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AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE INFILTRATION OF YORUBA TRADITIONAL CULTURE ON THE PRACTICE OF TITLE-HOLDING AMONG CHURCHES IN IJEBU OF OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The practice of Title-holding had been extant before the doors were opened for Christianity in Ìjèbúland, an area predominantly inhabited by the Ijebu speaking people of Ogun State, Nigeria to thrive. The acceptance of Christianity (though not that easy abinitio) by the Ijebu, reformed, to a great extent, the socio-political, religious and cultural lives of the people. The Yoruba traditional systems of marriage, naming and burial rites were, among others, influenced and reformed by Christianity. However, a good number of the Ijebu, like other Yoruba tribes which profess Christianity, still retain some of their cultural beliefs and traditions. Consequently, there was an infiltration or fusion of Yoruba tradition and culture on certain Christian practices and rites such as marriage, naming and funeral rites. Such infiltration can also be noticed in title-holding among the people. This paper, therefore, critically analyses the fusion of the Yoruba traditional elements to the Christian practice of the title-holding among churches in Ijebu. The paper adopts the historical approach establishing the institutionalization of title-holding in Christianity. It then x-rays the practice of title-holding among the people. The paper also considers the similarities between the Christian titles and the traditional titles mirrored along the traditional set up among the various sections of the Ijebu.

Keywords: Title-holding, Yorubaland, Ijebu Christians/churches, Ìjèbúland, Yoruba tradition and culture.

Introduction

The contemporary parading of ecclesiastical titles accompanying the names of Christian leaders such as "reverend, venerable, provost, dean, archbishop, cardinal, pope, primate, metropolitan, general overseer, canon, curate" is completely absent from the New Testament and would have amazed the apostles and early believers should they be around to witness this. Although both the Greeks and Jews employed a wealth of titles for their political and religious leaders in order to express their power and authority, the early Christians avoided such titles. The early Christians used common and functional terms to describe themselves and their relationships. Some of these terms are "brother," "beloved," "fellow-worker," "laborer," "slave," "servant," "prisoner," "fellow-soldier," and "steward." Of course there were prophets, teachers, apostles, evangelists, leaders, elders, and deacons within the first churches, but these were not used as formal titles for individuals. All Christians are saints, but there was no "Saint John" as is nowadays being paraded.

Nowhere does any Scripture written to any Christian, the Body of Christ, encourage anyone to use a title such as those rampant among Christians today. In the Old Testament, God had prescribed certain titles among the Jewish religious hierarchy such as the "High Priest", but the words of Jesus, spoken to those living in a culture rife with such titles in pagan religions, expressly forbade any other such distinctions. Rather than gaining honour through titles and position, New Testament believers received honour primarily for their service and work. The early Christians referred to each other by personal names like Timothy, Peter/Cephas, Paul, Titus, the terms "brother" or "sister," or by describing an individual's spiritual character or work: "Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5); "Barnabas, a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24); "Philip the evangelist" (Acts 21:8); "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 16:3).

Unlike in Christianity, at the nascent stage of Islam, some Muslims who were convinced of the prophethood and mission of Muhammad facilitated the spread of Islam by committing the resources at their disposal to the propagation and consolidation of Islam. Prominent among them was Abu Bakr bn Abu Quhafa who stood by Prophet Muhammad for the advancement of Islam in Arabia. Abu Bakr bought a number of slaves who accepted Islam with his money and set them free in addition to other financial assistance he rendered to the Prophet and a host of other male and female, young and old *sahabah* (companions) who, with their wealth and blood, championed the propagation of Islam. Due to these outstanding contributions to Islam and other remarkable achievements in the development of the Muslim community, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have personally conferred titles on some of them while others were known with different titles associated with their specific contributions after the demise of the Prophet.

However, as earlier opined, nowhere in the entire scriptures of the Christians approves of any titles for the spiritual leaders of the church. Even in the book of I Timothy chapter 3 where allusion is made to any religious title, it was just a guiding one and not anyone to be paraded as we have it today among the churches. It reads in part thus:

> If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence…(I Tim. 3:1-4). NKJV

The ministry according to this passage is a work. However the office of a bishop may be now thought a good preferment, then it was thought a good work. The office of a scripture-bishop is an office of divine appointment, and not of human invention. The ministry is not a creature of the state, and it is a pity that the minister should be at any time the tool of the state. The office of the ministry was in the church before the magistrate countenanced Christianity, for this office is one of the great gifts Christ has bestowed on the church, Eph 4:8-11. This office of a Christian bishop is a work, which requires diligence and application: the apostle represents it under the notion and character of a work; not of great honour and advantage, for ministers should always look more to their work than to the honour and advantage of their office. It is a good work, a work of the greatest importance, and designed for the greatest good:

the ministry is conversant about no lower concerns than the life and happiness of immortal souls; it is a good work, because, designed to illustrate the divine perfections in bringing many sons to glory; the ministry is appointed to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. There ought to be an earnest desire of the office in those who would be put into it; if a man desires, he should earnestly desire it for the prospect he has of bringing greater glory to God, and of doing the greatest good to the souls of men by this means.

From the above, it is observed that only the title "Bishop" is mentioned and not all titles extant in the church today. Different titles similar to those of Yoruba traditional titles were created, given religious colouration and conferred on the people today.

Apart from spiritual titles of the Bishop, Venerable, Reverend, that were conferred on the self-surrendered – for – the – work – of – God, found to be skilled in the word of God (the Bible), honorary titles like *Baba Ijo (*Patron of the Church*),Iya Ijo (*patroness of the Church), *Balogun Ijo* (Commander of the Church veteran warriors*), Otun Balogun Ijo* (Deputy Commander of the Church veteran warriors), *Iyalaje Ijo,*(Church business woman) *Iya Egbe Afadurajagun (*Patroness of the church's prayer warriors*), Baba Ewe* (Patron/Father of the Youth), *Iya Ewe* (Patroness/Mother of the Youth) to mention but few, were conferred on wealthy and influential Christians of high religious and social status in the land. This was done to source funds to finance church projects like building and renovation of works, evangelism, assessment levy payment among others. Other titles include *Iya Egbe aya Bisobu* (Patroness of the Women's guild), *Babalaje Ijo, Asiwaju Onigbagbo akile Ìjèbú* (foremost Christian in Ìjèbúland) and a host of others.

In selecting recipients of the titles, the traditional chieftaincy institutional system is adopted. The titles, both the spiritual and honorific were reeled out unequally to deserving families who have shown outstanding features in the development and progress of their communities and the church as a unit. The cultural infiltration of the Ijebu tradition and culture on the Christian title-holding in Ìjèbúland is evident.

As a sharp departure from early Christian ethical teachings and practice, this paper seeks to examine the extent of infiltration of the Yoruba tradition and culture on the church institution of title-holding among the Ijebu churches with a view to identifying the grey areas in the title-holding that are incongruent with Christian tradition and then offers recommendations to sanitize the institution in particular among Christians in Ìjèbúland and in Yorubaland as a whole.

a) Scriptural Basis for Title-Holding in Christianity

A careful study of the holy Bible on the lives and missions of some Apostles of Jesus reveals a divine ordination of the church leaders. In this case, title holding can be as those titles which God himself mentioned as deserving for His chosen people as mentioned in the Bible:

> But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pet. 2: 9-10.

In another instance in the scripture, it was said:

> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 1 Cor 12:27-28.

Concerning titles conferred on the chosen Apostles of god, this was done on the account of God's disposition, relationship or interactions with them. For instance, apostle Paul who became the strong pillar of Christianity today was as exemplary man who God Himself sought out from the darkness in order to use him mightily in the propagation of the gospel messages across the globe. Abraham was adjudged the father of faith, and was called by God Himself his friend because of the exemplary faith he displayed when he was tried by God. Hence, the titles father of faith bestowed on him.

Moses had a rare privilege of seeing God and hearing from Him directly. Thus he was given the title of a *Prophet*. Samuel, Eli, Elijah, Elisha, Nahum, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah and a host of others too numerous to mention in the Bible were called to prophethood by God and were used mightily by Him.

b) Historical Antecedents of Title-Holding in Ìjèbúland

Ìjèbúland is a land occupied by the *Ijebu*. Ijebu (also known as Jebu or Geebu[1] was a Yoruba kingdom in pre-colonial Nigeria. It was formed around the fifteenth century.[2] Historically, the *Ijebu* are the Yoruba speaking people who came to occupy *Ìjèbúland* from Ile – Ife through the legendary Obanta. The kingdom was one of the most developed in the region with a complex and highly organized government. The capital was at Ijebu Ode where the Awujale from the Yoruba words "agbeja ile" had his palace. Counterbalancing the Awujale was the Osugbo (known as the Ogboni in other parts of Nigeria), a council of all free born men that acted as the kingdom's courts. The Osugbo was divided into six groups based on rank, the highest being the iwarefa, whose head the Oliwa was the second most powerful figure in the land. Also powerful was the Olisa who could be described as the mayor of Ijebu Ode. It is important to state that the origin of the many *Ogboni* (fraternities) as well as other political groups in the land coupled with the *Baloguns* and *Oloroguns* (veteran warriors) titles is still unclear because the historical records about them remain obscure.

Like many African societies, Ijebu was also divided into three age ranks and these groups each had their own leaders. The Kingdom is made up of several towns that stretches to parts of Lagos State and borders Ondo State. The kingdom rose in power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries mainly due to its important position on the trade routes between Lagos and Ibadan. The kingdom imposed sharp limits on trade insisting that all trade through the region be conducted by Ijebu merchants. The monopoly brought great wealth to the kingdom.

c) An Over View of the Structure of the Yoruba Traditional Titles in Ìjèbúland

Ìjèbúland is a Yoruba Community which covers the present six local government areas namely Ijebu - Ode, Ijebu - North, Ijebu – North-East, Odogbolu, Ogun Waterside and Ijebu – East local government areas of Ogun State, Nigeria. Ijebuland is principally divided into four major sections namely Ijebu - Ode, Ijebu - Igbo, Odogbolu-Ayepe and Abigi Waterside. Ijebu – Ode, the second larger city after Ijebu - North remains the capital city of the land. The

numerical strength of the land according to 2011 population figure runs thus: Ogun Waterside: 87,540, Ijebu East: 128,930, Ijebu Northeast: 81,140, Ijebu Ode: 185,360, Odogbolu: 148,300, Ijebu North: 330,840

There are traditional, Christian and Muslim titles all over Ijebuland. Each of the sections, townships and districts in the land also confers titles on the Ijebu. Notable social clubs and religious societies similarly confer titles on their members. It is worthy of note to state that an Ijebu could hold more than one title at different times. There are some influential and wealthy people who are conferred titles by the central, section, district, club and religious societies in Ijebuland. For instance, an Ijebu Christian could be conferred *Otunba Agbaruwa* of Mobalufon (a township title), *Otun Balogun Ijo of Itele* (a sectional title) and *Baba Isale Club 50* (a societal title). This implies that an *Ijebu Christian* could be conferred with more than three or four titles at different times depending on his popularity and wealth cum interest at taking the conferred titles.

The structure of the chieftaincy traditional institution in Ìjèbúland remains the same since emergence as a distinct group of the Yoruba race. The structure is hierarchical with the Oba (traditional ruler) at the apex. Next to him are the general titleholders whose constituency is the whole of Ijebu kingdom. Then, next to them are the township chiefs (the *Baales*) whose areas of jurisdiction are the individual townships. The *Baales* (village/district heads) come at the base of the hierarchy. The traditional mainstream titles in Ìjèbúland comprise *The Pàmpá* which though is the lowest in rank, but is the mother and spring board of the other groups. The Pàmpá are the people referred as the electorate in modern democracy and from them the others derive their authority. *The Òsùgbó (*a Cult) - a Fraternity of Chiefs and Elders which was also the Executive Authority of the town and having also a religious character. *The Ìlàmùrén* is the class of High Chiefs under the headship of the Olísà. Other chiefs in this class are the Ògbéni-Ojà, Ègbò, Olótùfore, Apèbí and other Chiefs that may have been initiated into the class having fulfilled all the conditions of initiation and provided "Eran Ìbóje" (a feast of ram or goat. *Òdì Society*, this was composed of the Oba's attendants. Their descendants also come into this rank. They were employed as messengers of the Oba and were first styled "Àgùnrèns/Àgùnrìns" and later became "Òdìs" by promotion. *Pàràkòyí*, is a Society which was more of a commercial nature than political. It was the equivalent of the Chamber of Commerce. Members looked into anything pertaining to trades and market disputes. *Régbérégbé,* (i.e. The Society) is composed of all natives of Ijebu-Ode. The Oba and his chiefs derive their title from it. It supervises the work of the remaining four societies and has power to alter their decisions. The *Parakoyi* (council of the chamber of commerce) titles include *Babalaje, Iyalode, Iyaloja* and *Iyalaje*. The *Odes* (hunters) are those in charge of the security. Titles belonging to *Odes* are *Lerin, Aro, Lisa* and *Ajade*.

While explaining the prominent role occupied by the titleholders before Christianity in Yorubaland, Doi (1984) describes the title of *Balogun* thus:

> *Balogun* used to be a title of a chief warrior during the inter-tribal war and as the war chiefs first accepted Christianity, then their followers like Balogun Kuku in Ijebu Ode …, the same title is used for community organization after the spread … (Doi, 1984:201).

d) The Emergence and Development of Honorific Titles among Christians in Ìjèbúland

Christianity became pronounced among the *Ijebu* after the popular Imagbon war in 1892. Several attempts had earlier been made but with no success. The Oba was reported to have sent his bell ringers (town criers) round the town prohibiting anyone from embracing the religion on the pain of death (that is public execution in the open market). However, when it became obvious that the number of people that had embraced Christianity became appreciable in size, the leaders of the time, notably, Pa Odubela, Joseph Odumosu, Emmanuel Ewumi, Gabriel Adebogun, Akinsanya Ayeni, Adesanya Ogidan, Amos Awote, Josiah Osilaja, James Kogbe, Israel Otubusin, Elkena Adelaja, Jeremiah Laja, S.D. Olusoga and Daniel Olusanya were secretly meeting in the home of Pa Odubela for the purpose of learning the ABD primer as well as teaching one another in the word of God. They also felt that there should be a place where worship service should be observed. Thus the people agreed and approached Oba Adesimbo Tunwase (Arojojoye), the Awujale of Ijebuland for a piece of land. A piece of land at Etitale was given to them. But, because of insufficient space, a new land was requested for and the Awujale gave them a piece of land at Italupe. They approached Sodeke, the then *Balogun* of Egbaland, to give them a piece of land to build a mosque. Sodeke yielded to the request of the Ijebu Christians and a mosque was built at Iporo Kemta Kobiti, Abeokuta. Imoru, son of Salu Bale from Itoku quarters was appointed and turbaned as the first acknowledged chief Imam of Egbaland (Adegbenro, 1991).

In November 1892, the foundation of the first church was laid at Italupe and before completion of the building, a bamboo wall and thatched roof was erected for worship purposes. By 1892 December, Mr. S. E. Elliot (B.A.) was sent from Lagos to Ijebu-Ode as school master – Catechist at Italupe. Though the church was of bamboo and a thatched roof, yet, it was a symbolic acceptance of the new religion in Ijebu-Ode after decades of resistance. It was built with the assistance of the Church Missionary Society based in Lagos and was named St. Saviour's Church and had Mr. S.E. Elliot as the Catechist and Schoolmaster.

As more people embraced Christianity, the need arose for the Christians to approach the Oba for another piece of land to erect another place of worship. Thus in 1893 Oba Adesimbo Tunwase was again approached for another land and graciously gave them a big one at Ijasi known today as Cathedral Church of Our Saviour, Ijasi, Ijebu-Ode. Another big land at Ita Ogi and Ita Alapo where the present Christ Church Porogun was erected and the school respectively. In November that year, Rev. E.W. George was sent to Ijebu-Ode and stationed at Dogba house in Porogun, Ijebu-Ode.

In Ijebu Christian Community, titles could be said to be of two categories. These are spiritual/missionary and honorific/socio-civic titles. The spiritual titles are those conferred on church functionaries. The spiritual titles recognized among the Ijebu Christians include the *Bishop,* (who doubles as the overall leader and head), *Archdeacons* (placed in-charge of division of the church), *Canons*/*Reverends* (worship leaders in charge of various units of the church in the land). There could be some other church functionaries that are not ordained but are working within the ambit of the church. They are tagged *workers.* They include the Sexton, Lay-Readers, and Evangelists among others.

As earlier mentioned, honorific titles are those created and conferred on affluent and influential Christians in order to secure their financial support in executing various church

projects as well as for the sole purpose of paying the innumerous church levies from the assemblies up to the national and international levels as the case might be. Most of these honorific titles are replica of the traditional titles but are given religious colourations. Thus, some of the Christian titles in Ijebuland are suffixed with terms like "*Baba Ijo", Iya Ijo*" *"Balogun Ijo", "Iyalaje Ijo", Baba Isale",* and *"Baba Aladura*" to mention but few. And as the Ijebu Christian Community grew up, the *Otun*, and *Osi* titles of the various positions were created and conferred on influential Christians. In a bid to foster assistance to the heads/leaders of the church in their missionary dispensations, titles such as *Provost* (the vicar-general, or next in rank to the Bishop), Canons (statutory and honourary), Venerables were also preferred on the knowledgeable and qualified Ijebu Christians. Titles such as *Baba Ijo* (Father or patron of the church), *Balogun Ijo* (The generalissimo of the Church), and such as used in the church today were borrowed from the traditional setting in order to honour some influential Christians in the land and secure their support for the community development and the propagation of the gospel in particular (Okubote, 2009).

The honorific titles are many and their number is in exhaustive. Most of these titles are only held ceremoniously with no specific roles or functions to perform for the betterment/welfare of the holders. However, it is noted that not all the honorific titles are borrowed from the traditional set-up. A fact worthy of mentioning is that some honorific titles depict the socio-economic status of the holders. It is important to note that the *Baba Ijo* title which is considered an honorific title as well as other chieftains are also recognized and honoured as qualified members of the Church's ruling Council which takes charge of all laws operative in the church and also in the community of Christians. The *Baba Ijo* and some of the chiefs formed another nucleus in the day – to – day administration of the church with the *Baba Ijo* as the chairman of the body. He is seen as an intermediary and advocate between the spiritual and honourary titleholders.

e) Aspects of Yoruba Traditional Influence on Title-Holding among the Ijebu Christians

There are various ways by which the conferment of church titles on Ijebu Christians is greatly influenced by the Yoruba culture and tradition. Among these are the titles being conferred on the Ijebu Christians which reflect those of the traditional settings. Next is the process of the selection of the titleholders which is done through careful mean and the another is the *Iwuye* (the celebration proper) ceremony that accompanies the conferment. This is done in most grandiose manner and attracts all walks of life as the celebrants call on friends and well-wishers to grace the occasion and celebrate with them amidst pomp and pageantry. The Ijebu Christians have departed from the early practice as they now confer titles like *Balogun, Asiwaju Onigbagbo, Babalaje, Ajigbeda, Iya Ewe, Baba Ewe, Iya Egbe Aya Bisobu, Otun, Osi, Ogbeni Oja,* etc. with the suffix *Ijo* (Church/Christians) purposely to give them Christian colouration and outlook in place of those conferred on the early Christians. These titles are adopted and adapted from the Ijebu traditional setting.

The installation ceremony, popularly called *Iwuye* among the Yoruba, which accompanies title-holding among the Ijebu Christians is another Yoruba traditional effect on the Christian practice of title-holding in Ìjèbúland. The ceremony is often characterized by merry making, wining and dining among the people. During such occasion, popular musicians are invited to supply music. The Yoruba people, before the advent of Christianity, were noted for their love for celebration in their socio-religious engagements. According to Fadipe (1970), every

occasion calls for celebration including the death of their aged ones. It is this practice of winning and dining that is introduced into the institution of title-holding among the Ijebu Christians.

f) Influence of Yoruba Tradition on Title-Holding among Ijebu Christians: A Critique

It is worthy of note to state that the process of appointing or selecting the Yoruba king and other traditional chiefs involves some ritual practices that contradict Christian belief and norms. Thus, adopting such titles for the Christians gives an impression that those honoured with the titles have the same roles to play in Christianity and for the Ijebu Christians.

It is pertinent to state that the practice of the Ijebu Christians in conferring titles with traditional origin and outlook can be said to be contrary to the tenets of the Christian faith. The Ijebu Christians ought to have emulated the Lord Jesus or his Apostles in the practice of conferring titles on affluent Ijebu Christians.

The Ijebu Christians may be accused of being traditionalists and the titles they confer as being traditional ones due to the fact that they pattern their practice of title-holding along the traditional set-up.

While, it is permissible to eat and drink at *Iwuye* ceremony, one should be mindful of the teachings of the Apostles of God in the bible concerning what to eat and what not to eat. Apostle Paul clearly stated that if what one would eat would cause one's brother to stumble, it is better not to venture into it.

> "Everything is permissible for me"-but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-but I will not be mastered by anything. "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"-but God will destroy them both. 1Cor. 6:12 -13.

He further stresses that:

> Now about food sacrificed to idols: … about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. … Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. … Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall. - 1Cor. 8: 1-13

Christian law from the above quoted verses as we have in other sections of the Bible regulates what Christians eat or drink. Several passages in the holy book prohibits eating of blood, as well as food strangled to death etc. and in some cases, one cannot ascertain how the meat or food prepared for such occasion are killed.

Also in a situation whereby people drink alcohol at such an occasion because *Iwuye* (installation) ceremony of titleholders among the Ijebu Christians often gives room for intermingling of sexes whereby both men and women freely mix and dance competitively to

the admiration of musicians and the guests. This practice, no doubt, has serious implications for the practice of title-holding among the Ijebu Christians. It could make the practice condemnable if unguided. Unlawful wining and drinking as well as intermingling of sexes at *Iwuye* ceremony are not only inimical but also might lead to sinning against the Creator since after being tipsy with wine and alcohol, immorality might set in.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this study to examine the infiltration of Yoruba tradition on title-holding among Ijebu Christians. The influence of the traditional culture in the titles Christians created and adopted is so great that it is almost rubbing the practice of its sanctity and sacredness. Hence, the criticism of those aspects that are not in conformity with the teaching and practices of Christ in the Bible. The position of the paper is that if Yoruba traditional elements are separated from the practice of conferring church titles on Ijebu Christians, the sacredness of the institution will be maintained. It is in the light of this that this paper recommends that there is the need to sanitize the practice of title-holding from being dominated by the Yoruba traditional influence in Ìjèbúland.

The paper also recommended that the *Iwuye* (installation) ceremony of the Christian title-holders which is always accompanied with pomp and pageantry among the Ijebu Christians should be organized in such a way and manner that gathering of Christians in such an occasion is in conformity with Christian gathering. Only things that are permissible to be eaten and drunk in the Bible should be served on such occasions. The Ijebu Christian Community may sanction any titleholder who serves alcohol or engages in ungodly practice at his or her installation ceremony. Instead of being extravagant and spendthrift on the occasion of the installation ceremony, the Ijebu Christian titleholders should focus their attention on the welfare of the less privileged in the land; the indigent but brilliant students could be given scholarship to further their education. In addition, the sick and the inmates of the prison yards could be assisted financially while the needy Christians could be empowered economically. Finally, specific roles should be assigned to each of titles that Ijebu Christians will confer on those found worthy of holding them for the betterment of the gospel among the people as well as improved welfare of the Christians in the community.

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