



**MISSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO THE RESURGENCE OF ODO MASQUERADE CULT AMONG THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF ISU EHA-AMUFU IN ISI UZO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Scholars have worked on the impact of the Odo Masquerade cult amongst the people of the Northern part of Igbo land. However, the indigenous people of Isu – Eha Amufu in Isi uzo Local Government Area of Enugu in their own case are in two divides either for absolute abolishment or the resonance of the masquerade cult as part of their heritage. This paper presented a missiological response to the resurgence of Odo masquerade after several decades of its abolishment in Isu Eha – Amufu and based on content analysis of related documents and important ethnographic information through interactions and oral interviews, the study observed that conflicts of position as it related to the masquerade cult is both a positive and logical explanation of cultural change believed to foster development. The findings show that those who believed in the Odo Masquerade cult took the position that it was a cultural practice that united the people, established justice and connected them with their ancestors. At the same time, some hold the view that men hide under the masquerade cult to perpetrate cancerous scourges that intimidate, manipulate or deceive and plunge the people into darkness and wickedness, promoting killings and backwardness and coupled with the economic challenge and wastage led to its abolishment. Concluding as it were is the fact that all human institution presents both positive and negative sides, therefore the paper recommended the replacement of this cultural institution with some carnivals to accommodate social, economic and tourist activities in the community geared towards the promotion of equity and the maintenance of social order, spiritual and economic development amongst all strata of life in the community.*

**KEYWORDS:** Odo Masquerade Cult, Isu Eha -Amufu, Resurgence, Missiology.



## INTRODUCTION

The Odo masquerade is a full-grown man in a mask assumed to be a spirit from the ancestors, patronised by the indigenous people of Isu Eha–Amufu in Isi Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State. While some other parts of Northern Igbo land are witnessing disenchantment and loss of interest in the practice of Odo masquerade among the younger ones as modernity and Christianity are also taking their toll on the Odo Masquerade institution, the reverse is the case among some of the youths of Isu Eha–Amufu as there seems to be a widespread of cultural revival especially those that are detrimental to the social and economic development of the community.

Going back to history, the Odo masquerade trended in the community and during this time, the masquerade was worshipped as the adherents believed it established justice and connected them with their ancestors, others argued that people's rights were deprived, lives were disrupted and women and children were intimidated, lives and properties of both adherents and non-adherents also destroyed by the Odo masquerade institution. This was assumed to be the reason for the abolishment of the masquerade institution in its entirety in the Isu Community and Eha-Amufu in general. However, some youths of the Community between the years 2017 and 2018 resonated with the Odo masquerade institution. Since then, there have been discrepancies as to how best to handle the situation to maintain equity, peace and harmony in the community.

### Conceptual Clarification

#### i. Odo

Etymologically *Odo* is the Igbo word for the colour yellow. The colour is locally obtained from extracts of certain plants or wood and seeds, flowers or certain root tubers from the ground and mixed with water. The paste from dried powder so mixed with water is used for decoration in traditional arts and this is believed to have a ritual effect.

The *Odo* colour is used in decorating the *Odo* mask at the head region and it is blended with white and black colours. All of these coupled with a light green or yellowish fresh palm front (*omu-nfu*) form the basic costume of the masquerade at the lower region. Ezechi (2010) assert that *Odo* colour assumes a mythical link with *Odo* Masquerade.

#### ii. Masquerade

Thesaurus Dictionary in the noun form describes a Masquerade as a party, dance, or other festive gathering of persons wearing masks and other disguises, and often elegant, historical, or fantastic costumes. It is also viewed as a costume or disguise worn at such a gathering. More still masquerade in the verb form when used without an object connotes going about under pretenses or a false character that is to assume the character of or to give oneself out to be what is not.

Onyeneke (1987) as cited in Chukwuma and Oguamanam (2018) describe masquerade as a public display and performance of a masked or veiled actor as he seeks to present in his action the artificial identity which is created and expressed in the fashion of the mask dress adopted. Therefore it refers to any covering for the eyes, nose, mouth, or the whole face and body, usually worn for purposes of disguising, amusement or protection. Masquerades are



therefore partially or totally veiled or masked personalities used to advance social, religious, political, entertainment, cultural or economic functions.

Again, Okafor (2011) cited by Chukwuma and Oguamanam (2018) argue that masquerades or *Nmonwu* in Igbo cosmology relate to spirit manifest or the manifestation of a spirit of some sort in bodily form in the course of carrying out one or more cultural roles in the society which cut across all religious, economic, ritual, political and social life of a people.

### iii. Cult

The word cult is defined by Wikipedia as a group or sect of people with a deviant religious, philosophical or cultural identity often existing on the margins of society or exploitative towards its members. Meriam Webster online dictionary on its own defined the word as a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious. Okafor states that the word cult relates to groups that engage in secret societies whose activities are anti-social and most of the time criminal. They are defined as groups of people whose identities are not only shrouded in secrecy but also engage in activities that are inimical to the collective good of the System.

### iv. Resurgence

Resurgence is considered by the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary as a new increase of activity or interest in a particular subject or idea which had been forgotten for some time. Business English Dictionary added the aspect of growth and development to the concept of resurgence and considers it as a process in which something starts to grow, develop, or become successful again.

### v. Missiology

Missiology is a multidisciplinary branch of theology which studies the mission of the Church in all its aspects. It is also viewed as “the science of the cross-cultural communication of the Christian faith.

### vi. Odo Masquerade

Odo is the short form of Odomagala. The meaning of Odomagala is not very clear but some have alluded that it suggests ‘well set’ or that which sets things right. They argue that this is appropriately the mission of Odo masquerade in bringing some system into an otherwise chaotic world. This moralist definition is favoured by Odo masquerade's ability to take on evildoers in society and to promote righteousness and industry through its satirical demonstration among other means. Ultimately, Odo as a masquerade is very powerful in the cultural worldview of the people. It supplies all their needs, assures their maximum security and is capable of great feats. Consequently, anyone who achieves some great feat among the people is metaphorically called Odo. Some natives also believe that Odomagala is mystically related to Ovumagala (the porcupine). This thorny animal is linked by traditional mythologies to the spirit of Odo and gives the people belief about the security of the just man. The ovumagala link points to the moral probity of anyone who celebrates the Odo. However, the Odo masquerade like many other human cultural institutions has often degenerated to the very opposite of this foundational usage.

Furthermore, like in other parts of Northern Igbo land where the masquerade is known, Odo can be used as an appellation for the male child, it can also be used by adult males to greet



another especially when the person's name has been forgotten. This presumes literally, *my friend* in that case. At some other times, Odo is used as a child's local word for daddy, *Odom* (my father). In some other cases, it is also used for personal names like – *Nwaodo* (son of Odo), *Odo dire* (active Odo), and *ugwu odo* (odo hill or valley associated with Odo). These names depict ideologically Odo's unequivocal relevance to the people's existence and cultural heritage.

#### **vii. Isu Eha - Amufu**

Isu people, commonly addressed as Isu Akweka Iganyi Okpurukpu according to historical records, have existed for over seven hundred years. The Isu indigenous people emerged as a means of finding a lasting solution to the local land dispute between the Eha-Amufu and Ikem people who boarded them in the Northern Hemisphere. According to this record from the Igwe's Palace, after the settled land squabble, certain brave men were sent from various villages of Eha Amufu to occupy the territory and borders of now Isu indigenous people's domain.

According to this historical record, the conglomerate of people that make up the indigenous people of Isu also regarded as Eha Agu (Eha Amufu People that settled on the farmland site) are from Ihenyi, Mgbuji, Umuhu and Amede respectively; hence, till date, some clans in Isu still trace their roots to their kits and kins in the aforementioned communities in Eha-Uno (Eha Amufu People living in main settlement). The majority of the clans in Isu are from Ihenyi.

#### **a. Their Composition**

His Royal Highness, Igwe Sam Ogbodo, detailed that Isu Community is made up of five hamlets with several clans called (Umunna). These Clans also comprise many families called Ezinulo. In the order of their settlement in Isu Amaegbu hamlet from Ihenyi first settled in Isu, followed by the Amaegu hamlet and thirdly, the Amaezeka hamlet both from Ihenyi respectively, later on, Umuolugueze hamlet from Mgbuji and Umuode hamlet from Umuhu joined at various times. Some families from Amede also settled in Isu and they could be traced in families that made up the hamlets. This view was upheld until recently when another view emerged that Umuolugueze hamlet was the third to settle in Isu instead of Amaezeka. This later view supported the sharing formula that was adopted during hunting season. As it was customary in every African culture, elders were made to choose before their younger folks, this portrays honour and respect.

Bath explained further the composition of these hamlets to include:

- Amaegbu hamlet comprises the following clans – Umuchevu, Umuedeogene, Umuchiowefu, Umuohagu and Umuagbo.
- Amaegu hamlet comprises of these clans – Umueme, Umujira, Umuzu and Umudugbe
- Amaezeka hamlet is made up of these clans – Umueyim, Umuokwoezugo and Umueji
- Umuolugueze hamlet is made up of these clans– Umugwu-Olugueze, Umuezeode-Olugueze and Umuchi-Olugueze
- Umuode hamlet is made up of one Clan – Umuode



## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Oguamanam (2018) asserts that the central point of the *Odo* masquerade institution, from the purview of tourism development, is the festival associated with it which people from far and near come to witness. Mention was made of the three seasons of the *Odo* masquerade institution including the return, sojourn and departure of *Odo*, the return and departure are accompanied by ceremonies, which are commemorated with elaborate festivals. On such days, friends and allies from far and near are invited and entertained lavishly. Photographs of these masquerades are also taken and the music is recorded and stored in various forms. The mask photograph and images are of great importance to tourists, especially as souvenirs. According to him, tourism can serve as an avenue to promote the economic status of the community.

Andah (1980) cited by Oguamanam (2018) opined that tourism entails the mobilisation of a people's cultural and natural resources, especially those aspects which make people unique and spectacular from other people. Okpoko (1990) cited by Oguamanam agrees that by cultural resources, one may refer to those rich material and non-material attributes acquired within a given society and transmitted from one generation to another. While this may sound very acceptable and laudable, from research there is more to the masquerade than the eyes can see and imagine and these range from secrecy, killings, much dread and all forms of evil perpetrated by the adherents to the institution is worrisome, more still the intimidation and harassment of female folk and even strangers is much more disturbing. This infers that the continuous existence of the masquerade institution in the Isu Community spells wickedness and backwardness in terms of development. The option to the tourism resource can only be achieved by total overhaul and this will jeopardise the interest of the male folk who derive joy in the masquerade because of the secrecy and the submission of their wives out of the fear of the institution.

In tandem with this view, Ukwu et al (2023) assert that the *Odo* masquerade was introduced to be an object of entertainment, to offer the men leverage over the women in terms of power relationships and to protect the people against external aggression, he agrees that there is the need to sieve the aspects of the cult that is secret out of the present-day *Odo* masquerade. This will be a point of departure from the ancestral practice of *Odo* masquerade where enemies and opponents are spiritually and physically dealt with. It will be out of place in this era of globalisation for the vision of the people to be blurred by fetish practices that have never been used to improve the living standard of the people. Since development is linked to socio-economic practices that will improve the freedom and productivity of man, the practice of *Odo* masquerade should be positioned towards the areas where it can be of comparative advantage to the people, which fundamentally, is culture and tourism he submits.

To harness the *Odo* masquerade institution as a tourism resource, therefore, Oguamanam believes that other organs directly responsible for planning, developing and transmitting information about tourism like Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation and Enugu State Tourism Board should be involved. Furthermore, other government agencies like the National Commission for Museums and Monuments and other bodies involved in the conservation of Nigerian cultural patrimony, especially museums, conservation and resource management agencies etc. are responsible for preventing, presenting, and promoting cultural and material resources of Nigeria have a great role to play. These bodies should help to modernise the public places and or arenas where these masquerades perform by establishing





standard amenities like electricity, pipe-borne water and health care facilities within the area of the display of these masquerades. This can help sustain the interest of visitors to Isu. By so doing, it will help attract not only Nigerians but also foreigners.

This in the researchers' view is attainable but will require much effort to attract the government of today's Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The study is based on content analysis of related documents and important ethnographic information through interactions and oral interviews were picked based on the aim and objective of the study and to make some findings upon which conclusions and recommendations were made.

### **Findings**

#### **a. The Making of Odo Masquerade**

Peter (2024) explained that spears of palm trees are used in making *Odo*, especially the omu or igu-nfu usually the new ones that are yellowish. The preparation of Odo is tasking and it requires strength, skills, time and total commitment. The preparation of the Odo is done by a few men most of whom are hunters, they leave their home in disguise to go hunting and they slip into the forest designated for the masquerade to prepare the regalia. The initiates go for the harvest of palm fronds in the forest area or farm settlements. Such outing done by the initiates to harvest the odo material is called 'ikpa nku odo'. It is worthy of note that according to findings, on the day of ikpa nku odo, the routes for such purposes will be closed with a rope to avoid the passage of women and others who are non-initiates. Young adherents to the masquerade institution will climb the palm tree with sharp-edged cutlass, knife or sword to ripe - off fresh palm fronds quietly. The harvested bundles of palm fronds will be taken to the designated harvest areas of the masquerade called 'uham' for processing and the making of the masquerade regalia. During the ikpa nku odo, any woman or non-initiates found in the forest or the farm settlement is believed to have seen or known Odo's secret and therefore, stands the risk of losing their lives inside the forest or farm settlement. The next task in the making of Odo masquerade is the cutting of wood for the head region. While the head region and the skeleton are made of wood, the yellowish palm frond are tied to the lower region and the length and bulk of the regalia depends on the height and strength of the man who would carry the masquerade. The head of the finished and completed Odo is painted with yellow, red and black colours, of course, it assumes a deep creative artwork and the design is made to be exact every year during each season of the Odo masquerade.



Figure 1: Odo masquerade Source: [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)

### b. The Season and Practices of Odo Masquerade

Peter (2024) asserts that Odo Masquerade in Isu Eha - Amufu like any other place in Northern Igbo land has three seasons namely, **the return, the sojourn** and **the departure**.

**The Return:** Odo is believed to return from the spirit world at the expected season. This return” is technically known in Igbo vernacular as “Oduda Odo” (literally “fall of Odo”), a concept which depicts the image of coming down from on high, a glorious descent. The mystery of the return makes it awesome and the people are enthusiastic about it. Once the first moon of the Odo season is sighted, which in the native week’s calculation, falls probably within November, the exact day for the return of Odo is fixed by native calendar makers, usually priests and elders of each village with the help of diviners. The celebrations to mark the return of the Odo masquerade are characterised by elaborate ceremonies in families and the community at large. The occasion is free-for-all drinking amid Odo Masquerade in Isu as in other Northern Igbo Land. Some rich folks in the community take their friends home for glamorous feasting. Odo Masquerade stays about two weeks to allow other ceremonies to happen in the forest reserved for them before it comes out to the village to dwell in the designated compound built among the people.

**The Sojourn:** The period of sojourn describes the stay of Odo among the people, from the time of arrival to its departure. This period lasts between six and eight months. In Igbo traditional calendar, there are four market days presumed to make a week namely Nkwo, Eke, Orié and Afor. During Odo's masquerade sojourn, it does not come out on Orié market day to give people the liberty to go about their businesses without fear and harassment of any sort. However, on the remaining market days, extra care is taken in order not to offend the gods of the land in any way. Also, during this period, Odo moves about from village to village and even compound to compound to visit important men who in turn present rich sacrifices to it. These sacrifices are made by both men and women and each worshipper prays to Odo and presents his/her requests. Odo replies in coded language which is interpreted to the worshipper by a member of the Odo institution. The Odo also displays what it can offer its worshippers and initiation into the Odo cult is also held during the sojourn. The initiation



ceremony is a significant ritual in Odo culture, which symbolises the formal admission of youths into the male society.

**The Departure:** The departure of Odo to the spirit world is celebrated with many accolades. People who made promises to Odo if they found solutions to problems they presented the previous year fulfil them if they were successful and new requests are made. The people are usually sad at the departure of Odo masquerade even though they are aware that the ancestral spirits never leave the community in the real sense of their beliefs. The smaller Odo's leave before the principal ones. They do so on fixed dates. In the same way, each of the principal Odo has its own day of departure. Women and children are prohibited from witnessing the last two or three days before its departure. The masker at this point does not wear his mask, but still speaks and acts satirically. A metal gong (Ogele) is usually sounded to herald this episode. The aim is to maintain the secrecy of the Odo cult while ensuring that all the uninitiated persons called (Ogboodu) do not partake in its secret activities. The Odo moves around the village silently and unseen by people, tracing not the normal village roads, but the traditional pathways of the ancient generations. It then departs to the land of the dead. The departure of Odo is often associated with ascending the hill or crossing the stream, and in Igbo mythology, hills and streams usually depict boundaries between the living and the dead. Odo masquerade crosses the Ebe river which is assumed to be the boundary between the living and the dead escorted by spiritual persons (especially, titled men and chief priests), who would stop at a certain point and return to the village because they cannot follow Odo to the land of the dead, for that would amount to death. The Odo must proceed alone to the land of the spirit world. The departure of Odo is also accompanied by the disposal of cult materials used during the season, some are burnt and the more valuable ones stored away.

### c. The Names of various Odo Masquerade in Isu

Bath and Peter (2024) listed the names of Odo Masquerades among the indigenous people of Isu in the order of arrival and creation in the community.

- i. Ist Edeawogu nwa ngwere as the main Odo and Ngbavuru as the forerunner, it was the first Odo Masquerade believed to be brought into the community. There is also a notable one called Nwaozhiome that is meant for storytelling and special messages. Others are Enwukamu and Uvuawoke these two are dreaded because they flood people terribly, there is also Ovuru-uzo also addressed as Oriwebe (This moves alone and dances to the music of the spirit heard by itself alone). All these are the names of Odo masquerades attributed to Amaegbu Clan.
- ii. Okurempume as the main Odo and is also known as Odo Ugolodu Isu (the tallest Odo in Isu). This Odo is as tall as a story building and the most dangerous of them all. People travel from far away to consult it, especially in times of land dispute. It stands for truth and justice as it kills those guilty within a few days of swearing an oath before it. Besides Okurempume is Mgbavuru, an assistant and forerunner, Okuebule, Oshitowere, Ikenehurube, Nwozhiome the storyteller and Ovuru-uzo the same as Edeawogu mentioned above. All these are attributed to the Umuolugueze Clan.
- iii. Egbanavutu as the main Odo with Ngbavuru as its forerunner. Others are Azogumu, Emegu, Akoolo and Nwaozhiome all attributed to Amaegu Clan.





- iv. 2nd Edeawogu has all the Odo Masquerade as found in the 1<sup>st</sup> Edeawogu. According to the record, Umuenyim a family in the Amaezeka Clan of Isu pulled out of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edeawogu to establish their own Odo masquerade setting after a quarrel that ensued between them. This is an amazing artwork that portrays God as the ultimate creator and depicts man as being wonderfully and intelligently endowed hence as much as they number twenty-seven, each of them has their uniqueness that differentiates and helps distinguish them.

#### **d. Odo as a Culture**

Several people in the Isu community view the Odo masquerade institution as part of their cultural practice that satisfies their emotional inclination and enthusiasm thereby providing much-cherished entertainment. Some agree that the masquerade unites them and establishes a strong link between them and their ancestors. This informed their disposition as it relates to their displeasure with the abolishment of the masquerade institution. Kraft (1979) cited by Jeffrey (2004) asserts that culture includes all shared values, beliefs and practices that tend to characterise a particular group of people. Kraft writes that “culture consists of two levels: surface and deep levels. The surface level is largely visible and consists of the patterns according to which people behave. These behaviour patterns are however closely linked to a deep level of largely unconscious and invisible assumptions called worldviews”. This study reveals that masquerades like Odo and Omabe were traced to the Igala area. Ezechi cited by Oguamanam et al. argued that both Odo and Omabe masquerade known to the Isu community came from Igala. Few authors favour Idoma while the majority gave credence to the claim of Igala being the probable centre of origin. The epicentre of the finding is that Odo Masquerade traced its way to be adopted as part of the people’s way of life.

#### **e. Odo as a Religion**

Religion is defined as a personal set or institutionalised system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices. It is also the service and worship of God or the supernatural and a commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance. This is a reality with the Odo masquerade in the Isu community as it is believed to be an intermediary between the people, their ancestors and the creator (chukwu okike abiama) that deserve to be worshipped and adored. This explains their falling down in obeisance before the masquerade during the ceremonial festivities of the Odo masquerade return. Others present their requests and sacrifices of goats, fowls, yams and even money when requests are met each Odo masquerade year. Besides these are several religious rituals that are attributed to the masquerade that was necessitated the continued existence of the masquerade.

#### **f. Secrecy in Odo Masquerade**

Agbo posits that the driving force of the Odo deity is the secrecy surrounding the procurement and manifestation of its masquerades. Ugwueze added, “Secrecy is the secret of every cult.” It is around this secret that most activities of the Odo deities in the Isu community hang and this explains the fact that some secrets are kept from even men initiates not to talk of women and non-initiates who remain completely ignorant to the matters of the masquerade and even stand the risk of death if they have any slightest access to the masquerade, it also explain why people take oath of justice before Odo masquerade and dies if taken wrongfully. Peter also explained that the language of Odo masquerade differs from the entire community’s language and can only be understood by initiates.



### **g. Economic Challenge of Odo**

The culture of economic waste of the above cult is most pronounced in the waste of man-hours. Most of the cultural activities relating to masquerades are usually celebrated within a week or two. Initiates and adherents of the Odo cult engage themselves for six to seven months at the expense of economic activities. This invariably means that as long as men and youths in the Isu community continue to patronise the culture of exploring fifty percent of their economic time to eating, drinking, dancing and masquerading it will remain an impoverished society. Peter asserts that it got to a point in their lives that they had a re-think of the economic wastages as a result of the time spent patronising the masquerade institution.

Another major challenge surrounding the masquerade institution was the wastage of economic trees especially the palm trees which the masquerade regalia is fabricated from.

### **h. The Abolishment of *Odo* Masquerade**

In the days of the Odo Masquerade cult as a festival in the Isu community calls, agitations and contentions for its abolition filled the air. This was because the masquerade was seen as the reappearance of the spirit of the dead in a form of masquerade to loved ones periodically to be with them to offer some services which include security, protection, arbitration, entertainment and sanctioning among other intrinsic functions was overtaken by deeds of darkness and wickedness coupled with tales of harassment, intimidation, restrictions and even infringement of certain fundamental human rights. The height of their wickedness was when the church began to receive constant attacks from the institution. One of such attacks was the attack on the house of a Church leader, Mr Denis Oguama for hosting a discipleship class in his house. While the wife was beaten to the point of losing a pregnancy, he escaped death on several occasions. This moved the Church under the auspices of Eha-Amufu believers Association (EBA) ably led by Benjamin Odo as the President General while Rev Bartholomew Idu from Isu coordinated the Kano zone where the idea to challenge the institution at the Court of Law in 1994 was brooded and hatched. The result was the abolishment of the Odo masquerade Institution in its entirety in the Isu Community and Eha-Amufu in general. Agbo affirms that the judgement was delivered by Justice Aloy Nwankwo in the High Court of Enugu State holding at Nsukka on October 18, 1996, **Suit No N/44M/95**. It was noted that after the court injunction, the Church led the community to adopt Christianity as their religious belief system. This was done publicly during an Evangelistic Crusade where the elders of the community through the most senior elder Chief Amos Otobo renounced the cult and handed the entire land back to God for cleansing and dedication. This was followed by the total destruction of all sacred grooves set aside for the masquerade and all the items associated with the institution. Every year since 1996, such crusades have been celebrated.

### **i. The Resurgence of Odo Masquerade**

A decade after the abolishment of the Odo masquerade cult and the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its abolishment, the community has also enjoyed relative peace and several developmental projects making their route to the community. Between the year 2017 and 2018, some youths led by one Solomon (even with a Christian identity) slid back to resonate with the Odo masquerade Institution. Fully aware that the entire community denounced the institution, they armed themselves with weapons when they celebrated its



return and ever since then there have been discrepancies as to how best to handle the situation to maintain equity, peace and harmony in the community, Idu explained.

## The Missiological Response

### a. Christ and Culture

Richard Niebuhr (1951) cited by Jeffrey (2004) proposed five different possible relationships between Christ (the Church in mission) and culture. These include Christ against, Christ of, Christ above, Christ in paradox and Christ in transformation.

- i. Christ against Culture.** In this viewpoint, the Christian views Christ as totally opposed to, separate from, and even hostile against human culture. There have been significant proponents of this position such as Tertullian and Tolstoy.
- ii. Christ of Culture.** As you can probably anticipate by the words, this perspective is just the opposite of the Christ against culture perspective. It attempts to view Christianity and culture together, despite the differences that may exist.
- iii. Christ above Culture.** This view attempts to correlate the fundamental questions of culture with biblical revelation. Thomas Aquinas took this approach.
- iv. Christ and Culture in Paradox.** Individuals who adopt this view are sometimes called dualists because they believe that the Christian belongs to two realms (the spiritual and temporal) and must live in the tension of fulfilling responsibilities to both. Church reformer Martin Luther adopted this view.
- v. Christ the Transformer of Culture.** Individuals who adhere to this perspective are sometimes called conversionists because they attempt to convert the values and goals of secular culture into the service of the kingdom of God. Augustine, Calvin, John Wesley, and Jonathan Edwards are some of the proponents of this last view.

It is safe to say that all of these views probably contain some element of truth. However, a position that aligns itself with Scripture is one in which the Christian understands his primary responsibility to be a personal follower of Christ and His ways within a given human socio-cultural system and then attempts to communicate the transforming message of the gospel to individuals, as opposed to societies or socio-cultural systems.

### b. Discipleship Response

The greatest problem the Church in Isu like most African Christians had was the belief that everything in the culture is demonic without an in-depth ethnographic understanding of the culture including the issue of the lack of deliberate and intentional discipleship after the community renounced the masquerade cult. Thorough and intentional discipleship would have helped the people to see and understand clearly the damages done by the masquerade in their transformational development. This attests to the view of missiologists that culture displaced must be replaced with a better cultural practice.



### **c. Seminar and Entrepreneurship Response**

Dr Myles Munroe (2001) posit that the greatest problem of humanity is a lack of understanding of man's source, identity, purpose and potential, supporting this view is the fact that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. This presupposes that people engage in whatever is available when purpose is not defined. Seminars on the discovery of potentials and proper entrepreneurship programmes would have addressed the curiosity of the youths and channelled their zeal into doing things that would promote the trans-generational development of the community.

### **d. Social Action Response**

Man has been attributed to be both a religious and social being. This is because man is wired to interact with the Supreme Being and equally with one another. This thought agrees with many missiologists that a culture abolished must be replaced with a better one. This presumes that after the abolishment of the masquerade institution, a social activity like sports competition and other cultural activities that do not in any way conflict with religious affiliation and the human right of association would have been established.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **a. Tourism Option**

The prospect of Odo Masquerade involves the tourism option. According to Andah cited by Oguamanam tourism entails the mobilisation of a people's cultural and natural resources, especially those aspects which make people unique and spectacular from other people. The craft and creativity involved in the making of Odo masquerade is something to be explored for tourist purposes. However, caution must be taken to guard against syncretism.

### **b. Cultural Resource**

By cultural resources, one may refer to those Rich material and non-material attributes acquired within a given society and transmitted from one generation to another (Okpoko, (1990). Among them are festivals, beliefs, dance, diet, architecture, woodwork, metalwork, stonework, law, etc. There are some other cultural resources which may appear as artefacts of different kinds, monumental buildings and shrines, etc. that form part of cultural resources. The central point of the Odo masquerade institution, from the purview of tourism development, is the festival associated with it which people from far and near come to witness. Mention has been made of the outing ceremony of the Odo, both the returning and departure ceremonies, which are commemorated with elaborate festivals. On such days, people from far and wide are invited and entertained lavishly. Photographs of these masquerades are also taken and the music is recorded with explanations of historical past given and stored in various forms. The mask photograph and images could be of great importance to tourists, especially as souvenirs. This can help sustain the interest of visitors to the Isu community. By so doing, it will help attract not only Nigerians but also foreigners.



### c. Religious Carnival

Now that the focus of the youths is back on the masquerade, a religious carnival that focuses on the total man can be introduced to boost the social and religious life of the people. This will be packaged alongside evangelistic programmes and musical concerts where the natives will be encouraged to display their musical talents clan by clan. During this period medical treatment could also be organised in collaboration with some Government and non-Governmental agencies for the medically needy individuals who can't afford some level of medical care.

Since man has been described as a religious being, a symposium that bothers on various religions and worship can also be included and presented to educate the people on how religion contributes to shaping society. The timing can be the same time as the masquerade festival. This will draw people's attention from the masquerade and gradually it will replace the masquerade.

### d. Unifying the People or a Community

The unification of a people is not until a Masquerade is introduced, however, the forebears of the Isu community should at this point be appreciated for such an initiative of establishing something that is geared towards uniting them but due to civilisation and various forms of exposure, several other unifying social activities such as music, dancing which was very peculiar to the community and sports such as football, wrestling, athletics and other games that depicts the culture of the people could be upgraded and re-introduced to be organised as competition at various seasons of the year. Each clan could be made to prepare for active participation. Sponsorship strategies were developed and even religious bodies, organisations and the Ministry of Sports were mobilised to be actively involved.

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