



The Influence of Ibibio Traditional Religion Among Ibibio Christians Vis-À-Vis Covenant

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of Ibibio traditional religion among Ibibio Christians vis-à-vis covenant. It sees covenant as a solemn promise binding by an oath, recognized by the parties as the formal act which binds them to fulfill certain promises. The work reveals that the Ibibio Christians have been influenced by their traditional religious beliefs and practices due to the covenant relationship established by their forefathers. That is why the people despite their conversion to Christianity often revert to their traditional religious rituals especially during marriages, funerals and life threatening situations; hence, there is evident of syncretism and fear. The sociological nature of the issue under perusal commended survey approach which offers useful information for the work. Significantly, the influence of their worldview is the reason Ibibio Christians still bound inextricably to the traditional beliefs and practices. The work concludes and recommends that though the African traditional religious influence is enormous on Ibibio Christians, the church should teach and assure Ibibio Christians that their conversion to Christianity frees them from their traditional worldview and obligations. Therefore, the ministration of the church should be capable of bringing the people to divine encounter with definite new meaning and significance in life.

Keywords: Ibibio Traditional Religion, worldview, Ibibio Christians, Covenant

Introduction

It is obvious that among the African people, religion is more than anything else; it colours their empirical participations in the universe and make their lives profoundly religious phenomena. Traditional African society knew only one religion, the indigenous religion which greatly shaped the lives of the people. Consequent upon this, men desire to live in peace and harmony, and to ensure that every form of conflict or fracas is eliminated as much as possible, covenant is established. Kaunda (2020) posits that covenant making is one of the key religious elements that form the foundations of African religious heritages; it is expressed typically in symbolic actions, prayers, declarations, and rituals. The traditional people in the community and family lived together; hence, unity and peace are safeguarded by all through covenant. The true nature of African Traditional Religion is by nature tolerant in the extreme (Mbiti, 1969). This assertion



reveals that by nature, the religion is a peaceful religion, where God, deities, And Ancestors Are witnesses to every relationship to ensure peace, justice, or reconciliation.

Nthamburi (1991) opines that African people believe that their religion is a unique religion which meets and continues to meet the spiritual needs and realities of the people as a whole and the Ibibio people in particular. It is capable of integrating with other systems and religions of the world, especially Christianity and Islam, a unique feature that makes it distinct from other religions which are always in competition with each other; hence, causing a lot of tension and conflicts especially in contemporary Nigeria. Mbiti (2010) submits that African religious tradition is deeply integrated into the total life and worldview of the people, without delineating life into religious and secular components. African religion is therefore, part and parcel of the daily traditional life of the people. This integration of religion and daily life is also visible in African traditional systems, where religious practices function as means of social control, moral regulation and communal order. (Edem, 2024; Edem & Udom, 2024).

The pluralistic religious society today is challenging and influencing the traditional religiosity of the people. The advent of new religions especially Christianity has made a serious influence on the religious life of the Ibibio people and *vice versa*. This notwithstanding, the contemporary Ibibio Christians are facing a serious challenge from diverse traditional covenants of their forebears because of their culture and worldview. The work therefore aims at examining the influence of African traditional religion on Ibibio Christians vis-à-vis covenant.

Ibibio (African) Christians

Citing Nwachuku, Phaswana (2000) observes that there is being developed an interpretation of Christianity and specifically for Christian Theology that one may describe as African. Actually, the point is that an African is becoming a Christian within his or her social and religious milieu. An African Christian therefore balances the African traditional values with Christian beliefs and practices. Such balance reflects the continuing strength of indigenous culture, which often adapts to modern influences while retaining core traditional meanings (Ekpo & Edem, 2026). Hence, Ibibio Christian(s) refers to an individual or group of African persons who do not see any contradiction in syncretising that is, holding a mixture of both African and Christian beliefs and practices at the same time in their daily religious observance. Accordingly, he or she is a living Christian faith in and from Africa background cannot but interact with African culture in all its facets in his or her daily life.

The Concept of Ibibio Traditional Religion

It is difficult in tracing the origin of Ibibio Traditional Religion, that is when and who founded the religion. To accounts for the genesis of the African Traditional Religion, citing



Newman Kagema (2015) states that the existence of creatures implies a Creator, of order an Orderer, and of harmony a Harmoniser. Observably, Ibibio Traditional Religion is as old as the first man on the Ibibio land. The religion originated by the people, from their experiences and quest for the unknown. Actually, the Africans' reflection on their experiences in lives led them to reverence and display (sometimes shallow) fear for God.

It is equally noticeable that the African cosmology is basically religious and the title, African traditional religion shows that this religion had been practiced long before the introduction of other religions (such as Christianity, Islam and others) into the continent (Kibicho, 2010). Despite the coming of these new religions, the level of patronage enjoyed by indigenous belief systems and practices covertly and overtly proves that African traditional religion is still a living religion (Nkonge and Gechuko, 2014). Obviously, Opoku (1993) observes that though this religion is not the only religion of the people of Africa, and in some parts of Africa the religion is no longer directly and regularly practiced; the religion does continue to the modern times in different ways and forms where it greatly influences the lives of the African people as a whole and Ibibio in particular.

According to Kibicho (2010) the term traditional refers to the cultural mode of transmission, that is, the use of oral tradition such as stories, songs, legends, riddles and proverbs of the people in passing the religion from generation to generation. Indigenous music similarly serves as a medium of storytelling and cultural transmission, helping communities preserve identity and shared memory (Ekpo, Edem, & Edet, 2023). Many scholars who have attempted to define

African Traditional Religion have been very careful not to detach it from the present as this would be ignorant of the immense influence it continues to exert on the lives of the adherents especially the Ibibio society. Adamo (2011) defines African Religion as the inborn and aboriginal, emerged from the quest to know the unknown (supernatural) and the sustaining faith of the African people, embraced by the forefathers and passed from generation to generations and still practiced today by the present generation of Africans.

Thus, religion of the traditional Ibibio people was and still polytheistic. The concept of monotheism did not seem to have had a place in the thinking of the ancient Ibibio people. This idea therefore reflects that the daily life of the people is regulated by the tenets of their religion, that is, the people live their daily lives consciously of their religious beliefs and practices. Their religious beliefs and practices centre around the Supreme Being, who is directly or indirectly worshipped without an image or statue made to represent Him because of His supremacy and uniqueness (Antia, 2015). Traditionally, the worship of the Supreme Being (*Abasi Ibom*) was usually represented by a small pot with water placed in a clay mound besides “*Okono*” and “*Itomo*”, the boundary marking plants. This act constitute “*iso abasi*”, the face of God at which the people offer sacrifices. Such sacrifices were direct appeals, prayers, or other supplications to



the Supreme Being (*Abasi Ibom*); specifically on “*etaha*” or “*ata – etaha*” market day, the eight day was set aside for the worship of the Supreme Being called “*usen abasi*” (Essoh, 2004).).

According to Abasiattai (1991), *Abasi Ibom* was also manifested in the phenomena such as “*Abasi Ukod*”, God of in-law, “*Abasi Eyeyen*”, God of Grand-children or Grand-Child, “*Abasi Imaan*”, God of Kindred, etc. Essoh (2004) maintained that “*Abasi Ibom* simply means the limitless or infinite God, and He is being called by various names by the people, such as “*Obot*” or “*Obod*”, the Creator, “*Nsinsi Abasi*”, Eternal God and Everlasting, “*Edisana Abasi*”, Holy God, etc.. Additionally, the people believed in the existence of multiple divinities (*mme ndem*) that dwell in various places like rivers, forests, rocks, etc as their sacred place. These divinities were believed to cater for the general welfare of the people they represented, and their power could affect the people either positively or negatively. These divinities and deities were represented by images, and maintained by the priest (Okuku) especially through pouring of libations (Udoh, 2008).

Moreover, there were also an in-depth believe in other lesser deities (*mme abasi/ndem*) and ancestors (*mme ikaan*). Notable among the lesser deities include “*abasi isong*”, the goddess of the earth, responsible for the fertility of crops, “*eka abasi*”, the mother of ‘gods or head of deities, responsible for procreation and fertility of women; “*ebe abasi*”, a deified husband; and “*abasi ekong*”, the god of war (Abasiattai, 1991). Also, there was an inbuilt believe in spirits, witchcraft (*ifot*), magic, or medicine or charm (*ibok*), and reincarnation. There was also a market deity (*ndem urua*) who took charge of the markets as well as farm deities (*ndem inwang*). Libations and sacrifices were often offered to appease and invoked them to act accordingly (Antia, 2005).

Worldview-vis-à-vis –Christian and African Worldviews

Kraft (1978) sees worldview as the “control box” of culture that determines the people’s thinking, acting or doing, and values. Thus, it is the central systematisation of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture assent consciously and unconsciously to, and from which they develop their value system. It lies at the very heart of culture, touching, interacting with every aspect of the society, and exerts a great influence and power on a person’s life. Worldview is intricately intertwined with religious beliefs and practices and the link between religion and worldview is found in every culture. Okon and Ansa (2012) quoted Samovar *et al* posit that worldview served as “a definer and creator of cultures”.

Therefore, worldview is seen as a construct that makeup life, providing a sense of direction, a locus of destination, and a strategy of unity for human thought, life and action. This construction satisfies and unifies the traditional person in its entirety, giving him a sense of belonging, and direction. Worldview therefore, provides the people with advice, values and guidance; sanctions a wide range of human conduct by providing the notions of right and wrong. It further reveals the religious belief and practices of the traditional people, the belief in the a Supreme Being who guides the people on what is right and what is wrong, also the belief in benevolent and malevolent



spirits. The process of appeal to the gods through prayers, religious rituals for good health, rich harvest, and creates a bond as well as helps the people to understand their origin.

Olumbe (2008) submits that worldview depends on the community to which a person belongs and grows up in, and on what is learned from family. Actually, religion dictates and shapes the worldview of a person. Conversely, religion is at the core of a person's worldview, it is essentially a manifestation of the underlying religious beliefs. Thus, an individual's worldview is reinforced through repetition of familiar religious actions and is generally taken for granted until one encounters a different worldview which forces them to analyse why they do or perceive things in a certain way.

A worldview is the framework of our most basic beliefs that shapes our view of and for the world and is the basis of our decisions and actions. It is a blueprint, or a map for reality: first, it helps to explain and interpret life and the world; and second, it is the starting point from to view life, decisions and actions. The beliefs that we are referring to as basic here are the beliefs we hold about life's biggest questions. These beliefs shape our worldview. We call them "basic" since they are fundamental to all of our other beliefs and are the assumptions upon which we build our lives.

Nwoye (2017) quoting Kalu avers that the term "African worldview" is used to refer to the African's perception of his/her world; such an Africentric cosmo-vision is said to entail a religious view of the universe". Worldview to a large extent is a picture of the universe man creates for himself; hence, it is predominantly a religious phenomenon, a spiritual view of life and almost everything is given a spiritual or religious interpretation. Broadly speaking, Nwoye (2017) avers;

The average African sees his world as being made up of two interdependent, interpenetrating and complementary planes: the visible and the invisible or the material and the spiritual planes. Influenced by the belief that the universe is made up of both visible and invisible forces and agencies, though separated, are in close proximity to one another, most African scholars agree that the average African man or woman holds a precarious view of the universe.

This implies that most African peoples many a time act from the understanding that various types of misfortune, illness, death, and failure arise from the activities of unseen forces, unknown and unseen infuriated spiritual agencies and revengeful ancestors. The African worldview influences the making of an African humanity. This reveals to him that there exists the phenomenon of mystical causality in the universe.

The Concept of Covenant in Ibibio Traditional Religious Perspective

The term covenant means pact, promise, oath, vow, agreement, will, treaty, alliance, and so on. Citing Mendehall, Ibuot (2014) avers that covenant is a solemn promise made, binding by an



oath, which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action. Such an action or formula is recognized by the parties as the formal act which binds them to fulfill certain promises. Covenant basically means a formal legal agreement or contract, where there are promises made and obligations to be met between the parties concerned (Hornsby, 2005). For Oko and Koko, 2024, p.20), it is the basis and structure in every African society. Principally, covenant brings two persons, families, or parties together into a relationship by means of a contract or agreement (Rabali, 2004). Rabali (2004) avers that in general, it can be said that the covenant is a dominant idea in the story of God's dealing with man and the essence of the covenant was the promise God made to His people, their acceptance of obligations imposed thereby, and the ratification of the Covenant by the shedding of blood. We now consider the Covenant development according to this pattern.

Ogunleye (2013) submits that covenant is a contract under seal with a promise to do or not to do certain act. An agreement between two or more persons with laid down conditions and guaranteed benefits, depending upon a person's keeping or breaking the covenant. She further observes that typically, covenant is characterized by the parties involved, terms of references and the punishment/reward that will accompany the obedience or otherwise to the terms of the covenant. Thus, covenant is a serious commitment that hinges on solidarity and reciprocity with the objective of achieving peace.

Daniel (2009) avers that covenant normally involves two parties that draws up a binding agreement and commit themselves to the contents of the agreement. A covenant is a very serious and profound matter that establishes relationship which is different from kinship and sometimes requires sacrificial shading of blood, and feasting. To break a covenant is to invite a curse from God, deities or ancestors. Covenant in its manifold forms and purposes, establishes, re-establishes, cements, bridges, purifies, strengthens, initiates personal or communal relationships with one another, the community and ultimately with God. Thus, the breach of the covenant is a direct blow to the vital spiritual force and intolerable; it is in effect a death blow, threatens the life of the individual and of the community (Daniel, 2009).

Furthermore, Ibuot (2014) sees covenant as an agreement, very solemn in nature between two parties or individual persons (husband and wife), villages, nations and usually involves an oath to indicate the predisposition of the parties to make good on their words. Moreover, this solemn agreement or union is legal in nature, which is the reason covenants usually include blessings (benefits) and curses (loses). In African traditional religion the issue of covenant very sensible, one enters into covenant-making (iman) with utmost solemnity. Among the Ibibio, this may even involve the administration of *mbiam* (traditional concocted oath) just to be sure of the loyalty of the other partner in the covenant-making. In some cases, the covenant making may even involve giving and taking of oath especially delegates election of political party's primary (Oko and Koko, 2024, 20)



Moreover, citing Shenk, Daniel (2009) opines that there are different forms of covenant in African society in general and most serious or common covenants are man-to-man, God-to-man covenants (though not to the same degree as the biblical covenants), marriage covenants, land covenants, peace covenants, kinship (*imaan*) covenants; this kind of covenant is said to restore broken relationships among family members. It is more or less confined to those who are closely related through kinship or marriage. Adoption covenants covered both children and strangers who may settle and invariably become members in a particular family, village, community, or region away from their own biological relatives.

The Need for Covenant in Ibibio Traditional Religious Perspective

The needs for covenant among the Ibibio people are numerous. These include getting persons involve into workable relationships; so that the parties involved should adhere strictly to the duties and obligations as well as sharing in the expected benefits. Consequently, the desire for security in relationships is one of the core need for covenant in African society. African people as a whole seek the security of their lives and their members; the desire security for their lives, family members, spiritual and emotional lives as well as material (economic) possessions. The people desire to cling unto life and avoid what would threaten their lives including that of other people in the relationship.

A covenant equally exists between individual human beings; between two or more communities to defend some rights in the relationship, bind themselves in agreement never to harm any member of either village, which failure must draw negative consequences on the defaulting party as stated in the articulation of the covenant (the curses that were pronounced); between individual human beings and/or villages with some spiritual beings or supernatural forces. Moreover, in many African societies, especially traditional Ibibio covenant is established between two persons or villages seeking stronger ties, and ancestors (*mme ikaan*) and village deities are called as witnesses. This is followed by the necessary rituals to strengthen and enhance the bond. Consequent upon these facts, it is obvious that African people especially the Ibibio people enter into covenants for various reasons such as to guarantee faithfulness, protection and unity in the relationship.

In Ibibio traditional religious practices as it is obtained in other parts of African, in respective families, the forebears have entered into or made agreement with various gods (deities) or spiritual forces for protection against the known or unknown enemies, security against evil or spiritual or malevolent attacks. This covenant according to an interviewee, Ukpog (67) who avers that most of the ancestors in the past often entered into agreement with some spiritual forces either to fortified, secure or protect his family members even the generation yet unborn. He further narrated that most of the Christians today are under the spell of such covenant in their respective families. Another interviewee, Affiong (70) submits that her brother-in-laws covenant with certain



spiritual or mystical forces because one man (name withheld), a common enemy was troubling them seriously; hence, they covenant with these beings for protection and security against this enemy. Obviously, there are similar experiences that are abounding in Ibibio traditional society till today.

Influence of Ibibio Traditional Religion on Ibibio Christians vis-à-vis Covenant

Significantly, for several years now, African traditional religion remains due to the fact that it is still the religion followed by the majority of the African people due to the covenant relationship with their ancestors. This is a noticeable fact that more than a decade since the advent of Christianity in Ibibio land; African Traditional Religion persists and shapes the attitudes and actions of large numbers of people (Nkonge, 2014). Moreover, Conteh (2008) observes that although new religions like Christianity and others seem to be doing well in Africa as a whole and particularly the Ibibio, where they claim to have many followers, the people always resort to their traditional religious system in the time of crisis.¹⁵ Africans superficially follow other religions but remain deeply rooted in their religious tradition. It pertinently clear that whilst Ibibio people are overwhelmed by Christian practices, they extensively incorporate elements of African religion into their daily lives. This clearly indicates that the Ibibio Christians were followers of their traditional religious system before they claimed to be followers of Christian religion (Mulago, 1991).

In Ibibio society, there were covenants drawn up to cement a wide range of human relations and interactions. These involved issues such as marriage agreements, settling of disputes, adoption of individuals, admission into secret societies, arrangements for buying land and trade. These human-based dealings are operated more formerly Ibibio land and covenant served as preventive measures against the potential threat to harmonious relationship in these regards. The intention was to cultivate peace, good relations, mutuality, friendship, respect, love between people and nature and love between people and spiritual forces in the traditional as well as contemporary society (Daniel, 2010).

Actually, a superficial observer might make a mistake of believing that African religious beliefs and practices are disappearing because of the presence of Christianity, but for anyone who lives in real contact with the Africans, especially the Ibibio people, the question or idea does not arise. This is because the future of traditional religion is not at all problematic for our generation. It has its place and plays its role at every level of our lives and society (Conteh, 2008). To make it clear, it is noted that African traditional religion is living religion, and it is a contemporary living reality, found in all aspects of the African people including social, political and economic, and it has been largely responsible for shaping the character and culture of the African people throughout history.

This reveals why African traditional religion is very essential when it comes to addressing the challenges facing Ibibio people today. The religion serves as a remedy, helping individuals and



communities in their spiritual, social and psychological desperations, and frustrations. It seems other religions such as Christianity have failed in this direction, may be because of the way they were introduced in Africa. Citing Mugambi, Kagema (2015) observes that the European missionaries assumed that Africans were operating under cultural and religious vacuums hence needed to accept the culture and religion transmitted from Europe without questioning.²⁰ It is clear that though Christianity has made tremendous impact in areas of life among African people as a whole, Ibibio inclusive; yet, during life threatening situations most often this religion seem not to make any meaningful impact to the people, that is the reason they usually revert to their traditional practices.

In Ibibio traditional society, Christians have been seriously influenced especially during traditional marriage rites. Certainly, marriage is seen as a drama into which no spectator is admitted, hence, each party, a man, his woman as players plays their parts effectively. Therefore, together with the various customs associated with it, both families and the entire community have respective roles to play during this ceremony. This is because marriage is avenue through which an individual shares their intimacy. At this point of convergence, the entire members of both families and communities meet: the departed, the living and those yet to be born. It is obvious that marriage is a focus of existence; it helps to bring the human sexuality to its purpose, and the ushering of new life into the human society. Hence, enormous influence is exerted on any Ibibio Christian who wishes or intended to refuse certain obnoxious aspects especially in the area of certain sacrifice “*awa oduongo ye awa adia*”.

Another area of deep influence is during funeral rite. However, birth is the first rhythm of life for a new generation and the rite of birth is performed in order to make the child a corporate social being. During young-adulthood, initiation rites continue, the process that makes the child a mature, responsible, active, creative and reproductive member of a society. Death is inevitable and many societies considered it to be the most disrupting phenomenon of all. It stands between the worlds of human beings and that of the spirits, between the visible and the invisible. Ibibio Christians have seriously influenced during the period because of fear that is associated with it.

Among Africa people as a whole, death is considered to be a passage to a new level of existence, a transition to a new life. It marks a physical separation of the individual from other living human beings. Funeral rites mark a radical change in the life of the individual, and leave an impact on the lives of relatives, friends, and well-wishers, and the community at large. It usually leaves a vacuum which could never be filled. The inevitability of death strikes a mixed feeling among the people. It usually leaves an aura of fear and dread in the minds of the living.

Syncretism is indeed a major challenge for Ibibio Christians because they tend to mix their former religion and Christianity. This challenge is not peculiar to Ibibio Christianity, since African Christian communities often negotiate between biblical teachings and inherited cultural systems in matters of morality, identity and social obligation (Essien & Edem, 2024). This persistence of



traditional identity shows that cultural practices often remain alive even under the pressure of Christianity and modernization (Oko and Ogbodo). They continued to serve their traditional deities, sacrificing, observing and performing the necessary rituals during marriages and funerals while claiming to be faithful Christians. The challenge of syncretism among Ibibio Christians has been and continues to be major issue among the people. Citing O'Donovan, Olumbe (2008) submits that the possible causes are: cultural renewal in Africa, development of African theology which justifies traditional religions, emergence of liberal theology, and lack of adequate Bible knowledge among new Christians such that in times of trial the converts turn to Primal religious belief.

Factors that encourage the influence of Ibibio Traditional Religion

The factors that caused Ibibio traditional religion to influence Ibibio Christians are religious and social factors, as well as the pressures from the people. One of the religious factors is the failure of the churches and ministers to deal with the spiritual issues affecting the people. It is clear that as far as the Ibibio people are concern there is in-depth belief in the spiritual world which is composed of the unseen powers. This is their worldview, how the people perceive the world; it is the ultimate cause of all that happen, especially the unusual and the disturbing events (Grebe and Fon, 2006). The inability of church ministers to deal with spiritual issues that affect the members are one of the main reasons why some Christians allowed themselves to be influenced by the traditional practices. An interviewee, Ini-mfon (54) asserts that “my pastor could not help me when I reported to him about the spiritual forces that have been disturbing me in the dream. I had been praying since, yet nothing has changed, so I am very tired and helpless; therefore I have to help myself because it is said, ‘*Abasi unyanga anyanga idem*’”. Meaning literally, ‘help yourself as God is helping you’. Another interviewee, Etop (58) lamented on the helpless situation she was facing, the attack and influence of demonic spirits, (*mme ndem*), ancestral spirits (*mme ikaan/nkpo ufok*), and it seems that the “Christian church” that she belongs and the ministers cannot help; so, she was forced to consult the traditional herbalist for help”³⁰. Therefore, it is common among the some Christians when they are faced with such situation, they do not want to waste time in the church, they immediately seek for help from their traditional means, who they believe can handle their problem.

Lack of patience has been identified as another reason why some Ibibio Christians allowed themselves to be influenced by their traditional practices, as one of the interviewees Uduak (46) observes that “lack of patience on the part of some Christians caused them to revert. They cannot wait patiently for God’s appointed time of visitation to come. This is a very great sin before God; they should learn to wait for the Lord, not to be in a hurry”. Additionally, delayed answer to prayers has also been identified by another interviewee, Idongesit (39) as the reason African traditional religion influenced some Ibibio Christians, as she says, “when one prays for so long for a particular



issue, such as marital partner, or a child without an answer, he/she may look for an alternative means of getting it, may be through consulting diviner or herbalist. She furthers that, our people say, “*mmong ama akpene owo ke inua oboho, akapa etap*”. Meaning literally, ‘when water remains too long in one’s mouth its turns to saliva’. So, the people need immediate answer or “sharp-sharp” solution to their diverse problems”.

Apparently, other religious factors are the inconsistency between teaching and practice especially by their church ministers, lack of clarity on certain biblical teachings, as well as the failure of the ministers to use biblical instructions to correct its members. On the other hand, the social factors are the acceptance of the traditional chieftaincy title, initiation into traditional secret societies, performance of burial rites, festivals, and the communal life of the people. To sum it up, the desire for peace and harmony in life as well as fear of death compels the people to be influenced by their traditional religious systems.

Conclusion/Recommendations

It is certain that the indigenous religious tradition of Ibibio people emerges from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present generation, and the religion is being practised today in various forms and intensities among the traditional society. Obviously, the traditional religion is a way of life that intertwines with the people’s culture. There is no sharp dividing line between the two. In spite of the changes that the religion has undergone in the contemporary due to external and internal influences, the intrusion of comparatively new religions and the complexities of modernization, the traditional religious tradition is exerting certain influence on the people in many facets of life, their conversion to Christianity notwithstanding (Gehman, 2005).

It is observed that Ibibio Christians often mix their traditional worldviews with the Christian worldview. This usually challenged their authentic Christian beliefs and practices. Every missionary enterprise must, therefore work towards avoiding syncretism. However, for the people to avoid syncretism, they need to diligently work towards understanding the local culture and prevailing worldview so as to be able to fully appreciate the demands of conversion. Equally, the church should teach and assure Ibibio Christians that their conversion and acceptance of Christianity frees them from their traditional worldview, prejudices, limitations, and obligations to the traditional beliefs and practices. The ministration of the church should be capable of bringing the people to divine encounter which will definitely give new meaning and significance to the religious and spiritual yearning of Ibibio Christians. Most importantly, the people need to sensitise African theology to be able explore the meaning and process of conversion in the African setting.

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Oral Interview

S/N	Name of Interwee	Age	Date of Interview	
1	Akpan, Ukpong	(67) -	2/6/2022	
2	Eme, Affiong	(70) –	2/6/2022	
3	Akpan, Ini-mfon	(54) –	2/6/2022	
4	Usen, Etop	(58) –	5/5/2022	
5	Idoreyin, Uduak	(46) –	5/4/2022	
6	Ifreke, Idongesit	(39) –	5/6/2022	