

**Stephen
AJADI**

<http://www.ifra-nigeria.org/IMG/land-gradient-forces-religion-urbanism.pdf>

LAND AND
THE “GRADIENT FORCES”
OF RELIGION
AND URBANISM:
THE GOSPEL TOWN



STEPHEN AJADI¹

**LAND AND THE “GRADIENT FORCES” OF RELIGION
AND URBANISM: THE GOSPEL TOWN**

Abstract:

This paper was written during the Masterclass “Sacred Urbanism: Entrepreneurial Religion, Infrastructure and the New Urbanism in Nigeria” held at the University of Ibadan in June 2017. The author conducted a one-day fieldwork at the Gospel Faith Mission International (GOFAMINT), located in Òjóò, Ibadan. The paper looks at the issue of land as a medium of development and expansion for religious organisations such as GOFAMINT. It deals with the Church land acquisition process and appropriation of public space and urban living. It also responds to the impacts and consequences of land use and identity as they interact with each other in the context of religion and secularity.

Key words: religious communities, land acquisition, urban space,
public space

¹ Department of Architecture, University of Lagos

The primary study case is located in Òjód. The road — with a rather different character of its own as —often seems quiet for how busy it looks. It is characterised by noticeable human disorder and partially defined commercial spaces. The commercial spaces get more organised as one approaches the Ìdógbó barracks. At the barracks, shops line up the perimeter area of the military enclave in a pre-set manner. Near this area, the Gospel Faith Mission International (GOFAMINT), also known as Gospel town, sits along Igbó Olóyín. Guards are positioned at the gate. However, one of the first observations is people outside the camp using the camp as a lobby to access the road.

This appears rather contrasting to the descriptions of other religious spaces. For example, the Redeemed Christian Church of Good (RCCG) Camp is described by Adeboye (2012) and Ukah (2014) as a religious community gated and with its own regulations and way of life. GOFAMINT is another Christian space with land that engages the immediate surrounding. This project studies the religious community and the peculiar relationship it has with its immediate environment, especially in terms of land and the ‘forces’ acting on it.

The failure of government at many levels to discharge their fundamental constitutional functions and the growing impoverishment of Nigerians occasioned by neo-liberal reforms has led to the proliferation of religious organisations that are increasingly taking over the state’s function (Ukah, 2014). These organisations build prayer cities and towns, provide infrastructure and provide employment. They also engage in entrepreneurial activities such as building private estates, factories, universities, clinics, chalets, etc. In addition, they also provide water, electricity, roads, and transport systems, among other forms of infrastructure. They establish large communities in sacred spaces that attract congregants from various urban regions. The life lived in these ‘sacred urban spaces’ is different from the life in secular cities. The Gospel Faith Mission International (GOFAMINT) is one of such religious organisations.

GOFAMINT was founded by Pastor R.A. George, circa 1955. The growth of the Church necessitated the desire to acquire more land. GOFAMINT started as a ministry in Lagos around 1955². The need for more land caused them to move to Ibadan at Òjód in 1991, where the administrative offices are still located. With the rapid growth of the congregation and church activities, the ministry quickly outgrew Òjód and space was sought somewhere else. The next location was a place initially known as Alàkà. They have also out grown Alàkà and are currently developing a large area of land along the Lagos-Ibadan express way, like many other religious organisations.

This study focuses on the issue of land as a medium of development and expansion by religious organisations in southwest Nigeria. It explores how the desire, need and strategies of the church to acquire

² See Appendix IV

land intersects with the nature and appropriation of public space and urban living. It also responds to the impacts and consequences of land use and identity as they interact with each other in the context of religion and secularity. The project presents this through streamlined review of theme-specific literature and majorly, through archival map study, site studies with interviews and detailed observations involved.

1. Research Questions

The development of this project is driven by a pair of broad questions. These questions interrogate the activities of GOFAMINT using land as a medium of development and expansion. They also bring into fore the forces of religion and urbanism that come into play as the organisation's mediation through land occurs. The following are asked:

1. What challenges does GOFAMINT face in acquiring and appropriating land?
2. How do GOFAMINT and the neighbouring community construct the meaning and appropriation of space?

2. Land Acquisition

GOFAMINT acquires lands through direct purchase from the land owners. They are usually located in suburbs to make expansion easier. The Chief Security Officer (CSO) of Gospel town revealed, during an interview³, that they raised money to buy land from villagers who used to reside there. When they arrived, they continued to purchase land from other villages. The CSO says:

“When we relocated here, the land was not as big as this. We have been able to gradually expand it. The size of this land is about 35 acres but it extends.”

Similarly, a senior pastor in the Church disclosed:

“When we relocated to Ibadan in 1991, we bought land around Òjóò. When the congregation grew, the need to expand became necessary. We, therefore, purchased the land we currently occupy from a place known as Alàkà and other villages. The land was approximately 35 acres but of course grew as we bought more. With continued growth of the congregation and the need to further expand, we bought another 500 acres of land along the Ibadan-Lagos express way. Plans are underway to relocate to the new area before the end of this year (2017)⁴”

³ See Appendix II

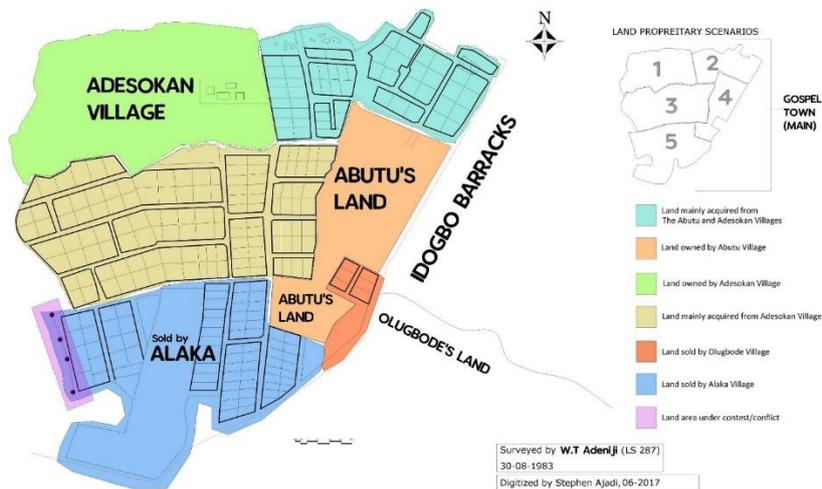
⁴ See Appendix III & IV

The huge piece of land which is between 30 and 35 acres was purchased in pieces from various villages that made up the area at the time.



Title section of the survey plan of 1983

A resident pastor and a church historian, retired pastor J.A Iyòayé⁵, explained that the villages Adésòkàn (which is now called Adégbìtè), Alàkà, Olúgbòde, & Abútu were the primary vendors of land to the ministry (see fig. 01). The Gospel Faith International Ministry bought land from them in large parcels clustered to form a large piece. Adésòkàn was the dominant village in terms of land size purchased, which is why the name of the village is on the general surveyed plan of the entire camp (see plate 01).



Land proprietary scenarios showing vendors and current ownership

The land sold by Alàkà village covers the area occupied by the church auditorium and the chalets all the way to the edge of the houses after the schools within the camp. They own all the land on which GOFAMINT's auditorium rests, up to where all the chalets are. Alàkà can be called the second dominant vendor village to Adésòkàn which the land survey documents have as the primary vendor. The area, however was widely and collectively known as Alàkà. Subsequently,

⁵ See Appendix III & IV

the presence of GOFAMINT in the area has caused the camp and the immediate extended areas to be collectively called Gospel town.

Pastor Iyòayé⁶ revealed that when the Church relocated to Ibadan from Lagos, they settled in Ojóò. They bought the land from the residents of the community there and started a broader approach in comparison to what they operated at Lagos. The Need for expansion took them to Alàkà, and with a current congregation size of 68 to 70 thousand (about 100,000 during some conventions), they felt a need to progress and expand to the Lagos-Ibadan express way where they purchased land from the Ògún mákin family in the region of Ògùn state. The new land currently being developed is put at about 500 acres and with it GOFAMINT has expressed the possibilities of a wide range of infrastructure projects, including the possibility of a university.

The main factors observed to be driving expansion are:

1. Rapid growth of church congregation and enthusiasts
2. The development of bigger plans involving infrastructure as the financial power of the church grew
3. Vision for the church as they grew from subsequent locations. This is buttressed by Pastor Iyòayé⁷ who explained that they kept coming up with bigger agendas and plans as they found themselves in new land masses which in turn led them to bigger land when the apparent need arose.

It can be said that the primary reason for expansion is the increase of human activity and land use which is brought about by an expansion of the congregation body and the number of enthusiasts. This main reason catalyses the growth of financial power (through an increase in donations by the congregation) which in turn makes the purchase of land and an expansion of infrastructural agenda possible.

3. GOFAMINT's Activities on Land and the Forces of Religion and Urbanism

In the course of the study, there were a number of forces noticed and observed. These forces can be broadly grouped in terms of their proliferation on land through urban space as driven by religion and other urban factors in proximity. There are 'sharp' forces that take place at a fixed location without any significant evidence of recurrence, proliferation or consequence scenario that extends across the religious and secular spaces. Another set of factors that come into play extend beyond the boundaries of GOFAMINT and interact with the immediate surrounding, bringing about an interplay of factors that trigger certain general urban conditions. These forces are grouped as "sharp forces" and "gradient forces".

4. The Sharp force of Land conflict

⁶ See Appendix III & IV

⁷ Ibid

Acquiring and expanding land has hardly been a challenge to the mission. GOFAMINT has been experiencing exponential growth in its membership size and activities. The District Pastor disclosed that:

“As for government, we do not face any stringent regulation regarding land acquisition. We have always been able to meet the legal requirements of obtaining land. The only regulation we found stringent was that of the tenure of general overseers of churches that affected the general overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. But the government has called back this code and has since regretted its action.”⁸

A senior pastor⁹ in the Church also revealed that intra-family (or intra-village) disagreement over the price of the land does hinder their desire to expand the Church. Sometimes we find cases where some family members are willing to sell their land to the church while others object.

There have been two types of land conflict as observed from a close study of the site. One can be described as an internal conflict within the villages that are land vendors. The other is an inter-conflict between the villages selling the land and GOFAMINT. At periods of land purchase Iyòdayé explained that some of the villages (Adésòkàn for instance) had internal contentions over the price at which land should be sold to GOFAMINT. This was not a major concern to the camp administration as they only waited to hear what the price of the final costs of the land were. The only case of inter-conflict noted was the one over the part of land in which there is a spring. This spring is where the camp gets water through a purification and distribution plant that they have set up. The Alàkà family once raised a claim to the area after they had sold it to the ministry. In 2016, they reportedly moved four beacons —FP6258, FP6259, FP6260, & FP6261 (see plate 02) along the spring and broke down the fence bordering the side. The conflict is still on-going. In early June, 2017, the camp reported to the elders of the village who sent a representative to them. There has been a meeting but there currently are no clear indications that the dispute has been settled.

⁸ See Appendix V

⁹ See Appendix III & IV



Plate 02: Section of the Alàkà-sold land still under conflict showing contested beacons (Ajadi, 2017)

This issue of land ownership contest upon close study and observation does not seem to affect the running of the camp nor the life of the people in it or in the larger area. It seems hermetic to the GOFAMINT administration and the Alàkà family. It nevertheless has created some slight distraction in camp administration as a committee needed to be dedicated to settling the problem from GOFAMINT. It is not yet clear if this current dispute will deter the Alàkà family to deal with the church in terms of land sale subsequently in the future but the mission is currently showing no interest in buying additional land. This is because they have already started work on a 500-acre mammoth piece at the Lagos-Ibadan expressway.

5. “Gradient” Forces

A number of factors/forces operate across territories in the context of this study. These forces can be said to have a “gradient” effect as they vary almost smoothly (in intensity) from the camp to the larger part of the outer community. Issue of land with this character are seen as evident mostly because the camp is not fenced behind and activities from the camp over time have smoothly transitioned and merged with that of the immediate surroundings.

6. Land Permeability

It has been observed that the camp lacks a complete perimeter fence. Consequently, passers-by ‘intrude’ into the camp’s premises. Though the camp does not bar them from passing, the security men as well as retired pastor I. complained that some of these passers-by are

indecently dressed. This suggests to them that they do not recognise the sanctity or sacredness of the camp¹⁰. The seeming openness of certain sides of the camp have some soft demarcations to control vehicles (see plate 03). These demarcations are usually left open during the day but are under close watch at night. They control only vehicles as pedestrians can seep through the rather wide interstitial spaces between (and through) the barricades.



Soft space demarcation at the northern periphery of the camp

The levels of permeability through GOFAMINT is evident in its gradient demarcation of space, which appears to loosen up as one goes through the guarded main gate in the south through to the north. This permeability manifests in the democratisation of pedestrian space around and through the camp.

7. Infrastructure and Entrepreneurship in Gospel Town

Further manifestations of permeability of the over 35-acre land is found in the number of structures, such as schools, a clinic, chalets, residential houses, etc. that outsiders are opened to. Although these were not originally built for commercial purposes, some, like the restaurant and clinic are being used commercially. Only one region of land on the survey map is designated as 'commercial', (see fig.02). As mentioned, the camp has water treatment plant, a dedicated transformer and a power generator. It has a number of employees: guards, teachers, nurses, doctors, cooks, etc. GOFAMINT provides all the infrastructure of the camp¹¹. The Camp administration said that the provision of these facilities is due to the failure of the government in providing the relevant infrastructure. The CSO¹² also has this to say:

“We have built a number of structures, such as an auditorium, halls, residential houses, and 20 chalets. The houses are occupied by members and non-members while the chalets are used to accommodate principal officers of the church, or members of other Christian organisations who

¹⁰ See Appendix III & IV

¹¹ See Appendix V & VI

¹² See Appendix II

come for retreat. We rent our halls for burial and wedding ceremonies.”



Survey plan of GOFAMINT, showing characters of permeability

The Church is located along Òjódò-Alàkà Road, which is the major road in the area. Although the camp is big enough to accommodate weekly worshipers without blocking the road, the mammoth crowd gathered at the Church’s Annual Convention and similar events cause huge traffic gridlocks on the road. Consequently, the Church engages traffic warders to ameliorate the hardship this creates to other road users. The district Pastor¹³ revealed that during conventions, congregants’ vehicles cause traffic:

“What we do is to call police and road safety officials to control the traffic. Though we do block road for other users, they do not complain because they are also beneficiaries of the convention. This is because it boosts economic activities in the area for the short period of time”

The preceding statement indicates that GOFAMINT recognises the road as a public space. It also rationalises temporary or partial intrusion of this space. Despite this, the relationship between the Church and the neighbouring communities remains cordial. He also added that the activities of the people who pass through do not inconvenience them¹⁴, except when they dress indecently. They are called to be advised when seen. However, they know that they will not be welcome in the auditorium, especially during religious activities.

The entrepreneurial inclusivity of the Church is evident in its openness to vendors during conventions and other large events. Everyone screened can mount stands and sell during such events. Alcohol, narcotics and anything illegal are not allowed to be sold. Land permeability in this case is fostered by the lack of a full perimeter fence, limited optional access to the main road by the camp outsiders

¹³ See Appendix V

¹⁴ Ibid; see also Appendix VI

except through the camp itself, and the inclusive commercial propensity of the camp.

8. The Tension of Land: Nomenclature and Urban Identity

The population of the mission members and enthusiasts of GOFAMINT has notably increased. The permeability of the camp's boundaries has also allowed a blend of housing and land use for residential purposes. The close and permeable interaction of the nearby residents have evolved a new nomenclature of the place. The place largely known as Alàkà is now generally called Gospel town. This does not seem to go down with a much more orthodox group of residents near the camp as they fear the new name will erode the historical identity of Alàkà. They have since frowned at billboards put up by GOFAMINT (see picture below) and other people that state the address of the area as 'Gospel Town'. This tension is in a gradient as it disappears as one moves through the camp to the immediate adjoining residents behind (up north) who really do not care (in fact they form part of the people who came up with the name). This occurrence shows how the presence of religious practices in large communities influence even the nomenclature of their urban transcript. It is however not clear in the case of GOFAMINT if the permeability of the camp contributed to the tension of the area nomenclature. All our respondents within the camp and outside it explain that the permeability played some role. Nonetheless, they credit the increase in population of the people who engage the camp during large events as a more probable cause of 'enforcing' the popularity of the place as 'Gospel Town'.



Large billboards depicting GOFAMINT and adjoining regions as 'Gospel Town'

9. GOFAMINT's Facilities as Urban Territorial Markers

A rather interesting observation is how facilities like water and electricity describe the gradient boundaries (and simultaneously, the relationship) between the camp and the larger community. The acting resident pastor at the Òjódò site when asked how the boundary between the camp and the immediate adjoining residences can be determined said:

“In the absence of electric supply from the government, when we switch on our generators, they know who is with us and who isn’t.”¹⁵

Water, on the other hand, is given to the neighbouring residents for free. This also catalyses permeability as the sets of water tanks are within the camp and the nearby residents have to come into the camp to fetch it.

Other facilities like mini-gates and small pipe barricades (see survey plan) demarcate regions where the camp intersect with the outer community which is often physically seamless. The Camp itself is put at 35-acres but the larger community is approximately 50-acres with no clear boundary demarcation.

10. Conclusion

The involvement of Churches in infrastructure provision appears to be connected with the failure of governments to provide the necessary services (Ukah, 2014). Apart from the transformer donated by the current Governor’s wife, all other infrastructure is provided by the GOFAMINT. The use of notions such as “sharp” and “gradient” forces in the larger scene of sacred urbanism enables us to understand how land operates, both as a means of development and proliferation in the discourse of religion and the city. GOFAMINT is also a religious community like many that have been springing up in the past few decades. What makes it peculiar, however, is its permeability which brings to play forces of urbanism in near-smooth gradients of existence, ubiquity and life. This seems to be a more inclusive approach to the setting of a religious ‘city’ in juxtaposition to other camps like the RCCG and Winners (Living Faith). As much as these sacred urban transcripts seem to solve social problems through facilities and clear-cut rules within their walls, they also give off vibes of alienation, especially to people of other religions. This does not seem to be the case with GOFAMINT camp as the its land interaction and connectivity in gradient form allows a more democratic engagement with the immediate public. The camp even influenced the Military at Ídógbó barracks to take advantage of the growing population size that the camp draws. The military set up shops along the perimeter of their land which brings them income as well. The conventions allow nearby residents to rent out rooms out of their homes to visitors for a week or more at prices higher than what they pay as annual rent.¹⁶ The forces of land nomenclature and identity is an adverse development of the presence of GOFAMINT. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the camp is empathic to its immediate environment. These forces of nomenclature, facility availability, land permeability, territorial markings among others are very important to note in religious ‘cities’. The knowledge of these forces and how they mediate land will help develop new and deeper insights into the knowledge of the nature and workings of sacred urbanism: entrepreneurial religion, infrastructure and the new urbanism in developing in Nigeria. GOFAMINT will soon move to the 500-acre

¹⁵ See Appendix V

¹⁶ Ibid

site at the Lagos-Ibadan Express way towards the end of 2017. The impact they have made (and may continue to make) on the current site they occupy is not negligible. The camp and hence the ministry has influenced an increase in commercial activities while fostering inclusive commerce without religious bias. It has also extended this inclusive spirit to land use and engagement especially in the aspect of pedestrianism and the provision of basic facilities. These influences may have imbued the nomenclature of the land region and hence, threaten the identity of the place with a 'new' name. It also has evolved an urban problem of seasonal traffic gridlocks which is often characterised with more populous urban transcripts. These setbacks do not seem to pose an impending threat to the existence of GOFAMINT in the area. This can be linked to the ministry's openness and inclusivity. The questions are if they will keep up this notion of openness, public empathy and permeability that they have given birth to at Alàkà (Gospel Town) as they proliferate and extend to other land regions. Will GOFAMINT engage and use their new land at the Lagos-Ibadan express way in this manner? Will the current 'gatedness' of existing religious camps influence them? This even brings up more questions of the scalability of this structure of land use as land gets bigger, its feasibility, meaning and impact on the larger immediate lands as well as in different urban contexts.

References

Adeboye, O. 2012. 'A Church in a Cinema Hall' Pentecostal Appropriation of Public Space in Nigeria.' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 42: 145–71

Ukah, Asonzeh. 2014 'Redeeming Urban Spaces: The Ambivalence of Building a Pentecostal City in Lagos, Nigeria.' In *Global Prayers: Contemporary Manifestations of the Religious in the City*, 178–97. Zurich: Lars Muller

Appendix I: Interview Guide

The following are a set of questions that were asked to key respondents. In cases of unstructured interviews, the trail of the questioning was led by the information given by the interviewee.

1. How did you acquire the land to build the Gospel town?
2. Do you have outfits/extensions?
3. If yes, how did you acquire the land for the outfits/extension?
4. What challenges do you face in acquiring land?
(Probe for stringent regulation enacted by government to govern land acquisition by Churches and community resistance).
5. Do people in the neighbouring community complain of your activities?
(Probe for road blockage and noise pollution).
6. If yes, do you find their complaints valid?

The general public around the site were also interviewed concerning some insights gotten from GOFAMINT including the nomenclature of the place as ‘Gospel Town’. General feedback can be found in the essay. (random interview sampling was done at the north side of the camp periphery as well as at the row of shops in the south)

Appendix II: Transcribed Interviews

Due to the lengthy nature of the interviews, instead of a fully transcribed text, key insights gotten from the interviews are highlighted. This is offered as snipped sections of the interview. It must be noted that each snipped section is a full response to a question or else otherwise stated as an interview summary.

Interview with Chief Security Officer, 22-06-2017

Summary:

We raised money to buy land from villagers who used to reside here. When we relocated here, the land was not as big as this. We have been able to gradually expand it. The size of this land is about 35 acres. We have built a number of structures, such as auditorium, halls, residential houses, and 20 chalets. The houses are occupied by members and non-members while the chalets are used to accommodate principal officers of the church, or members of other Christian organisations who come for retreat. We rent our halls for burial and wedding ceremonies. However, we still face a paucity of space due to growing size of our congregation. We have already obtained another 500 acres of land along Ibadan-Lagos road to meet up with expanding population.

There are no stringent rules on land acquisition imposed by government. We have satisfied all the requirements to obtain the land.

Our relationship with people in the neighbouring community is cordial. Our activities do not inconvenience them.

Appendix III: Interview with a retired Pastor—Pastor J.O.I. (Part 1) 22-06-2017

This interview was conducted by the two authors and each have different transcriptions since the interviewee demanded to speak in Yoruba for some part of the interview. One of the respondents does not speak the language hence two sets of interview texts from the same respondent. The following are insights gotten from the first part (English)

A senior pastor in the Church revealed that they bought all their lands from the locals. “When we relocated to Ibadan in 1991, we bought a land around Òjódò. When the congregation grew, the need to expand became necessary. We, therefore, purchased the land we currently occupy from a number of families. The land is approximately 30 acres. With continued growth of the congregation and the need to further expand, we bought another 500 acres of land along Ibadan-Lagos express. Plans are underway to relocate to the new area.

Intra-family conflict over the land does hinder our desire to expand our church. Sometimes we find cases where some family members are willing to sell their land while others object.

We operate schools, chalet, restaurant, and we provide the entire infrastructure found in this camp. We provide electricity (we bought a transformer and generator), water, etc.

We have never had any conflict with neighbouring communities over space use. However, some indecently dressed people pass through our church's parameters since it is not completely fenced. Though we do not prevent them from passing, I do call them to advise them to dress decently.

Appendix IV: Interview with Pastor I. (Part 2) 22-06-2017

Snippet of interview:

The Afternoon sir

Good Afternoon, its sunny outside, please come in.

We are researchers from the French institute of African studies and we are doing a study on Land in large spaces occupied by religious organisations. We will be happy if you can help us with answers to questions about this place.

I will do my best. I will tell you what I know.

How was the Land of the Gospel Town secured?

The Land to this place was bought from a number of villages. Five that I know of; Adésòkàn (which is now called Adégbíté), Alàkà, Olúgbòde, Abútu... I can't remember the fifth but I think there may even be more than five. The Gospel Faith International Ministry bought land from them. The lands are clustered in a central Location. Adésòkàn is the dominant village in terms of who we bought the largest land from. They own all the land on which our auditoriums rest up to where all our chalets are. Alàkà can be called the second dominant village but the land survey documents have Adésòkàn as the primary vendor.

In the process of buying these lands, have you encountered or experienced any form of conflict or misunderstanding?

There are usually internal debates with the paramount families of some of the villages that we did business with. These contentions are usually based on how much they think land should be sold. We don't have problems from our own end here. There however, was a time when a family removed beacons of the spring on the land. I think they learned that we were purifying the water and distributing it for free. I am not really sure, but they wanted to reclaim it. We had to explain to them using the master survey plan of the land that it was now part of our property. I think the issue is organised now.

Do you have any set of rules in this camp? I mean laid out rules that the people here must follow?

We do not have rules except for the obvious ones: Drinking and selling of alcohol is prohibited. Indecent dressing is also frowned at.

Do you enforce these rules? How do the public feel about these rules?

You know the people who pass through our camp are not bound by these guidelines. We try to caution them though. It is tough because some of them walk through this place with indecent dressing. I personally try to caution them. I call them and advise them. The young men and young women. It is Important that we let them know that there are some things that we do not condone. Some of them comply, however we do not force them. I we did we will have a big problem in our hands. There will be conflict. We just try to make them understand our stand. They can't enter my own house with such dressing. They certainly can't enter the church auditorium with such dressing.

What is the size of this place?

I think it is about fifty-something acres

How many houses are here?

You mean residential buildings or all the buildings?

All the buildings.

I am not sure, I lost count at 600, you know it spreads into the larger neighbourhood. They call the whole place Gospel town you know, including the larger town.

Who provides the utility in the place?

You mean light, water, security and so on?

Yes.

We do. We power the whole camp. We also provide water for the whole camp. There is a water treatment plant we have for the spring in our land and it provides water for the entire facility. We use the electricity from the government too, but when we don't have it, we switch to our source.

Are these facilities open to the public?

We allow everyone to fetch water. We also provide electricity to our affiliates at a cost. Electricity isn't for everybody though.

When did you get here?

I was transferred here from Ìdì Ìròkò, in Ògùn state in 1991. I am retired now.

How long have you been working with this ministry?

I have been a pastor with GOFAMINT since 1980. I however, have been a member since 1966.

When was this ministry started?

It started in Lagos in 1955. Reuben A. George was the founding overseer. He passed away and Rev. Elijah O. Abíiná took over as the general overseer. He is still in charge till date.

How has the place affected the larger surrounding?

There have been more houses around here. Another observation is the move by the soldiers from Ìdógbó barracks to let out shop space to people along the perimeter of their landed property which happens to be opposite GOFAMINT. They regulate the management independent of the government even though the government has tried to override the management once...but failed.

Appendix V: Interview with the District Pastor 22-06-2017

We acquired this land from the residents of this community. When our congregation grew, we had to relocate to our current camp in Alàká, beside the military barrack. The land is over 30 acres, and we acquired it bit by bit. It was used as a hideout for criminals despite the presence of military barracks. We have also acquired a new land along the Ibadan-Lagos express way. We are moving to our permanent camp there. We have 68,000-70,000 congregants; therefore, we need a bigger camp to accommodate them.

The major challenge we face in expanding our camp is resistance from residents. They are sometimes not forthcoming, and this hinders our desire to expand. As for government, we do not face any stringent regulation with regards to land acquisition. We have always been able to meet the legal requirements of obtaining land. The only regulation we found stringent was that of the tenure of general overseers of churches that consumed the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. But the Government has back down and regretted its action.

We provide all the infrastructures you find on our camp. Governments have failed in providing infrastructures.

The pedestrians that pass through our camp do not inconvenience us. Also, during our convention, congregants' vehicles cause traffic. What we do is to call police and road safety officials to control the traffic. Though we do block road for other users, they do not complain because there are also beneficiaries of the Convention. Economic activities in the area tend to be boosted during our convention.

Appendix VI: Interview (unstructured) from the 2 gatemen: F.F D. and J.O O. 22-06-2017

An unstructured interview was carried out with 2 security men stationed at the gate. The security men; F.F D. and J.O O. have been at their posts for 2 years and 4 years respectively. The interviews are unstructured for a number of reasons. It was hard to separate them for individual questioning. Since they were at the boundary between the camp and the immediate environment, we felt they will know a number

of things that may be useful to us that we may not have planned for. We allowed them to lead the trail of questioning. We started off with a question and asked questions from any new thing that they said. A summary of insights gotten from the interview is enumerated below:

The row of shops in front of the GOFAMINT Camp was catalysed by the presence of the camp itself.

People living at the other end of the camp used the camp as a lobby to the main access road. They walk through the camp.

The camp is not beleaguered with rules and regulations but decent dressing is a must to partake in the church programmes.

During these church programmes, anybody checked and screened are allowed to come and sell within the camp premises. Muslims also mount stands during the conventions, revivals and other religious activities within the camp.

The camp provides its own electricity and water service. The people from outside the camp also come in to use the water. They could not comment on the use of electricity by people outside (but near) the camp.

The camp contains a seminary school, a primary school and secondary school. A clinic can also be found in it.

Appendix VII: Survey plan from the archives of Pastor I. Dated 30-08-1983 by Surveyor W.T A.



Survey plan