, is very essential for success to be attained in any evangelistic endeavour. While sending the twelve disciples on an evangelistic mission, Jesus gave them this advice saying, “And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town” (Matthew 10: 14). What this assertion really represents to Christians of today is for them in the

course of their evangelism to respect individual's opinion, belief system, culture, religion and tradition. It is important that Christians should have a firm understanding of the fact that every religion is legitimate and is to be accorded some respect even at the threshold of evangelism.

Christian evangelism of other religions most times has been ineffective because some Christians have failed to respect them and therefore failed to be understood by these other religions. Aggressiveness, violence, rudeness and being dogmatic should not be the approach of Christians that are involved in the process of evangelizing the people. A situation whereby some of these religions and their paraphernalia (symbols) were subjected to attacks and total destructions as seen happen in some parts of Igboland is highly despicable to say the least. The truth is that a religion, culture and tradition which are not opposed to Christian faith and have held sway in Igboland for instance even before the arrival of the missionaries deserves some respects.

The message is that in Igboland, traditional religion and culture and its adherents should be treated with utmost respect they deserve in the course of any evangelism. On the unrespectful treatment of traditional religion, Arinze (2014) explains that:

The gospel of Jesus Christ does not precipitate a religious or cultural operation wipe-out of the past. The missionary is not a reckless iconoclast. Unless a people to be evangelized know where they come from, what their religious and cultural heritage held as precious and worthy and what their ancestors have taught them to abhor, they cannot be sure foundation members of the Christian faith. Grace builds on nature. It does not destroy it. (p. 15).

It is not far from the truth that even the missionaries themselves to some extent were disrespectful to the traditional religion and culture of the Igbo people. History is inundated with iconoclast activity of the early missionaries in communities as Arochukwu between the periods of 1901-1902 with the destruction of the Long Juju known as Ubinukpabi, in Awka

with the destruction of Agbala-Awka deity in the year 1904 and so on following their attempts to plant Christianity. Christians of today seem to have started to copy the early missionaries by being disrespectful to the culture, tradition and religion of the people during the time of their evangelism. Being that religion as well as culture and tradition is a critical part of life of every human person which also stands as a defining factor for them.

There is the need for all especially Christians to treat and handle the belief system of others with an utmost caution and respect. To be more specific, it is important that Christians start to see its relationship with the culture, religion and the tradition of the people as a sensitive issue during evangelism. Christian's sensitivity to how issue of culture, religion and tradition is treated during any evangelism or crusade will guide them to relate in a harmonious way with the adherents. A Christian evangelism that would be able to produce a desired result of making converts must have effect on the character and behaviour of itself on others.

In essence if for instance an evangelist is to be found to exhibit character devoid of respect either to the traditionalist or his symbol of worship which often culminate into violence and destruction of the latter, certainly such a chaotic situation cannot be the best way for a meaningful and sustainable evangelism to thrive. A meaningful and sustainable evangelism would thrive among other things where acceptance and respect for other person's belief system is all-embracing. In most times, it is easier to initiate and commence the work of evangelism than to carry out the task of obliging oneself to the principle of according respect to the belief system of the people.

Speaking on Jesus' attitude towards people of other faiths, Carr (n.d.) noted that, in Jesus we have a person who is thoroughly critical of people of his own religious tradition and willing to see the positive points in other people's faith and practice. And this justified the claims that while Jesus sojourned on the earth He gave an equal opportunity and respect to the tradition, religion and culture of the Greeks, Jews and the Gentiles. This actually informs the

reason, every person that engages in the work of evangelism as a matter of importance should imbibe the principle of respect to culture, religion and tradition of the people. Of particular interest is the fact that Jesus' approach to culture and tradition in the course of His preaching the word of God was without any disdain.

Rather in the words of Carr (n.d.) Jesus had a perceptive eye to recognize how even people of other faiths could be open to God's grace and be empowered to transcend culturally inherited prejudices. This no doubt explains how Jesus tolerated and respected the belief system of other faiths. This distinctly exemplifies the nature and trait of Jesus Christ which is expected of His followers to also exhibit. Attitude and conduct of Christians must appear to show a genuine respect for traditional religion and culture especially during evangelism.

It is worthy of special note that the call for respect for culture, tradition and religion by Christian evangelists is not intended to water down the scripture. In specific term, it is a pointer to Christians that while keeping their identity intact they must be prepared to respect other religions, precisely the positive values of their culture, religion and tradition. This is to allay the concern that Christians may in their quest to respect tradition, culture and religion in the time of evangelism compromise their faith. By according respects to culture, religion and tradition of the people, evangelism becomes a journey of better understanding and the discovery of the truth which could provide an opportunity for a true conversion.

There is no denying the fact that when one displays some level of respect to culture, religion and tradition of the people, the person is simply exploiting the germane sensitivity of Jesus Christ who exhibited high level of respect to man, his culture, religion and tradition. Therefore for Christians to have a good evangelical fellowship with those people of other culture just as Jesus Christ had, they should follow the footsteps of Jesus. To this end, every Christian must be ready and willing to respect other religions even as they evangelize their members.

Speaking on Jesus and the apostles on their understanding and respect for the culture of the people of their time while evangelizing, Payne (2007) states that, Jesus and the apostolic church knew about the value of culture in the communication of the gospel. For example, in Paul's Mar' Hill address, he began his message by stating what would have been a complement to the Athenians, namely, that they were very religious people (Acts 17: 22). He then decided to connect with his Athenian hearers not with a passage from the Old Testament, but by quoting from their own poets (Acts 17: 28-29). In his defence before Agrippa, Paul made certain to conduct himself appropriately as any proper orator would have done before such a statesman by stretching out his hand before proceeding to speak (Acts 26: 1). Being aware of the various cultures of the people to whom they were speaking allowed the early evangelists to connect with their audiences and gain hearing.

A further insight from Payne drew attention to the fact that closely related to the early churches' understanding of the value of culture was the fact that the methods and gospel presentations of Jesus and the apostolic church varied from situation to situation. Jesus did not speak to Zacchaeus as he did to Nicodemus. Paul did not present himself in the same manner to Agrippa as he did to Lydia (Acts 16). Jesus' encounter with the Gerasene demoniac required a different approach than how he engaged the Samaritan woman. Although the gospel message did not change (Acts 20: 21), the contexts required different methods of engagement and communication devoid of violence.

The truth of the matter is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of peace and not of strife. The same way Jesus and the apostles of the early church were sensitive to the fear, hurts and concerns of other religious bodies while speaking the truth of the gospel in love. Christians of today can learn a lot from Jesus' approach to evangelism. Jesus would befriend the sinner but not to belittle the sin. He would acknowledge the sin and the grave nature of sin

and share the gospel but, would back off if the recipient would become irritated. He was an excellent listener and finally performs acts of kindness and servitude to show humility.

It is important that Christians of this era should have a deep reflection on evangelism and give some thought on what kind of evangelism would serve them better for a peaceful coexistence even after the evangelism had been done. The kind of evangelism that would serve such a purpose must be an evangelism that is able to internalize the practice of showing some respects to various organs of other religions. This is important, and Christians must be conscious not to unnecessarily and unfairly disparage other religions and hence being inherently disrespectful to them. The ideal thing remains that evangelizing Christians should try to imbibe the idea of respecting people's belief system as attached to their culture, tradition and religion.

Nevertheless, it is not in doubt that the supremacy of God cannot be compromised for any reason at all. This is the reason Christians even when they are expected to respect the culture and tradition of the people it is not enough reason for them to negotiate their belief with that of the tradition, culture and religion of the people. This cannot be said to be of consistency with the biblical pronouncement of the message of Jesus on evangelism. On the other hand, it is expected of Christians to see respect for other religions as a moral principle which is to be done without prejudice.

Petersen (1987) gives this as advice to Christians saying, as Christians we need to adapt to change, especially in area of our behaviour. Going into the world requires change, so as to have a full participation or impact in people's lives. This means to think, to feel, to understand, and to take seriously the values of those we seek to win. So, Petersen's assertion speaks volume of the need for Christian's behaviour towards those they intended to evangelize to reflect their seriousness to respect the culture, religion and the tradition of the people. This attribute and conduct no doubt is conspicuously missing in every of the communities in Igboland that have

witnessed attack and the destruction of Traditional Religious artifacts during Christian evangelism in recent times.

The major emphasis on Christians' respect for culture, religion and tradition of the people during the course of evangelism cannot be over emphasized. The truth of the matter is that every religion truly deserves some recognition and respect for its position as a legitimate religion. One is to acknowledge the fact that such a pragmatic approach by Christians towards other religions would make conversion effectual. Christians cannot afford to be therefore one-sided with Christianity and its culture, disregarding and disrespectfully treating the culture and the traditions of other religions. In the words of Hook (2015), I thought it was pretty important to respect people's cultural background (including their religious beliefs). There seemed to be a disconnect between respecting a person's religious beliefs and trying to get a person to change his or her religious beliefs to align with mine. On this premise, the unassailable truth is that as a Christian evangelist, one has to respect the religious position of a prospective convert unmolested even at the point of evangelism. The inability to do this often brings about a discoloration of evangelism that results into iconoclasm and attacks on traditional religious artifacts.

Preaching of the gospel for the conversion of faith would become real and acceptable the moment preachers or evangelists imbibe the attitude of respect for other religions. When an evangelist or the preacher of the gospel claims superiority over all that other religions stood for in terms of their religion, culture and tradition, it is an act of being disrespectful. Believing that only what originated from Christian religion is legal and good to be respected may not be proper. In a situation as this, the chances of making converts are very slim when compared with if other religions were given their rightful respect. The acceptance of the gospel of evangelism by the non-christians is in accordance to the way by which the gospel is presented. One fundamental thing to note at this point is that in the eyes of the people in this case the non-

christians, the message of the gospel and the preacher of the message of the gospel are seen as the reflection of the other. To this end, Christians therefore ought to present the gospel of evangelism as a dialogue born out of respect for the people, their culture, tradition and religion.

5.7 Understanding the Standard for Christian Evangelism

Emerging facts have shown that the church vis-à-vis Christians may not have made sufficient effort to understand what it really means to proclaim the gospel in a complex and complicated socio-cultural society. The historical situation in Igboland in recent times has shown that the lack of prompt understanding of evangelism standard is the cause of violent conflicts during Christian evangelism as a result of cultural misunderstanding. The complexity of the interaction between Christianity and traditional religion in the time of preaching the gospel could be traceable to insufficient understanding of the biblical standard for evangelism.

Jesus while sending His disciple for evangelism according to the book of Matthew 10: 14 accounts is believed to have handed over to them the standard for evangelism. The passage is reminiscent of the fact that people be allowed to receive the gospel of Christ by personal decision devoid of coercion. As Keathley (2004) puts it, evangelism is a process that brings a person to a decision. In our work with people, we become a part of the process of preparing, sowing, watering, or reaping, but we cannot hurry the process. We must learn to care about people just as did the Lord.

The point to be grasped is the fact that in evangelism standard, Christian evangelists while doing their preaching are expected to allow the prospective converts the chance to listen and be given the opportunity to respond accordingly. The standard for the biblical evangelism that Jesus Christ has commissioned as far as matters of opinion are concerned is a process centred on the need not to force ones opinion on others. In Mark's account of Jesus calling of the disciples he said "And he appointed twelve to be with him and to be sent out to preach"

(Mark 3:14). The truth of the matter is that they were with him and watched him, and he sent them out to do what he had done. Jesus's evangelism style serves as the prime example for his first followers as it should for those of the twenty-first century Christians.

Corroborating this fact, Lewis & Lewis (1989) observe that, "Not only did Jesus' preaching move the unlettered multitudes of the first century, but His preaching methods and communication style seem especially well-suited for the century listeners" (p. 19).

Therefore since Jesus serves as an excellent model for an effective evangelistic preaching, it is important that Christians of today should endeavour to imbibe the evangelism standard as shown by Jesus himself. Comer (1997) in re-emphasizing the same thing states that the bible is clear about the importance of Christian's spirit or attitude in evangelism. In evangelism, preachers of the gospel are expected to carry themselves in a positive behaviour that would make men change their minds. The aim of Christian evangelism is to get people especially the non-christians to change their minds about God. In accomplishing this task it requires a complete behavioural reorientation in line with the standard for Christian evangelism.

In the words of Tkach (n.d.), Christianity does have behavioural standards. It does involve changes in the way we live. It does make demands on our lives. We are to live for Christ, not for ourselves. However, one understandable fact is that in as much as Christianity has a behavioural standard the same is to be said of some components of Christianity such as evangelism. Given the already scary prospect of having a crusade and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of the other faiths in this contemporary Christian age, Christians must fashion out how to stop the situation. To this end, there is the need for Christians to be driven in their duty of evangelism by practical application of evangelism standard.

According to Richards (2017), Gospel proclamation is truth-telling. Whether sharing the gospel with a stranger on the street or a neighbour over coffee, evangelism tells others the

truth about the human condition and God's redemptive plan to reconcile us to him. This no doubt is the standard and the fundamental basic for an effectual evangelism. In other words truth is necessary to faithfully proclaim the gospel. Richards went on to advise Christians that evangelism is not merely a methodology. One size fits all doesn't work with evangelism. The task involves real, complex human beings. You'll never have the perfect conditions to share the gospel. Whatever the condition, though, be mindful that you take truth as companion with you in any gospel conversation.

It is therefore imperative that Christians should understand that the standard for evangelism revolves around being unconditionally truthful while preaching the gospel or evangelizing. Christian evangelism must always stand out as totally distinct from falsehood, manipulation, coercion and other methods of the likes, but must reckon with the standard of following all men with the gospel truth. It is most important that Christian evangelism in no sense whatsoever should descend to the level of not being conducted with the truth. Associating Christian evangelism with fallacy is neither the standard nor the true way of evangelism or making of converts as Jesus did.

When a Christian embarks on evangelism of other faith and the common response is that the person is trying to force his belief on others, such an act simply negates the standard of evangelism. Rothra (2008) is right to have pointed it out that the moral argument is that nobody has the right to force their beliefs on another; the legal argument is that the constitution protects individual beliefs and any attempt to change those beliefs hinders that freedom. The open truth remains that the peculiarity of the constitution on the freedom of choice making is the same with the evangelism standard of never to force belief on another person.

The greatest motive for evangelism is for Christians to preach the gospel and make conversion of faiths. Christians must understand that this motive cannot just be accomplished by willpower without adherence to the evangelism standard. One should understand as clearly

pointed out in Rothra (2014) who says that, unless the gospel is explain and person is asked to respond to the gospel, then there is no evangelism. This gives volume for one to understand that Christian evangelism is averse to imposition of self on other religions but rather creates room for an answer to the call for a change of faith or belief system.

In all fairness, it should be pointed out that Christians who are enthusiastic about carrying out the work of evangelism and conversion of people of other religion must play according to the standard of evangelism. In doing so, such Christian evangelists should sufficiently respect the personality of his prospective convert and what he actually believes in or represents. The most important occasion of the great commission mandate in the gospel account of Matthew was when Jesus advised His disciples saying, “And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town” (Matthew 10: 14). In other words, it could be simply said that Jesus advised His disciples that any man who wants to be left alone being not ready to accept the gospel should be granted his or her wish.

To say the fact, one of the noticed problem of the early Christians following their misconception about evangelism as Adiele (1996) puts it, remains that “They had the belief that the great commission was intended for compliance by the twelve apostles and not for every Christian” (p. 8). It is an open truth that some Christians of today may have felt the same way that the great commission standard for the conduct of evangelism as outlined in gospel according to Matthew above remains exclusively that of the apostle. It is a clear fact in Christianity that every Christian is expected to comply with the great commission standard. These standards for an effective Christian evangelism have been there and all that is needed is for Christians to take note of them, try to understand and work in line with its established precepts.

One should take into consideration the bickering, brawls and altercations that trail some Christian evangelism in recent time in some parts of Igboland as a result of the abuse of evangelism standard. The common truth is that some preachers of the gospel and people that have keen interest in evangelism intentionally or unintentionally found themselves in violent conversion of religious beliefs perhaps as the trending thing. While it is important to question the reason for the derailment from the great commission standard for evangelism as observed in recent times, Abraham (1989) is of the view that “Christians should recoil from much of what passes as evangelism in the modern world. Some forms of evangelism are so bad that they may dechristianize those subjected to them, or they may inoculate people from the gospel indefinitely” (p. 166).

From the above premise, it is a candid suggestion that any process of Christian conversion that is devoid of the great commission standard for evangelism is something other than or something less than evangelism. This speaks volume of the truth that Christians’ broad understanding and attentiveness to evangelical standard in their work of evangelism cannot be overemphasized. Abraham (1989) is noted to have warned that our conception of evangelism have a profound effect on our evangelistic practices. Fundamentally, they set up the criteria of success or failure. For Peters (1981), evangelism must find its orientation in the bible. A return to the principles and practices unfolded in the book of Acts is the only reliable answer.

Therefore it is noteworthy that Christian’s clear understanding of the principle of evangelism as entrenched in the standard for evangelism would drive the way and manner they carry out their evangelical mission and the result it will definitely churn out. Primarily, it is an obvious fact that evangelism is an important part of Christian work, but much needed to be done to guarantee that the activity of evangelizing the people is carried out with the integrity it deserves. In order to achieve this feat, it will take the understanding of today Christians to

operate their evangelism and crusades within the confines of the great commission evangelical standard.

5.8 Engaging Church Mission Principles and Practices in Christian Evangelism

Church is a creation of God as stated in apostle Paul's farewell message to the people of Ephesus in the book of Acts saying, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the holy spirit has made you overseers to care for the Church of God" (Acts 20: 28). Importantly, Church is not literally an edifice but simply a Christian community or rather Christians themselves. Noteworthy is the imperativeness for one to understand that God always has a reason for everything He does. The common truth is that God did not establish the Church just to be a place where people gather to pray and fellowship together only. It must be emphasized that God has a greater purpose, a mission plan in mind for the Church.

This mission plan of the Church as outlined by Jesus Christ is contained in His command to the Church which says "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always to the close of the age" (Matthew 28: 19-20). A further insight from Robbins (n.d.) shows that the mission of the Church is in reality a continuation of Christ's earthly ministry. The truth is that in line with Robbins' assertion, the continuation of Christ's earthly ministry by Church today implies the mission of the Church to know and love Christ so supremely as to represent him and his values accurately in the world and to serve people's deepest needs in the way Jesus Christ himself would have done it for them. This is the Church mission principles and practices that ought to be seen in today's Christian evangelism work.

The Church mission no doubt is not expected to begin and stop with the speaking of words of God and the preaching of the gospel of conversion, it should go beyond that of words

of the gospel to meeting the needs of the people through social intervention activities. To participate in mission which in essence is the act of evangelism itself as a Church is to participate in the practice of God's love toward people which is one of the principles of Christian mission. In the 1982, Lausanne committee for world evangelization, Stott (1982) put it starkly saying that, in addition to worldwide evangelization, the people of God should become deeply involved in relief, aid, development and the quest for justice and peace. Lausanne committee claims that social action is more than a consequence of the evangelism because it is one of its principal aims. Stressing that social activity is a bridge to evangelism; it accompanies evangelism as its partner. They are like the two blades of a pair of scissors or the two wings of a bird, as they were in the public ministry of Jesus.

In the words of Veronis (1995), the crucial aspect of a mission is not what one proclaims, but what one lives and who one is. Orthodox theology and history teach us that the transformed life preaches in a way that no words can match. One holy man said, preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary use words-Francis of Assisi. Thus the first and foremost principle of any method of mission is the development of the spiritual character of missionaries, their struggle for holiness, their capacity to carry God's grace, their humble, servant attitude, and their identification with the people.

It is a candid move to emphasize on the fact that the social action aspect of the Church mission principle is not to downgrade or put at risk the work of evangelism. Evangelism always is the priority and that was the reason Jesus had to preach to the people that sat around and went on to show them tremendous kindness by having to give them something to eat hence satisfying their physical need of food (Mark: 6: 34-43). The true picture of Jesus feeding of the over five thousand people promptly displayed the compassionate lifestyle of Jesus to help the needy. The end product of this kind dealing of Jesus with the multitude that came to him was

that many people became attracted to Jesus for two reasons, to hear the word of God which he preaches and to be fed again by him.

The narratives as stated above, speaks volume of the fact that the Church mission being the continuation of Jesus' earthly ministry activities actually juxtaposes the fact that everything Christians and the Church engage into should be and can as well be evangelistic. The issue of being of help to the needy in area of feeding, clothing, availing them of the opportunity of a sound judgment and justice when in a position to do so, showcases the common features of Church mission principles and practices. The reality is that each step taken along this spectrum of social action brings about a greater depth of relationship and true conversion of faith.

The social action account does appear to pin-point issue of good character and conduct as what should epitomize the life of the Church and the Christian community as laid down Church mission principles and practices. A good deal of confusion is caused by some people that judge themselves as Christians without the prerequisite conduct to prove their knowledge of Church mission principles and practices as Christians. The fact is that a situation as this cannot engender a true and effective coherent evangelism for the conversion of souls for Jesus Christ. A scenario as this is suggested to have played a major role in the impromptu violent attacks and destruction of traditional religious artifacts by Christians during evangelism in some part of Igboland. The lacking in Church mission principles as evidenced in the life conduct activities of the people may have caused the rigid posture of the non-Christians to concede to their demand for conversion.

Truly the above premise could be predicated on Brown's (2012) observations that:

Since the beginning of the Church, conversion to Christianity has always been a controversial issue. In its 2000 year history, too often have violence or inducements been used to secure conversions. Usually when such anti-Christian methodology has been employed, there has been a close relationship between the ecclesiastical

authorities of the time and the politics of empire and expansionism. Today's world is complex and multi-faceted. There are many competing claims for what is right and true. Within this context one of the most important debates for the Church continues to be that of conversion. (p. 2).

The reason for the controversy that usually surrounds conversion in other words evangelism work since the inception of the Church is to be put at the overbearing influences of evangelism and various crusade participants. And the resultant act of violence that often herald the process of conversion in today Christendom as asserted by Brown obviously is dependent on the use of anti-christian methodology during the course of evangelism and crusades.

The Church mission principles and practices are the clear cut route given to Christians as a template for an effective, coherent and ethical evangelism. These principles speak volume and passionately too of the Church ability to see the work of Christian evangelism as something beyond the preaching of the gospel of conversion alone. As something that portrays the lifestyle of Jesus Christ, the Church mission principle goes deeper to present the work of Christian evangelism as a service which should encompass patience, flexibility and tolerant. An insight from Veronis (1995) shows that the first and the foremost principle of any method of mission is the development of the spiritual character of missionaries, their struggle for holiness, their capacity to carry God's grace, their humble, servant attitude, and coupled with their identification with the people.

The common truth is that on the issue of Church mission principles and practices, the people that engage themselves seriously into it are no different than humanitarian workers. These set of people are ready to identify with the plight of the people and humbly attend to them as much as one can help for the love of Jesus Christ. This is what Christian evangelism should also reflect in the thinking of the church and its followers that are set to engage into crusade evangelism. An evangelism enthusiast that desires to succeed must be ready to

exemplify humility coupled with the servant attitude of Jesus so exhibited when he washed the feet of his disciples as a model. The Church mission principles and practices of humility, love and the helping of those in need bring to the limelight the fact that one could proclaim the gospel more effectively through one's example and not only by his or her words of preaching.

This speaks volume of Christian evangelism that carries the expression of a good attitude together with an enticing work of service that would dignify the work of the gospel to convince prospective converts to embrace Christianity. It is Webster's (1961) belief that:

In service-evangelism the Christian must be more concerned with the integrity of the service than with the promptitude of the response. In service, the gospel is implicit, in preaching it is explicit. They are illustrative and interpretative in the labour of the missionary Church. The two can never be separated. In the apostolic Church, each expression of love was also an expression of the gospel, preaching and healing followed each other, both belonged to the Christian mission and there was no sharp difference. It was natural for st. Peter to heal the lame beggar at the beautiful gate; it was equally natural for him to preach the gospel in giving the explanation afterwards. The Christian mission is simply an active recognition of the dimensions of the love of God. (pp. 147-148).

This dimension of the love of God as embedded in the Church mission principles must be reflective, exemplary attitude and conduct of an earthly Jesus Christ adorned with social service evangelism in every move for conversion. The truth is that Christians should be more concerned with the practical implication of the concept of identifying with the people and meeting their needs for them. The mission of the Church is principally to meet the need of the people both in physical and spiritual dimensions. In buttressing this point further while giving a vivid view on mission, Schanbel (2008) defines mission as:

The activity of a community of faith that distinguishes itself from its environment in terms of both religious belief (theology) and social behaviour (ethics), mission is convinced of the truth being claims of its faith: and hence actively works to win other people to the content of faith and the way of life of whose truth and necessity the members of that community are convinced. (p. 22).

From this backdrop, the truth is clear that the obvious duty of the mission to win convert is made most possible with the distinguished social behaviour of the Church. This is to suggest that for the Church to affect and improve the life of the needy within their reach by identifying with them is a social behaviour. The fact is that the little push and the little help the Church engages itself into alleviating and aiding members of a community could guarantee the conviction of the people to accepting their demand for conversion to Christian religion. This without doubt is one of the ways to communicate the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of diverse cultural and religious beliefs. The Church mission principles and practices demand more of Christians, a global character that would present unique changes in the life of members of the society.

It therefore becomes imperative that the church mission principle is to be seen as a practice that would make the work of Christian evangelism effective for cross-cultural conversion. Evangelism as entrusted in the Church mission principle is meant for Christians to showcase response of the caring aspect of mankind that comes from the heart of love and compassion. To a very great extent, Church mission principles and practices provide many opportunities for the existence of effective sharing of the gospel. This involves as promptly mentioned earlier the practice of identifying with the challenges of the intended prospective converts and being of help to them. More so, the act of one using his or her position to guarantee that justice is done to all and sundry without any discrimination would make evangelism of high regard to the people.

In Nigeria, the invasion and the dastardly activities of a deadly and notorious Islamic terrorist fundamentalist group known as Boko Haram in the northern eastern part of the country is no longer news. The killings have been so much that a lot of people that managed to have escaped death from the hand of the insurgents but having lost their various homes and everything have been gathered together and re-settled at a place as internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the government. It is worthy of note that churches in Nigeria have not been found wanting in helping out during a time of man-made disaster as this. According to Ibiwale's (2017) observation, the International Christian Centre located in a forest in Uhogua community accommodated internally displaced refugees from the north-eastern states ravaged by the horrendous activities of the dreaded Islamic insurgents, Boko Haram.

The social, religious and cultural background notwithstanding, the Church still deemed it necessary to accommodate the people affected to shelter and feed them. While commending the Church for their humanitarian act, Ibiwale (2017) also made it clear that the good news is that the International Christian Center is doing the best within its available resources to give succour and hope to these internally displaced persons, ravaged and traumatized by the war of insurgency in their own country. And good enough, these victims of war have not lost all hope of a better future. For Solomon Wasa, a J.3 student from Gworza Borno State, 'I am in Edo State for safety from Boko Haram and to serve God and we are very fine here'.

This act of kind gesture as shown to the people displaced from their homes by Boko Haram insurgents by the International Christian Centre in Edo State, Nigeria is extremely exceptional. It therefore speaks volume of a demonstration of church mission principles and practices which encompass coming to the help of the needy and giving hope to the hopeless. It is to be noted that the service of providing the material needs of the people in the area of security, food and shelter never preoccupy the place of preaching of the word of God to the people for hope revival. The fundamental thing is that an evangelism service as this one is itself

an expression of Christ's own love, compassion and the ability to identify with people undergoing through one challenge or another.

One is to expect that engaging in an act as this would produce a massive positive response from the people whenever the gospel message is preached to them. With the act of charity and the extension of the hand of help by the Uhogua International Christian Centre to the people affected by the insurgency it is unavoidable that the refugees following the right attitude of assistance shown to them, some of the IDPs would perhaps genuinely be attracted to embrace and accept Christianity. Just as one cannot rule out the fact that the tendency that some people may have to formally become Christians out of need for survival cannot be downplayed. Of course it is the mission of the church to confront injustice and alleviate suffering out from the poor masses irrespective of religious background as an expression of God's love for human kind.

The common fear that the church would be losing its God centeredness and the preaching of the gospel with the provision of social services to the people should not arise. The Church no doubt is to also throw its weight as well on the proclamation of the gospel since both are of common cause, which are evangelism and the conversion of souls to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the greatest message in the world of Christendom and delivering this message remains the greatest mission for the church to accomplish. In accomplishing this task of coherent evangelism there exists a number of biblical principles as earlier stated as attached to the church mission practices that would help shape the way non-christians think of the message of Jesus Christ and his Christian religion to be in positive standing with the prospective converts.

If one is to put the fact straight, the common truth is that, in the sight of God evangelism and conversion of souls to Jesus Christ is the business of the church and Christians in general. And it is left for the church to learn to communicate well with the non-christians in their midst

by being humanitarian and compassionate in their dealings with them. Then the Church must endeavour never to relinquish its mission of changing the lives of the people especially the poor, even when faced with the challenges of money, political pressures or otherwise. The church mission principle and practice is primarily to help save souls and change lives for and through Jesus Christ. And engaging into it will not only prioritize evangelism in the sight of the non-christians, but it would bring about an effective and a coherent evangelism that makes sense.

5.9 The Position of Church on Violent Evangelism and the Issue of Syncretism

From the beginning as already emphasized, the relationship between Christianity and arts has been one of action and controversy. History has it that even during the time of Emperor Constantine, the Church then supposedly the Roman Church were engulfed in art and image issues. Some early Church fathers saw the problem of images within the framework of Christianity's two foundations, Hebraic and the Greco-Hellenistic traditions: the Hebraic injunction against images and the Greco-Hellenistic appreciation of the beautiful works of art. The early church recognized the importance of the visual not only as a primary means of human perception but also as a didactic vehicle in the sense that most early converts were initiated and nurtured into Christianity not simply by the words of preaching alone, but by visual images as well. However the iconoclastic controversy of image-destroying tendency has continued to resurface sporadically throughout the history of Christianity. The relationship between Christian churches and African Traditional Religious artifacts, above all sculptures, images, have not been without serious fundamental problems with the incidences of attack as exemplified in some parts of Igboland in discourse.

However, for some churches as the Catholic Church, it is the concept of the Church that the gospel and evangelization are not specially related to any culture but they are not necessarily incompatible with them. On the contrary, they can penetrate any culture while being subservient to none. It was therefore with great interest that, Vatican catalogue otherwise the Vatican museums ethnological collection divulged the fact that, at the beginning of the 20th century Pope Pius XI (1857 – 1939) as a sign of Catholic Church's respect for the culture, arts and religious traditions of the people throughout the world, wished to organize a major event: the 1925 Vatican Exhibition. For Greenfield (1982) the concept of the mission work had changed radically, especially following the innovative ideas of the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965). The goal was no longer to Europeanize the third world, but instead to establish foundation of Christianity in local cultures. The position of the church with respect to other religions had also changed, encouraging open dialogue via evangelization rather than confrontation. Through this means promoting an understanding of other religions was considered essential.

In Pope Paul VI's assessment of missionary enterprise in Africa during his visit to Uganda in 1967 as contained in his message, *Africae Terrarum* (the Propaganda fide), he was swift to point out to the Christians as it concerns forced conversion of the people, that they should make no effort to change the peoples rites, customs and morals unless they manifest opposition to religion and morality. And this has been one among the recognized stand of the Catholic Church on evangelization. But a further insight on the position of the Catholic Church on the character or the spirit of evangelization, Flannery (2007) asserts that:

The ministry of evangelization requires of the evangelizer fraternal and ever increasing love for those whom he is evangelizing. The apostle Paul, the model for every preacher, wrote these words to the Thessalonians which may serve as our plan of action: "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you, not only the

gospel of God but also our own selves because you had become very dear to us. What is this love? It is the love, not so much of a teacher as a father, or rather of a mother. It is the Lord's wish that every preacher of the gospel, every builder up of the Church, should have this love. The sign of this love is our concern to communicate the truth and to bring all those to whom we preach into the fold of unity. A further sign of this love is to devote oneself without any reserve or hesitation to the task of preaching Jesus Christ. We may be permitted to mention some other signs of this love. The first is that we show respect for those whom we are evangelizing. We must not fail to show consideration for religious beliefs, for their dispositions and their way of life which we must not try to force unduly. We must show consideration for their conscience and their opinions. (p. 779).

The above passage as a matter of fact speaks volume of the obvious evangelization template of the church in dealing with the people, their culture, religion and tradition, with respect for the people and their culture. The bottom line suggests that Catholic Church has an existing principle that hinges on tolerant, dialogue and accommodation of other religions during evangelization. In his Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation after the 1994 African Synod, Pope John Paul II showed respect for African Traditional Religion. With regards to African Traditional Religion, he wrote in *Ecclesia in Africa* saying;

A serene and prudent dialogue will be able, on one hand, to protect Catholics from negative influences which condition the way of life of many of them and, on the other hand, to foster the assimilation of positive values such as belief in a Supreme Being who is Eternal Creator, Provident and Just Judge, values which are readily harmonized with the content of faith. The adherents of African Traditional Religion should therefore be treated with great respect and esteem, and all inaccurate and disrespectful language

should be avoided. For this purpose, suitable courses in African Traditional Religion should be given in houses of formation for priests and religious. (p. 67).

Throwing more light on the statement from the Pope, Arinze (2014) observe that:

A close examination of this attitude of the church shows that it is indeed reasonable. We must admit that not all missionaries all through the centuries have followed this directive. But there is no doubt about its wisdom or about the stand of the church. (p. 15).

Arinze's assertion is a pointer to the fact that while some missionaries both past and present day evangelism enthusiasts may have neglected the tolerant and the respectful disposition of the church to the adherents of traditional religion, and revert to disrespectful attacks on traditional religious artifacts as seen it happen in Igboland. However this does not change the position of the church against such behaviour and conduct.

On the issue of syncretism in Christian evangelism, Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion, according to Leeming (2014) is of the view that the term syncretism has had different denotations and connotations over time. In current usage in anthropology and religious studies, it generally refers to a mixing of elements from different religious systems or traditions. From the perspective of many religious leaders, such a mixing is often viewed as a negative process, as an abandoning of true religion. From the perspective of many anthropologists, psychologists, and professionals of other academic disciplines, religious syncretism may assist in a positive acculturation process, whereby elements of different systems emerge in a new format allowing an integration of ideas and behaviours.

From the onset the church, in this case the Catholic Church have never hidden their position on the issue of syncretism which entail the integration of differing religions and cultural system of belief for a positive Christian religion via the process of inculturation. By the use of syncretism, the church finds it easier to evangelize as they plant Christianity at the

heart of traditional religion. In the words Arinze (2014) “Authentic inculturation indicates that there is an intimate transformation of cultural values by their integration into Christianity and also the implantation of Christianity into the different cultures” (p. 16). This is one area where the present day Christian evangelists may have missed it by them taking up violence on traditional religious artifacts rather than finding a way to blend the two religions for a better understanding of each other.

While appraising Bishop Shanahan approach to inculturation in Igboland, Onwubiko (1997) observes that,

Bishop Shanahan did not run away from shrines and sacred places and centres of religious worship. He celebrated mass in shrines and convinced the people that at mass the priest makes contact with *ani-muo*. He realized that religion and religious practices dominated the life of the people. He approached them through religious contacts. He knew that if anything was important among the Igbo people it had rituals, festivities attached. He interpreted local practices in terms of Christian religious sacraments. When he baptize dying children he convinced the people of the importance of such an action by telling them that he was giving the dying children *Ozo* titles for heaven, the people understood and approved. (p. 60).

In the light of integrating culture into Christian belief as part of inculturation and evangelization of some Igbo titles such as the *Ozoship* society; this as far as Arinze (1966) is concerned, the idea, therefore, is not to Christianize the *Ozo* title or any other title, but to purify them of pagan religious elements contrary to revealed truth and retain them as purely social customs.

The truth is that so much have been done by the Catholic Church especially to bridge the gap that existed between the gospel and traditional religion through the instrumentality of syncretism and inculturation. The fact remains that if inculturated evangelism bore fruits in the life of the Igbo people of the past, nothing perhaps stops Christians of today from attaining

such fit as they apply syncretism ie inculturation approach in their day to day act of evangelism rather than forced conversion.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

Evangelism is the bedrock for Christianity and ever since Jesus gave it as the great commission to His apostles. It has continued to thrive with the contemporary Christians seeking to bring down the knowledge of the word of God to all and sundry. This no doubt produced a conversion of a predetermined pattern all in the sense of fulfillment of a divine mandate as given to every Christian to embark on the preaching of the gospel to make conversion of faiths. One of the greatest problems of Christian evangelism of our time no doubt is that Christian participants in the work of evangelism do so with an agenda. Some of these people's agenda oftentimes obviously differ from the stipulated principle or standard of evangelism following the violent nuances of their evangelism work.

This certainly has given rise to the most searching question on the genuineness of those Christians that are devoted to the cause of evangelism to save souls. It has shown that Christian evangelism organized in some parts of Igboland for instance, seems not to be in accordance with the principle of ethical evangelism. The pointer is that in most occasions, Christian evangelism is characterized with violence and conflicts between Christians and the traditional religion adherents. The violent attack and destruction of traditional religious artifacts which

usually takes the centre stage when Christians seek to evangelize the people and their culture is seen to be very common.

In Jesus great commission mandate, Christians are expected to live as law abiding citizens in their work of evangelism. Given the scary prospect of preaching the gospel as a result of the complexity of the societal religious values, attitude and conduct play crucial roles in the acceptability or otherwise of the gospel. The truth is that the activities of some Christians in the eyes of the non-christians portray Christians as trying to force them to give in their traditional religious artifacts and belief rather than to make effort to convert hearts to Christ. The prospective converts hence see such an action as not being at variance with the standard principle for Christian evangelism. This is one of the most pathetic problems with many of today's Christians following their inability to relate Christian gospel to diverse culture, religion and tradition of the people.

It is an open secret that Christians' attitude these days towards culture and religion of the people just as during the early Christian missionary's evangelism in Igboland has not changed. In those days, iconoclasm is believed to be the order of the day through ridicule or by the branding of Igbo traditional religion and culture as being satanic or barbaric. Even today Christianity is viewed by some people as an agent of change and as a hammer that destroys whatever is opposed to the Christian religion. As a tool for change it has been alledged that attempts are continuously being made to wipe out elements of traditional culture and religion physically by the destruction of groves, idols and artifacts.

A critical look at the events of the stereotype of the Igbo Christianity in this contemporary era especially its missionary initiated type of iconoclasm shows that in today's work of evangelism, participants in Christian evangelism often fail to adopt an effective way of connecting with the people of other religions. And this points to deficiency in understanding the fundamental principle of the great commission as the standardized form of Christian

evangelism. More importantly people should be able to ask questions to find out why despite the much preaching of the gospel ever since, Christians are still struggling against idol worshippers in an attempt for the conversion of these non-Christians. This is the perceived gap Igbo Christians that are enthusiastic about evangelism seems not to have noticed which the study have bridged.

6.2 Conclusion

Christian evangelism spread through the face of the earth, firstly through the efforts of the apostles, the early church and in Igboland through the effort of the Christian missionaries. As it is, evangelism effort of these people as mentioned above is their commitment to preach the words of God to others especially the non-Christians for the purpose of converting them to Christianity. History has it that the means as adopted in carrying out the mission of evangelism both by the past missionaries and the present day Igbo Christians always pitch them against the culture, religion and tradition of the prospective converts. This has been the issue with Christian evangelism as far as evangelizing Igbo people, their culture, religion and tradition is concerned.

Violence on traditional religious artifacts, the symbols of worship of the people of Igboland has become a phenomenon associated perhaps with the modern era of Christian evangelism. The door to door preaching and canvassing for the change of faith and religion is now overtaking by coercion of belief rather than dialogue or persuasion. In today's evangelism, Christians have taken hold of the legacies as adopted by the pioneers of Christianity being the European missionaries, which introduced violent destruction of idols, shrines and the religious artifacts of the Igbo people. The concern has been that this act had oftentimes than not generated severe conflicts among the two religions in Igboland.

It has become a general thinking that even though Christians know the importance of evangelism as a fundamental obligation. Some Christians are believed not to have yet understood actually what evangelism is all about. This is visible in some Christians' attitude during evangelism which most of the time is driven by the use of an inappropriate principle of evangelism. This has actually prompted the common thought from the non-Christians to often suggest in their opinion that Christian evangelism in reality gives shelter for the accomplishment of hidden agenda from either charlatans or extremist Christians. It is a point of fact that the destruction of traditional religious artifacts, the symbol of worship of the traditional religion adherents in most cases which is seen as a result of carrying out a vendetta, gives credence to the fear of the Traditional Religion adherents that evangelism work is a hidden agenda.

One is to note that in Christian evangelism the question of methods for evangelism is significantly important. But dreadful damage has been done to the work of Christian evangelism by the use of methods that are unworthy for the propagation of the gospel. It is to be noted that the thinking of some Christians that the act of evangelism work is to involve using certain pressure and brutal means to achieve conversion is unbiblical and what contradicts the fundamental principle of Christian evangelism. For the fact that the act of evangelism means a lot of things different from what it ought to be, it has the tendency to promote misunderstanding and the miscarriage of the biblical standard for Christian evangelism. This is where violent act on other religions come into play during Christian evangelism as is the case in some parts of Igboland. The truth is that such situation no doubt fans the ember of strife and hatred among the people.

The researcher finds out that with the circumstances that surround Christian evangelism in this era by extension Igboland which usually results into violence, strife and hatred cannot be said to be healthy for an effectual conversion. For certain, a rundown of an event as this

would produce Christians some of which are not truly converted but have to fake conversion in order to avoid further intimidation or victimization. A situation as this invariably churns out Christians with a hypocritical behaviour that professes Christianity in the morning, voodoo at midnight which simply implies the promotion of Christians dual allegiance to God and deities. This no doubt ridicules the great commission mandate as well as the Christian faith in general.

The practice of Christian evangelism ought to revolve around the act of tolerance and persuasion to convince someone into accepting the Christian religion. The fundamental purpose of evangelism is geared towards the making of disciples of others for Jesus Christ. This making of disciples can only be effectively carried out under serious conversation, dialogue, tolerance, love, social services, and respect for culture, religion, tradition, dignity and integrity of the people. It is not pleasing to note that most of these attributes as highlighted above are lacking in those parts of Igboland that witness violent Christian evangelism or crusades.

The Igbo people are known to be religious and both their life and their modus operandi have some element of religious inclination. What is therefore left for evangelism enthusiasts that are very much desirous to evangelize in Igboland is for them to locate how to make Christianity a phenomenon and an attraction to non-Christians especially. It is important for Christians involved in evangelism to understand the fundamental principles, in other words the standard for evangelism and align themselves to it accordingly. A critical look at some of these fundamental principles as standard for evangelism such as dialogue, tolerance, non-violent approach during evangelism and so on; shows that these principles being dynamic as it were have a force that can stimulate a change within a system devoid of coercion.

It is indeed fact-finding to know that despite the soft spot an Igbo person has for the things of religion, tradition and culture of his forefathers, the disposition for a compromise of his faith cannot be said to be difficult to accomplish depending on the approach or evangelical

strategy put in use. History has it that some of those earliest Christian missionaries in Igboland effectively used certain approaches and strategies such as opening of schools, building of hospitals, welfare or social services and so on as a means to have the people accept the gospel and embrace Christianity. It is an open truth that the missionaries were able to achieve their target of Christianizing the Igbo people with these aforementioned approaches.

For Christian missionaries on arrival in Igboland to have adopted some strategic approaches to achieve its purpose of establishing Christianity in the land, nothing supposedly is to withhold the present day Christians from doing the same thing and even more so as to win converts without coercion. The violent evangelism that challenges the legitimacy of other religions by forceful destruction of its symbol of worship should not have been the case as it is in recent times. Christian evangelism as instituted by Jesus Christ is not at all haphazard but only need that Christians should follow laid down strategies and principles so as to achieve a target.

It would really degenerate to a life of illusion and misunderstanding for Christians of this era to think of the great commission work as accidental. The truth of the matter is that evangelism as instituted by Jesus Christ is never without plan or order of organization. Evangelism as far as God is concerned is planned in such a way that it is to be done in accordance to this extract from the gospel book of Matthew 10:14. When paraphrased, it is of the view that evangelism is to be non-violent. But this has not been the case, with the complexity of man in life challenges; the fundamental Christian evangelism principles have been neglected and abused all in an effort to make a desperate conversion of soul for Jesus Christ. Of course it would be proper to think of motives as this to be subjugated with malice, hatred, revenge mission as undertone. On this note, it would be hard to avoid putting some of the blame on the violence that characterizes most crusade evangelism in some parts of Igboland

for instance on the nature of evangelism methods used by Christians during their evangelism activities there and then.

But with the laid down basic principle for evangelism in place, it is obvious that some true converts would be made without any turmoil; just as in the other way round charlatans and fanatics would be the end product of violent Christian evangelism. Truly speaking, Christian evangelism needs not to be enmeshed with violence for its consequence on evangelism is enormous. Evangelism is not to be taken apart from the preaching of the word of God. Evangelism that would make for a true conviction may take time (Acts 14: 3, 19:10), many people receive the gospel the second or the third time they hear it. It simply takes patience and tolerance. Jesus gave a command to every Christian to go into the world and preach the gospel. But it all behooves on Christians to look at how best to go about it without fatal consequences of chaos and violence. Evangelists or organizers of various crusades in Igboland for instance are to render selfless services that would touch on the life of the people in such a way to buy over their heart for Christ.

Succinctly speaking, the issue of clashes, violence and conflicts between Christians and traditional religion adherents during crusade evangelism in some community of Igboland can be controlled if the basic principles as mentioned in this study that govern evangelism are adhered to. They are important conditioning factors that affect the likelihood of man's belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christian evangelism must therefore be very much concerned with all of these principles, bearing in mind that violence on traditional religious symbols does not overtime mean the destruction of the spirits behind them. But in as much as the claims of positive impact of traditional artifacts destruction during crusades in these communities cannot be despised. The truth remains that non violent crusades would make for a better conversion of non Christians to Christian religion in a community, sadly, it is the discovery of this study that Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts in Igboland are still in the increase, with many

properties lost during various attacks and reprisal attacks. Just as it is the finding of the study that some custodians of shrines and artifacts in these communities concerned are willing to do away with them given the right evangelical and convincing approach.

6.3 Recommendations

The recommendations as a result of the findings from the study are as follows. Since evangelism is mandatory for every Christian to perform as designed in the great commission, the common truth on the violence and the bad blood often witnessed in recent time during Christian evangelism and crusades in Igboland in discourse is traceable to the way and manner the message of conversion is presented or preached to the people. To this end, the time has come for Christian stakeholders to take a hard look at what evangelism is, reflect seriously on what has gone wrong, and make suggestions on how it might be pursued or done with integrity. There are good reasons this enterprise is to be taken up with enthusiasm and caution.

At the first place, Christian leaders and organizers of evangelism crusades should endeavour to educate their subjects on the importance for them to conduct evangelism according to the laid down standard and fundamental principles of Christian evangelism. Christians must realize that evangelism being a crucial responsibility, its success or failure largely depends on the attitude the participants churns out. Dialogue, tolerance, respect for other religions and so on should be the watchword and indices of Christians as they embark on either crusade, evangelism or soulwinning activities at any point in time.

In other to avoid miscreants, charlatans and persons with vendetta motives from hijacking crusades or any evangelical outreach, leadership of various churches and organizers of crusades are to bring out measures that would put them in check. At first, organizers of crusades are to make it as a guiding principle that before the destruction of any traditional artifacts or religious symbol, the person in custody of the said items, the rightful owner or owners must give their consent to that effect. On a second note, it will be nice for organizers

of crusades to set up security group, people that would keep an eye on the attitude and conducts of participants during Christian crusades.

More importantly, it is necessary that church leaders, priests, the laity, opinion builders in various churches in Igboland make out time to conscientize and re-orientate their faithfuls to understand that evangelism or conversion of belief is never by force of violence, but by the reason of an in-depth conversation and persuasion of someone to convert from one belief system to another. Without fear of contradiction, the study puts forward for consideration that Igbo Christians as in discourse are to re-strategize and rejig their method of spreading the gospel of conversion of faith to Jesus Christ to be devoid of violence and intimidation as is often the case.

Both the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) as an umbrella Christian body in Nigeria which Igbo Christians is an affiliate member no doubt has a part to play in a situation as this. With Christian violent evangelism, a lot of issues have been thrown out with such things as hatred, malice, physical confrontations and attacks of all kinds on the opposite religions emerging as a common feature of the day. It will take the meticulous intervention of such religious body as C.A.N. and P.F.N. to change the narratives of associating Christian evangelism with violence on other religions. They have a role to play in quelling the tide of violent evangelism during Christian crusades by sending emissaries to the leadership of their membership churches to help advice their members against violent evangelism.

It will be apt to further suggest for the establishment in every church an evangelistic council that would spearhead the coordination of Christian evangelism for a flawless evangelism especially in terms of violent act against other religions. It would be a nice one if such a council is to exist in all the churches for it will be of immense help in calming the tide

of violent evangelism and the spontaneous destruction of traditional religious artifacts in Igboland during Christian crusades.

The researcher is apt to suggest for a more of personal interface with the prospective convert than Christian crusades that makes for an uncontrollable crowd gathering of people for a Christian evangelism. This is based on the common truth that evangelism can take place within the context of people talking with non-christian friends and neighbours on individual basis. Every one perhaps has non-christian friends, family, neighbours and co-workers. Today, Christians can adopt this system of one-on-one evangelism as the early Christians historically did in their time of evangelism work. This method perhaps is one of the most effective means of evangelism that would make Christian evangelism a friendly experience between Christians and traditional religion adherents rather than Christian evangelism being what is to divide them.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Academic Research

Although this research was carried out on Christian evangelism and violence on traditional religious artifacts in Igboland, the following areas are suggested for further academic research.

- A study on the effect of violent evangelism on the advancement of Christianity in Igboland.
- An appraisal on ethical evangelism as an antidote for a violent free Christian evangelism or crusade.
- Destruction of traditional religious artifacts during Christian crusade, its socio-economic and religious implication on the church and the society.
- A discourse on the pattern to tackling Christian evangelism and violence on Traditional Religious artifacts in Igboland.
- A critical evaluation on proselytism and evangelism in the light of the great

commission mandate.

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The name, age, occupation, religion and gender of persons interviewed in the course of this research study with dates as stated in the diagram below are as follows:

S/N	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	RELIGION	GENDER	DATE
1	Agumadu John	60yrs	Farming	Traditionalist	Male	26/03/18
2	Anyadike Michael	63yrs	Farming	Christianity	Male	26/11/17
3	Anigbo Samuel	50yrs	Civil Servant	Christianity	Male	15/03/18
4	Ekwenugo Mike	51yrs	Farming	Christianity	Male	26/01/17
5	Ezeoffor Alfred	65yrs	Trading	Traditionalist	Male	03/07/17
6	Maduaguna Elizabeth	60yrs	Farming	Christianity	Female	26/01/17
7	Nchekwube Hycient	75yrs	Pensioner	Christianity	Male	26/01/17
8	Ngene Alphonsus	50yrs	Bricklaying	Christianity	Male	26/01/17
9	Nnechi Udeh	69yrs	Farming	Traditionalist	Male	17/03/17
10	Nwangwu Obiora	45yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	24/5/17
11	Nwokike Cajethan	50yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	28/01/18
12	Obi Sylvester	62yrs	Contractor	Christianity	Male	23/01/17
13	Anunobi Nnaemeka	77yrs	Farming	Traditionalist	Male	26/07/17
14	Okoroafor Linus	57yrs	Carpentry	Christianity	Male	24/05/17
15	Okoye Christian	60yrs	Farming	Christianity	Male	17/03/17
16	Okoye Gilbert	44yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	26/01/17
17	Okafor Nwabueze	57yrs	Trading	Traditionalist	Male	26/01/17
18	Onwuchekwa Onyibo	67yrs	Farming	Traditionalist	Male	15/04/18
19	Onyechi Cyril	47yrs	Transporter/ catechist	Christianity	Male	04/02/18
20	Ibe Obinna	40yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	13/07/17

21	Nwose Chukwuka	35yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	12/11/17
22	Nweke Amos	45yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	12/11/17
23	Okonkwo Polycarp	55yrs	Motor Mechanic	Christianity	Male	13/02/18
24	Ibekwe Nnacheta	60yrs	Farming	Traditonalist	Male	13/02/18
25	Azolibe Chrstopher	45yrs	Priest	Christianity	Male	13/02/18
26	Chukwura Echezona	48yrs	Trading	Traditionalist	Male	13/02/18
27	Okeke Ezeokoli	56yrs	Farming	Traditionalist	Male	13/02/18
28	Okeke Innocent	50yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	13/02/18
29	Ogbuebini Samuel	49yrs	Priest	Christianity	Male	12/11/17
30	Umeayo Kenneth	40yrs	Trading	Christianity	Male	24/05/17