

Volume XI Number 2

Autumn 1988

KING'S

Theological Review

The Mystical Meaning of Scripture: Medieval and Modern Presuppositions <i>Grace M. Jantzen</i>	39
The Problem of the Penultimate Theories of Salvation Reconsidered in a South African Town <i>Ronald Nicolson</i>	44
Eli (Earth-Goddess); as a Guardian of Social Morality among the Traditional Ikwerre of Rivers State, Nigeria <i>Wellington O. Wotogbe-Weneka</i>	50
The Fundamentalist Paradigm and its Dilemmas <i>Neils C. Neilsen Jr.</i>	55
Adam as Analogy: Help or Hindrance? <i>Larry Kreitzer</i>	59
BOOK REVIEWS	63
FACULTY NEWS Insert	

ELI (EARTH-GODDESS); AS A GUARDIAN OF SOCIAL MORALITY AMONG THE TRADITIONAL IKWERRE OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

WELLINGTON O. WOTOGBE-WENEKA

Introduction

One of the most heartening and encouraging revelations at this stage of increased interest in African Studies is the fact that prior to the coming of the white missionaries into African soil, Africans had had and still have their clearly defined means of social and moral control. This is among what had kept the various African communities and societies going, and all functioning smoothly before the white colonists came with their western pattern of social and moral control. This paper is as a result of a study carried out among the Ikwerre ethnic group whereby the significant role of ELI, the earth-goddess, in directing and guarding the traditional Ikwerre to moral rectitude was identified. Again, it has also been established that no traditional religious concept of the people of our study can be comprehended and appreciated in Ikwerre theology unless the unique position and role of *Eli* is clearly understood. For instance, all over Ikwerre land there is a common saying to the effect that *Nye Kpakwataru, Eli chekwetaa* (The earth-goddess only protects the just). Justice as we all know it, is a cardinal moral concept. Thus, this saying of the Ikwerre goes to buttress the people's strong belief that *Eli* (the earth-goddess) loves and protects any morally upright man and that the morally depraved will never win the favour and blessings of the gods.

In Ikwerre theology, *Eli* and the ancestors are so believed to be responsible for the people's morality that a casual observer may erroneously conclude that the supreme being (God) has no hand in directing the people to moral rectitude. But this is not the case. In Ikwerre's cosmogony, the people strongly believe that *Chiokuke*¹ is responsible for all that exist on the earth's surface, including the various divinities of which *Eli* (the earth-goddess) is a part; and that power exercised by such divinities is believed to have been given to them by the Supreme God Himself.

Clarification of the concepts of Eli

Etymologically speaking, *Eli* literally means "land", but in Ikwerre theology it refers to the earth-goddess. Thus *Nso-Eli* or *NHE ELI SOGWU NSO* (what the earth-goddess forbids) are the Ikwerre expressions for "sin". Similarly, *QRU-ELI* or *OMERU-ELI* are their words for "to commit sin" or simply "to sin", just as *Nye-aruru r'eli* are the people's expression for a sinner.

Eli is strongly believed to be the repository of the Ikwerre morality. For instance, whenever abominable events occur people will exclaim as they troop out *Eli whulem* or *Eli-ikwenjo* or *Eli rulem* which will literally mean "the land is lost", "land, forbid bad or evil thing", "the land is spoilt" respectively, but these expressions are meaningless in theological terms. In Ikwerre theology, the three expressions actually mean "the earth-goddess is lost or finished", "may the earth-goddess forbid evil", and "the earth-goddess is defiled". For this reason, therefore, bad things, evil or immoral acts are those acts,

sayings, thoughts, which *Eli* forbids. In other words, whoever indulges in them has evoked upon himself the wrath of *Eli* with its adverse consequences. Besides, such acts are said to be abominable, sacrilegious, for they are usually considered supernatural crimes before *Eli* the earth-goddess. The only hope of escape for such an offender can come if and only when he must have performed the prescribed expiatory, reparatory and propitiatory ritual sacrifices which are believed to be capable of assuaging and/or warding off the anger of *Eli*, and/or any other equally aggrieved deity. Again, the consequences of such actions are believed to be contagious, as their effect may go beyond the individual offender to embrace his relations, the chief priest in charge of *Eli*'s shrine at the time the offence was committed, and even the whole of one's village. In other words, it is the people's belief that whatever sufferings and misfortunes an individual or his relations encounter after an abominable act, is brought about as a consequence of the offence committed against *Eli*. However, this view does not negate the fact that there are in existence other workers of evil and misfortunes in the society, such as the sorcerers and witches who are called *Nde nshi-eli* among the Ikwerre of our focus. These are the apprehensions which had guarded and guided the social morality of the Ikwerre, and are still very much influential in curbing the people's moral excesses in the traditional Ikwerre. For that, there is everywhere the belief and fear of *Eli* deity, which always instils fear into people thereby acting as a restraint or a check on their day to day activities. Besides, the psychological and financial² implication of the consequences of offences or crimes against *Eli* are sufficient reasons why most people have chosen in most cases, to conduct their affairs in a socially and morally approved pattern.

Eli and Ikwerre concepts of evil

The act of murder is regarded as one of the greatest offences or crimes a man can commit against *Eli* in Ikwerre land. Two categories of murder can be distinguished. One is the unpremeditated or accidental murder. In either case however, what is important is the fact that blood has been spilled or the life of a fellow human being has been taken, particularly when it involves the life of a kinsman, an action which is strongly believed to make the earth-goddess *Eli* rage with anger. *Nabofa* tell us³ that when a child is born in most African communities, one of the first rituals performed on him is that which is meant to unite him mystically to the earth-goddess of his place of origin, hence with such rituals also all those who hail from the same town or village will thus be linked to the earth, which they jointly conceive as the mother from whose womb they all came. Because of this, in the act of murder, the murderer has destabilised not only his own psyche but his own people, the chief priest and the entire community to which he belongs, since all these are mystically united under the motherhood of the earth-goddess. Thus, among the Ikwerre, explains a community leader,⁴ if it is an accidental murder (*ochu aghom*) of a kinsman by a fellow kinsman, the murderer must go on self-exile before the offence is made public, and at that place he will be lying on the floor on *okwukwo okinima ovarara* (red plantain leaf) until the earth-goddess is placated. This act of remorse and self denial no doubt symbolises the offender's demonstration of a feeling of guilt brought upon him through his unintentional murdering of his fellow human being and kinsman, and

also is a symbol of the offender's humility before the earth-goddess, who is now believed to be raging with anger as one of her "children" has been forcefully killed. Again, as a consequence, the incumbent chief priest of *Eli* known as *Nye vugwu eli* or *Nye kwa eli* at the time the crime was committed must run away to a neighbouring town or village or from among his own village until the earth-goddess is placated. But before this placatory ritual is performed the relatives of the culprit will meet the chief priest in whichever village he must have run to and present him with *akoro nu ekho* (a type of foliage plant), *awhuru akwa okwukwu* (the shell of a newly hatched hen), and some quantity of palm oil. These items being presented to the chief priest symbolise the preparedness of the relatives of the culprit to perform the placatory ritual, and at the same time symbolise the recalling of the chief priest back to his cult, so that he can direct or supervise the *qwhaji eli* (placatory ritual).⁵

On the other hand, if it is a premeditated murder of a kinsman by a fellow kinsman, there is no wastage of time. In the words of a community leader,⁶ a stranger and not a native is given *aro ibe* (a pointed metal-like stick used traditionally in pointing at a culprit) to go and point at the culprit. This symbolises that the sinner should go and hang himself without delay at the *ajo qhia* (evil forest). It is believed that unlike the accidental murder, there is no amount of expiatory or placatory ritual that is capable of washing off the blood of a kinsman intentionally murdered. Here again, it must be seen that the idea behind sending a stranger instead of a native to perform such an action, is tantamount to his actually taking part in the murder, as it is believed that *dieli gbuo dieli ibe a* (a native does not murder a fellow native). A stranger on the other hand is not mystically united with the native and so it not bound by the wrath of the *Eli* deity. Besides, it is obligatory that as soon as the stranger finishes this assignment, he must pack up his belongings and go to another village. In such cases, strangers often employed for this assignment are those who are no longer in the good books of the natives, and such assignment is as it were, forced upon them in order to find excuse for asking them to quit the village.

Metu records that among the Ibo, in the case of unpremeditated murder, the killer is notified and given opportunity to flee the town whereas, in the intentional type, the houses and property of the culprit's family are destroyed, and if he does not flee, he is expected to hang himself.⁷ In another part of Igboland, it is said that if a person murders a stranger who is staying in one's house the gods are outraged and the consequence is that the offender is offered up as "Osu" to the outraged divinity to placate his anger and ward-off a grave calamity.⁸ However, the Ikwerre exercise some moderation because, unlike the Ibo, the culprit can come to compromise with the relatives of his victim and the two parties agree on certain compensatory terms. This was the view Amadi expressed when he writes that "in Ikwerre, bargaining was possible; and death penalty could be commuted to a heavy fine, usually involving the replacement by a slave or free born".⁹

Stibbs has drawn our attention to think that this practice of the Ikwerre also finds expression among the Israelites of the Judeo-Christian Bible where a ransom was seen as an offering made for the release or redemption of a life otherwise forfeited. According to

Stibbs, such divinely-ordained practice provided for them ceremonial indication that sinners deserving judgment and death could only live in God's sight if some equivalent sacrifice of life or shedding of blood were provided to take the place of their own punishment; and again, it is by this only that their sin could be expiated before God.¹⁰ In fact, among the Ikwerre, the consequence of the offence of murder is believed to be so inevitable that there is no escape from it before the *Eli*. Among the Lambas of Northern Nigeria, it is reported that heinous crimes like murder are beyond human vengeance, but the criminal does not escape. A curse is said to be imposed upon him, for he will go mad, or be driven to suicide, or be drowned in the river, all being the work of the wronged deities.¹¹ These are the rigours and fate awaiting a murderer before the Ikwerre *Eli* divinity, hence for fear of *Eli* rather than a genuine voluntary resolve not to commit the offence, people often strive to avoid the offence.

If and when suicide is committed among the Ikwerre, the *Eli* is said to have been polluted by the culprit. Secondly, it is said of the culprit, *eli kpapiyalama* (the earth-goddess has exposed him). This suggests that the culprits may have been committing a series of abominable acts against *Eli* in the past, hence in annoyance, *Eli* has now used this occasion of suicide to bring his past atrocities to the notice of all.

As in the case of murder, the chief priest of *Eli* at the time the suicide was committed, on hearing of this *Nso-eli* (what the earth-goddess forbids), must run to a neighbouring village and only returns whenever the relatives of the deceased have presented him with *akoro nu ekho* (a foliage plant), *awhuru akwa okwukwu* (the shell of a newly hatched hen), and oil, signifying their preparedness to cleanse the earth. As a consequence also, the relatives of the deceased incur unexpected and heavy expenses as they have to placate the earth-goddess who is believed to have been defiled. Besides, the corpse of the deceased through suicide is accorded a shabby and shameful burial rite, for it is believed to be sacrilegious and sinful to bury the corpse of a suicide at home. Rather, it is thrown into the *ajo qhia* (evil forest). Again, by the way of suicide, the deceased has brought disgrace and public ridicule to members of his family and the entire village, because this is believed to be a sign that they harbour evil doers. Thus, with the apprehensions of these consequences, people have often refrained from thinking in terms of suicide.

It is also abominable before *Eli* for close relatives to have sexual intercourse with one another. This act is believed to be capable of defiling or polluting the earth-divinity. The general assumption in Ikwerreland is that people who commit this type of offence do so out of sheer ignorance of their being in close relation with those with whom they commit the offence; especially among the teenagers who are yet to be briefed on their elaborate extended relations, as it is the case with most African communities. This is why we will agree with Beidelman when he said that "those Nuer sins that are most dangerous, such as incest with close kin, usually are not intentional and therefore, presumably involve little psychic guilt as we understood the notion".¹² Since this type of offence is in most cases committed out of ignorance, its consequence only comes upon the sinners where they refuse to placate the defiled or polluted earth-

goddess, on being told that they are relations. In which case, explains a community leader,¹³ where pregnancy results out of the union, it is strongly believed that the woman must have painful labour and might even die during labour; and that if the baby is eventually born, it will only live for a moment and die afterwards. Among the Yoruba, writes Awolalu, “if a man and a woman commit incest, the two people involved in the immoral act are exposed to ridicule and are required to offer propitiatory sacrifice to assuage the anger of the ancestral spirits”.¹⁴ Dopamu also reported the belief among the Mende of Sierra Leone to the effect that it is forbidden for a man to have sexual intercourse with his wife’s sister or any of her relations, and any person that violates this law of incest will be punished with sickness.¹⁵ In Ikwerre, the general belief is that the earth-goddess usually takes her vengeance on and holds any adult member of the society who sees or even hears that a close relation commits the offence of incest and fails to point out or expose them. An Ikwerre proverb amply illustrates this: *Owhu okpute gbu okhovadu, bekhaa bee nugee gbu wonti* (seeing and conniving at evil kills the elders, hearing of evil and failing to withdraw from it kills the young). As a consequence also, the chief priest of *Eli* at the time must run to a neighbouring village and only returns when he is presented with prescribed items which symbolise the readiness of the culprits to cleanse the land ritually and thereby purge themselves of the wrath of the gods. It is a consideration of the shame of exposure and public ridicule of this offensive act against *Eli* that often makes people refrain from such immoral acts.

It is also considered an abominable act against *Eli* for sexual intercourse to take place in the bush or on farmland or on bare floor. It is believed that *Eli* will hold the offenders. The belief is that offenders will be inflicted with swollen sickness and meet a series of misfortunes until they are forced by such circumstance to confess their offence against *Eli* before the priest of *Eli*. This is important because as a private affair, it would have been naturally difficult for someone else to detect except through a volitional confession of those who did the act.

Recently, a stranger in an Ikwerre village had sexual intercourse with his wife in the bush, since the practice is no abomination in the stranger’s home village. This man had a series of sleepless nights as the *Eli* is said to be disturbing him and asking him to go and confess his *Nsq-eli*. Initially, this stranger took it lightly, but as this persisted, he was forced to go to the chief priest and find out from him what is meant by *Nsq-eli* in Ikwerre language. The chief priest listed a number of *Nsq-eli* of his people for the stranger which included the offence of having sexual intercourse in the bush, and asked him whether he had ever committed any of them to which he answered in the affirmative. Having declared *Nye aru reli* (one who defiled the earth), the man absconded from the town for fear of the consequences of his abominable act, especially the public ridicule that would accompany his exposure. It was said of him *eli kwega laa* (the earth-goddess could not harbour him). This vindicates the Ikwerre belief that the gods are never on the side of the evil one. Again, if the stranger had refused to confess this abominable act, it is believed that even though he escapes punishment during this life time, divine judgment is inescapable for the culprit in the life-after because as Brandon once observed, “Whatever the nature of one’s

personal convictions, the idea that all men after death have to face divine judgment is generally familiar”.¹⁶ Thus, among the Ikwerre, when copulation took place on the farmland, the offender is said to have two gods to contend with – *Eli* (the earth-goddess) and *Ajoknujii* (the god of yam). Expensive sacrifices would have to be made to ward off the wrath of the gods. As Amadi succinctly puts it:

“all available evidence indicates that offenders fell ill or died if they did not perform the appropriate ritual to cleanse the land and themselves after committing abominations. Moreover, any misfortune suffered by the village after the abomination was attributed to the offended gods.”¹⁷

Not only avoiding the bush and the bare floor, during sexual intercourse, one should also comport oneself in such a manner that one’s legs or hands do not drop on the floor while having sexual intercourse on the bed. In the view of a community leader, the one who sees this offence against *Eli* being committed and fails to report it to the chief priest stands as condemned before the gods as the real offender.¹⁸

Stealing which is considered abominable against the earth-goddess in Ikwerreland includes stealing of yam-seedlings, yam tubers and the stealing of native goats, and all other animals believed to be the property of the gods. For instance, the name for native goat in Ikwerre is *ewu-eli* which literally means “earth’s goat”. But the real meaning as the name implies is “goat that belongs to the earth-goddess”. Again, the native goat, of all the domestic animals, is owned by *Eli*. Thus, it becomes abominable for a mortal being to attempt to steal a thing that belongs to the gods. Similarly, whoever steals yam-seedlings already planted or even yam-tubers already tied at the yam-ban has incurred the wrath of the earth-goddess, for the people believe that no one steals things which belong to the gods and goes scot-free. A Yoruba proverb which clearly illustrates this point is that which says:

“A-mokun jale, bi oba aiye o ri o, t’oke nwo o” (You who steal in the cover of the night, know you assuredly that if the earthly king does not see you, the heavenly king (God) does).¹⁹

The offence of yam and goat stealing is said to be so grievous that in the past culprits are sold off into slavery without mercy if they are natives, and if they are strangers, they are nailed on the head, that is, killed instantly to avoid the wrath of the gods. The recent practice however is for the culprit to approach the chief priest who prescribes for him what is to be bought to appease the gods.²⁰

The Ikwerre name for poisoning is *Nshi-eli*. In other words, its meaning in actual fact is “poisoning against the earth-goddess”, hence for an individual to eliminate the life of others through sorcery or witchcraft is considered a serious offence against the earth-goddess. Usually an accused is located or identified through divination. As the news of the alleged offence spreads like wildfire in the village, the accused becomes isolated as all his friends will desert him. He is then summoned to the central village square and with the *mkipara oha* (the elder’s staff of office), he is made to swear an oath by the *mkipara oha* and the gods

of the land to the effect that the *mkpara oha* and *eli* should kill him if he was the one who committed the sin of which he is accused. After swearing the oath, he is still isolated and he is expected to die as a result within one year in which he is under oath, and if he does not die as expected, he is immediately declared to have been vindicated by the gods. He then gives a party, rejoicing his vindication with his relations, friends and well-wishers in what is called *Oñhu nzugbara*. On the contrary, if he dies within the year he is under oath, it is then concluded that he was guilty and his living relatives are expected to perform the earth-cleansing ritual in the manner of a murderer without which it is believed, there will be no peace in the land.

All over Ikwerreland, various deities and divinities are worshipped and each of these divinities has one type of sacred animal or another dedicated to it, and hence, such animals are sacred to the devotees. For example, Atah of Omagwa has the crocodile as its sacred animal while Rukani of Akpor has the python as its own sacred animal. Killing any of these animals is regarded in the area as equivalent to killing the very Deity which they symbolise, and this act is believed to make *Eli* deity to rage with anger. One of the foremost consequences of the offence of killing a sacred animal therefore is that one has invoked on oneself the wrath of the gods. Besides, the cordial relationship between the gods and the culprit has by this very act been broken. Thus, it is generally believed among the people that any misfortune that befalls one after this incident is a manifestation of the gods' anger on the culprit. In which case, the culprit will never have peace of mind until he has performed the requisite pacificatory ritual sacrifice to appease the aggrieved gods. For example, McEwen and Aseltine reported of how the Meyan hunters, after killing a deer, apologise to the deer for taking its life. They do this by approaching their priest with a certain amount of money requesting him to pray to the gods for their forgiveness.²¹ It will be seen from this that they do so in the understanding that the deer whose life has been taken belongs to their gods and that failure on their part to come forward for this propitiatory sacrifice is believed to be capable of leading them to a disastrous end; hence the people willingly come forward for such rituals. This is where we have to agree with Gaba who expressed the view that:

“the very submission of the individuals to punishment and rites of purification after behaving in certain ways suggests that there may be a consciousness in the people of personal responsibility for their action.”²²

Thus, in order to avoid the wrath of *Eli* and its disastrous consequences, Ikwerre people often strive to refrain from these offences that are against *Eli* deity.

Certain days of the week and certain periods of the day are designated and consecrated holy days. There are laid down rules on what to and what not to do at such holy days or periods, of which, failure or refusal on the part of an individual to adhere to such rules is believed to have polluted the day or period. On such holy days, people are not even supposed to die because death on such holy days is seen as polluting to the holy days. Besides, it is immediately concluded that the deceased had had “a dirty record in the book of the gods of the land”, *Eli* in particular, hence they allowed him to die on such a holy

day of all the days of the week. In desecrating a holy period or time, the offender has incurred the wrath of the gods, and hence must spend heavily to ward off their anger, thereby re-establishing his strained relationship with these gods. Failing to do this, the culprit is believed to be meeting myriads of misfortunes, and if he eventually dies, he is thrown into the evil forest. Those who die on holy days are never buried that day but the following day.

In parts of Ikwerreland, it is an abomination for a woman of puberty age and above to climb a tree, no matter how low the tree may be. In areas of Ikwerre where this act is regarded as abominable, *Eli* the earth-goddess, it is believed, will make the offender crippled and, in extreme provocation, kills the person. For instance, a chief priest narrates of how about 12 years ago, a stranger woman who was caught climbing a tree refused to placate the earth, and ran away to her place, only to die at pregnancy the same year. Her death was immediately explained away as the result of her refusal to come forward for such placatory ritual. It was even said that a native who saw the stranger when she was climbing but refused to report her to the chief priest as tradition demands, also died mysteriously on hearing of the news of the death of the stranger. This goes to buttress the belief held among the people that an offence committed against the earth-goddess can never go unpunished, except where a substitute in the form of a scapegoat is provided, as is common with most African communities; for as Awolalu rightly observed:

“where the sacrifice was meant to be substitutionary, the offerer's sin and guilt were transferred upon the victim, who acted as the scapegoat.”²³

In parts of Ikwerre, in addition to other expenses, the offender is fined a specific amount to be determined by the elders and *owho* (staff of justice) holders.

Among the Ikwerre also, if a taboo is broken, the offender automatically invites the wrath of the deity who imposed the taboo upon the people and with whom He entered into covenant, just as Parrinder puts it when he said:

“if a man breaks a taboo he expects the supernatural penalty to follow, and his friend may desert him or punish him still further.”²⁴

It is probably in this realisation that Marret said of taboos that “they are ceremonial abstinence based on the fear of definite consequences”.²⁵ Fortes added his voice by saying that “those taboos are scrupulously observed, for the wages of disobedience are misfortunes, sickness, and even death of a wife or child”.²⁶

Final remarks

We have been examining the various ways in which *Eli* (earth-goddess) can be seen as a guardian of social morality among the traditional Ikwerre. In Ikwerre, as it is the case with most African communities, there exist laws, customs, set patterns of behaviour, rules and regulations, observances and taboos, which are held sacred and which must be observed by every individual in the community. These, when observed will make for the smooth running of the society. Their sacredness lies in the

understanding of the people that they are instituted by the gods of the land, particularly *Eli*. That the people should respect and abide by these social customs and prohibitions is a true demonstration of the awareness on the part of the people that *Eli* stands for their well-being, social harmony and above all, moral control. In other words, the people regard *Eli* deity as a moral watch-dog, whose presence in their midst always reminds them of the need to behave in a socially approved manner. Again, we see here that *Eli* is held in high esteem and respect probably due to their understanding that, unlike the Christian concept of a merciful God, *Eli* is merciless, and strikes or punishes instantly whoever goes contrary to the morally accepted social principles.

However, this does not mean that everybody in Ikwerreland of today is of the fear and respect of *Eli*. In other words, in the minds of some people today the traditional religious practices are no longer taken seriously, as evidenced from proven cases of deliberate neglect of their gods and shrines by the devotees, to the extent that local shrines are allowed to be overgrown with weeds. Some people no longer bother to attend to the gods and the ancestors, let alone accepting them as the watch-dog of traditional morality. In fact, to many in Ikwerre today, morality has been thrown overboard. What is uppermost in the minds of such people is how to make it materially with little or no regard to traditional morality. Again, it will be noted that with the coming of the western civilisation also came an improved health care delivery through western medicine. Thus, those diseases formerly attributed to the wrath of *Eli* (earth-goddess) because of offences against her by man, are nowadays explained and handled in scientific terms, and anything to the contrary is branded superstitious. With this also came western values and ideologies in every aspect of life of the traditional people. Therefore, for one to be in tune with modern life meant abandoning and undermining every aspect of traditional life of the people. It is probably in this light that we can rationally explain the reason for the shift in emphasis of the understanding and whole acceptance of the role *Eli* was originally believed to play in directing and guarding people to moral rectitude, like the days when traditional religious practices with their taboos and precepts were blindly accepted by adherents without questions.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Chiokuke is the Ikwerre word for Supreme God meaning (God who creates). Other names and attributes of God among the people include *Oluḡbuo* (the victor), *Iḡbugiriḡbu* (the impenetrable), *Otuḡobi* (He whose decision is final), etc.
2. Sacrificial rituals meant to assuage or ward off the consequences of a crime or an offence against *Eli* are usually very expensive, of which people dread the idea of incurring such avoidable expenditure.
3. Nabofa, M. Y. "Blood Symbolism in African Religion" *Religious Studies* Vol. 21, 1986, p. 391.
4. Interview with Chief Friday Okpabi of Omagwa on 7/4/80 (aged 77 years).
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Metuh, E. I. *God and Man in African Religion*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1981, pp. 111 and 112.
8. Ezeanya, S. N. "The Osu System in Igboland", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 1. E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1967.
9. Amadi, E. *Ethics in Nigerian Culture*, HEB, Ibadan 1982, p. 16.
10. Stibbs, A. M. "Expression: How Sinners are put right with God". *Themelios: An International Journal for Theological Students*, Vol. 4, 1976, p. 6.
11. Smith, E. W. *African Ideas of God*, OUP, London, 1965, p. 22 from C. M. Doke's *The Lambas of Northern Nigeria*, 1931, p. 228.
12. Beidelman, T. O. "The Nuer Concept of 'Thek' and the meaning of 'Sin', Explanation, Translation and Social Structure". *History of Religions: International Journal of Comparative Historical Studies* Vol. 21, No. 2, November, 1981, p. 139.

13. Interview with Chief Wolu Ngè of Emohua on 2/4/86 (aged 80 years).
14. Awolalu, J. O. "Sin and its removal in African Traditional Religion", *ORITA* Vol. X, June 1, 1976, p. 10.
15. Depamu, P. A. "The Concept of Sin in African Religion" in Dopamu et al (ed) *God, Man and Judgment*, Ilorin, 1981, p. 84.
16. Brandon, S. G. F., *Religion in Ancient History*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1969, p. 102.
17. Amadi, E. *Op. cit.* p. 28.
18. Interview with Chief Moses Amewhule of Omagwa on 7/7/86 (aged 55 years).
19. Awolalu *op. cit.* p. 10.
20. See also Arinze F. A. *Sacrifices in Ibo Religion*, Ibadan, University Press, Ibadan, 1970, p. 34.
21. Richard C. McEwen and Herschel E. Agelene "Prayer in Primitive Religion" *Religious Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, March 1979, p. 102.
22. Gaba, C. R. "African Traditional Conception of Freedom and Responsibility" *ORITA* Vol. XI, June 1, 1977, p. 45.
23. Awolalu J. O. "Yoruba Sacrificial Practice" *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. V, Fasc. 2, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1973, p. 87.
24. Parrinder, E. G. *West African Religion*, Epworth Press, London, 1969, p. 178.
25. Marret, R. R. *The Threshold of Religion*, Methuen and Coy Ltd, London, 1914, p. 77.
26. Fortes, M. "Oedipus and Job in West African Religion" in Leslie (ed) *Anthropology of Folk Religion*, Vintage Books, New York, 1960, p. 27.