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AN EXAMINATION OF THE ENCOUNTER AND INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON TIV TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND VALUE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT
A general view of many experts holds that no culture can have intercourse with another and remain same. Once there is an intercultural encounter, each culture adds and or subtracts something from its cultural norms. Christianity as brought to Africa came carrying under its wings the culture of its origin and that of the missionaries that brought it. This work is an assessment of the influence of Christianity on Tiv Traditional Religion and Cultural Values. Using the historical method and built on the Sociological conflict theory of Karl Marx, it explores the socio-religious implications of the influence of Christianity on Tiv traditional religion and cultural values. An African adage maintains that before the discovery of corn, fowls were eating something. In the same manner, before the advent of Christianity in Tivland, the Tiv people had their cultural values well cut out and were living by them. However, Christianity which carried alongside it western civilization came into the Tivland and disrupted the traditional values almost turning the Tiv culture upside down. This rendered the traditional methods of preserving morality ineffective. However, on a positive note, Christianity came with formal education and modern medical services which uplifted the social-economic status of the Tiv people. This study, through its findings unveils the following facts: that most of Tiv people are Christians but like other ethnics groups in Africa still engage in some of their cultural practices such as polygamy, traditional medicine, performances of *Akombo* (rituals) and *Tsav* (witchcraft)

amidst their practice of Christianity. The research also discovers that Christianity is not totally at variance with the Tiv traditional religion and cultural values; only the modus operandi differs. The work therefore recommends a nuptial union between the Tiv cultural values and the Christian religion in other to bring about a more deeply rooted Christianity in Tivland. The research further opines that Christian leaders in Tivland be properly educated on the core cultural values of the Tiv people and how they can even enhance the propagation of the Christian faith if well tapped into.

Introduction

Every society across the globe is always changing. No matter how stable a social system might appear, it is continually undergoing slow but cumulative changes (Aker, 120). While most of the times the changes are gentle and subtle, in some cases more rapid changes that might involve visible disruption of an entire established structure take place. When this occurs, it leads to break down of established social and cultural forms, and there emergences new ones which might affect the identity of the social group.

Throughout the African continent, the general trends have been to abandon the traditional African beliefs, customs, norms, values and ways of life and adopt new ones. This trend has degenerated into a complex that African culture is inferior, parochial, obsolete and archaic. For some African scholars, the most horrifying and devastating of all of this is the mass drift from African traditional religion into Christianity which highly packages western cultures.

With the advent of Christianity into Tivland through the missionary activities of the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church of Christ, the Christian missionaries took undue advantage of the insatiable inclination of the Tiv people towards everything foreign. In this way, it did not take long before the cultural values, the tradition and the indigenous religion of the Tiv nation were termed barbaric and primitive and consequently trashed into the waste bin of history (Wegh, 38).

Many Tiv scholars are divided over this topic. While some call for absolute reversal to the core traditional religion and values of the Tiv, some however maintain that the Tiv nation as currently configured through the influence of Christianity remains the best. This research nonetheless, makes a case that a marriage between Christianity and the Tiv Traditional religion would engender equilibrium where the good values of the Traditional Religion of the people are blended with the Christian message thereby making the Tiv people truly Christian and culturally Tiv (95).

The identity and origin of the Tiv People

The Tiv occupy Tiv land, located mainly in Benue State. They are also found in some parts of Taraba, Nasarawa, Kogi and Plateau States. Wegh offers information on the geographical setting of Tivland, which is inhabited by the river Benue in central Nigeria, covering an area of about 30,000 square kilometers and stretches from 60 to 80 and then 10 North latitude and 80 to 10 East longitudes. Tiv have a fast growing population, their figures stood at 3.7 million in the 1965

census and they are estimated to be over 7 million presently -making them the most populous ethnic groups in Benue State, and fourth largest in Nigeria. The Benue fertile land is marked with two seasons, wet season (April-November) and dry season (November – March). Dry/cold harmattan is experienced during the dry season. Tivland is surrounded by neighboring ethnic groups such as the Udam (a collection of tribes) in Cross River State on the south. The Jukun, Chyamba and Mumuye in Taraba State on the east, the Alogo, Angwe and Koro in Nasarawa on the northern part, and Idoma and Igala on the west (23).

On the origin of the Tiv, Wegh, contrary to Yakobu as cited above has it that, there is no common view as to the original home to the Tiv people. According to him most account connect Tiv with Bantu stock somewhere around Central Africa, while others refers to their place of settlement prior to their migration to the present Tivland as *Swem* in the south-east of the Republic of Cameroon. However, Wegh agrees with the first account which is the general view, which holds that the migrant Tiv came from their original homeland in Congo, passed through *Swem* where they settled for some time before arriving at their present place in Nigeria. Evidence of this show that, there is linguistic similarity between Tiv language and the Bantu Nyaza who live in the present day Malawi. Moreso, the Tiv share certain cultural and physical traits with some central African group, such as physique, dance, arts and worship forms (24).

The Tiv by their identity are traditionally farmers, though quite a number of them have now joined the public service. They are peace loving. Tolerant, accommodative and hardworking people. The language spoken by Tiv is called *Zwa Tiv* (Tiv language) with little variations among the different Tiv groups but each group understanding the other. The concepts of God (*Aondo*), witchcraft (*tsav*), spirits (*ujijingi*) and rituals (*Akombo)* constitute the sum total of the Tiv world-view and Religion, and permeate all spheres of life (10).

Overview of Some Tiv Cultural Values
The Tiv, as other human societies share a common habitat and depend on one another for their survival and well-being. As a cultural group the Tiv have evolved a perfected well-defined cultural system with their well-coined symbols that enables them to meet their needs. Odefola defines culture as configuration of learned and shared patterns of behaviour and understandings concerning the meanings and value of things, ideas, emotions and actions. This configuration of pattern and understanding arise out of man's physical environment, his biological nature and his group life (Odotola, 6). Thus, Culture is a way of life of a people. Tiv Culture therefore refers to the Tiv way of life which manifests their behaviour, ideas, emotions, value of things and ideas in all facets of life. According to Gbor, culture represents a whole gamut of Tiv traditional events and activities of their general life. It is from these events and activities which relate to the spheres of life that the Tiv generally pass on ideas, through socialization, to their future generations. Tiv values are also derived from the same cultural items, events and activities of

their general life. It is all about their beliefs, sentiments, feelings, emotions and attitudes (Gbor, 16).

On the other hand, Gbor and Atel, while making reference to the Tiv Traditional Religion maintain that for the Tiv, religion is life and life is religion. Religious practices cover all of life from the time one is conceived to the time he gets old and dies. Among the Tiv people, religion determines morality but it is also found in social life, politics, and kingship (Atel, 25).What one needs to do is to see the Tiv religion and culture in the context of a unified world view in which man; nature and supernatural constitute a continuum (19).

For the traditionalists, it was God that gave moral laws; they consider these laws as the highest categories of laws which are the basis of the cultural values. Not honouring the values, not walking within its stipulations was seen as disobedience to God. God, in the opinion of the people, gave moral laws through divinities who were to execute judgment (111). This view quite agrees with the Tiv situation, hence Gbor explains, Tiv traditionally believe that God *(Aondo)* is the Creator of the sun, stars, firmament, moon, and heaven and earth. That is why elders in Tiv often instruct their young ones to learn how to do things according to God's creation *(Gbaaondo)*; in other words, to be orderly in their actions. It simply means doing things the way God created human beings to think and act as was rightly passed on to them by the past generations. As a result of the conviction that God would punish a deviant person either by himself or through a deity, the people ran away from sin (19).

Gbor has a similar view with Metuh in explaining the Tiv position that apart from the fear of God or supernatural punishment, the traditional people feared societal punishments. The Tiv saw men as social beings, one could not have a full realization of his purpose in this world without the help of the society, and any violation of the divine law(s) attract the wrath of God upon the society, consequently, the society jointly punishes the offender by either killing or sending him on exile or in some cases making him deformed (20).

The Tiv highly cherished their cultural values. Some of these cultural values have been selected here by John Gbor to include: Honesty (*jighjigh*), truthfulness (*Mini*). Peace (*Bem*), fairness (*Erdoo*). Justice(*U erenkwag sha mimi*), respect for elders (*U nan mbavesenichivir*), dignity of labour (*u soon tom man u eren u dedoo man sha gbashima*), love of fellow man (*u soon or umache)*, the respect for human life (*u kuran uma u hanma or umache*), the sacredness of human life (*u yangen u haanawambe a or umache inya*),hospitality to visitors (*u eren a orvanya dedoo*), respect for Family values (*u nan chivirgh sha tsombor),* showing kindness(*u eren a ior dedoo*), Compassion (*u tesendooishima man mhoonom hen iormbagen*); and the willingness to help those in need (u wasen ior mbaibanave), etc.

Christianity in Tivland

Christianity which is one of the largest religions in the world, with more than 3,000,000, 000 adherents, was founded in Judea (Modern Israel) about 2,000 years ago by Jesus of Nazareth, basing its belief in Jesus as the resurrected son of God or Messiah (Encyclopedia, 898).

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Contributing in this view, Gbenda (9) maintains that, Christianity is the religion generated by faith in Jesus Christ as the revelation of divine mystery. Following his death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, he laid the foundation and axis of a new faith. Thus, the death, resurrection and ascension into heaven are regarded among Christians as very important events in the religion. Through his passion, death and resurrection, he overcame human sin and alienation, thereby offering human beings a new opportunity of getting in touch with God. Christians put their faith in Jesus and Christianity is essentially following the life of Jesus Christ and following the path he laid for the salvation of mankind (9).

Christianity after three centuries of persecution became the official religion of the Roman Empire and spread throughout the world, especially in the first through fourth and sixteen and then the twentieth centuries, under the aegis of Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and various eastern independent churches (Encyclopedia, 899).

According to Moti and Wegh, the history of Christianity in Tivland began in 1354 when W. B. Baike, as officer of the British Royal Navy, led the first expedition into Northern Nigeria. It was this voyage that also took him up to Benue where he met the Tiv and wrote about them. Samuel Crowther, who later became bishop over a huge part of West Africa accompanied Bake on the expedition and returned with a strong desire to plant a church along the Niger and Benue (80). However, this dream had to wait until 1907 when Karl Kumm, founder of the Sudan United Mission (SUM) proposed a plan to the South African branch of SUM for evangelization. In 1911, missionary work had started at Sai. However, disagreement soon arose between the African and the English members of the team, the disagreement had to do with the division of Tivland between these two groups. After a number of meetings, it was decided that Tivland should be the responsibility of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM), the Mother Church of the African speaking group. Tivland thus became under DRCM of South Africa and SUM. The church has become autonomous in Tivland and is known as the *"Nongo U Kristu U Sudan Hen Tiv* (NKST), translated as the Church of Christ from Sudan among the Tiv (81).

According to lortyom, the first branch of the Mission whose members came in contact with Tiy was the SUM; the South African branch, led by Karl Kumm who left Lokoja on their way to Ihia village on the upper part of River Benue. On their way, they had a stopover at Abintse a village in Tivland some meters south of Makurdi in1904. By 1908, Kumm visited Tivland again, this time he came from the east. During his visit in South Africa, Kumm indicated that he would like to be in charge of the SUM South African branch, but while in England, and on his way to Sudan, he learnt that the SUM American branch which was already in Jukun land (the neighboring tribe of Tiv) regarded Tivland as the next area which they desired to cover. Following this development Kumm started work at Mbula near Yola. However, the decision of the Lokoja conference that work should be started among the tribe with the greatest population led the Tivland to be preferred (lyortyom 56). On the 17th April 1911, Rev. Botha, Guinter and

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Carl Zimmermann started work at Sai. These were missionaries Church of Christ of Sudan among Tiv (81).

While the DRCM entered Tivland from the east in 1911 and began work at Sai, the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) entered from the west and began work among the hiarev. The RCM was the second Christian Church to come to Tivland, they began their first attempts among the Tiv around the middle of 1919 (108). Mato has stated that the RCM arrived in Makurdi in 1924 (8).Denga, however in his opinion Stated that, RCM started work in Tivland in earnest in 1930. The construction of the railway from Akwanga (where RCA Company had been working for many years) to Makurdi brought a lot of Roman Catholic railway workers to Makurdi. This then paved way for the Roman Catholic organization to come to Tivland. In 1930, the German Holy Ghost Missionaries arrived Makurdi, this marked the beginning of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi (Denga, 16). Denga again state that, in 1938 a new mission was opened in Gboko, the new administrative headquarters of Tiv. After 10 years of hard work, during the Second World War, the British were at war with Germany and since Nigeria was a British colony, the German priests who were in Nigeria were forced to leave the country by the British. As a result of this war the Catholic Mission in Tivland suffered a great setback. However, after the war, the English chapter of Holy Ghost fathers came to assume work in estern part of Tivland. James Hagan was named Prefect Apostolic and later became the first Bishop of Makurdi Diocese in 1961 (17).

The Roman Catholic Mission emphasized so much on education and this gave it an impressive advantage over the DRCM. Since the mission belief that education was the basis for evangelization, the RCM established many schools and taught in English language, while the DRCM relied on the Tiv language and established few schools and the level of education was limited at the elementary stage (20).

Christianity and the Tiv Culture
Faith and culture enjoy a harmonious relationship. In the past centuries of Christianity, evangelization did not take into cognizance the culture of a people. The translation and adaptation approaches were the dominant models missionaries often used in the context of evangelization. Sadly, these approaches failed to create adequate contact with the local cultures where the faith was transplanted. The distance between faith and culture has caused the Christian faith to be foreign in many cultures across the globe including, North African countries, Japan and others. In Tiv society of central Nigeria too, Christianity even though remains the dominant religion is yet to take concrete root in Tivland (120). Scholars who write on the encounter between Christianity and Tiv culture underscore the tension that existed and still exist between Christianity and Tiv Traditional Religion. For instance, Christian missionaries did not agree with *tsav* (witchcraft), *akombo* (magic), rites of passage and some marriage rites. Tiv Traditional Religion and culture on the other hand, saw Christianity as intruding and thwarting the Tiv belief systems and practices. (12) In Tiv society, witchcraft and magic, and other practices are

constitutive aspects of religion and culture. Many scholars argue that the encounter demonstrated a dialectical relationship of the practices of both. The goal of the pioneer missionaries to save the souls of Africans in general resulted to a continual appeal to Africans to renounce cultural practices that opposed the Christian religion if they were to be Christians. As the faith was increasingly accepted by Africans, the call to substitute cultural practices with Christian beliefs was criticized by African scholars on the basis that the substitution theory deprived Africans of their cultural heritage (19). Such tension revealed that the Christian missionaries had little or no knowledge of indigenous rituals and cultural practices as inherently possessing primal religious systems that could enrich the Christian faith.

Abolition of Rites of Passage by Protestant Missionaries
According Wegh, Traditional African society is hierarchical in its structure (55). Status can be both ascribed and achieved. Because rites of passage mark the movement of an individual from one stage to another and from one role or societal position to another, they are part of the socially recognized means through which individuals achieve status in their community (29). For the Tiv people of Benue State, apart from ascribing social status to its initiates through their participation in rites of passage, they also believe that societal harmony is not possible without them (14). As such, rites of passage take on significant implications for both the participants and their communities since these rites help define and redefine the community's relationship to an individual and the individual's changing place in the community (81).

 For the Tiv people, the most elaborate rites of passage usually concern the initiation of the young into adulthood. In this way a society not only socializes its young by outwardly moving them into new roles of social responsibility, but also transforms them inwardly by molding their moral and mental disposition towards the world (91). This is because the traditional notion of personhood is essentially relational. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involve participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of the community. According to Torkula (Tor Tiv iv) a person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence (39). To be without one of these corporate elements of life is to be out of the whole picture. Unfortunately, this is the situation of many Tiv people today as a result of the abolition of rites of passage by the missionaries.

Abolition of the Rite of virginity by Protestant Missionaries
In traditional Tiv culture, morality was a highly prized virtue. The virginity of females in particular was not taken lightly. Thus, once a female child was weaned, she would be initiated into the cult of single spirit (*Akombo à Igbanjôv*), and its symbol (typically the shell of a small snail called *Ikyôôr*) would be tied around the neck of the girl. When the girl reached marriageable age and a suitor came for dowry payment, one of the requirements was to bring a

young she-goat that had not yet given birth (*Ivoàkyôôr*). Then there would be a cleansing rite of passage (*Akôôr à saghen*, 'the removal of the singleness bond'), during which the symbol of the single spirit would be removed from her neck and she would be handed over to her husband. It was believed that as long as she carried the symbol, she would be sterile and unable to bear children if she had pre-marital sex, and the male offender would become impotent. In this way, purity of life and sexual morality were maintained in the traditional Tiv society.

The cleansing rite for *Akôôr à saghen* amongst the majority of Tiv people had a parallel variant known as *Ier* (ritual bathing) within two Tiv clans (the Ihyarev and Masev lineages). Both of these rituals converged at a point, although the latter was more elaborate, taking several days (98). Writing on this, Awuawuah states: here the *Ier* priestess (priestess not in a strict sense of institutional priesthood) using some leaves, she dips it in water from a hole dug in the ground. This symbolically represents a river that is meant to wash down the iniquities that might have befallen the woman and need to be washed away (96)

For both rites, the priestess performing the ceremony, more often than not, an elderly woman, would bathe the initiate. As she bathes her, she would recite the words given in the table below:

TABLE 1: The Incantation for the ritual bath of initiates during Tiv rites of passage of females from childhood to womanhood.

Ritual incantation	Author's translation
Ibo sen, Ishôkôndo	Guilt descent, right-standing ascend
Ibo sen, Ishôkôndo	Guilt descent, right-standing ascend
Iyange wan nomso	The sun for the male child
Uwer wan kwase	The moon for the female child
Mnenge a nenge ga	I am not a copy cat
Ôôn we nyiane [nyian ne]	I am cleansing you today
Akombo a Tiv ci ca cii.	[By] all ritual cosmic powers of Tiv

Source: The Tiv words are taken from Awuawuer (2017:332) and translated by the author.

This cleansing rite was believed to have a twofold efficacy in the life of the initiate: firstly, it freed the young lady from fetish and mysterious forces (*Akombo*) that had been previously placed on her. Secondly, particularly for the *Ier* rite (which was for those who had already engaged in officially sanctioned pre-marital sex), it served to secure her progeny by ensuring her cleansing; a form of atonement (87)

It was abominable for any young man or woman to have premarital sex. To make sure this does not happen, it was customary to perform the rite of virginity a night after the marriage ceremony was performed. If it was ascertained that the woman was not a virgin, the husband would procure a piece of wrapper and make a large hole in the middle of it and deliver it to the mother in-law. This was the highest public embarrassment any woman could suffer. On the other hand, if it turns out that the bride is a virgin, six rolls of wrapper, a pig or cow (according to the financial

status of the groom) were purchased and delivered to the mother for being a good mother. In other to avoid shame, mothers took the moral discipline of their female children very seriously.

Converging Points between Christianity, Tiv Culture and Religion
Okpe, Nicholas in his analysis of the activities of Christianity among the Igala people of Nigeria opines that in the early period of the Church, many pagan festivals were induced or converted into Christian festivals without necessarily abolishing them. He further made a case that such approach could have been more productive in Igalaland and many other parts of Africa. In his opinion there are many Igala festivals that could be induced with Christian element and eliminate the aspects that are contrary to the Gospel message (Okpe 190). Same can be said of Tiv people and so many other tribes in the African continent. Except for the deep bias on the part of the missionaries, the Tiv Traditional Religion (TTR) which is part of the cultural heritage of the Tiv has a lot of similarities with Christianity. There existed and still exist a huge dosage of common ground that could be genuinely taken advantage of to create a romantic and lasting marriage between the Tiv culture/religion and Christianity. Some of these converging points include but not restricted to:

i. Belief in one Supreme Being
The belief in the Supreme Being (*Aondo*) among the Tiv dates from antiquity. Although God might not have been directly involved in the daily affairs of men, the acknowledgement of His existence as believed by the Tiv, is not in doubt: For them, *Aondo* (God) is the creator of the universe - *Tar* (*Aondo-gba-tar*). This work of creation covers everything that is in existence. God is also considered incorporeal (non-material or physical) but His size is symbolized by the firmament and the earth. His power, wisdom, presence, universality are expressed in his creation while His supremacy and sovereignty are manifested by the entire nature itself. Thus rivers, seas, mountains, valleys, sun, the moon, thunder, lightning, and darkness attest to God's handiwork. Death, sickness, and every activity under heaven and earth are directly attributed to Him. Hence *Aondo-ngu-noon* to the Tiv means, God is causing the downpour. The firmament itself is God's skin (*Kwav-Aondo*). Lightning (*Aondo-nyiar*), the Sunshine (*Aondo-ta-Iyange-shin-Aondo-due-Iyange*), and Thunder (*Aondo-Dura*) all these are directly ascribed to God.

ii. The Tiv Perception of *Aondo* (God)
(Akiga 38) as cited in S. Moti and F. Wegh (201) has given us what may be regarded as the earliest concept of *Aôndo* (God) among the Tiv. The Tiv, he says, in very early times used the name of *Aôndo* quite frequently. The Tiv believe that *Aôndo* exists and is nowhere else but above. *Aôndo* is the Supreme Being, the creator of everything, including man. The name *Aôndo* was known for several centuries before the European Christian Missionaries came into Tivland, and even though they changed everything about the Tiv Tradition Religion, the name *Aondo* still passed for the Christian God and has remained so till date. The Tiv word for creation and nature

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is *gbaaôndo*. This is a compound word consisting of the verb *gba* (carve) and the noun *Aôndo* (God). Creation has been carved by God, it is his work. The Tiv being good carvers as demonstrated by the array of carved images used in the *Kwagh-hir* (visualized form of Tiv folktales) use the symbolism of carving to describe God's work of creation. In spite of their knowledge of carving, the Tiv do not make images of God. For they say that *Aôndo* is too great, one cannot make an image of Him (57)

It should be stressed that the Tiv believe in one Supreme Being - *Aôndo* - and do not have deities or intermediaries. The association of *Aôndo* with the sky has led (Downes 71) to erroneously treat *Aôndo* as being synonymous with the firmament, and even to suggest that the sky is God, just as the sun has been regarded as God. (Mbiti 19) rejects such a view, explaining that many other people associate God with the sky, the sun and heavens, all of which suggest great distance and aid men in trying to comprehend and describe the transcendence of God. Some writers have pointed out that *Aôndo* is remote and that he is not thought of in personal terms among the Tiv. (Bohannan, 65) refers to *Aôndo* as an 'otiose god, a god who created the world and then withdrew and left it to be run by persons, Spirits and forces that he created, but that are other than himself. Both (Rubingh 69) and (Downes, 97) argue that *Aôndo* is not a personal God among the Tiv. The reason Rubingh adduces for this is that the Tiv are not 'Christians and therefore address God in prayer only in a moment of intense crisis, when they may cry out for help from the highest power in the universe. Downes asserts that he found no idea of a personal God among the Tiv, adding that the idea of God the creator could be traced to the influence of Christian missions. We have already shown with reference to Akiga that the Tiv have always related directly with God prior to the coming of Christianity. In former times the Tiv frequently addressed God. This was usually done through the elders of the people. The arrangement in several instances was that in every patrilineage (*ityô*) an elder was appointed and given the responsibility of addressing God on behalf of the people when the need arose. For example, when rain came with heavy winds and thunder *(idyuran)*, the elder came out of his hut to *sôô* (implore) *Aôndo* to send down rain without winds and thunder. If it was raining heavily in a particular locality, the youngest male child (who had never slept with a woman and was therefore considered pure and innocent) was directed to throw a burning charcoal into the rain to stop it (45 All of these go a long way to show clearly that there is so much that units Christianity and the Traditional Religion and culture of the Tiv people of Benue State.

Summary and Conclusion
This study focuses on the impact of the methods of early Christian missionary evangelization and Proselytisation on the native cultures of northern Nigeria, with a particular focus on Tiv people. It demonstrates that the gross lack of cultural competence amongst the early western missionaries made them inflict monumental damages on the culture and psyche of Tiv people,

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albeit inadvertently. This has been used in assessing appropriate missioner methodological approach for engaging the gospel and culture.

The key issue in the study is that the gospel must be presented in forms that connect with its target audience at heart, without harming them physically, psychologically, socially, culturally or environmentally. Steps must also be taken to ensure that the gospel is 'nativised' in the culture it reaches without its own soul being lost, and at the same time, selectivity in its mission (exclusively focusing on its heavenly dimensions without attending to this-worldly concerns of its target population) must be avoided; rather, the totality of metaphysical and existential needs of the individual and the culture it reaches must be addressed so that they may be redeemed

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