

**Institute for Christian Teaching  
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**FUSING BIBLICAL BELIEFS AND CHRISTIAN VALUES  
INTO UNIVERSITY/HOST COMMUNITY RELATIONS:  
THE BABCOCK UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE**

by

**Oluseyi O. Oduyoye  
Babcock University**

**642-07 Institute for Christian Teaching  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904 USA**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Ilishan: The Promised Land of Adventist Higher Education in Nigeria**

The seed for the present day Babcock University was sown as far back as 1954 when at the floor of the General Conference session Elder D.V. Cowin, the then Educational Secretary of the West African Union Mission, pleaded passionately with the brethren on the need for the establishment of a post-secondary institution to serve the higher education needs of thousands of Adventist Youth emerging from the new independent states within the sub-region.

According to Babalola (2002) quoting from Coon (1990),  
The affected missions were commissioned to look for suitable prospective sites, gather complete data, and report back at the next session of the Union Committee. They were told that minimal criteria included (1) adequate acreage for major campus development, including a substantial agricultural preserve, (2) an adequate water supply, (3) commercially generated electricity being readily available and (4) the location must not be far away from big cities.

The search by the Nigeria Mission brethren was led by Elder Roger Coon, then Director of the Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School of West Africa at Ibadan. Getting a large acreage of land with the stated specifications was by no means an easy task; not surprisingly, they met with many disappointments and frustrations. Just like Father Abram and his people on the tortuous journey to the Promised Land of Canaan, suffered they did, but they got to Canaan. Similarly, undaunted by these initial setbacks and with the support of indigenes like Late Pa J.S.K. Osibodu and Pastor S.A. Adebawo, the search which took the brethren to Ijebu Ode and Iperu finally ended at the present site at Ilishan. History was made on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of June 1958 when the West African Union Committee voted to lease a 370 acre tract of land at Ilishan Remo for 99 years.

Some 14 months after i.e. August 1959, the first two white expatriate families, the Winslows and the Coons, moved into rented apartments in Ilishan town to begin not just a school but a mutually beneficial relationship between the Ilishan Community and the Seventh- Day Adventist Church represented by its various organs i.e. Babcock University Group of schools, BU Medical Center, Adventist World Radio, Ellen G. White Research Center etc.

### **1.2 The Town and the Gown**

The world over, universities and their host communities have co-habited and interacted in what writers term "Town and Gown" relationship: the 'Town' representing the host community while the 'Gown' depicts the academic gown which stands out the university as a center of learning

For there to be meaningful achievement of stated objectives on the school's part, the host community must be able to play along safely; this relationship must not only be positive and cordial, it should also be fruitful – in other words, there must be tangible, visible and measurable achievements on both sides. It is when there is mutual understanding between the two communities that there can be peaceful co-existence. About two years ago there was the unpleasant news of a conflagration between the Olabisi Onabanjo University (the nearest public university to Babcock University) and her host community, Ago- Iwoye, in which lives were lost and properties running into millions of Naira destroyed. It was a clear case of a strained relationship between the town and gown which was not properly handled.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The paper has the following objectives:-

1. To bring into focus how our educational institutions can impart Christian values through community service.
- 2 To demonstrate specific aspects of community life through which Babcock University has been of benefit to her host community.
- 3 To highlight strengths and weaknesses in the BU/Ilishan relationship.
4. To highlight other areas in which Babcock University can be of service to the community in the spirit of true Adventist education.

### **1.4 The Focus of this Paper**

This paper will appraise how Biblical beliefs and Christian values have affected the relationship between Babcock University and her host community of Ilishan over the years. Areas of strength will be brought into sharp perspective and areas where improvements are needed for the mutual benefit of the two communities would also be highlighted. Both strengths and weaknesses will be supported by relevant passages in the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy. It is expected that the paper would serve as an eye opener to Adventist educators, planners and administrators the world over, on how healthy relationships between our schools and their host communities can be nurtured largely by exhibiting positive Christian values and by showing that we are indeed believers in the Bible who practicalize the totality of the Advent message to this generation.

It is then that we will not just be offering Christian education but the priceless message of salvation to millions of people around the world where our schools are situated.

## **2. AREAS OF STRENGTH IN BABCOCK UNIVERSITY/ ILISHAN RELATIONSHIPS**

Since the government accreditation of Babcock University as a private university in 1999 many positive things have happened to strengthen the bond between the institution and her host community. Among these are follows:

### **2.1 Award of Tuition Scholarships**

Babcock University offers twenty (20) tuition scholarships on an annual basis to students who are indigenes of Ilishan. The offer covers 200 –500 Level students who

meet certain criteria among which are, academic proficiency, good citizenship, recommendation by the town's traditional ruler and the Chairman of the Ilishan Development Council.

## **2.2 Collaboration on Security Matters**

There is an active collaboration between the Babcock University Security Outfit (BUSO) and the Ilishan Vigilante Group (IVG) on fighting crime. The institution offers financial, material and logistical support on a regular basis while the IVG offers reinforcement to BUSO when requested.

## **2.3 Ilishan Indigenes on Babcock University Board of Trustees**

June 2006 witnessed the appointment of two indigenes of Ilishan as members of the University's Board of Trustees (BOT). This is the first time in the history of the institution. Of the two, one is a successful non-Adventist big-time player in the corporate world as well as a businessman, and a recipient of a national honour. The other is an Elder of the SDA Church and an experienced and well-respected Structural Engineer who helps in overseeing some of the on-going building projects on campus.

## **2.4 Admission Concession to Indigenes**

The University has an unwritten agreement with its host community to grant an admission concession to Ilishan indigenes that meet the school's admission requirements. This is the same concession it grants to members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This gesture has in no small measure boosted the admission into Babcock University of Ilishan indigenes. It has also exposed such students to a direct encounter with the Advent Message with consequent baptism of some of them into the Adventist family.

## **2.5 Collaborative Research**

Among other things, the Ilishan/ Babcock relationship has brought about collaborative research between the two communities. An example of this is the on-going research on the nutritional lifestyle of the indigenes being conducted by the Head of the Department of Agriculture, Dr. (Mrs.) Y. O. Makinde.

## **2.6 Medical Missionary Activities**

The community tremendously benefits from the Medical Ministry of the Babcock University Medical Center. Co-incidentally, the current Acting Medical Director of the Center, Pastor (Dr) Femi Sotunsa is an Ilishan indigene. The doctor, an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the first indigene to head the Center.

The Center regularly provides lectures in our churches, as well as free tests and drugs to the elderly and widows. The indigenes themselves testify that no other church provides such services in the community. Through these lectures, some have been baptized into the church while the level of health awareness in the community has generally improved.

## **2.7 Employment Opportunities**

The Ilishan community has enjoyed some employment opportunities due to the presence of Babcock University especially in the non-academic area; however there are areas of improvement that need to be addressed.

## **2.8 Increase in Commercial Activities**

The Ilishan town, largely a rural community has witnessed a tremendous boost in commercial activities from the inception of Babcock University. Though it comes with an increase in cost of living to the residents, the beneficiaries are largely the indigenes

## **2.9 Participation in Annual Isanbi Week Activities**

The Isanbi Week usually celebrated once a year with a Grand Finale on the first Saturday of October is an annual event aimed at raising funds for the development of the community. Over the years, BU has played active part in the week's activities. In line with her stand on the seventh day Sabbath, her officials are conspicuously absent at the Grand Finale. They do their felicitations after Sabbath hours. The 2006 Edition was largely supported by BU with a full-page advert in the Program brochure as well as an active participation during the Week's Education Day.

## **2.10 Generous Land Ownership**

Because the coming of Babcock University has caused landed properties to appreciate, many foreigners have bought land in Ilishan while some have built houses with the intention of spending their retirement years in the community.

## **2.11 Increases in Church Membership and the Number of Adventist Churches**

A positive fall-out of the presence of Babcock University is the increase in the number of converts to the church. However, one is not very sure whether all of them are genuine converts or simply opportunists who want to take advantage of what Babcock University offers to church members.

No doubt, the presence of Babcock University has brought about an increase in the number of Seventh-day Adventist churches in the town. From a modest single church from much of the 70's through the 90's, Ilishan is now home to at least four (4) organized churches apart from those worship centers on the university campus.

## **2.12 Graduate Indigenes**

Many indigenes have taken advantage of the hitch-free programme of Babcock University. Some of them have graduated and are employed mostly in the cities. These are positive testimonies for parents to send their wards to Babcock.

## **2.13 Other Social Benefits**

As a mark of honor to Babcock University for its unique role in the scheme of things within its host community and even beyond, at least two members of BU family have been conferred with chieftaincy titles by the town's traditional ruler Oba F.R.O. Fujamade. The last beneficiary is the institution's immediate past Vice Chancellor, Professor (Chief) Adekunle Alalade who was honored with one of the highest chieftaincy titles in Ilishan – the *Akorewolu of Ilishan* which literally translates to the “Bringer of good tidings to Ilishan”. Principal among the good tidings are the immense benefits that

accrue to Ilishan from the government recognition of Babcock University as a degree-awarding private institution of higher learning.

This rare recognition which took place on May 25, 2006 was witnessed by the principal officers of the institution and visiting officials from the General Conference Headquarters and the West Central Africa Division, corroborates the saying of the wise man in Prov. 22:29:

Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men. (NKJV)

There are other numerous benefits like the provision of pipe-borne water to residents who live on the fringes of the university land boundary. This is an unquantifiable benefit in a country where clean, drinkable water is still a luxury several years after independence.

The town's residents are also allowed to use the University library and the cyber café for token fees

Key officers of the university have also been known to play mediatory roles in disputes within the town.

### **3 USUAL AREAS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR HOST COMMUNITIES**

In most communities in Nigeria, the possible areas of conflicts are classified into the following:

1. Culture and Traditional Festivals.
2. Land Matters.
3. Perceived or Obvious Inequities
4. Communication Gap or Misinformation.

#### **3.1 Culture and Traditional Festivals**

The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines culture as “the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group”.

Similarly, Ajetunmobi in Fageyinbo (2005) defines culture as:

The society's entire heritage, including all the knowledge, beliefs, customs and skills acquired by individual members of a community as well as their learned behaviors, habits and techniques which are passed on from one generation to another via the process of socialization.

The second definition implies that culture is the sum total or cumulative social and material heredity that gives a distinct or unique identity to a group of people who have a defined social system.

Still from the same source, Fageyinbo opined that there are some cultural universals that are noticeable in all cultures – they include ceremonies like naming a child, burial, marriage, language, music, weapons, and tools for different occupations. In other words, there is no superior or inferior culture; every society adopts and adapts to ways of life, which are considered suitable to it. Culture is found in every human society. No matter the level of development of a society, distinct cultural traits are found. Therefore, there is no inferior or superior culture.

It is when we fail to appreciate the culture of a people different from us that we ignorantly condemn certain practices and if not done within tolerable limits, this tends to bring conflicts. At best, we could inquire why certain things are done in certain ways in some societies. If we are not convenient with the answers, we will do well to tolerate those things so long as we want to live in those societies. This way, we minimize conflicts.

In this aspect of community life, Babcock University has not done badly at all – the institution, as far as we know, has not had cause to condemn any of her host’s cultural practices. At best, the institution, from the 2005 Colloquium communiqué, is encouraging research into some aspects of the cultural practices of its host community in order to be more enlightened and ultimately promote good neighborliness.

Of course, the institution does not compromise on any practice that is in direct conflict with the commandments of God especially the observance of the Sabbath day. It is interesting to note that the culture of the Ilishan people is largely in tune with most of the Ten Commandments.

It is the responsibility of the Church through its organs like our educational and medical institutions throughout the world to bring to light those aspects of their host communities’ cultures that oppose the teachings of the Bible. We should, in love bring out God’s injunctions as spelt out in the Bible especially Exodus 20 : 3 – 6 and Isaiah 44:9-20 to those in our various host communities who still indulge in idolatry. According to Mrs. White,

The church is organized for service, and in a life of service to Christ, connection with the Church is one of the first steps. Loyalty to Christ demands the faithful performance of church duties. This is an important part of one’s training: and in a Church imbued with the Master’s life, it will lead directly to effort for the world without. Education, p. 268.

Most Christian Churches in Ilishan observe Sunday as their day of worship. Babcock University does well by standing out lifting up the banner of Christ in respect of the true Sabbath by shutting down all secular business on this God’s Holy Day. In fact, it is said that if there is anything Babcock University does well, it is Sabbath observance.

The Ilishan community, which hitherto had only one local Seventh-day Adventist Church, now with the advent of BU, has four organized churches apart from the university main church and over ten other worship centers on campus for students and resident workers.

Ellen G. white, in one of her writings, *The Faith That I Live By* said, inter alia,

Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and when holy beings of both heaven and earth were astir on the morning of the first day of the week, He rose from the grave to renew his work of teaching His disciples. But this fact does not consecrate the first day of the week and make it a Sabbath. . . . The Sabbath was instituted in Eden before the fall, and was observed by Adam and Eve, and all the heavenly host. God rested on the Sabbath day, and blessed and hallowed it. I saw that the Sabbath never will be done away; but that the redeemed saints, and all the angelic host, will observe it in honor of the great Creator to all Eternity. -*The Faith I Live By*, p. 303.

### 3.1.1 Ilishan's Administrative Set up and Christian Values

In Ilishan, like most of Yoruba land, the *Oba* is supreme. He is referred to as the “*Ekeji Orisa*” i.e. one who is next of a deity - intermediary between God and man. The *Oliwo* is next to the *Oba* in the hierarchy. He is the traditional Prime Minister and head of the *Osugbo*. In the olden days the *Osugbo* was the *de facto* government with powers to adjudicate on cases of theft and other infractions, the ultimate objective of which was to sanitize the society and make it habitable for all. Whatever decisions are reached by the *Osugbo*, the *Oba* usually implements. Whereas the *Oba* can confer chieftaincy titles on deserving individuals and presides over the *Oba-In-Council* (akin to an Executive Council), the *Osugbo* acts as a check on him. In case the *Oliwo* or any member of the *Osugbo* misbehaves, there are also prescribed sanctions to put such person(s) in check. This was the vogue before the advent of Christianity and modern forms of government.

### 3.1.2 Babcock University and Ilishan Administrative Set up

Babcock University's compliance with her host community's administrative set up is summed up in the advice of Paul in Romans 13: 1-7 where it says inter alia:

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.... Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. (NKJV)

In line with Biblical injunctions, the management of Babcock University fully recognizes the administrative set-up of Ilishan and does nothing to denigrate it or bring it to disrepute. The administration co-operates with the town's traditional ruler in all aspects of community life to the extent that they do conform to “Thus saith the Lord”. It also enjoins her workers who live in the community to be good citizens and above all be ambassadors of Christ by exhibiting Christian values in all they do.

### 3.1.3 Babcock University and her Host Community's Traditional Festivals

Apart from land matters, perhaps one of the most volatile areas in the relationship between the town and gown in Africa is the issue of traditional festivals. Prominent among the festivals of Ilishan are the “*Oro*” and the “*Egungun*”.

Of the two, the *Oro* is perceived to be deadlier because of the taboo that it is forbidden for women to see it. This is corroborated by the traditional folk song:

“*Awo Egungun l'obinrin le se*  
*Awo Gelede l'obinrin le mo*  
*T'obinrin ba f'aju k'oro*  
*Oro a gbe e*”.

Translated, it means,

“It is the *Egungun* cult that a woman can be a part of;  
She can also be an initiate of the *Gelede* Cult;  
But the day a woman beholds the *Oro* cult  
She gets consumed by the *Oro*”.

The *Oro*, no doubt is a dreaded cult both by indigenes and foreigners largely because of this notion that it kills. This perception has largely brought some friction (though non-

violent) between Babcock University and her host community. There was a suggestion that the *Oro* celebration be shifted to night time (from its present day time) as is the practice in some larger towns and cities due to what the proponents term “civilization”.

As an indigene of the town and an ardent lover of anything traditional, and having had the opportunity of watching the *Oro festival* from my ASWA student days at Ilishan in the mid-1970s up to the present, I can say, without any fear of contradiction that I’m yet to hear of one person killed by *Oro*. Rather, the *Oro*, celebrated once a year in the first week of August, is a rallying point for all Ilishan sons and daughters akin to an annual homecoming. Many people who have not seen themselves in months usually meet on *Oro* day. The day also presents a one-day opportunity in the year of how the world would look like without women. Some men take the advantage of the absence of women to do all kinds of bizarre things like taking their bath in the open, wearing rags, ladies’ dresses & ear-rings and other crazy things they otherwise won’t do in the presence of women.

Ironically it is the women who rather enjoy the festival more. From their ‘confines’ they entertain visitors with good food and drinks. However, some women just relax and ask to know from the men folk the songs for the current *Oro*. Usually both the achievement and the ills of the society are highlighted in songs rendered in beautiful Remo dialect accompanied by music supplied by able-bodied men beating the *Apepe* - dried bamboo wood cut to size. The men, arranged in two singing groups, engage each other in a competition with a panel of judges present. A trophy is usually awarded to the winning group.

The *Oba* usually invites his fellow *Obas* from the neighboring villages, towns and other dignitaries to come and witness the grand finale usually the first Saturday in August.

From the foregoing, the *Oro* is largely a bundle of fun and joy. Of course, few mishaps are witnessed principally from excessive consumption of alcohol and fighting by some over-zealous youths.

One possible area of conflict between the Ilishan town and Babcock University Community on the issue of *Oro* is that the grand finale falls on a Sabbath, a day the Seventh day Adventists, the proprietors of Babcock University, hold as sacrosanct in compliance with God’s injunction to keep the Sabbath day holy.

In resolving this conflict, Babcock University is guided by Paul’s injunction in Rom. 12:18 to live peaceably with all men by offering free accommodation to female worshippers who don’t want to be confined to their homes in Ilishan town during the Sabbath hours. They sleep on campus and go back to their homes on Sunday morning. The *Oro* people equally respect the holy ground that Babcock is by not extending their celebration to the campus. To date there has been no violent reaction to *Oro* by either the town or the gown.

Some day; the *Oro* celebration may ultimately shift to night-time like in other places. But until then both the town and gown will have to live with the situation. However, there is nothing intrinsically evil about the *Oro*.

### **3.2 Land Matters: Role of the Ilishan Development Council**

Another area of conflict between institutions and their host communities is land matters. This has been a sore thumb over the years sometimes resulting in court cases between some land-owning families and Babcock University.

However, the mediating role of the Ilishan Development Council (IDC) under the leadership of Professor Oladipo Oduye, a veteran University administrator, has substantially doused the tension in this area. Jesus Christ Himself in Mathew 5:9 say, “Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

The maturity with which the Prof. Oduye-led team has handled such potentially explosive matters as land is worthy of recommendation to our institutional leaders the world over. The likes of Professor Oduye, an emeritus professor of Veterinary Medicine who retired as Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic of the University of Ibadan, should be sought after wherever our institutions are located worldwide. Here is a man of rare intelligence who feels at home among the intelligentsia as well as stark illiterates that constitute the bulk of land owning families in Africa. His excellent communication skills in both the English Language as well as the *Remo* dialect of Ilishan qualify him as an acceptable negotiator/mediator on land and other crucial issues between Babcock University and her host community.

In the words of Titus in Chapter 2:14, Prof. Oduye and his team members on the IDC could appropriately be referred to as among those that He (Jesus Christ) might redeem from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people zealous for good works.

If we earnestly ask for the spiritual gift of discernment, we should be able to identify such spirit-led men and women in our institutions’ host communities. They are the ones the Lord would use in smoothing any rough edges in our relationships with our hosts.

### **3.3 Perceived Inequities: Employment Opportunities**

Yet another area of conflict between institutions and their hosts in many communities in Nigeria is the perceived inequities in the distribution of opportunities especially employment-related ones. Understandably, at Babcock University, the adherents of the Seventh-day Adventist faith are more favored in employment matters than the non-Adventist indigenes.

While the employment in core academic areas cannot be subjected to indigeneship, the non-academic areas need to be addressed for the sake of peaceful co-existence. This is underscored by a provision of the National Universities Commission (NUC), a regulatory arm of the Federal Government of Nigeria on University matters, which stipulates that a sizeable percentage of employment opportunities in non-academic areas should go to indigenes of such areas in which the Universities are cited.

While not doing badly in this area, there is still room for improvement. Again, the Ilishan Development Council is doing well in its mediatory role by constantly bringing to the fore the need to hire indigenes in the non-academic areas at the BU/IDC quarterly meetings. The new administration of Professor Kayode Makinde has promised to create a forum whereby the management of Babcock University would rub minds with the people of Ilishan on various topics in order to enhance the peaceful co-existence of the town and the gown.

### **3.4 Communication Gap/Misinformation**

Relationships have been marred and even many wars have been fought in the past between communities due to communication gap or outright misinformation. Town and

Gown relationships can be improved when communication gaps are bridged. There must be a forum where information coming from the community should be vetted for authenticity before such information is acted upon. This goes a long way to easing tension and enhancing good neighborliness. The *Oba* and some IDC Executive members are sure repositories of information on vital matters of Ilishan. They should be regularly consulted for necessary assistance. In bridging the information gap between the two communities, the management of Babcock University has largely followed the injunction of Paul in 1 Thess. 5: 21 by testing all things and holding fast what is good.

#### **4 LESSONS FOR OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

From this write – up, it is obvious that the strengths in the inter-relationships between Babcock University and her host community far out-weigh the weaknesses and possible areas of conflict. Our educational institutions around the world can learn a few lessons from this viz.

##### **4.1 Educational Support to Indigenes**

Our school administrators should devise ways of cultivating the indigenes in their host communities. We should try and win them over with such incentives as scholarships (tenable in our schools) and other forms of educational support to the youth. Such indigenes (an example of which is the writer, born a Muslim, converted to Methodism and later to Adventism), once convinced of the Advent message serve as dual ambassadors of the institution to the community and of the community to the sending institution. This way, possible areas of conflict or friction are quickly ironed out and resolved before they become uncontrollable.

Ellen White, writing on the importance of education says: “

“I am glad that we have institutions where our youth can be separated from the corrupting influences so prevalent in the schools of the present day . . . Every influence should be brought to bear to educate the youth and to elevate their morals. They should be trained to have moral courage to resist the tide of moral pollution in this degenerate age. With a firm hold upon divine power, they may stand in society to mold and fashion, rather than to be fashioned after the world’s model.

*Review and Herald*, August 19, 1884.

##### **4.2 Affirmation of the Good**

We should identify with the good in every community and condemn those practices not in agreement with Biblical principles, but in doing so, we should as much as possible, employ Christ’s injunction of not judging so that we are not judged. When we correct, we should always follow Christ’s admonition in Matthew 7:5 which says:

“Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother’s eye. (NKJV).

According to Ellen White,

We must direct minds to Jesus, not seeking praise or honour of men, but committing ourselves to Him who judgeth righteously . . . Whatever wrong construction may be placed upon my testimony by those who profess righteousness, yet know not God, I shall in humility go forward

with my work. I will speak the words, which God gives me to speak in encouragement, reproof, and warning. Manuscript 4,1883 *An Explanation of Early Statements*.

In all our campuses, we as Seventh Day Adventists should live the Advent message. Some of us deny our God from the way we live and relate with our neighbors. We should realize that these people need us. May it never be said of us that “I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness” Matthew 7:23.

#### **4.3 Medical Ministry as Complement to our Educational Work**

The Seventh - day Adventist Medical Ministry is commendable and should, as much as possible; complement our educational work all over the world. This goes a long way in driving home the Advent message to a dying world. The successful example of Ilishan clearly demonstrates the symbiotic relationships between these two keys ministries of our work.

#### **4.4 Government Accreditation, a Must**

As much as possible, our schools should obtain the necessary government accreditation of their host countries. This conveys acceptability to our programmes and generates less friction with stake-holders. This way, we can infuse our doctrines on our student population – and indirectly on their parents. For the first time in several years, the relationship between Babcock University and Ilishan has been very cordial – a positive fall – out of government’s recognition of the institution’s programmes and the attendant social clout of Ilishan as a University town – a status envied by neighbouring towns and villages.

#### **4.5 Attractive Course Offerings**

Our institutions should offer relevant courses attractive to young people and their sponsoring parents. With more Ilishan indigenes attending and graduating from Babcock University, we are preparing the foundation for changing some of those “negative” things in the culture of its people.

Replicating this in every country and town in which our schools are situated, we would be preparing thousands of youths and those they encounter for the Great Day of the Lord. This is corroborated by Mrs. White in an article in Review and Herald:

There can be no more work than the proper education of our youth. We must guard them, fighting back Satan that he shall not take them out of our arms. When the youth come to our colleges, they should not be made to feel that they have come among strangers, who do not care for their souls . . . . .

The future of society will be determined by the youth of today. Satan is making earnest, preserving efforts to corrupt the mind and debase the character of every young person; and shall we who have more experience stand, as mere spectators, and see him accomplish his purpose without hindrance? Let us stand at our post as minute men, to work for these youth, and through the help of God, hold them back from the pit of destruction. In the parable, while men slept, the enemies sowed tares; and while you, my brothers and sisters, are unconscious of his work he is gathering an army of youth under his banner; and he exults, for through them he carries on his warfare against God. The teachers in our schools have a heavy

responsibility to bear. They must be in words and character what they wish their students to be, men and women that fear God and work righteousness.....

Teachers, what opportunities are yours! What a privilege is within your reach of molding the minds and characters of the youth under your charge! What a joy it will be to you to meet them around the great white throne, and know that you have done what you could to fit them for immortality! If your work stands the test of the great day, how like sweetest music will fall upon your ear the benediction of the Master, "well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". *Review and Herald*, August 19 – 26, 1884.

#### **4.6 Intellectuals in Our Host Communities**

In every community where our educational institutions are established, there are men and women endowed with the rare gifts of vision and discernment, who are not necessarily of our faith. It is our responsibility as educational administrators, planners and teachers to fish out these worthy individuals, befriend and cultivate them. When we cooperate with such respected men and women in our host communities, the word of God can be sown on good ground and by the grace of the Sower, it will germinate and bring out beautiful harvest in hundreds and thousands.

In the Ilishan Development Council (IDC) Chairman's speech on the last *Isanbi* Week Celebration, a conspicuous mention was made of the change in the leadership baton of Babcock University. While praying for a successful tenure of the new Vice Chancellor, Prof. Kayode Makinde, the IDC Chairman, a Professor Emeritus of Veterinary Medicine, enjoined the community to work together with the new administration in order to foster a formidable town and gown relationship. The eminent Professor was the same person who spear-headed an out-of-court settlement of a land case that, apart from the unquantifiable bad blood and loss of goodwill, would have cost both sides considerable amount of money and valuable time.

#### **4.7 Other Possible Forms of Community Service**

Since the university is not intended to benefit only the indigenes of Ilishan, other areas in which Babcock University could be of service to humanity are as follows:

##### **1. Babcock University Radio Broadcasts**

This is a new FM station that is in the process of being granted a broadcast license which will enable it to transmit various religious programmes to at least six of the country's 36 states. People have made positive decisions for the Lord simply by listening to spiritually rewarding programmes on the radio. BU's case should not be an exception. There is ample opportunity of broadcasting in the local dialect as well as feedback from listeners.

##### **2. Road Safety Campaigns/Driver Education Programmes**

The BU Administration recently approved of a request by one of the HODs, Dr. Solomon Adebola, to spearhead a Road Safety Campaign specifically Targeted at commercial motor cyclists

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

No doubt Adventist education stands to benefit immensely so long as we all realize that "God has instructed to each one capacity and powers, that they may be returned to Him enlarged and improved".

This should be evidenced in the relationships between our colleges and universities and their host communities. The subject of this paper is the appraisal of how Biblical beliefs and Christian values have affected the relationship between Babcock University and her host community of Ilishan with the hope that Adventist educators around the world can pick a lesson or two in preparing the world for the Great Commission.

Among the strengths highlighted in the town and gown relationships between Babcock University and her host community, Ilishan which could also serve as a clarion call to all educational institutions all over the world to emulate are as follows:

1. Award of scholarships to deserving students of the host communities – such scholarships should be tenable only in our schools.
2. Collaboration between our institutions and their host community on academic researches, security matters and other areas of community life.
3. Representation of the host communities on our schools' Board of Trustees, where feasible.
4. Granting of admission concessions to qualified students of our host communities.
5. Providing medical missionary activities to indigent members of our host communities especially the senior citizens and widows.
6. Employment opportunities to our immediate communities without compromising our church doctrines and Christian values.
7. Identifying with our hosts in areas of community development.
8. Peaceful co-habitation with our hosts. We should resist the temptation to resolve disputes via law courts. Rather, we should cultivate responsible men and women in the society who would assist us on knotty matters especially land disputes.
9. Deliberate policies aimed at increasing the number of indigenes passing through our educational institutions.
10. Increase in the number of Seventh – Day Adventist Churches as well as baptized members in our host communities.

The weakness cum possible areas of conflict identified in the study include:

- a. Culture and Traditional Festivals.
- b. Land Matters.
- c. Perceived or Obvious Inequities and
- d. Communication Gap or Outright Misinformation.

From the paper and in practice the benefits/strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. The Adventist Educational world stands to immensely benefit especially in those areas that enhance the relationship between our institutions and their host communities. This is without compromising on Biblical beliefs and Christian values.

In closing, making Christ our Perfect Example is the fit and proper thing to do in town and gown relationships and in all other situations. Ellen White enjoins us to make Christ our Perfect Example in these quotations:-

Following Christ's example of unselfish service, trusting like little children in His merits, and obeying His commands, we shall receive the approval of God. Christ will abide in our hearts, and our influence will be fragrant with His Righteousness. *In Heavenly Places*, p. 72.

God requires every man to stand free, and to follow the directions of the Word. In every movement Christ's followers are to reveal their regard for Christian principles—loving God supremely, and their neighbors as themselves; reflecting light and blessing on the pathway of those who are in darkness; comforting those who are cast down; sweetening the bitter waters in the place of giving their fellow pilgrims gall to drink ... we are to have a pure, growing Christianity. In the heavenly courts we are to be pronounced complete in Christ. *This Day with God*. p. 311.

We must study the example Christ has left us, as revealed in His character; and then, all unconsciously to ourselves; we shall do the works He did. By reflecting upon those around us the rays of light we thus receive, we may bring to a saving knowledge of Him those who know Him not. If all who claim to believe the truth would practice the lessons of Jesus to love our neighbor as ourselves, there would be a forward, upward movement all along the line. We are to love souls for whom the Saviour died, with the pure unselfish love He manifested when He became our sacrifice.

From this write-up, it is obvious that Babcock University has set the pace in enhancing good neighbourliness with her host community thus diligently complying with the counsel of St. Paul in Romans 12:18 which encourages us to “..... as much as it depends on us, live peaceably with all men”.

This counsel, well heeded by the administration of Babcock University and her progenitors (ACWA and ASWA), has over the years yielded positive fruits of qualified graduate indigenes in many areas of life viz. medicine, nursing, accounting, pastoral ministry, teaching, politics, business etc.

On the spiritual plane, the Ilishan community has witnessed an upsurge in the number of churches and worship centers within the town and the University campus. The spill-over effects also manifest in increased socio-economic and spiritual benefits to neighboring towns and villages.

However, the greatest reward of this integration of the Seventh-day Adventist faith and learning exemplified in service to Ilishan community and the entire West African sub-region would be at the Second Coming of Christ when those who went through the shores of Babcock University would tell the master the role the institution played in winning the community to Him.

The challenge goes to our sister educational institutions round the world to enthusiastically share Biblical beliefs and Christian values beyond their classrooms to impact positively on their host communities.

**MARANATHA!!!**

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