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# The Ecclesiastical Factor and the Rise of Neo-Traditionalism in Igboland: Unintended Consequences and Socio-Cultural Implications

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*Abstract: This study examines the complex relationship between ecclesiastical influences and the resurgence of neo-traditionalism in Igboland, Nigeria, focusing on unintended consequences and socio-cultural implications. Employing a multidisciplinary approach, it integrates historical analysis, theological inquiry, and socio-cultural examination. Through a comprehensive literature review, gaps in scholarly discourse are identified, and framed within theoretical frameworks such as inculturation and materialism. Historical analysis traces missionary patterns, while theological inquiry explores Christianity's tensions with indigenous cultures. Socio-cultural examination, using qualitative methods, provides insights into contemporary Igbo society. Findings reveal that ecclesiastical actions, including missionary patterns, extreme inculturation, materialism, social security gaps, and clergy conduct, inadvertently contribute to preserving and revitalizing indigenous cultural and religious practices. This unintended consequence fuels neo-traditionalism as cultural resistance, challenging Christian dominance and highlighting broader discussions on cultural preservation and identity. The study underscores the importance of dialogue and collaboration between religious institutions and indigenous communities to promote cultural preservation and societal transformation. Acknowledging these unintended impacts fosters a more inclusive relationship, enriching our understanding of religion, culture, and identity in contemporary Igbo society and beyond.*

**Keywords:** Neo-Traditionalism, Ecclesiastical Influences, Cultural Preservation, Socio-Cultural Implications, Igbo Landscape.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of the dynamic interplay between ecclesial influences and the resurgence of neo-traditionalism in Igboland offers a compelling avenue for research, as it delves into the



unintended consequences and sociocultural implications of the church's actions within the cultural context. As a phenomenon that has gained increasing prominence in recent decades, the rise of neo-traditionalism in Igboland presents a complex and multifaceted challenge to the established order, one that warrants a closer examination.

Existing scholarly discourse on Igbo cultural revival has often focused on the various manifestations of this phenomenon, such as the revitalization of traditional festivals, the resurgence of masquerade performances, and the renewed emphasis on indigenous arts and crafts. However, the role of the ecclesial factor, namely the actions and policies of the Christian church, in catalyzing and shaping this cultural renaissance has received less attention. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the unintended consequences and sociocultural implications of the ecclesiastical influence on the emergence and sustenance of neo-traditionalism in Igboland.

This interest stems from a desire to understand the intricate dynamics at play, where the introduction of a foreign religion, Christianity, has inadvertently contributed to the preservation and revival of traditional Igbo cultural and religious practices. By examining the various facets of the ecclesiastical factor, including the patterns of missionary enterprise, the phenomenon of extreme inculturation, the prevalence of materialism within the church, the lack of social security, and the conduct of the clergy, this study seeks to shed light on the complex interplay between the institution of the church and the resurgence of neo-traditionalism in Igboland.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to offer valuable insights into the broader discourse on cultural preservation, identity, and the role of religious institutions in shaping socio-cultural dynamics. By exploring the unintended consequences of the ecclesial factor, the study hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate mechanisms that underlie the revival of traditional practices and beliefs in the face of dominant religious and cultural influences. Additionally, the findings may hold relevance for other indigenous communities grappling with similar challenges, providing a framework for navigating the complexities of cultural preservation and adaptation within the context of religious pluralism.

## **2. RELATED WORK**

The interplay between religious institutions and the resurgence of traditional practices, often termed neo-traditionalism, has become a prominent theme in contemporary social science research. Here are some of the perspectives of various scholars on this complex phenomenon:

### **1. Integration and Reinterpretation:**

- **Adrian Hastings (1993):** In his work *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, Hastings argues that religious institutions can act as catalysts for neo-traditionalism. They might integrate traditional elements into their practices and reinterpret them to resonate with contemporary audiences. This approach can revitalize religious traditions and foster a sense of cultural identity.

### **2. Selective Appropriation and Contestation:**

- **Jean and John Comaroff (1999):** The Comaroffs, in their book *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*, highlight the selective nature of neo-traditional



movements. They argue that religious institutions might appropriate specific aspects of tradition that align with their ideologies, while discarding or reinterpreting others. This can lead to contestations within communities and the emergence of new forms of tradition.

### **3. Legitimization and Social Control:**

- **Talal Asad (1979):** In *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, Asad emphasizes the role of religious institutions in legitimizing neo-traditional practices. He argues that such institutions might collaborate with the state to enforce specific cultural norms associated with tradition, potentially serving as instruments of social control.

### **4. Resistance and Empowerment:**

- **Elizabeth Burgos (2012):** Burgos, in her book *In the Name of Love: Rituals from the Sacred to the Secular in Filipino Catholicism*, presents a different perspective. She argues that neo-traditional movements embedded within religious institutions can serve as forms of resistance against dominant cultural forces. They can empower marginalized communities to reclaim their cultural identities and challenge external impositions.

### **5. Economic and Political Factors:**

- **Akinwumi Ogundiran (2013):** Ogundiran, in *Sociological Theories: A Global Perspective*, emphasizes the influence of economic and political factors on the rise of neo-traditionalism. Religious institutions might leverage neo-traditional movements to mobilize support, gain political influence, or provide social services in the face of economic hardship or political instability.

Hence, the diverse scholarly viewpoints on the relationship between religious institutions and neo-traditionalism abound. Moreover, the specific dynamics at play in each case will depend on the historical context, the nature of the religious institution, and the specific traditional practices being revived. However, further research is necessary to understand the depth of this complex phenomenon across different cultures and societies

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology employed in this research encompasses a multidisciplinary approach, synthesizing historical analysis, theological inquiry, and socio-cultural examination to elucidate the complex interplay between ecclesiastical influences and the resurgence of neo-traditionalism in Igboland. Through a comprehensive literature review, the study contextualizes its investigation within existing scholarly discourse while identifying gaps in knowledge. Theoretical frameworks such as inculturation and materialism guide the analysis, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the unintended consequences of ecclesiastical actions. Historical analysis traces patterns of missionary enterprise, while theological inquiry explores the tensions between Christianity and indigenous cultures. Socio-cultural examination, including qualitative data collection methods, sheds light on contemporary dynamics within Igbo society, providing insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals.



Furthermore, the research employs critical analysis to evaluate contradictions within religious institutions and comparative analysis to draw parallels with other contexts, enriching the analysis and drawing broader implications. This interdisciplinary methodology enables a holistic exploration of the ecclesiastical factor's role in shaping neo-traditionalism, contributing to a deeper understanding of cultural preservation, religious transformation, and societal change in Igboland and beyond.

### **Theoretical Framework: Integration and Reinterpretation: Examining Hastings' Viewpoint (1993)**

Propounded by Adrian Hasting., In his influential work *Church and Mission in Modern Africa* (1993), he explores how religious institutions can act as catalysts for neo-traditionalism through the process of **integration and reinterpretation**. Here's a closer look at this perspective:

#### **The Integration of Traditional Elements:**

- **Reinvigorating Religious Practices:** Religious institutions might incorporate aspects of traditional rituals, symbols, or narratives into their practices. This integration can make religious teachings more relatable and meaningful to local communities, fostering a sense of cultural connection (Hastings, 1993).
- **Enhancing Relevance and Appeal:** By integrating traditional elements, religious institutions can revitalize their practices and make them more appealing to potential converts or those seeking to reconnect with their cultural heritage. This can lead to increased participation and a stronger sense of community within the religious institution (Hastings, 1993).

#### **The Reinterpretation of Traditions:**

- **Adaptation for Contemporary Audiences:** Religious institutions might reframe traditional beliefs and practices to resonate with contemporary social realities and values. This can involve reinterpreting creation myths, adapting rituals to suit modern lifestyles, or emphasizing aspects of tradition that align with current ethical concerns (Hastings, 1993).
- **Maintaining Continuity with the Past:** Reinterpretation is not simply about abandoning tradition. It's about finding ways to connect with the past while remaining relevant in the present. Religious institutions can reinterpret traditions to ensure continuity with the past while addressing the needs and concerns of contemporary society (Hastings, 1993).

#### **Benefits of Integration and Reinterpretation:**

- **Cultural Identity and Revitalization:** This approach can strengthen cultural identity by connecting religious practices to local traditions. It can also revitalize cultural practices that might be fading away by integrating them into a more prominent religious framework (Hastings, 1993).
- **Increased Participation and Community:** By making religious practices more culturally relevant, integration and reinterpretation can lead to increased participation and a stronger sense of community within the religious institution (Hastings, 1993).



### **Criticisms of Hastings' Viewpoint:**

- **Homogenization of Traditions:** There's a risk of homogenizing diverse cultural traditions if religious institutions promote a singular, standardized interpretation. Regional variations and nuances within traditions might be neglected (Hastings, 1993).
- **Erosion of Traditional Meanings:** Reinterpreting traditions can lead to a disconnect from their original meanings and purposes. This could weaken the significance of these traditions for some community members (Hastings, 1993).

### **Relevance to the Rise of Neo-Traditionalism in Igboland**

Hastings' perspective is valuable when examining the rise of neo-traditionalism in Igboland and the role of religious institutions. Here's how you can apply it:

- Analyze how religious institutions in Igboland are integrating traditional Igbo practices into their rituals and teachings.
- Examine how these institutions are reinterpreting traditional beliefs and stories to make them relevant for contemporary audiences in Igboland.
- Investigate the impact of this approach on cultural identity, community building, and participation within these religious institutions.

By considering both the potential benefits and drawbacks of integration and reinterpretation, you can gain a deeper understanding of how religious institutions are shaping the revival of traditional practices in Igboland.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. The Ecclesiastical Influence: Unintended Catalyst for Neo-Traditionalism in Igboland**

The term "ecclesia" originated in ancient Greece, referring to the assembly of citizens involved in political decision-making. In Christian usage, it evolved to represent the gathering of believers for worship and fellowship (Robertson, 1919). Ecclesia means a particular body of faithful people and the entire body of believers (Robertson, 1919).

In Christian faith, "ecclesia" is often used to refer to a religious assembly or congregation, representing the community of believers or a specific local church (Caudle, 2020). While the term "church" is derived from "ecclesia," it is not a direct translation (Caudle, 2020, p. 1).

The concept of ecclesia encompasses the church as a community of believers united in their faith, worship, and service to spread the teachings of Christ. It refers to both local and universal bodies of believers, providing support, guidance, and spiritual growth (Caudle, 2020).

In the context of this research, the term "ecclesiastical factor that gives rise to neo-traditionalism" highlights the unintentional actions of the Christian church. These actions, whether through policies, adaptations, or interactions with local communities, inadvertently contribute to the revival, preservation, and reinforcement of cultural and traditional religious practices in Igboland.

The unintended consequences of the church's actions play a significant role in shaping and sustaining cultural and religious traditions. Policy decisions made by the church can intersect with local cultural customs, inadvertently breathing new life into traditional practices (Caudle, 2020). The church's involvement in the social and cultural fabric of Igboland





inadvertently contributes to the resurgence and sustainability of cultural and traditional religious practices.

Hence, the ecclesiastical factor in Igboland inadvertently becomes a catalyst for the preservation and sustainability of cultural and traditional religious practices, although this is not its primary intention (Caudle, 2020). Some of these factors include:

**i. Pattern of the Missionary Enterprise:** According to Madu (2018), Christianity has been likened to a ship that moves from port to port, assimilating ideas and values from different cultures it encounters. Christianity originated in Palestine among the Jews and later incorporated elements of Jewish and Roman cultures when it reached Rome. It then moved to Greece and adopted aspects of Greek culture before arriving in Africa, where it was introduced with little or no borrowing from African culture.

The missionaries who brought Christianity to Africa held negative views of African culture and saw it as inferior and pagan (Sedos, 1981; Ukpong, 1984; Okure, 1990). They introduced a hybridized version of Christianity that selectively incorporated elements of African culture deemed compatible with European expressions of the faith. African cultural practices, such as drumming, dances, and rites, were condemned and forbidden as idolatrous or too sexual (Sedos, 1981; Madu, 2018).

The missionaries' perception of Africans as ignorant and in need of their own God led to the imposition of European-like forms of worship, architecture, vestments, and prayers (Okure, 1990). This resulted in the suppression of Igbo culture and the loss of cultural identity among the Igbo people (Madu, 2004). The missionaries' theological and evangelical approach aimed at smooth colonization and conversion for social advantages, rather than genuine dialogue and incarnation of the Christian message within the local culture (Ekechi, 1971).

Competition among different denominations further hindered the deep penetration of the gospel and fostered shallow faith and superficial congregations (Nmah, 2008). The negative effects of this approach include the loss of cultural identity and the shallowness of the Christian faith among the Igbo people (Obiefuna, 1985). Christianity was perceived as stifling or extinguishing African culture, leading to the loss of the original qualities of the race (Ekechi, 1972).

Neo-traditionalism in Igboland represents resistance to the derogatory influence of the missionary enterprise and the encroachment of foreign beliefs and values (Egwuonwu, 2017). It is a conscious effort by individuals and communities to reclaim and revitalize indigenous cultural and religious practices marginalized during the process of Christianization. Neo-traditionalism allows the Igbo people to assert their agency, preserve their cultural autonomy, and challenge the notion that Christianity is the sole path to spiritual fulfillment (Josephine, 2016).

Through the revival of traditional practices, neo-traditionalism aims to counterbalance the dominant influence of Christianity and maintain the authenticity of Igbo cultural heritage (Nwadiolor & Agunwa, 2014). It serves as a form of cultural resistance that honors ancestral traditions, reaffirms the importance of indigenous beliefs, and promotes indigenous knowledge and way of life (Nwadiolor & Agunwa, 2014).

In summary, neo-traditionalism in Igboland is a movement aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage, countering the dominance of Christianity, and reclaiming and promoting indigenous



cultural and religious practices. It represents a conscious effort to assert cultural identity, challenge missionary influences, and preserve the authenticity of Igbo cultural heritage.

**ii. Extreme Enculturation:** The term "extreme inculturation" is not commonly used, it is a concept coined by the researcher to refer to an exaggerated or radical form of cultural adaptation within the Christian church or any religion.

In the context of extreme inculturation, which involves a departure from traditional Christian beliefs and practices in favor of assimilating into the Igbo African culture, several scholars and theologians have provided insights and perspectives.

Culture is an integral part of human beings, shaping their thoughts, actions, and emotions. According to Shorter (2015), culture can be compared to a prism through which people view their experiences. African theologians argue that participating in the localization of theology to the realities of the African community is a form of self-theologizing, known as inculturation. Pope John Paul II emphasized the link between Christianity and culture, stating that the synthesis between the two is not only a demand of culture but also of faith.

Inculturation is a theological endeavor to express the gospel in ways that are relevant to a specific culture. It involves the reinterpretation of both the gospel and the culture while remaining faithful to both. It is believed that African Christian identity can be preserved by blending the gospel with the cultural values and traditions of the people. It promotes dialogue and respect for the African cultural identity and acknowledges that all cultures have the right to exist within Christianity.

However, extreme inculturation poses concerns as it may lead to the abandonment or significant modification of core Christian tenets and rituals to align with the dominant Igbo culture. This can result in the loss of distinctiveness and a diluted Christian identity. Bosch (1991) refers to this uncritical assimilation as extreme inculturation, highlighting the need to recognize the distinctions between faith and cultural expression. While culture and faith are inseparable to some extent, there is a need for critical evaluation and discernment of cultural practices and beliefs.

Sanneh (1989) suggests that "translatability" and "critical contextualization" can serve as means to counter extreme inculturation. Translatability refers to the ability to translate religious concepts and practices into different cultural contexts while preserving their core meaning. Critical contextualization involves evaluating cultural practices in light of the larger cultural and historical context. These approaches provide a framework for engaging with culture while safeguarding the essence of faith.

It is important to note that extreme inculturation can result in conflicts and tensions within the religious community, as some members may resist or question the extent of cultural adaptation being pursued. There are concerns about the potential dilution or distortion of core beliefs and values, as well as the preservation of religious and cultural heritage.

The Catholic Church has witnessed efforts to incorporate Igbo cultural elements into religious practices, such as integrating Igbo language, music, and dance into liturgical ceremonies. However, the inclusion of certain practices, like masquerade initiation and rituals, has raised debates and controversies. Critics argue that such practices blur the lines between Christianity and traditional religion, potentially undermining the essential doctrines and teachings of Christianity.



Some faithful individuals have expressed their disapproval of extreme inculturation practices, emphasizing the need to maintain a clear distinction between cultural celebrations and pure worship of God within the church. Concerns have been raised about double allegiance and the potential negative impact on the integrity of the Church.

In conclusion, extreme inculturation involves a significant departure from traditional Christian beliefs and practices in favor of assimilating into the Igbo African culture. Scholars and theologians emphasize the need for critical evaluation and discernment of cultural practices and beliefs in light of the core principles of faith. The goal of inculturation is to integrate cultural expressions into Christianity while preserving its distinctiveness and integrity.

**iii. Materialism:** Materialism, particularly in the context of wealth acquisition, refers to a mindset that prioritizes the accumulation of material possessions and financial wealth as a primary source of happiness and success (Hornby, 2000; Duh, 2015). Materialistic individuals equate personal worth and success with the quantity and quality of their material possessions (Owoeye, 2019).

The prevalence of materialism in Nigerian churches has become a concern, with many pastors and ministers promoting prosperity as an integral aspect of spiritual salvation (Oladotun, 2020). This materialistic preaching and the display of affluence by materialistic preachers have distorted the value systems of Christianity in Nigeria (Oladotun, 2020).

The quest for materialism among Christians is leading many to abandon the doctrine of contentment, with being poor now considered a sin (Oladotun, 2020). In some cases, materialistic considerations influence the institution and investiture of knighthood within Christian denominations in Nigeria (Orisakwe, 1998). The focus on material wealth, social status, and personal connections can play a role in the selection and investiture of individuals into the knighthood, compromising the true spiritual commitment and service to the church (Orisakwe, 1998; Onyekwelib, 2007).

The association of knighthood with the display of wealth creates an environment that fosters materialistic tendencies and undermines the intended purpose of knighthood (Onyekwelib, 2007). The exclusion of the poor from the knighthood contradicts the teachings of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the importance of caring for the marginalized and showing compassion (Onyeoha, 1995).

There are concerns regarding the discernment and standards employed during the selection process for knighthood, as individuals with questionable moral character or involvement in practices contradicting Christian principles are granted such esteemed recognition (Anonymous, June 2, 2023). Furthermore, there is a perceived bias towards individuals of higher socioeconomic status when it comes to considering individuals for knighthood within the church (Abuchi, personal communication, June 7, 2023).

Some individuals question the sincerity and relevance of the church's teachings when materialistic values overshadow its core principles, leading them to seek alternative spiritual paths (Anonymous, June 6, 2023). Materialism within the church may indirectly encourage involvement in illicit activities as individuals resort to desperate measures to achieve their materialistic goals (Anonymous, June 6, 2023).

It is crucial to recognize that such practices are not aligned with the teachings and principles of the church, which should promote integrity, love, and ethical behavior (Anonymous, June





6, 2023). The core values of the church should discourage involvement in illegal or harmful activities (Anonymous, June 6, 2023).

**iv. Lack of Social Security:** Social security may be defined as any program of social protection established by legislation, or any other mandatory arrangement, that provides individuals with a degree of income security when faced with the contingencies of old age, survivorship, incapacity, disability, unemployment, or rearing children (Duh, 2015, p. 1).

In the context of Christianity, the term "social security" is not typically used in the same way as in the secular sense of government programs and policies. However, the principles and values found in Christianity do emphasize care, support, and social responsibility towards others, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized members of society. These principles can be seen as a form of social security within a Christian framework (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2016).

According to Poe (2005), Christians are called to prioritize the well-being of the poor and vulnerable, both individually and collectively. They are encouraged to embody love and generosity, advocate for systemic change, and actively engage in addressing poverty through personal actions and influencing societal structures. The development of social welfare programs and policies should be guided by a commitment to justice, compassion, and a shared responsibility to care for those in need (p. 63).

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Bishops (1999) asserts that the principles of Catholic social teaching, including protecting human dignity, preserving the common good, option for the poor and solidarity, and subsidiarity, are reflected in the Social Security program and serve as the foundation for the Church's support of the program (p. 6).

Hence, the absence of social security within Christianity can have significant implications, leading to the rise of neo-traditionalism in Igboland. When Christians perceive a lack of support within mainstream Christian institutions, they may turn to neo-traditional practices for spiritual and social fulfillment, which offer a sense of community and shared values. The lack of social security measures can also drive individuals to seek immediate solutions through traditional religious practices.

Additionally, the absence of social security can result in a disconnection from cultural identity, leading individuals to embrace neo-traditionalism to reclaim and preserve their heritage. Neo-traditional practices may also be seen as providing better community support, leading individuals to turn to them for help. Ultimately, the lack of social security within Christianity can prompt critique and dissatisfaction with the institutional church's effectiveness in addressing members' challenges.

**v. The Clergy Factor:** The role of clergy within established religions involves overseeing rituals, instructing followers, and providing spiritual guidance. Titles such as clergyman, clergywoman, and clergyperson are used to refer to formal leaders within religious traditions. The behavior and lifestyle of clergy members greatly impact their credibility, effectiveness, and the perception of their religious communities (Smith & Gregory, 2005). In Igbo culture, the clergy's actions and words are considered reflective of the presence of the spirit of God within them (Ezenezi, 2015). The clergy's adherence to the teachings and values of their faith can enhance their moral authority and strengthen their ability to guide and counsel others (Smith & Gregory, 2005).



The misconduct and moral shortcomings of clergy members, such as corruption and abuse of power, can lead to a loss of trust and confidence in the church and the Christian faith (Anonymous, personal conversation, May 29, 2023). The perception of the public on a religious tradition can be influenced by the behavior of its clergy (Balboni, 2017). Instances of corruption and internal conflicts within religious institutions can drive individuals away and lead them to seek alternative spiritual paths (Anonymous, personal communication, May 28, 2023). This disillusionment can result in a return to traditional religious practices that provide a sense of authenticity, cultural continuity, and spiritual fulfillment (Emeng & Okafor, 2022).

Personal accounts of individuals who have left the church reveal experiences of harm, betrayal, and disappointment with the clergy. These accounts highlight the importance of addressing issues of abuse and misconduct within religious institutions (Anonymous, personal communication, May 28, 2023). The character and conduct of clergy members influence the level of trust and faith that their followers have in them (Smith & Gregory, 2005). Skepticism towards the church and its leaders can lead individuals to seek alternative spiritual practices that they perceive as more authentic or aligned with their values (Anonymous, personal communication, June 13, 2023).

The emergence of cultural revival and neo-traditionalism in Igboland can be influenced by the disillusionment with established religious institutions (Anonymous, personal communication, June 13, 2023). Neo-traditionalism provides a sense of cultural identity, rootedness, and a connection to ancestral heritage that may be perceived as lacking in mainstream religious institutions (Emeng & Okafor, 2022).

Thus, the behavior and actions of clergy members have a significant impact on the trust, perception, and spiritual journeys of individuals within religious communities. The adherence to moral principles, ethical conduct, and alignment with the teachings of their faith are essential for clergy members to maintain trust and credibility among their followers.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the ecclesiastical factor's unintended consequences have profoundly shaped the resurgence of neo-traditionalism in Igboland. Through missionary patterns, extreme inculturation, materialism, social security gaps, and the conduct of the clergy, the Christian church has unintentionally contributed to the preservation and revitalization of indigenous cultural and religious practices. This complex interplay highlights the need for a clear understanding of the relationship between religious institutions and cultural dynamics.

The rise of neo-traditionalism represents a form of cultural resistance, allowing Igbo communities to reclaim autonomy and challenge the dominance of Christianity. However, it also underscores the broader discourse on cultural preservation, identity, and the role of religious institutions in shaping sociocultural landscapes. By exploring these unintended consequences, this research provides valuable insights into the complexities of cultural adaptation and preservation amid globalization and modernization.

Moving forward, fostering dialogue and collaboration between religious institutions and indigenous communities is crucial for promoting cultural preservation, spiritual fulfillment, and societal transformation. By acknowledging the unintended impacts of ecclesiastical actions and policies, a more symbiotic relationship can be cultivated, paving the way for a



more inclusive and holistic approach to cultural preservation and adaptation. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing scholarly discourse on religion, culture, and identity, inspiring further exploration and understanding in the contemporary Igbo landscape and beyond.

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