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Trailblazers of Adventism in Nigeria, 1900s–1930s

Introduction

The Pew Research Center reports that out of the 80 million (50.8%) Christians in Nigeria, there are 60 million Protestants (or broadly defined 37.8%), 20 million Catholics (11.0%), 40,000 Orthodox Christians, and 810,000 other Christians (Pew Research Center 2011). Among Protestants, mainline, mission churches, and Pentecostal and/or Nigerian Initiated churches play key roles in the religious and social arena of Nigeria. Among the mission churches, Seventh-day Adventists with about 234,200 members (*2018 Annual Statistical Report* 2018:94) constitute a small percentage of Protestants in Nigeria. One of the reasons for this might be that they were late comers to the religious scene of Nigeria.

While the earliest Christian mission to Nigeria can be traced back to the 16th century for Catholic missionaries (Isichei 1995:45) and to the late 1840s for Protestant missionaries, Adventist only arrived in Nigeria in the early part of the 20th century. Popular opinion and several historical monographs have placed the coming of Seventh-day Adventists to Nigeria in 1914. The account claims the British Adventist missionary, David C. Babcock along with two other Africans, R. P. Dauphin and Samuel D. Morgue as the first missionaries to Nigeria. According to this popular study, while Babcock and his team started work in Western Nigeria in 1914, Jesse Clifford started work in Southeastern Nigeria in 1923, and John J. Hyde began mission work in Northern Nigeria in 1931 (Anosike 1971; Agboola 1987; Kuranga 1991; Maigadi 2005; Alalade 2008). Hence, Babcock (and his associates), Clifford and Hyde are until today considered the pioneers of Adventism in Nigeria. This is the main reason why Babcock University was named after Babcock as the pioneer missionary in Nigeria.

Following this tradition, when another Adventist university was founded in 2013 (approved by the government in 2016) in the South East of Nigeria, it was called Clifford University in honor of the pioneer work of Jesse Clifford in that region. While it is true that these missionaries labored to establish Adventism in different areas in Nigeria, historical data shows that before them, James Hyatt as well as Sydney Hayford and Benjamin Tikili had been working in Nigeria.

This article seeks to highlight the contribution of unknown key pioneer Adventist missionaries in Nigeria in order to give credence to the work of those who have not been adequately recognized. The focus of the article will be focused mostly on personalities and their approach(es) to mission. The article demonstrates that the pioneer work in Nigeria was in at least two phases: (1) commissioned laymen and self-supporting missionaries, and (2) ordained and commissioned missionaries. In addition, the paper shows that West African missionaries were key to rooting Adventism in Nigeria.

Phase 1: Commissioned Laymen and Self-Supporting Missionaries

Laymen here will be termed as those who were not commissioned ministers but who were enlisted as licentiates and served as missionaries doing medical and teaching jobs. This was the case of James (who was not ordained) and Marian Hyatt (Records of the Foreign Mission Board 1903:92). Self-supporting missionaries are those who did some mission work in addition to their jobs as in the case of Sydney Hayford and Benjamin I. Tikili.

Western Nigeria Part 1: James Hyatt

James M. Hyatt was a black American medical missionary who worked together with his wife Marian in the West African Countries of Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. Born in 1869 in Denver Colorado, James Hyatt went on to become a dentist. He was married with Marian (a seamstress and dress maker) on 21 December 1892 (Williams 2005:40). In 1902, he was to go to Nyasaland (Malawi) after the Foreign Mission Board sent a request on his behalf to the Colorado Conference (Records of the Foreign Mission Board 1902:65). Although this did not materialize, two years later, in March 1903, James and Marian Hyatt entered Ghana as the first official Afro-American Adventist missionaries in that country and all of West Africa (Owusu-Mensah 1993:67). Later, in 1905, they went to Sierra Leone where James Hyatt worked briefly for a year as the first Adventist missionary (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* 1906:86; Hyatt 1905:13) followed by David C. Babcock.

Between 1906 and 1907, Hyatt went on to work in Nigeria. He must have been working from Lagos for that period since the 1907 *Yearbook of Seventh-day Adventists* lists his name under the ministerial directory as a licentiate working in Nigeria (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* 1907:101). However, after 1907, he was no longer listed in the church records. In *Precious Memories of Missionaries of Color*, James Hyatt is reported to have returned to the United States where he continued itinerant preaching and colporteur work (Williams 2005:44).

However, it seems Hyatt left the ministry and began a private dentistry practice in Liberia and later in Ghana (Letter: Langford to Andross 1920). The General Conference (GC) committee minutes of 1910 notes that Hyatt “a coloured man, is not now associated with our work, and owing to family troubles, his wife left him” (General Conference Committee Minutes 1910:177). Sadly, Hyatt had started paying indiscrete attention to another woman (Letter: Serns to Shaw 1920) and physically abused his wife. That year, his wife, Marian Hyatt had desired to return to America because of her health. The GC committee voted thus: “That we request Elder D. C. Babcock to investigate the case of Mrs. Marion (sic) Hyatt, and authorize him to send her home if she so desires, or if he thinks it proper, to arrange for her to do missionary work in Liberia” (General Conference Committee Minutes 1910:177). After some time, Marian Hyatt returned home to America where she stayed with her sister in Michigan. She died after a severe illness on January 21, 1917 (Letter: Serns to Shaw 1920).

Three years later, James Hyatt died on July 14, 1920 in an accident killed by a truck (lorry) in Ghana (Letter: Linnel to Shaw 1921; Shaw to Serns 1930). In spite of these problems, James Hyatt was the first Adventist missionary to land in Nigeria. In view of the fact that there is a scarcity of information relating to his work there, applying insights from his work in Ghana and Sierra Leone may be helpful in our reflection. While he was in those countries, he held Bible studies (Hyatt 1905:13), carried out evangelistic meetings accompanied with a vibrant music ministry (Hyatt 1903:19), taught classes at the mission school (19), and did medical mission work as a dentist (Owusu-Mensah 1993:67).

If he did some of these activities in Nigeria, then the appeals from those whom he reached is evidence of his efforts. Such type of appeals, reported by David C. Babcock in 1909, were published in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. “The appeals that have been made from Northern and Southern Nigeria demand our immediate attention. Here permanent stations should be built up soon” (Babcock 1909:15, 16). Babcock noted earlier in the report that “while speaking in public recently, a lady in the congregation arose, and made an earnest request for us to open our work in Lagos, the capital of Southern Nigeria. This lady is the wife of a leading physician in Lagos, and is quite a talented woman” (16).

Southern Nigeria Part 1: Sydney Hayford and Benjamin I. Tikili

In the same report, Babcock notes, “One brother is now on the Benne River teaching school, another is teaching at Bonney, and at Lokoja our books are read with much interest” (16). The said brother teaching at Bonny was Sydney Hayford, the son of J. D. Hayford, a Ghanaian mining landowner who also did Adventist pioneer lay work in the Gold Coast (Owusu-Mensah 1993:65). Hayford would go “out at times into the streets in the early morning to tell people about the soon coming of Christ, the true Sabbath, etc.” (Hale 1906:16). He also trained young men to become Bible teachers. His desire to reach people with the Adventist message was passed on to his son Sydney who became a government schoolmaster for the British colonial administration in Nigeria. While Sydney Hayford worked for the colonial government, he began doing “some” Adventist mission work in Bonny, Southern Nigeria.

Sydney Haford’s efforts in Nigeria are known due to J. D. Hayford’s letter to Dudley Hale. Hayford writes, “No doubt it will interest you also to learn that my youngest son, Sydney, now fully come to the age of manhood, and who has been at Bonny, in southern Nigeria, as a government schoolmaster for one or two years, has been doing some earnest work as a Seventh-day Adventist. He is an earnest lad, that good boy of mine is, and I bless God for him” (16). Sydney was the one who introduced Benjamin I. Tikili (from Nembe, of the Brass people in Niger Delta) to Adventism.

Tikili who was born into the home of practitioners of African (Nigerian) Traditional Religion, began learning of Christianity when he was sent to school in Bonny, Nigeria. He later became an ordained minister in 1924, worked as a pioneer missionary under Jesse Clifford in the Niger Delta regions of Southern Nigeria and later in Ghana.

It is interesting how Tikili was introduced to Adventism. Around January 1919 when Tikili became a student in the Normal College or Teachers’ Training Institute in Bonny, he began studying the Bible on his own. Then he became friends with Sydney Hayford who taught him that the seventh day is the Sabbath and the biblical day of worship. Tikili began keeping the Sabbath but was ridiculed by his fellow students. Then he asked his teacher (Hayford) if there were people who kept the Sabbath. In response, he was given an address of Adventists in America. Tikili ordered two books through this address and continued studying about Adventist beliefs. Tikili led two others to the same convictions he had come to. They joined his small “Adventist” band of indigenous Sabbath keepers under the leadership of Tikili.

In 1921/1922, when Tikili finished his studies at the Institute in Bonny, he was appointed as a teacher at Aba Government School. According to Tikili, he and two others remained Adventists until the official missionary (Jesse Clifford) was sent to Aba in 1923. It is possible that when L. F. Langford, William McClements, and Jesse Clifford toured South Eastern Nigeria, they met with the few Adventists of Tikili's group and other indigenous Sabbath-keeping groups. In Tikili's testimony, he claims, "My life in the Government school became a light, and many scholars started to make enquiries, which brought them to the faith" (Tikili 1938:12). This testimony is evident of Tikili's continual work as an indigenous "Adventist" mission worker in addition to his job as a teacher for the British colonial administration. Evidence for a small group of Adventists is found in a letter, possibly from Tikili, which was read by E. R. Palmer at the General Conference committee of 16 April 1923. The letter talks of a "number of new Sabbath keepers in the Southern part" of Nigeria "who had taken their stand as a result of reading a copy of *'Present Truth'* bearing a date in 1916" (General Conference Committee Minutes 1923:327).

Sydney Hayford may have not been an ardent Adventist as his father claimed, for Tikili referred to him as "a partial Sabbath-keeper" (Tikili 1938:12). Nevertheless, Sydney led Tikili to the Adventist faith. Tikili in turn led a few others. Tikili was not only the first convert in South East Nigeria, he was also a pioneer worker. The work of Hayford and Tikili served as a springboard for the mission efforts of Clifford when he came to Aba in 1923. Likewise, it is apt to conclude that it was the pioneer missionary efforts of James Hyatt in the West of Nigeria, which prepared the ground for the coming of David C. Babcock to Nigeria.

Additionally, it is apt to conclude that pioneer Adventist work in Nigeria was started by lay people: The Hyatt family of African-American background and Hayford and Tikili of West African background. Hyatt may have been commissioned to survey the West of Nigeria. Hayford seemed to have been a lone Adventist in the South until Tikili, an indigene, came into the picture. The efforts of these men have until now remained largely unknown.

Phase 2: Ordained and Commissioned Missionaries

Commissioned ministers are understood as those who served as seasoned missionaries and had already served as former pastors in their home countries. For example Babcock, Clifford, and Hyde. I will also include R. P. Dauphin who was ordained as a minister, Samuel D. Morgue, a licentiate, and James J. Hamilton who were experienced West African commissioned missionaries.

Western Nigeria Part 2: David C. Babcock, Rudolf P. Dauphin,
Samuel D. Morgue and James J. Hamilton

According to original documents, the Nigerian Mission was organized in December 1913 (*The Story of Our Church* 1956:548; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* 1914:123) while David C. Babcock went to Nigeria in 1914. Born in New Hampshire, Ohio, on 12 September 1854, Babcock studied at the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Battle Creek College in Michigan. He would later work as a local pastor and president of the Virginia Conference (1897-1900). He first served as a mission director of the British Guiana Mission until 1905. During that time, he lost his wife Ann Davis in 1901. He remarried Mina Bradshaw who accompanied him to West Africa (Alao 2004:19).

Babcock came to Nigeria after serving in Sierra Leone and mostly in Ghana from ca. 1905 to 1913. Until this time, the West African mission of Adventists focused its strength mostly on Sierra Leone and Ghana. The Nigerian Mission was officially organized towards the end of 1913 when a missionary conference was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This conference, convened by Ludwig Richard Conradi, president of the European Division, recommended that the West African Mission be divided into three regions: (1) Nigeria, (2) Gold Coast (Ghana), and (3) Sierra Leone and Liberia. David Babcock was asked to take charge of the Nigerian mission (Alalade 2008:50; Alao 2004:19).

Consequently, Babcock and his family arrived in Lagos in March 1914 together with three other African missionaries, Rudolf P. Dauphin of Sierra Leone, Samuel D. Morgue of Ghana (Babcock 1919:24; Kern 1915:14), and James J. Hamilton of Sierra Leone. More should be said on Hamilton at this point. Nigerian Adventist historians have until today maintained that Babcock came with two West African missionaries. Hamilton has always been left out of Babcock's crew. Possibly because information on this missionary from Sierra Leone is not readily available. Interestingly, he was mentioned by William McClements in *The Advent Survey* as a member of the group of missionaries led by Babcock to Western Nigeria (McClements 1936:1; Read 1930:3).

The Babcock team moved to establish the Adventist message in Erunmu, Ibadan (capital of the western region) in Yoruba Land. It has been noted that one of Babcock's associates (possibly Morgue) learned the Yoruba language. This aided evangelistic communication of the early mission in Western Nigeria. In addition, Samuel Oyeniyi, the son of the Baale (ruler) of Erunmu, who started keeping the Sabbath, became the evangelistic translator for the missionaries (Agboola 2001:24, 25). Oyeniyi not only spoke Yoruba and English, he spoke Hausa, which is widely spoken in the Northern region. Having him on the team facilitated the progress

of the SDA mission reaching out from Erunmu further inland to Sao and Ipoti-Ekiti where the first mission station was built. The mastery of the local Yoruba language enabled the opening of three village mission schools and resulted in the baptism of about seven converts at the end of 1914 (25; *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* 1996:181).

Babcock was not only an evangelist. He was also an educator. One notable SDA mission advance by this team of missionaries was the establishment of a school in Sao (Shao), Ilorin in 1915/1916. The school served the three stations of Erunmu, Sao, and Ipoti-Ekiti, and expanded to become the first formal Seventh-day Adventist educational institution in Nigeria. This was where early national workers for the mission were trained. These workers were mostly trained as evangelists in addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as in entrepreneurial skills like bricklaying, furniture making, carpentry, etc. (Agboola 2001:26). Although Babcock served as its head, the running of the school was possible because of the language prowess of members of his team, comprised of Morgue and especially Oyeniyi who became a teacher in the school (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* 1996:181). Still, the educational feat of these early missionaries is not surprising since the establishment of educational institutions in mission stations was a prime Seventh-day Adventist mission strategy. Moreover, other Christian missionaries also used education during the Colonial era.

Although Babcock spearheaded the mission work during this phase, the success of this phase of the mission came mainly from his African associates: Morgue, who learned the local language, and Oyeniyi, an indigene of the community. This supports Andrew Walls' argument that "most Africans have always heard the gospel from Africans, and virtually all the great movements towards the Christian faith in Africa have been African led" (2002:45).

Ill health forced the Babcock family to leave Nigeria in October 1917. Ernest Ashton, his assistant became the interim director of the mission (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* 1918:135). Shortly after, due to his wife's illness, Ashton also left Nigeria (Andross 1926:269). He was succeeded by L. F. Langford and William McClements respectively.

Southern Nigeria Part 2: Jesse Clifford

Adventism's progress in the West of Nigeria started at first with an evangelistic endeavor and was aided by educational institution (Nyekwere 2004:5). In the South East where Adventism had more success, camp meetings gave the mission its initial push under the leadership of Jesse Clifford. Clifford, an English missionary, had served in Sierra Leone

and Ghana. He arrived with his wife, Winnie D. Clifford, at Aba, Nigeria in 1923 and began promoting evangelistic activities with the use of tracts, and lanternslides as well as through camp meetings.

In 1924, after Clifford convinced Tikili to join the ministry, he later resigned from his government service to become an official mission worker (Tikili had been baptized the year before). This gave Clifford's work a boost. The ordination of Tikili brought in an additional minister with responsibility to do official mission as well as with the ability to conduct baptisms for several converts responding to Adventism. Another boost came through an educational program. With Tikili as headmaster, Clifford officially started a boy's primary school at Aba in 1927. This primary school and an additional Bible school became the basis of Adventist educational work in the South East of Nigeria.

In his approach to mission, Clifford experimented with Bible classes where he taught prospects how to read the Bible. He also experimented with public evangelistic meetings. Nevertheless, the camp meetings held in 1928 and 1929 gave Adventism its initial success in Igboland (McClements 1929:6). It became an effective approach for missions in the South East. Aside from the fact that the Igbos were generally open to Christianity, one reason for this was that the camp meeting booth style, made of palm fronds, was suitable to the Ngwa Igbos who did not live in towns or cities but in compounds (Read 1927:18, 19; Clifford 1927:9) with several thatch houses around. Other approaches used by Clifford included: maintaining contacts with indigenous Sabbath keepers (Clifford 1923:13; McClements 1924:12), writing a book in the Igbo language (McClements 1930:2), and opening an informal school.

Around 1930, Clifford sought converts in the hinterlands of Abua (a riverine area of the South-south). In those hinterlands, the Adventist workers met with other Sabbath groups. One was the Church of Christ Seventh-day. Clifford was faced with the dilemma of whether to take in this group of Sabbatharians as foundational members of the Adventist Church. In the end, he decided otherwise since most of them who claimed to be Christians "were polygamists and engaged in other strange practices and customs" (Alao 2004:34). Although the mission enterprise would later benefit from the conversion of those indigenous Sabbath keepers, the missionaries instead decided to work among adherents of the traditional religions as a starting point.

Another approach used by the Clifford-led group was to regularly visit government schools and offices. Those visits proved successful as some students like C. H. Dede, Josiah Evoh, Philip Onwere, Daniel Onyeodor, and Robert Abaribe became Adventists and helped out in the newly established Adventist school. They all later became leaders of Adventism in

that region. That same year, 1930, L. Edmond who later replaced Clifford as the director of the South East Mission opened another station in the South East in Elele. The South East continued to have the influence and direct contribution of Tikili until towards the end of the 1930s when he left Adventism and pulled others with him.

What led to the unfortunate disassociation of Tikili from the Adventist Church? In 1938, the world Adventist Sabbath School lesson featured the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost for the first quarter in its study guide (D. Izima 1973:23, 24). During this time, the membership of the growing church in Aba believed in the imminent manifestation of the latter rain. By July and August, a kind of “spirit movement” began. This charismatic movement saw several members claiming the power of the Spirit to see visions and dreams, power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and make the lame to walk, etc. While some prophesied and spoke in tongues, others openly confessed their sins and were flogged publically to gain forgiveness (23, 24).

The movement brought about two conflicting opinions. While some saw those manifestations as satanic counterfeits, another group, most probably led by Tikili the indigenous and influential pastor, believed in the authenticity of the movement. When C. A. Bartlett attended the workers’ meeting in August, his lecture on “Try the Spirits whether They Are of God” seemed to diminish or quell the movement’s momentum. With less support from the church leadership on this matter, Tikili resigned and established his own church (Seventh-day Church of God) taking with him some followers (24; Interview with Solomon O. Agharaumuna 2019).

The resignation of Tikili should not be a surprise considering his African Traditional background. He must have seen the manifestation of the Spirit as part of indigenizing or localizing Adventism and making it culturally relevant. However, the mission leaders, who encouraged rationalism and order in worship, did not share his vision. This disagreement led to a schism, which possibly could have been avoided. Yet, this episode in history did not impeded the success or growth of Adventism in the South East regions. The post-1930s historical growth attests to that fact.

Northern Nigeria: John. J. Hyde

Considering the success of the work in the South East and in the West, and with prospects also in the North, Nigeria was organized into three missions in 1930. The following year, 1931, as Clifford left to take charge of the mission in Ghana, John. J. Hyde who had worked in Sierra Leone and Ghana, started mission work in Jengre, near Jos in Northern Nigeria.

Before moving to Jengre, he resided at Ibadan from where he made a survey for an appropriate station for the work in the North of Nigeria. (Maigadi 2005:38) After Jengre was chosen as a mission station, Hyde moved there with his wife, Louis Hyde, a trained nurse and their son.

The Jengre area was mostly dominated by Muslims, which made mission work difficult. Therefore, the Hydys began a dispensary since Mrs. Hyde was a trained nurse. The dispensary, which later became the Jengre SDA hospital, provided an avenue to reach the people around the Jengre area who were in dire need of medical treatment. One episode was the treatment of the jigger flea by Louis Hyde. She extracted the parasite from the feet of those who came for medical assistance. This in turn captured the attention of the people around. In 1933, E. D. Dick was the president of the West African Mission. Notice his report:

The medical work under the direction of Sister Hyde, a trained nurse, is warming the hearts of the people. From twenty to thirty come for treatments and medicine each day. Some of these come from a distance of fifty miles or more. The spiritual side of the work is kept foremost, so that the patients can understand that it is God who brings relief from their distresses. The Sabbath services are attended by some forty to fifty each week, and a definite interest is manifested. Some who have been cured, refuse to return to their houses, as they wish to stay near the mission so they can attend the morning and Sabbath meetings. (Dick 1933:10)

Once, when William McClements, superintendent of the mission in Nigeria, visited the Hydys, a delegation of about fifty chiefs came to inquire about the Adventist medical work. The men who were practicing traditionalists and cannibals expressed a need for Adventism in their area (McClements 1932:12). This inquiry led to a plan to conduct strong medical and evangelistic work among them. Although the plan did not materialize immediately, through the medical work in the North, some people easily responded to the Advent message even after initial resistance (Maigadi 2005:38, 39, 44).

In addition, Hyde understood the need to have a knowledge of the Hausa and Amo languages. He labored to build relationships in his community. A notable friendship was the relationship he had with the Kakwi family. The four sons of Kakwi—Lamba, Mayang, Filibus, and Simon—became his “disciples” and worked as pioneers in their community. They all later became Adventist workers (44). Before John. J. Hyde left to Sierra Leone in 1942; the work in the North of Nigeria had already gained some footholds: there had been baptisms (Hyde 1936:4) combined with the beginning of a semi-formal school where adult education was conducted

(Maigadi 2005:44). Hyde was replaced by L. W. Normington, and thus ended this phase of the Adventist mission enterprise in Nigeria.

Summary and Conclusion

The beginnings of Adventism in Nigeria had a dynamic outlook. Pioneer mission work was done in different regions almost simultaneously. Hence, it is not possible to attribute the pioneer mission work to one or two persons. Rather, Nigeria had several pioneer Advent missionaries who came to Nigeria in phases. The work of these pioneers require adequate documentation. James Hyatt who was the first black American missionary in West Africa did pioneering mission work for Adventism in Nigeria and the groundwork he laid cannot be downplayed. While the work of Hyatt, Sydney Hayford, and Benjamin Tikili remains under research, the person and work of James J. Hamilton, Babcock's associate from Sierra Leone, needs substantial historical treatment. Moreover, the work of indigenous African missionaries like Hayford, Tikili and Oyeniyi who only receive one or two sentences in historical accounts has been vastly underestimated. It was the indigenous efforts of the early African leaders that contributed to the success of the mission in their regions.

Furthermore, the mission history of Adventism in the South East of Nigeria begs the following question. Where and when does the mission history of the denomination begin in an area or region? Does the history of a denomination begin when missionary X arrives in a region, sets up camp, builds a school and a church? On the other hand, does it begin with the acts of God (*missio Dei*), leading a particular people slowly and gradually to his gospel? As patterned in the conversion of Tikili, with a heritage of African Traditional Religion, the history of Adventist mission among the Igbos was a fluid and dynamic process where the acts of God laid the foundation for the establishment of Seventh-day Adventism in that region. This vision of a *missio Dei* hermeneutic is helpful in doing and writing mission history.

Finally, aside from dates, names, and places, original research on the relationship of the early missionaries to the host culture, other Christians, and the colonial government remains unexplored. This calls for further research, particularly of the history of Adventism in Nigeria and generally of the denomination's history in Africa.

Endnotes

¹Although this is not the forum to treat this, Oluadah Equiano has argued that the Igbo had a Jewish ancestry and this concept seemed to be influential in the success of Christianity. See the autobiography of Oluadah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (London. Published by Author, 1789); Sylvester A. Johnson, *African American Religions, 1500–2000: Colonialism, Democracy, and Freedom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 145ff. Another reason for this may be the power Christianity offered. Cyril Okorochoa has argued that one of the characteristics of the Igbo religiousness is dynamism, the search for power (*mana*) that guarantees abundant life (*Ezi-ndu*). Since *mana* is the explanation for the achievements of the white man, who was able to cross the seas and come to Africa, (not a man to the white man’s superior weaponry or scientific advancement but the man behind his contrivances and achievements), conversion to Christianity to gain that *mana* of the white man was the Igbo reaction. Cyril Okorochoa, “Religious Conversion in Africa: Its Missiological Implications,” *Mission Studies* 9.2 (1992): 168–181.

²I personally interviewed Solomon Onunwa Agharaumuna in August 2019. He is generally considered the oldest living Adventist in Aba. Until now, the first name of Tikili remained unknown. I came to know the first name B. I: Tikili as Benjamin through research on Sabbatarian groups in Southeast Nigeria. He is mentioned as overseer of the Church of God (Sabbatarian) in Port Harcourt. See Richard C. Nickels, *History of the Seventh Day Church of God* (NP: Giving and Sharing, 1973), 207, accessed November 2, 2018, [http://www.friendsofsabbath.org/ABC/Richard_C_Nickels/History%20of%20the%20Seventh%20Day%20Church%20of%20God\(vol1\)/History%20of%20the%20Church%20of%20God,%20Seventh%20Day%20-%20Richard%20Nickels.pdf](http://www.friendsofsabbath.org/ABC/Richard_C_Nickels/History%20of%20the%20Seventh%20Day%20Church%20of%20God(vol1)/History%20of%20the%20Church%20of%20God,%20Seventh%20Day%20-%20Richard%20Nickels.pdf); see also interview of the son of Tikili, Lael Tikili said the following in the interview: I am from Nigeria. My father Bishop Benjamin Tikili was the pioneer of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Eastern Nigeria.” See “Bible Sabbath Association Organizational Profile Interview with The Joint Church Of God 7th-Day Fellowship,” *The Sabbath Sentinel*, September-October, 1999, 12. https://www.biblesabbath.org/tss/479/tss_479.pdf

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