

IMPACTS OF THE METHODIST CHURCH NIGERIA (MCN) TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF REMOLAND

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Abstract

The Methodist Church Nigeria has had a significant impact on the growth and development of Remoland. Through its various initiatives and programmes, the Church has played a crucial role in shaping the local community and enhancing progress and prosperity. One of the key ways in which the Church has contributed to the growth of Remoland is through its focus on education. The Methodist Church has established numerous schools and educational institutions in the area, providing quality education to both children and adults. This has not only improved the literacy rate in the region but has also created opportunities for individuals to pursue higher education and enhance their skills. The Church has also been actively involved in various community development projects. These include initiatives to improve healthcare facilities, infrastructure, and social services in Remoland. The Methodist Church has also been a strong advocate for environmental conservation, promoting sustainable practices and raising awareness about the importance of preserving the region's natural resources. In addition to these efforts, the Methodist Church has been a leader in enhancing social justice and equality in Remoland. Through its outreach programmes, the church has helped to uplift marginalized communities and empower individuals from all walks of life. This has not only led to a more harmonious and inclusive society, but has also contributed meaningfully to the overall growth and development of the region. The impact of the Methodist Church Nigeria on the growth and development of Remoland cannot be overstated. Through its unwavering commitment to education, community development, and social justice, the church has played a pivotal role in shaping the region's progress and prosperity.

Introduction

The impacts of the the Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) to the growth and development of Remoland cannot be overemphasised. The Church had, over the years, contributed immensely, and in diverse ways to enhance the well-being of the laity. No doubt, there is the absolute emancipation of the hitherto down-trodden individuals who, ordinarily, would not have been able to raise their heads above the poverty level. The MCN, via its numerous pragmatic programmes have assisted to lift people up phenomenally. Most of those who have decided to give their lives to Jesus through the MCN, have had their stories changed for better. Others who have not joined, were encouraged to do so apparently because of the radical transformation of the lives of those who had hitherto been members.

The impacts of the MCN in Remoland, as a matter of fact, served to boost the number of the laity exceedingly. Virtually every Tom, Dick and Harry wanted and still wants a radical transformation in his or her life through the instrumentality of the MCN which was, and still doing everything humanly and spiritually possible to transmutate the lives of its members. People usually struggle to avoid contremeps and or tripidation (no matter how infinitesimal) in their lives, and the MCN appears to have somewhat guaranteed that substantially.

Contributions of Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) To Remoland

The advent of the Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) to Remoland engendered a radical transmutation of the land. In fact, the MCN was a precursor of the good things that came to Remoland. The denomination evidently served as fillip to the whole land in its entirety. Much as it is true that the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had earlier come to Remoland, there was little that they could accomplish as their stay was quite ephemeral. According to Ayodele, the first set of Missionaries to come to Remoland were Germans. They were the Rev. C.A. Gollimer and G.F. Gerst. They were Anglican Missionaries from Abeokuta. They came to Remoland in 1852. They went to ofen township and settled down in order to plant Misstionary Station there. The place is now known as ofen homestead (*Orile ofen*). From *Orile ofen*, they went to other Remo towns to preach the Gospel. They laboured among the Remo people between 1852 and 1854 without a Missionary Station, because the Remo people did not ascribe to the new religion.¹ This was probably as a result of the traditional religion, which they enamoured enormously. Buttressing the above, Ayodele again opines that the indigenus population of Remoland of old were deep in their religious beliefs and practices. This is not surprising as they were part of the Yoruba race who believed in multifarious religious practices. This should not be regarded as unusual because serveral world countries believe in the existence of various gods and goddesses.² The Remo people are no exception in the belief in the various gods and goddesses of the Yoruba. Rituals of various dimensions were rife in the early Remo settlements. There were rituals of human beings, fowls, he-goats, eggs,

yams, bananas, plantains, cowry shells, palm oil, money (coins) etc which were offered to the various gods and goddesses. Every junction in the Remo townships then was littered with ritual pots and calabashes.³ However, the coming of the MCN marked a significant milestone in Remoland as the Church embarked on very laudable programmes, some of which will be discussed here.

Part of the impacts of the MCN in Remoland is the establishment of schools. Literacy level was at its lowest ebb during the advent of the Church. Thus, the MCN felt the absolute need to establish school(s). Schools, according to Gores are places of learning where teachers meet with students who have come for instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, science and much more. Many schools provide day care and health care services to the community. Elderly people learn new technology at high school. Job training is offered to adults. Cities and schools are becoming partners and sharing libraries, parks, pools and athletic facilities.⁴ Buttressing the above, Nelson pontificates that school is one of our most important institutions. Schools teach reading, writing, the use of mathematics and other basic-skills needed in everyday life. Schools increase people's knowledge of the world and themselves and help them understand the rapid changes that take place in modern society. Schools prepare people for jobs and careers and help them develop interests that make their leisure time more rewarding. In schools, students learn their responsibilities and rights, as citizens improve their ability to think critically, and develop such basic values as truth, justice and equality. Human knowledge is extended through research carried out in schools.⁵

The significance of school cannot possibly be over-emphasised. This is apparently because the MCN in Remoland benefitted enormously from their hitherto established schools. According to Ayodele.

At 1500 hours, prince Ademuyiwa Haastrup preached at Epe before the Elepe. The listeners were over two hundred. He took his text from Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, chapter five verse two. David Solanke, a boy of about fourteen years from the Wesleyan School read a lesson. At 1630 hour, Prince Ademuyiwa Haastrup preached at Makun, with not less than five hundred people in the congregation. He preached from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded by saint Matthew, Chapter six verse thirteen. Alfred Omole, aged between ten and eleven years, the son of Balogun of Makun read the lesson in Yoruba. The reading from the Holy Bible by the boys created surprise and healthy jealousy among the people of Sagamu to the extent that many of those in the congregation decided to send their children to school. The *Akarigbo*, the *Ewusi*, the *Elepe*, all coronet kings promised to send their children to school. The *Ejiga (Lajiga Oogun)*, the *Balogun*

of Makun also promised to send a child to school the following week. This was the beginning of the enviable position of Western Education in Sagamu by Wesleyan Missionaries.⁶

Besides, Ayodele goes on to enthuse that there was increase in the number of converts. This made it imperative for prince Ademuyiwa Haastrup to be more intimately concerned with Sagamu in order that the group of converts may continue to grow stronger in faith and larger in numerical strength. He did not leave the group to religious instructions alone, he added formal education. The school was important to the adherents so that they could be able to read the Bible and do simple calculations. He established a Church and a school...⁷ Some of the schools established by the MCN subsequently include, but not limited to the following, viz:

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| 1. Wesley School, Sagamu, founded | 1892 |
| 2. Wesley School, Iperu, founded | 1893 |
| 3. Wesley School, Ode Remo, founded | 1896 |
| 4. Wesley School, Ogere, founded | 1900 |
| 5. Wesley School, Ikenne, founded | 1903 |
| 6. Wesley School, Isara, founded | 1903 |
| 7. Wesley School, Ilisan, founded | 1904 |
| 8. Wesley School, Irolu, founded | 1910 |
| 9. Sokoya, Memorial, founded | 1945 |
| 10. Sonyindo Wesley School, Wesley, founded | 1946 |
| 11. Wesley School, Makun, founded | 1948 ⁸ |

Evidently, some of the prominent sons and daughters of Remoland are products of the Wesley schools. Quite a good number of them are eminent scholars and distinguished administrators in reputable schools, colleges, universities and even business organisations. They are at the top echelon of these establishments dictating the shots. Their hitherto acquired knowledge had broadened their horizon phenomenally. Indeed, education is the application of knowledge. The training that they underwent in these schools served as potential tool that assisted them enormously, to forge ahead in their chosen professions. And they are reckoned with as people worthy of the positions they are occupying. In other words, they are round pegs in round holes. They cannot be regarded as misfits, as they are goal-getters or achievers.

Ditto, in the political realm, education that had been hitherto acquired from the Wesley schools assisted the Remo people tremendously. They were adequately educated to contest for eligible positions, both at the state and federal levels. Besides, they were and are still able to educate the electorates as regards voting. Voters have been able to cast their votes appropriately. Thus, the number of invalid votes are usually very minimal, since the electorates know how to go

about voting. This is probably not found in some places. The resultant effect of this is high number of invalid voter's card. Some electorates do embark on multiple voting, since they do not know the procedure. Again, the resultant effect of this is the nullification of such cards. In other words, such votes cast are not counted. They are valueless, as they cannot be counted for any of the candidates contesting that particular election.

Furthermore, it was probably the resolve of the MSN to improve the academic attainment of the Remo people that necessitated the establishment of the Methodist Seminary, Sagamu. Essentially, the Seminary was founded to provide the necessary ecclesiastical training for clergymen of the church. Since its inception, the institution had trained considerable number of priests who have served in several locations, propagating the gospel. Some places that would have probably not heard of Jesus Christ have had the opportunity, ostensibly because those trained by the Seminary have found their ways to these places as they saw their role as that described by Paul which states under alia:

To open their eyes that may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me (Acts 26:18)

It should be noted, accordingly to Owoeye that the CMS and other missions established schools for the natives mainly to produce interpreters, catechists, priests and clerks, but the natives also benefitted from their educational programme⁹.

The presence of the whites who were MCN missionaries probably encouraged some companies owned by the whites to come to Remoland for commerce. According to Ayodele the European firms like the U.A.C, CFAO, John Holt e.t.c settled down in Sagamu from the late nineteen twenties, trading with Remo U.A.C particularly dealt in farm produce like cocoa, palm oil and palm kernel¹⁰. Commerce according to the duo of Brant and Dickey is:

Transport of commodities from place to place for exchange purposes. The British economist, Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) that "the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another is an intrinsic characteristic of human nature". Smith also observed that the expansion of commerce is a critical component of the process of modernization. In modern society, production is organized to take advantage of specialization and division of labour. Without commerce, it would be impossible to organize production in this manner.

In ancient times, transporting commodities over and significant distance was an expensive and risky enterprise. Thus, commerce was restricted mainly to local markets and the most commonly traded articles were foodstuffs and clothing. Most people spent the bulk of their resources on food and what they neither grew nor gather themselves, they obtained through trade. In addition to food, clothing and shelter, the rich devoted their income to conspicuous attire, jewelry and works of art. As a result, an important trade in luxury items developed¹¹.

The indigenes of Remoland became familiar with the art of buying and selling of diverse products which were brought by the foreign companies. That, indeed, encouraged the people to be producing local items which they could easily market among themselves locally, without necessarily taking them outside the locality. Farm produce, such as banana, plantain, pineapple and yam e.t.c were not left out. Thus, commerce boomed exceedingly in Remoland, as buying and selling enhanced enormously the social and financial status of the average businessman and women. Besides those in the mercantile, farmers standard of living witnessed a phenomenal enhancement, as their produce were sold, with relative ease, within the terrain. Farmers could afford the school fees of their wards. They could also afford to clothe themselves and compete favourably with these in the urban areas, when it came to dressing. Dressing, according to Hornby, is the act of putting on clothes¹². Odey pontificates that the Christian missions introduced and promoted western culture in areas of dressing, good reduction in the number of intra-tribal and inter-tribal warfares, the period of confinement of widows and mourning for the dead, the safety and survival of twins and their mothers, and other practices like marriage of many wives and improvement of traditional architecture¹³.

It should be noted with utmost significance that the advent of the MCN in Remoland brought the introduction of western medication, via the establishment of hospitals and clinics. According to Cicchetti, a hospital is primarily a place where people who are sick or injured are given medical attention or surgical care. In addition, many hospitals conduct educational and research programmes¹⁴. She goes on to postulate that there are many different kinds of hospitals. Some Hospitals only treat patients suffering from mental illness or chronic diseases, or cancer. Other hospitals specialize in treating patients of a certain age group, such as children or senior citizens. However, the largest number of hospitals are short-term, general hospitals. These are hospitals that treat patients with all kinds of illnesses or injuries that donot require hospitalisation of longer than 30 days¹⁵. The MCN acknowledge the import of medicare as a necessary concomitant of their ecclesiastical assignment. Thus, they did not ignore the treatment of the sick as they embarked on the propagation of the gospel. According to Oyalana and Ayodele;

Most of the western missionaries in Nigeria were medical based and retired military men. They were people who could take care of the health of those people they were to work with. They treated people who were sick free of cost. They built dispensaries where people were treated daily. In Sagamu, there was a clinic at Oko manse. In Ipesu, a clinic was built as well. The Wesleyan missionaries went beyond the treatment of people alone; they taught the pupils in the Wesley schools the importance of hygiene¹⁶. Hygiene became a subject being taught in the schools which also had great influence in various homes through the pupils. When Mellor arrived, he added maternity centres to the clinic and dispensaries already built. The rate of infantile mortality was seduced by 80%. The maternity centres were staffed with the trained women from Ilesa Wesley Guild Hospital. Nursing sisters, medical officers from Wesley Guild Hospital, Ilesa made occasional routine visits to both dispensaries and maternity centres¹⁷.

Doubtlessly, the establishment of dispensaries and maternities by the MCN guaranteed sound health, relatively, in Remoland. Pascoe postulates that most people have a good idea of what is meant by health". But, it is difficult to define it exactly. The simplest and most traditional definition is that health is the absence of disease. Other definitions emphasize the positive aspects of health, describing it, for example, as the proper working of the body and mind. Still other definitions of health include the idea of well-being. For example, the World Health Organization, a branch of the United Nations has said that health is "physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease". But no matter how health is defined, keeping the body well is the foundation of good health¹⁸.

It is probable that one of the reasons why it was relatively easy for the MCN to succeed in Remoland was the introduction of medical facilities. Like the Cliché goes *Health is Wealth*. Converts had the opportunities of enjoying the medical facilities improvised by the church. Those who got healed of one ailment or the other, were easily converted in a jiffy, and they went and invited their friends or family members to come and enjoy the same treatment and subsequently got converted. Thus, where the other denomination failed earlier, perhaps woefully, the MCN recorded enormous success. This was because many of the indigenes who were clamouring to receive healing of diverse sicknesses that they were hitherto subjected to got the necessary or required attention and medication that eventually made them whole.

Again, it should be noted without any spirit of immodesty that in the days of yore, there were numerous ailments that cure were with the local roots and herbs. Such diseases defiled local medication. However, the western medication did justice to them because within a reasonably short time, the sicknesses vamoosed. A good example is malaria. It is true that malaria might not kill an Africa easily; nevertheless, it would subject him/her to incapacitation for a considerably long period of time, thereby making him/ her unproductive for the said period. The samething can be said of sore. Procaine Penicillin injection would heal any sore, irrespective of the size and depth, in a jiffy. This is at variance with local herbs that would take a long time to heal the sore under excruciating pain.

Also, the advent of the MCN brought to Remoland Standard buildings, comparable with the ones that could be found in urban areas. Since the MCN embarked **on** the constructions of magnificent buildings, especially the Cathedrals, the autochthons, too, started to copy what was introduced by the MCN missionaries. Thus, many beautiful buildings started to spring up in Remoland. It is obvious that the standard of buildings found in a particular place would determine the status of the town or city. When the indigenes saw the edifice that the missionaries were putting up, they enamoured and emulated them. Thereafter, there was improvement in the type of buildings that the Remo people were constructing. This was because they wanted a unique improvement in what they had hitherto. Today, a visit to Remoland would demonstrate to any visitor that the houses there are of high standard, which can compare favourably well with those found in cities like Lagos, Ibadan or Port-Harcourt. Indeed, the indigenes are not resting on their oars. They are daily in search of the latest architectural design(s), so as to compete with those in the urban areas. Since the indigenes are not poor, and can foot the bill of the projects, one can evidently find daily improvement in their architectural designs.

Besides, the ardent of the MCN missionaries appeared to have served as precursor of socialization in virtually all ramifications. The Remo people were desirous to be like the whites who were always neat. The people's way of life was enhanced by the presence of the whites. They tried as much as possible to copy some of the things that the missionaries were doing. The putting on of hats, for example, as part of socialization was found among the people, who would want to put it on, probably to preclude the hotness of the tropics. Socialisation, according to Shashi, is the process which individuals adapt themselves to the norms, values and common needs of the society. A process based upon learning of symbols where in the biological entity of a new human and continues to learn culture. A means of society and culture in producing itself and continuing after its carriers, humans, are removed. The process through which people learn to think, feel, evaluate and behave as individuals in relation to others and social system.¹⁹