

Re-visiting ‘our’ Cultural Heritage for a Better Understanding of who ‘we are’ as Nso and Babungo people of the Anglophone Cameroon-Africa

Bongajum Dora Lemnyuy
Presbyterian Theological Seminary Kumba, Cameroon

Tamuh Divine Chenwi of BUIB

Article Information

Received: February 06, 2023

Accepted: March 15, 2023

Published: March 28, 2023

Keywords: *Re-visiting, cultural heritage, better understanding, re-think, identity, embracing, practicing, Christianity, Nso, Babungo, indengens, Anglophone Cameroon*

ABSTRACT

Before the Missionaries came to Cameroon in the 19th century, unlike any other tribe in the Anglophone Cameroon and beyond, the Nso and Babungo people had remarkable cultural practices which manifested in various aspects of life such as religion, marriage customs, naming rites, music/communication, festivals among others. These cultural values have since experienced tremendous changes which are connected first to the missionary activities and other factors. This historical comparative education study sought to identify some cultural practices and beliefs of the Nso and Babungo people of the North West Region of Cameroon, demonstrate the knowledge of some of those practices, relate them to Western conception or misconception and develop a model to educate the above people that their cultural practices and beliefs are not bad as conceived by the missionaries. The paper is qualitative in nature and has as design ethnography. Conclusions arrived at attest to the fact that the arrival of the missionaries in Africa in general; Cameroon in particular and Nso and Bambungo tribes was a blessing. However, care must be taken to preserve cultural practices and beliefs. This is because the arrival of the west has continued to impact negatively on indigenous African cultures to which Nso and Bambungo traditions and customs are not an exception. Thus, if this trend continues, some aspects of these cultures might likely disappear and posterity will hold ‘us’ responsible. Even though Nso and Bambungo traditional religion, performing of annual sacrifice and traditional marriage ceremonies still survive, their influence is no longer greatly felt by the young ones. The old ones who possess the talent and knowledge are fast passing away with nobody prepared to learn and take over from them.

Introduction

Before the Missionaries came to Cameroon in the 19th century, the Nso and Babungo people had remarkable cultural practices which manifested in various aspects of life such as religion, marriage

customs, naming rites, music/communication among others. These cultural values have since experienced tremendous changes which are connected first to the missionary activities and other factors. This historical comparative education study sought to identify some cultural practices and beliefs of the Nso and Babungo clans of the North West Region of Cameroon, demonstrate the knowledge of some of those practices, relate them to Western conception or misconception and develop a model to educate the above people that their cultural practices and beliefs are not bad as conceived by the missionaries. It is worthy to note that Christianity which could be termed a western religion was brought to Africa in general and Cameroon in particular with the notion that Polygamy, a type of marriage that is acceptable in African and Cameroon in particular, style of worship of the Supreme Being, dressing, etc were evil as they considered. It should also be noted that those who were converted to this new found religion abandoned these practices and embraced monogamy, style of Christian worship of God, dressing etc. This notion is still operational in today's Christianity in Africa and Cameroon in particular whereby Africa has become the center of Christianity in the whole World.

It has been noted also with dissatisfaction that the same western countries that brought Christianity and imposed their culture and cultural practices to Africa in general in the recent past are engaged in some practices (even in some of their Christian churches) like homosexuality, transgender etc which are seen as taboo to the African culture and practice and some of which are condemned in the Bible. This has pushed 'us' to go back to our cultural practices, revisit some of the misconceptions and evaluate them viz a viz the present practices of those who brought Christianity and its teachings to Cameroon.

Definition of Term(s)

Culture

Krober, (1963: 10) defines Culture as a way of life of a particular group of people. The manner of dressing, the way of speaking and the food they eat. Dora, 2022:32 sees culture as the beliefs, behaviors, language, values, objects, pattern way of life and other characteristics shared by a particular group of people who claim to share a single origin.

Re-visiting: Re-visiting is generally seen as the process of going back again to where one has been. It is seen in this paper as the process of going back to the roots of the cultural practices of the people for better understanding of the present aimed at adjusting the present life style of a people.

Cultural heritage: Cultural heritage in this paper is seen as the process of getting or possessing what rightfully belong to a people. It is the possession of tangible cultural values and practices from generation to generation ensuring that none of such aspects is missing along the line with the aim of handing it over to the next generation for continuation.

Better understanding: It is the process of assimilating the knowledge of what has been tampered with during the period of colonial education and missionary era in Cameroon aimed at considering a change of mindset.

Re-think: It is a mental and behavioral process of studying (assessing) an activity or practice that has been given a negative or position interpretation aimed at making adjustment in the current practice.

Identity: It is simply seen as whom one really is.

Embracing: it is the act of accepting a belief willingly and with enthusiasm by a people or individual purposely to take it as a life style.

Christianity: It is a religion that was introduced and brought to Africa in general and Cameroon in particular by the European Missionaries in the 19th Century.

Nso People: These are people from one of the tribes of the North West Region of Cameroon. They speak Lamnso and are noted everywhere as lovers of their culture.

Babungo People: They are also people from one of the clans in the North West Regions of

Cameroon.

Anglophone Cameroon: These are the English speaking part of Cameroon who has as their colonial administrators, the British. Presently, there is a serious crises of identity and minority which has brought about war in Cameroon with a fraction of these people asking for independence and others asking to go back to the two state federation as it was before Cameroon become a unitary nation in 1972.

For the purpose of this paper, the culture of the Nso people will be discussed first, that of Babungo second and the paper will in the cause of discussions, examine the misconceptions of these people by the missionaries, suggesting a model to be used by the current generation to understand, embrace and practice some of their cultural practices that were brandished fetish by the missionaries.

1. **Traditional Social Associations of the Nso People.**

Bediako in Nyuyki (2020:119) opines that it has been beyond doubt that the missionaries brought Christianity to Africa mixed with the Gospel and Western culture. This was so mixed that one could hardly draw a line between them. Worst of all, the Westerners believed that their culture was superior. Converts were told that the African culture in general and the Nso culture in particular are dangerous and should be dismissed, consequently introducing the so called Western superior culture. From this premise the Nso traditional social associations such as Ngwerong, Ngiri, Rum, etc, which were meant for socialization and fellowship were tagged by the missionaries as “Secret Societies.” Interestingly some of these associations like *Ngwerong* and *Mfuh* are the peace, law and order enforcement and military wings of the Nso people respectively. The missionaries did not only term some of these cultures inferior, but a threat to the newly converted African (Nso) Nyuyki (2020:119). This form of Christianity introduced to the Nso man was irrelevant, however because the Nso man just like other African Christians persisted in their religio-cultural practices as was the case with Matthew the Catechist who was caught behind a mask of one of the most dreaded Nso masquerades by his boss; a white Roman Catholic Priest (Jumbam 1980:141-148)

Religion

To be African, generally speaking, is to be religious, as Mbiti (1990) rightly stated, “*the African is notoriously religious.*” Religion is an important aspect of Nso culture. The indigenous Nso people like most of African clans, believed in the existence of many gods, “*Anyuy*” and ancestor spirits. The people believe in life after death. Ancestors were spirits of deceased persons. They believed that their ancestors were closer both to them and to the gods (*Anyuy*) and thus qualified to act as intermediaries between the people and God the Creator, *Nyuyombom*. Nevertheless, Nso traditional religion distinguished between God (Nyuy) and gods (*Anyuy* – plural of God). This distinction did not suggest any contradiction between the two terms. The name God was more of a universal concept, denoting God as the creator of the world (universe) while *anyuy* was used in reference to divine representations; be it a compound, river site, escarpment or cave. It was common to hear the lineage head or priest made incantations “to the gods of the land”. (Yinyuy, 2005: 20). This was misunderstood by the westerners, they took this practice to be the worship of other gods and not their Yaweh.

Protection against Witchcraft

Witchcraft was also a threat to the Nso people. To fight this evil, there was a common rite called *nguv*, which is a liquid concocted from leaves, backs and roots of trees believed to have supernatural forces. After an invocation and sanctification, the officiating priest gave each participant a share of the concoction to drink. The solemnity with which the act of drinking the concoction took place Mbuy, (1992: 26) described this ceremony as the “most solemn ritual in Nso religion. It had disastrous effect on wizards and witches who drank of the sacred concoction. Any wizard or witch who drank fell dead. The missionaries condemned this act and instructed believers to use persistent prayers to defeat witches and wizards. This was a misconception in that the missionaries did not see this from a Nso perspective, rather they took it from where they came from.

Other Blessing and Protection Rites.

Other sacrifices carried out included *Menkan*, *Ntangri* and *Kidiif*. (Verye, 2007: 96). *Menkan*, was an act of benediction destined to invoke blessings and also to prevent evil spirits from attacking the people. *Ntangri* was the sacrifice of expiation, amend, reparation in which people accepted their wrong doings or fault on others and seek for reconciliation. This was performed when somebody was critically sick. The patient offered a goat or fowl, palm wine, kolanut, cornfufu and egusi as a ransom to the ancestors for the atonement of sin. *Kidiif* was a sacrifice of reconciliation which was usually performed to settle a serious disagreement that caused the separation of family members, families or fondoms. Palm wine crowns the occasion especially when there was successful reconciliation, it enlivens the people to sit down and discuss other important issues. All these sacrifices were performed to restore peace, invoke blessings on the people and ensure harmony with God and the ancestors. The rites were misunderstood by the westerners who only thought such could be done only in church. They didn't for once correlate these rites to the Jewish that matched with the above Nso rites in the guilt offering of Leviticus 7, Blessing pronunciations of Numbers 6:24-26 and reconciliation rites of Leviticus 5:5-6.

Traditional Baptism (Naming Rites)

Furthermore, another important aspect of Nso culture was traditional baptism or naming rites. Before the advent of Christianity, Nso had their traditional religious naming rite which was carried out on traditional public holidays or "country Sunday." Two days were *Kiloveey* and *Ngoiyulum* kept out of an eight-day week as country Sundays according to Nso calendar. Country Sundays or *vishiyvebam* were nonworking days as farm work in particular, was prohibited. Among other things, "vishiyvebam" were also days set aside for traditional baptism. This occasion was supervised by a high priest, *Tanyuy* and/or priestess, *Yenyuy*. During the traditional baptism, a child was given an appropriate name according to Nso naming rites. During this special naming rite ceremony, blessings of good health and prosperity were pronounced on the child. He or she was provided a traditional woven raffia bag which contained a leaf of the peace plant (*kikeng*), calabash and cowries (money). It was sealed with the *kikeng* plant and incantation of progress declared on him or her as the priest called on God (*Nyuymbom*) to guide and protect the child. During this rite, a mixture of salt and red oil was applied on the child's body. It was believed that salt would purify or cleanse the child and protect him or her from evil spirits while red oil signifies royalty. Generally, children were given names such as *Lukong*, *Tumi*, *Shei*, *Wirba*, *Wirsungnin*, *Wirngoran*, *Ngoran*, *Tatah*, *Ntang* and *Biy* among others. (Yinyuy, 2005:25). This naming rites were seen by the white man, missionaries as rites of initiation into some evil cult. Christians who practiced this were stigmatized. Of recent some of these blessing bags have been burnt by some "men of God" in the name liberating these children from somewhere. This act is also seen as a misconception even in today's indigenous practitioners of Christianity.

Marriage Custom

Another traditional institution where Nso culture was expressed was Marriage. The Nso people were predominantly polygamous because the number of wives a man had determined his position in the society. This explains why the Fon (Clan head) kept as many wives as he could. The *vibaays* (traditional Lords) and *afaay* (Lineage heads) equally had more than one wife while a common man with no title could get married to only one wife if he wanted. The collection of bride price comprised red oil, palm wine, a bag of salt, kolanuts, fried groundnuts, "bush meat" and other materials like blanket or the roofing of the bride's family house (depending on the family and how bride's mother's bride prize was given). With the complete payment of the bride price the woman becomes a member of the husband's family and took up the name of her husband. She only visited her family when necessary. Each lineage head, received the bride price of his female dependents. (Banbooye, 2003: 2). It is important to note that before the bride price was finally collected, the would-be husband, friends and family members frequently visited the girl's family, with gifts. During such interactions, the two families learned much about each other as they carried out investigations to inquire if their daughter or son was to be in good hands. The character of the husband or wife was equally examined

by both family members. (Banbooye 2003:2). Out of their reasons, the missionaries told the Nso man to do away with polygamy backing it up from the Pauline teachings on marriage (1 Corinthians 7:1-16). Many have argued that this was a misconception because the 1st century Palestine and to whom the Pauline teachings were addressed to was totally different context.

Traditional communication

Pre-missionary Nso man had a special way of delivering information or announcements to the community. They used a “talking or sounding drum,” called *Ngu’ or Nchum* respectively. In most cases, the drum was played to summon elders and warriors, members of *Manjong*, the military club so as to inform them on any important issue that warranted the immediate assembly of the people. The sound of this drum created a haunting melody and tune which signified the death of someone or danger in the land. Whenever it was sounded, people rushed immediately to the place where it was lodged, to know what has happened. In this light, the *ngu’*, had the ability to connect information and equally summon people together. (Yeika, 2016). This is one of the rare cultural practices in Nso Fondom that was embraced even till date by the missionaries. In the 19th century, missionaries adopted the use of *ngu’*, to summon Christians in the various mission stations especially for Sunday Service or Christian meeting.

So far, the paper has addressed some aspects of Nso culture/practices and the misconceptions by the missionaries. The paper will proceed with the Babungo People and this section is delimited to looking at one of the festivals of the Babungo people as one of their cultural practices which attracted the missionaries as well-the Nikai Festival.

2. The Nikai Festival of the Babungo People

Traditional and cultural festivals are centuries old practices existing within the traditional “states” systems of the polities across the Africa continent. They are mobilizing agencies to demonstrate the strength of a people, an expression of identity, unity and political stability. Traditional and cultural festivals are not only a mark of the African continent but also an attachment of African descent.

In the Babungo Fondom, the Nikai is a tool of governance and an important platform within the traditional political system of the polity. Besides the cultural and ritualistic regards to the Nikai festival, more attention is directed to the political and governance perspective of the traditional festival with the Nikai of Babungo as stated by Kungso 2021. Thus, the choice of the Nikai festival in this paper is influenced by Kungi 2021.

The Political and Ritual Aspects and the Manifestations of Nekai in Babungo

The fixing a date for commencement of the political and ritual activities leading up to the Nikai festival was agreed by Tifuan in consultations with the Fon and the Bah. Once the period is determined, the local market day, *Mfewing, mask agents of Tifuan* went round the market announcing to the populace that the Nikai festival will be opened on the first Nkuuse, a resting day, (Sor’ohTifuan). And that the festival will run for three nkuuse, leading up to the planting season. The people as well as senior traditional state functionaries take thier dispositions, each in their contributions towards the success of the festival. As from this moment, the traditional political machinery is a strategic position within the authority system of the fondom.

The Political and Ritual Aspects of Nikai Festival

The institutions of cult shrine that existed in all the traditional political system of the Grassfields to justify the divine authority of the traditional authority and provides an enabling environment for traditional festival. The many rituals and sacrifices performed and in particular those connected with Nikai were done by political institutions and structures within the traditional authority system. These include the structures of Tifuan, Fon, Bah and Tita Fuanje. The ritual functions fulfilled by the institutions of cult shrines show the crucial role in the ritual integrations of the traditional governance and political system of the polities of the fondom.(Kungso 2021)

The Nikai festival opens up with the ritual and religious performances carried out by the traditional institutions and structures most of which are involed in traditional governance. In line with the

articles of the constitutional ordering related to the festival, agents of the constituted authority, Tifuan, performed ritual and religious visits to sites that are home to shrines and gods of the land. The ritual powers of this body were associated with the fertility of the land and its people, the cult of the royal ancestors and a sacred kingship. The gods of the land were vital for the promotion of fertility, health, prosperity, peace and justice in the land. Besides, sacrifices were made mainly to ward-off the mystical power with its evil aspect.

In Babungo the Mfwei is the institution of the cult shrine. It is a special society that functions outside the palace, but answerable to Tifuan. It is responsible for the peace, protection and cleansing of the kingdom and its members perform their rituals once a year and when there is an abomination in the kingdom¹. They go out from door to door and from one corner of the kingdom to another performing protection sacrifices. The members of the Mfwei carry special calabashes, gheue mfwei which contains a concoction made from different herbs. These herbs include the Inkegh and the Membua. Besides the Mfwei group is the Vitiitifung another important institution of cult shrine in the Babungo chiefdom. The Tomb priests (vitiitifung) are members of the constituted authority who perform rituals for the preparation of a fruitful New Year. These sacrifices were performed at the sites of Nyui Nka Teng, weei nyei Forghai, Weei nyui Lai and Jo Nginah². The Fon, the Bah and Fuanje as bearers of political power in Babungo are highly implicated in the ritual stages of the Nekai festival. Ifung Mange (Ifung Mange is the hurt covering) and Forghai are the two most important ritual sites that are in the village and these three political authorities have to visit it yearly.

The Manifestation of Nikai Festival

The Nikai festival takes place in the palace court yard of the Babungo village. Early in the morning of the first week day of Nkuuse, the Nikai drum is beaten and the sound is heard in the entire kingdom. The sound is an indication and a call to everyone that the dancing proper is opened. This period is marked by general euphoria and excitement, for the village has been cleansed and the gods appeared (Fowier 1990:34)

Nikai TePhor

As presented in Ndzofa (2021:65) the first week of the festival is called Nikai te phor. It is danced by all the young recruits who just graduated from initiation, in the company of other senior men of the community. The dressing code for those dancing this day is 'leaves' worn round the waist and on the head, hence the name *Nikai te phor*. This is usually not crowd pulling given that important personalities in the political and governing class are absent. They are however, sitted in the confines of *Ta fou Tifuan*, drinking and preparing for the two other series of the festival, namely *Meubuh ta nikai* and *fuan nikai* respectively. Most men try to win the hearts of their women, others try to renew their love relationships of their ladies and some concluded new marriage deals either getting the women as their first wives or as second or third wives. Its generally a moment of nuptial flights, which accompanies the men in the next two sessions of the festival.

Meubuh Ta Nikai

Meubuh ta nekai takes place on the second Nkuuse, following the nikai te phor. The mobilisation is impressive and all those that matter in the traditional government bussiness are present. The dancing begins, with the young people animating scene, while waiting for the *meubuh ta nekai* and Bah to come on stage. In essence, *meubuh ta nikai* is the Fon wearing a mask holding two royal spears, enter the dancing areana from the lower part of the palace to meet the others. Simultaneously, Bah carrying the Mba Vengo, holding the *woughleu*, a spear, comes down from *Ta fou Tifuan*, alongside all the notables particulaly Fuanje, dances slowly till they meet the Fon in mask. They danced to the tune of the drumming music, a few rounds in area then dispersed. The Fon takes the direction of his palace, while the Bah and the nobles return to *Ta fou Tifuan*. The implication of this arrangement show the two personalities, the Fon and Bah as the central axis in a dual command authority system in the polity. Tita Bah led the dance as *Gwejui Ba-Tifuan*, founder of the ruling dynasty as well as the laws

¹ Interview conducted by Seminary students with Micheal Fingah of Babungo, Dec 2022

² Ibid

governing both the people and the political institutions. He commanded respect, prestige and power both in the traditional authority system and from the people. Here the Fon appears as an agent of Tifuan, while visible leadership rest with the Bah. This exhibition demonstrated a duality which reigns at the summit of the traditional political system. For the populace and the senior traditional state functionaries, this deployment recognizes and celebrates the leadership role of the Bah who lead the migration of the people from Forghai to the present location. The *mba vengo*, (bag) he carries contain the founding elements and “the constitution”, key elements of the customs and tradition of the people. Note should be taken that only the Bah is authorized to carry this bag, but in times of conflict between the Bah and the Fon, only Fuanje is allowed to carry it during the Nikai. Though not his role, he substitutes for the Bah as one of the original founders of the kingdom. With the Bah not present during this ceremony, entails The Bah dressed even more gorgeously in cowry decorated traditional attires, carrying the *Mba Vengo* as Bighai, founder of the ruling dynasty, the “constitutional ordering”, that maintains the customs and tradition inforce. He leds the Nikai assisted by Fuanje followed by notables of Moukang. During the ceremony, the Fon display wealth and wishes a better farming season for the kingdom. This is done by the Fon throwing CFA coins and corn seeds to the crowd. Note that this ceremony is the last occasion to the commencement of the planting season. In the deployment of the Nekai festival, the institutions of the Fon and the Bah are being venerated during the ceremonies as described above, clearly stand out as the pivot of traditional governance of the Babungo people. These two power centres with “equal” status play complementary roles for the success of the festival, demonstrates the existence of a duality within the traditional political and governace system of the polity (Godwill, 2013:76).

Fuan Nikai

The third and last *Nkuunse* marks the final lap of the Nikai festival. It is named *fuan nekai*, in view of the fact that the Fon is the centre of attraction during this ceremony. It is a very colourful ceremony heavily attended with invitees streaming in from all over the world. The ceremony makes Babungo a major tourist destination, as there is usually a display of royal traditional artifacts representing symbols of custom and tradition of the polity. During the festival, the Fon and the Bah as well as all other senior traditional state functionaries appeared each dressed in their traditional ceremonial regalia decorated to their rank and social status. The dressing of the Fon and the Bah involved a lavish display of royal treasures and regalia³. Special cap woven with black and white threads and decorated with nine turaco red feathers, *tingbai* and nine porcupine quills, *Nsangong* were evenly distributed and fitted on the right and left sides of the cap and worn on the fon’s head. The Bah was decorated in the same way, but with seven *turaco* red feathers, *tingbai* and seven porcupine quills, *Nsangong*⁴. A necklace made principally of bulges of dark –blue and white beads were thrown around their necks. These ornaments were symbols of nobility, prestige and components of religious powers and authority of Fuan (Fon) and Bah. The final stages of dressing included the wearing of ivory made bracelets on the right arm and the low over-lapping dress Nkui was worn on the waist line. All the material items described here were symbols of rank and the unchallenged authority of the Fon and the Bah in Babungo. The Nikai festival in Babungo was and still is an event which has great political and symbolic dimension⁵.

Misconception of Some Babungo cultural practices and Believes by the Missionaries

Having little knowledge of the cultural practices of the Vengo let alone its importance, the early Missionaries who came to the village with an already preconceived idea of what they wanted for the people, saw some of the practices during the Nikai festival such as the Rituals performed, the “constitution of the people” bah Vengo as a worship of idols instead of God. It was with such eyes that they discouraged and even banned those who had been initiated in to the Nikai and or other secret societies in the fondom from activities of the church and her worship of the one and only true

³ Interview with a notable from Babungo Tita Ngwetwi 3rd Feb 2023 and presented in class by Level 200 Sociology students of PTS Match 2023

⁴ Interview with Tita Ngwitwi of Babungo on the 3rd of Feb. 2023

⁵ Research carried out by the level 200 students of sociology at PTS Kumba and presented in class, Match 2023

God which was not the case because Africans (Vengo inclusive) knew and worshiped God long before the coming of the Missionaries to Africa.

Added to this, with the desire to control power the missionaries saw the amount of respect and power which the Fon and Bah possessed as mouths of the people before the gods in times of war and peace as an issue, as such they discouraged they people from giving such respect to these individuals rather than to God in a bite to alienate them more away from their culture to that of the western world⁶.

Model for the Nso and Babungo people to educate the present generation on the misconceptions of the colonial administrators and missionaries in early development of formal education

Contextualization: According to Nyuyki (2017:9) Contextualization is understood as the various processes by which a local church integrates the gospel message (the ‘text’) with its local culture (the ‘context’). In his book he made reference to Shenk (1999:56) who calls it a process whereby the gospel message encounters a particular culture, calling forth faith and leading to the formation of a faith community, which is culturally authentic and authentically Christian. According to him control of the processes involved in contextualization resides within the context rather than with an external agent or agency. In this way, culture is understood to be a dynamic and evolving system of values, and patterns of behaviour. Contextualization here therefore is considered as a necessary practice of all churches (if possible, schools as well) in Nso and Babungo within their own cultures. Contextualization lays emphasis on practical issues.

Having this in mind, one can see with all clarity that the Babungo people and their practice of NekaitePhor is no different from what obtains during Baptism in the church which serves as a physical sign in to manhood and birth into the body/ family of Christ respectively. The cultural aspects of visiting the gods and performing sacrifices is only a way of maintaining a link with their ancestors just like the Bible links creation to Adam as seen in the gospels in other words making it very clear that one’s genealogy is of great importance as it is often said a tree without roots is only good for the fire because no life can be found in it, in like manner is the people and their cultural heritage.

Hitherto missionaries arrived in Nso, there was a well-structured society that did not ignore the existence of a Supernatural Being (God-Nyuyombom). By contextualisation, a Nso Man needs not to be ashamed of bringing his cultural aspects into the Church so long as they are not in any way against the norms of its existence or the existence of some Christian practices and beliefs. So, with the introduction of the Samba, Toh dances in the Church, Nso Christian children being given Nso names during baptism amongst others should no longer be considered “evil” or “unworthy.” The Gospel did not emanate from space, it was reconstructed within a society that had cultural practices and beliefs, so Nso Christians should not feel their own practices are not good except those that do not honor the Creator (God-Nyuyombom) and/or negatively affect humanity and society⁷.

Conclusion

In all, from a critical point of view, the arrival of the missionaries in Africa and Nso and Bambungo clans was a blessing. The contributed in the introduction of formal education. However, care must be taken to preserve cultural practices and beliefs. This is because the arrival of the west has continued to impact negatively on indigenous African cultures to which Nso and Bambungo traditions and customs are not an exception. Thus, if this trend continues, some aspects of these cultures might likely disappear and posterity will hold us responsible. Even though Nso and Bambungo traditional religion, performing of annual sacrifice and traditional marriage ceremonies cultural festivals still survive, their influence is no longer greatly felt by the young ones. The old ones who possess the talent and knowledge are fast passing away with nobody prepared to learn the take over from them. It should be noted that it is not everything about the west that is bad. It is thanks to the Baptist and Catholic missionary bodies that the Nso community is endowed with modern hospitals. It is thanks to

⁶ Critical evaluation of level 200 students of Sociology of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary Kumba; Match 2023

⁷ This model is developed by the level 200 students of sociology, PTS Kumba; Match 2023

the Basel Missionaries that Nso and Bambungo could have schools in the past and even today. We should in all honesty copy what is good from the alien cultures we come in contact with and let go some aspects of our culture which are not progressive. In doing so, we should make sure that what we borrow and what we maintain in our culture will still sustain the solidarity upon which our indigenous societies existed.

References

1. Banbooyee, W., 2003. *Nso Marriage customs*. Kumbo: Nso History Society publication Cameroon: EAS J Humanit Cult Stud. Chilver., *Zintgraff's Exploration in Bamenda, Adamawa and Benue Lands 1881 - 1892*, Buea
2. Dora, L. B., 2022. *Know and Interact Wisely with Your Environment: A Sociological Apparatus for Social Transformation*. Shiloh Printers Bamenda
3. Fowier, L. (1990) *Babungo: a Study of Iron Production, Trade and Power in a nineteenth century Ndop Plain Chieftdom* (Cameroon), PhD Anthropology University College, London University
4. Godwill, K. N. E. (2013) "Conflict in Traditional Authority System in Babungo, 1900-1990", Master's degree Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, Yaounde, 66-89. (UMI N° 02H271)
5. J.P. Notué and B. Triaca, Babungo; *Treasures of the Sculptor Kings in Cameroon*
6. Jumbam, K., 1980. *The white Man of God*. London: Cambridge University Press.
7. Kroeber, A. L., 1963. *An Anthropologist looks at History*. London: University of California Press.
8. Kungso, G. N.E., 2013. *Conflict in Traditional Authority System in Babungo, 1900-1990*, Master's Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I.
9. Kungso G.N.E. 2021., *The Nekai Festival and Traditional Governance in Babungo*, North West.
10. Mbiti, J.S., 1990. *African Religions & Philosophy*. Oxford: Heinemann
11. Mbuy, T. H., 1992. *Understanding Witchcraft Problem in the Life of an African: Case Study of Cameroon*: Oweri Highspeed Printing.
12. Ndzofoa, G., K. (2021) *The Nekai Festival and Traditional Governance in Babungo, North West Cameroon*. East African Scholars Publisher, Kenya, Volume 3
13. Nyuyki P.S., 2017. *A Missional Approach to Traditional Social Associations of The Nso People of Cameroon*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria
14. Nyuyki, P.S., 2020. *Phd Pastors Honour: Rev. Dr. Jonas N. Dah at 80: A commemorative Publication*. Bamenda: (Unpublished).
15. Veye, F. M., 2007. *The truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Nso Kidiif Ritual as Model of Genuine Reconciliation*. Protestant University of Central Africa, Yaounde: PhD Thesis. (Unpublished).
16. Yeika, E., 2016. *The Manjong Warrior Society*. Bamenda: Baron Printing House.
17. Yinyuy, H., 2011. *The role and Impact of Christian Women Fellowship in Evangelization in the Kumbo Zone, Cameroon 1961-2* (unpublished).

Other contributors- Kindzeka Lioinel Nfor, Lukong Blaise Njoyi, Nsanui Tiefe and Yvette Yahbuengkeh Tiwebyse of Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Kumba- Cameroon