

MAINLINE DENOMINATIONS AND PENTECOSTAL - AFRICAN INITIATIVE CHURCHES: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The day had done for the Africans to be responsive to the inner inspiration of the Holy Spirit on the call for special task or duty to perform to God in his salvation plan. Base on this, the researcher intends to delve into the critical analysis of the mainline denominations and the Pentecostal – African initiative Churches. The mainline churches are the well established churches that embarked on missionary activities into African countries from the Western world of Europe and America. These Church missionaries came to Africa to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Significant change of lifestyle in the life of the Africans were made, lots of people were converted but were not deeply rooted into the radical demands of the overzealous converts. Thus, the expectations of some new Christian converts who were, engrossed into the doctrine of the main denominations were not met, consequently, some Africans disintegrated from the mainline denominations, initiated new churches based on the cultures of the Africans, with much emphases on spiritual healings, prayers, miracles, visions and prophetic movements. The researcher uses critical analysis base on library research techniques to delve into the root causes of the springing up of the African initiative churches and the positive roles they play in the life of the Africans. This study is recommended to all Christendom in Africa to harmonize the system of worship for the promotion of unity.

Keywords: Mainline Denomination, Pentecostal, African Initiatives, Churches.

Introduction

The advent of early Christian missionaries into Africa brought radical change in the lives and cultures of the Africans. The Christian missionaries are the followers of Jesus Christ, the second person in the triune God, manifested in the form of human person, lowered himself, became obedient unto death, even death

on the cross, Philippians 2: 5- 11. This Jesus resurrected ascended into heaven after forty day of his death. Prior to his ascension, he commissioned his disciples to go into the whole world and make disciple of all nations, baptize them: in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Matthew 20:28-20. This mandate prompted the early missionaries from Europe and America to eagerly come to Africa precisely in Nigeria to witness the gospel of Jesus. In consequence to this, many mainland denominations courageously flock into Nigeria to evangelize the populace.

It is pertinent to recall the coming of the Portuguese Catholic missionaries¹ in 1515 who, made first attempt to come into southern part of Nigeria to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. However, their mission failed and could not yield any fruit; they were simply engrossed with distractions of trading and commerce. The Oba of Benin and chief of Warri and Opopo were carried away with the gains of trading and the mission was futile due to much distractive involvement in slave trading. Three years later, anti slave was lifted up to free African slaves. Sierra Leone was made the depot for all freed slaves. Fortunately, most of the freed slaves were already been converted to Christianity. The European missionaries followed the freed slaves to Free Town in Sierra Leone to evangelize Africa and liberate them from bondage of poverty, barbaric activities that were heinous in the African society.

The English speaking Christian missionaries who accompanied the freed slaves utilize the opportunity to move into West African coasts and began to convert people into Christianity with the assistance of the freed slaves who were able to trace their homes. The churches that trooped into Africa to Evangelize and get the inhabitants converted were: Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian Church and others. Most notable was the Church Mission Society- CMS missionaries from the Church of England, that play prominent role in disseminating the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to farther land of the Southern part of Nigeria.

These Christian missionaries from different denominations embarked on serious evangelism to the west and eastern part of the country. They utilized different baits of humanitarian demands to attract and trapped the targeted converts. To accompany the preaching of the life, death and salvation work of Jesus Christ,

¹ A. Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: Gorge Allen & Unwin, 1974), 74.

these mainline denominational missionaries included in their mission outreach: the erection of different churches, establishment of schools, hospitals, vocational centers for skill acquisitions and domestic training. They worked assiduously in the spiritual growth of the populace in matters of catechism, Bible studies, marriage counseling and family planning.

The mainline churches strictly adhered to the instructions and due processes laid down by the Alien missionaries that introduced Christianity to the indigenous people of Nigeria in Africa. They were strongly organized and followed the strategic plans laid down for the establishment of the other branches, groups, associations and organizations of the denomination. The liturgical worship was well organized and streamlined. The worship, services and Masses are being officiated by the ordained trained ministers inclusive; Priests, Pastor, Reverend, Venerable, Cannons, Deacons and Bishops. Other vital participants in the liturgical ministries are: the choristers, Ushers or Church warders, Lectors, alter servants, elders and others that facilitate the enhancement of the worship or fellowship in the main denominations. One peculiar thing in the mainline churches is the fact that, they tend to erect magnificent edifices such as: the main church for worshipping God, the ministers' house, schools² and hospitals. However, the mainline churches seemed to be archaic to some vibrant inspired Church members, who explicitly displayed the desire to worship God in African modes and culture than the foreign European culture. These Africans claimed to have seen visions, dreamt and received the gift of prophesy, spiritual healing, and holy anointing. They are the instruments of the establishments of the African Pentecostal initiative churches in Nigeria.

Christian Missionaries

The mandate to go and make disciples of all nations, by Jesus Christ, formed the basement of being sent out to disseminate the good news of our Lord Jesus to different parts of the world. A missionary is one who is sent out on mission. Missionary work is a call to duty to carry out an assignment in a total dedication to God and to his people in a particular place. Mission is an assigned task one has to perform. Microsoft encounter dictionary defines mission as, calling: an objective or task that somebody believes it is his or her duty to carry out or to

² M.O. Salami, *Christian Missions in West Africa* (Ilorin: Adelpk Printing Enterprises, 2001), 22.

which he or she attaches special importance and devotes special care³. The word 'Mission' connotes two dimensions: one is referred as the assigned task, duty or work which involves activities surrounding a particular job. The other is tagged to the land or area in which mission activities is carried on or established.

Christian Missionaries are the followers of Jesus Christ, who are grounded in faith, propelled by his mandate to disseminate his teachings and ways of life to the ends of the earth. They were inspired and propelled to launch into the deep in spite of the problems, difficulties, challenges and persecutions they might encounter for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. These indefatigable missionaries, engulfed with the love for Christ and faith in his salvation mission, worked assiduously into different countries of the world, bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to mankind. Believing in the companionship of the Holy Spirit, as source of encouragement, boldness, wisdom, knowledge and fidelity, they were convinced and propelled to bear unrelenting witness to the Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Simon of Cyrene also bore witness to the Africans in the North, he assisted to carry the cross of Jesus to the cavalry and probably disseminate the good news of Jesus to his town of Cyrene that was in Africa but very close to North Israel. It is pertinent to recall the vital role the Ethiopian Eunuch played in the work of evangelization to the Ethiopian nation on his return from his enlightened encounter with Philip; one of the disciples of Jesus that witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles on the Pentecost day in the upper room at Jerusalem. Christianity was established in Northern Africa in the first and second centuries of Common Era.

Christianity into Sub-Africa was a gradual process due to the fear of uncertainties; poisonous insects, unfavorable climate, lack of good water ways and harbor, so it was termed 'Dark Continent' by the West. The first attempt to spread Christianity into West Africa was in 15th Century under Prince Henry the Navigator. The Portuguese began to explore the west sea coasts. They were the first European Missionaries to set foot in Nigeria. The Roman Catholic Church soon began to send out official missionaries to accompany the early trading ships and soon a well-organized infrastructure was in place with the Islands used as springboards for missionary efforts on the mainland. The first church established

³ Microsoft® Encarta® 2009. © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

by the Portuguese in the region was at Elmina and the first service was conducted under a mango tree. One Don Diogo spearheaded the missionary activities; met the chiefs and the people and, they accepted the Christian faith although the Chiefs were apparently motivated primarily by the possible of commercial gains and acquiring land for the erection of the church buildings.

The Portuguese were sorely interested in commerce, nevertheless, they realized that, if Africans were not rudimentary educated, and accepted Christianity; they might not get good costumers. According to Fafunwah, 'the two civilizing agencies considered most important by European merchants, civil authorities and missionaries at that time'⁴. The missionaries failed to convert the indigene due to wrong strategies and engrossment into trading and business.

The second attempt of the Christian missionaries was successful due to the involvement of the Nigeria African liberated slaves who had settled in Freetown, Sierra Leone. They travelled down the coast to Lagos and Badagry for trading purpose and some of them met their family members: children, parents, brothers and sisters and other relations, while others who could not travel, sent messages to their relatives at home. Most of them had been converted into Christianity; they were used as evangelizers to their people in the native language⁵. The advent of the first English-speaking in 1842 and its expedition along the coast and River Niger to the hither land aided the missionaries to gain solid ground. The idea of evangelizing Nigeria originated from the Church missionary Society (CMS). The arrival of Rev. Birch Freeman, the son of a Negro with an English mother accompanied by William De Graft, Ajayi Crowder, Rev. Townsend and others facilitated the growth of Christianity in Nigeria.

The Mainline Denominations

Mainline denominations are the historical established churches that were involved in bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to African countries. The early denominational rise in Christendom were the Catholicism church and the Protestantism⁶. The early church was empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the whole world till the end of time. This is the mandate Jesus gave to his disciples prior to his ascension into heaven. The

⁴ A. Babs Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1974) 74.

⁵ *Ibid*, 77.

⁶ Ujata S. Amos, *The Rise, Growth and Development of Indigenous Independent Churches in Africa* (Zaria: Faith International Printers and Publishers, 2003), 11.

leadership of the church was conferred to Peter, the first Pope. The nuclear church established in Rome, imbibed the Roman system of governance and was influenced by its culture. The early church has no denominational spirit and structure, but experienced great schism in 1054, when the eastern rite separated from the western rite in consequence of power supremacy, ecclesiastical differences, language and political powers. Popes and cardinals began to realize that ownership of land and selection of Bishops and popes by emperors and secular rulers was an infringement on the freedom of the church⁷. The church authority felt that the empires were infringing and intruding into the affairs of the church which they were not comfortable with, the schism was a gradual process affecting the church of 11th century until it escalated fully in 1054.

The Catholic Church

This is the historical unity of the Christians prior to the separation of different independent churches of Christianity. Catholic referred to the universality of the church, that is everywhere of the world. Consequently, the Catholic church is the fulfillment of the word of Jesus at his commissioning the disciple and giving the mandate to go afar and preach to all nations, to bear witness to him (Jesus Christ) until the end of time, to baptize them; in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit Matthew 28: 19-20. The Church is the people of God. The word Church in Latin; means ecclesia, from the Greek word ek-kalein⁸ (to call out of). It means a convocation or assembly, referring to the assembly of the people especially in regards to religious people. At the event of creation, God assigned human being the duty to increase and multiply and fill the earth, Genesis, 1: 28. God's children fill the whole world. The early Christian was authorized by the Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ to spread his gospel to every people in all nooks and cranny of the universe. Church connotes the building⁹ in which Christians meet for worship. It is pertinent to mention the pre denominations in the early Christian church namely; the Catholic church of the Roman rites which considers itself as the one true church and the Eastern Orthodox Church considers itself as the Original Christian Church. Thus; the

⁷ Alan Schreck, *The Compact History of the Catholic* (Church Mumbai India, Pauline Publishers, 2013), 48.

⁸ Geoffrey Chapman, *Catechism of the Catholic Church Pocket Edition* (London: British Cataloging- in- Publication Data, 1975), 173.

⁹ Joseph a. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane, *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2003), 186.

Catholic Church has four characters: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. The Catholic Church firmly established in Rome, had internal and external challenges on schisms and reformations that erupted into copious denominations. The great reformation carried on by Martin Luther in the Sixteenth Century gave birth to Protestantism from it many denominations sprang up in full blow and established subsequent Pentecostalism.

Protestant Denominations

The concept of protestant denomination referred to group of people organizing themselves to form common foundational doctrine¹⁰ slight or different from the existing doctrine in the Christendom. Encarta dictionary emphasize the fact that. Protestants in this regard are members of church rejecting papal authority and some fundamental Roman Catholic doctrines, and believes in justification by faith. The bedrock of protestant denomination was laid as a consequential of the upsurge of reformation super headed by a renowned Theologian of the sixteenth century, an Augustinian Priest, and Monk Professor Martin Luther¹¹ when he posted the Ninety Nine Theses of the 1517¹² nailed at the door of All Saints Church. Coupled with presence of the reformed renaissance and enlightenment in Europe, Many scholars and elites rationalized religious practices and beliefs as opposed to dogma and orthodoxy. The adherents of Christianity in various parts of Europe needed reformed church to suit the demands of the society in the civilized world. The authority of the papacy was questioned and lots of issues pertaining to the authentic welfare of the physical and spiritual being of people were examined and questioned. The imperative gave birth to denominational churches from the Roman Catholic Church. These denominations include: Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Adventist churches. The basic doctrine includes the emphasis on the Holy Bible as the authority of the church and salvation through the grace of God. At the initial introduction of these separate denominations, the Christendom was facing lots of faith and doctrinal challenges. Different people with various charisma, the purities, reformers, sprang up to compete with the Catholic Church. The churches in Europe were once in unhealthy rivalry: antagonism. Hatred, envy, jealousy, prejudice and misunderstanding erupted into bloody and disunity of the church.

¹⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism#Denominations>

¹¹ Mbachirin T. Abraham, A Brief Survey of the Religious and Political History of the Reformation(Makurdi: Lamp and Word Book, 2012), 74.

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther

Slave trading was a lucrative business for the European merchants and business tycoon men and Africa was the field of slave trading. In the 17th century, the bill of Anti slave trade for the Africans proposed and passed on, some philanthropist: Sir Wilberforce and Granville group, who were members of the House of Lords (Senate). They were staunch members of the Anglican Church, the Church mission Society (CMS). The African slave trading was terminated by their efforts and the freed slaves were deported to Free Town the capital of Sierra Leone.

Many of the freed slaves had already been converted into Christianity of various denominations. As they came down to Africa, Nigeria precisely, they came along with Colonial masters who came to explore and penetrate into the governing authority of the natives. The Missionaries also accompanied the colonial administrators to aid in preaching the gospel to the people and gain conversion from the indigenes. One of the prominent ex-slave was Ajayi Crowther, who later was ordained an Anglican bishop. He embarked on expeditions with the European missionaries and colonial administrator to explore the two big rivers of Niger and Benue, to ascertain the possibility of getting further into the inner villages and communities, to know the potentials and abilities of the indigenes. Ajayi Crowther, was famous in utilizing the native language as an interpreter to render unalloyed assistance to the colonial masters and the early missionaries' expatriates move further into the villages and communities. The use of plough¹³ and the Bible was accredited to the European colonial masters and the missionaries. Thus, the freed slaves worked assiduously in helping Christianity to spread in the Southern part of Nigeria.

The Missionaries that trooped into the Southern Nigeria were mostly protestant missionaries such as the CMS, the Church of Missionary Society of the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church, Baptist Church, Presbyterian Church and others. They zealously launched into the deep to catch souls, to preach the gospel of Jesus and to convert them from traditional religion into Christianity Religion. They utilized the means of: establishing all levels of formal educational system to eradicate illiteracy, medical institutions such as: clinics, dispensary, Hospitals and Maternity homes. Notwithstanding, the missionaries built churches in many towns and villages approximate to the inhabitants. They also engaged in Sunday schools, teaching of catechism, organized bible studies, choir, playing of band,

¹³ Ibid,5

youth meetings and development. The indigenes were taught and commissioned to read the Bible, interpret it as it appeals to their comprehensive minds. Some indigenes were trained and ordained as Priests and Pastors, Catechists, Elders, and Bishops. Some of the African Christians equally began to experience the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in their lives; like the missionaries, conducting Sunday services and Bible studies. This experiences led some African Church members to simultaneously move by the Holy Spirit, boldly began to demonstrate special prophetic charisma of prophecy, anointing healing, dreams and interpretations of dreams and liberation. These prophetic African Christians shortly break away from the mainline churches and found the African Independent Churches.

African Independent Churches

The upsurge of African Indigenous Churches came up from the period of the nineteenth century when the indigenes seemed to have internalized the gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them by the European and American Missionaries respectively.

African independent churches are the Churches that had sprang up from the mainline churches with the inspiration of worshipping God in African ways and mood. It is the expression of the people of Africa in relationship to the worship of God in African culture and traditions. The integration of African Culture into the Christian churches worshipping and fellowship gave some indigenes of Africa a real sense of worshipping God and beholding his omnipresence in their environment. A group of individuals felt to be engulfed with the power of the Holy Spirit, felt called to perform certain functions for God. They were inspired, empowered and moved into action to proclaim the wonders of God as it was revealed to them, to pray prophesize, heal, liberate and preach the words of God to the people in their locality. The African Independent Churches appears in different nomenclatures such as:

Separatist in relation to their disintegrating from the mainline churches they belonged prior to the establishment of the indigenous churches.

Ethiopia refers to the independent churches in Africa, established by the African to shun the imposition of European authority and their culture in Christian worship. Ethiopians stands for indigenous initiative with no support from foreign countries. It is pertinent to recall spreading of gospel by the African

Ethiopian Eunuch to the Ethiopians, Acts 8:26-40. Ethiopia is referred as Cush in the Old Testament Genesis 10:6, Southern Egypt and Sudan¹⁴ are inclusive. A secessionist group of the Yorubas from the Baptist mission reclaimed the name Ethiopianism¹⁵.

Zionist is another term used to describe the African churches¹⁶ which are charismatic. These churches are commonly seen in South Africa and Zimbabwe; often make reference to revelation¹⁷ and healing.

Spiritual is another designation given to African Independent Church. Most of the leader and founders cherish the name and are referred as spiritual churches. The spiritual churches are prevalently in the western part of Nigeria precisely in Yoruba land, they known to invoke the Holy Spirit and to give the interpretation of the Holy Spirit.

Prophetic Movement is being referred to African indigenous church to describe their assertion on healing power. The Churches solely focus on the charismatic¹⁸ personality of a prophet.

Praying Churches is another name given to the African Independent indigenous churches. Most of these churches are known for their frequent fervent styles of praying. The indigenous Yoruba's cherish praying churches. It is referred as Aladura churches. They can engage in praying all day and night. The main duty is praying for various needs, challenging and confrontation of different force.

Pentecostal Churches

Pentecostal churches are the denominations in Christianity that lay emphasis on the working of the Holy Spirit in their ministerial lives. They interpret the Holy Bible literally and demonstrate liberally in the mood of worship. The method of worship is informal, just as the Spirit directs and leads the pastor, evangelist, elders and the members of the congregation. There are three classes of Pentecostalism.

¹⁴ Deji Isaac Ayebgoyin and Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches*, 2013, 3, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid,5

¹⁶ Ibid, 5

¹⁷ Ibid,6

¹⁸ Ibid, 6

(a) **Classical Pentecostalism:** The movement of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the members of the church began in the foreign nations with the organization of Charismatic Renewal and Revivals. The purpose is to re-enact the event of the Pentecost on the early church in Acts 2; 1-13. The group exhibit ecstatic movement featuring enthusiasm in healing, speaking in tongues, baptism of the Holy Spirit, interpretation of prophesies and all kinds of miracles. Emphasis is laid on visions¹⁹, dreams and spontaneity in public worship and to indentify the voice of the Holy Spirit within the fellowship.

(b) **African Independent Pentecostal:** As the name sounds, it depicts the Pentecostal churches that were started by the Africans and are controlled by the Africans without the intrusions of the foreign Christians. The indigenous Africans felt intrinsically, the calling of God to them for the special vocation confided on them, mainly to bring change in the life of the Africans. Emphatically, the gift; charisma is the bedrock of the African Independent Pentecostal Churches. Africans are the main founders of the African Independent Pentecostal churches and they man it in African ways, organize the activities of Sunday and other day's programmes.

(c) **The Newer Pentecostal Movement:** The trending issue in Christendom is the upsurge of newer Pentecostal movement in the present contemporary society. Virtually every day new Pentecostal churches are being found in consequence of self acclamation of the possession of the Holy Spirit and all the charisma manifesting to her presence. The unique thing circling the newer Pentecostal movement is the different ways they manifest their power daily. In contrasted to the classical Pentecostal churches and Independent Pentecostal churches, rather, they focus on prosperity doctrine, sowing of seeds, basically emphasis is on claiming things and blessings. They easily engage in identifying the witchcrafts responsible for ones hindrance of progress or life. Liberation from all sorts of curses from evil forces and evil spirits emanating from; Individuals, parents, family, forefathers, village, community, relations and friends is common. Most prayers are; invoking, command, uproot, subdue, you out! The children of God must shout: Big and Bigger Amen! Alleluia Somebody, There is no strict regulation on dressing code. Dress as your instinct directs you. The man

¹⁹ Allen Andeson, *Global Pentecostalism, Charismatic Movements and Independent Churches* Switzerland, 2013, https://www.academia.edu/6068798/Global_Pentecostalism_Charismatic_Movements_and_Independent_Churches_Christianity_Shifting_Southwards_Historical_Overview

of God, the prophet, Seer, waves his hands or handkerchief people begin to fall down. It is pertinent to know the fact that founders of these newer Pentecostal movements got the revelation on their own and not taught by the mainline churches. In Nigeria, some of them were lecturers in University prior to their vacation to the general overseer of the Church, example pastor Kumuyi of Deeper life Bible Church and Pastor David Oyedipopo of Living Faith and host of others. The trending issues of showcasing signs and wonders are alarming in the new Pentecostals as 'Men of God' are performing copious miracles of all kinds. Attention is drawn on the use of white handkerchiefs that draws the worshippers to fall down. Some ordered the worshippers to eat grasses, worms and insects to receive miraculous healing. The adherents are instructed to drink the bath water of the pastor as holy anointing and healing, lying on the ground for the man of God to march on their bellies or backs, genuflect on their knees as the pastor passes by, these men of God raises voices to command, bind and cast all sorts of immodest shows are prevalent in church activities in the name of worshipping The Almighty God.

Features and Elements of Indigenous Pentecostal Churches

Emphasis on Prayer: The African Independent Pentecostal movements lay more emphasis and reliance on prayer. Different styles of prayer are being promoted with varieties of demonstrations. Prayer is the bedrock of all undertakings with firm believes on the blessings, successes and favours are obtained through fervent prayers. In prayers the forces of evils are commanded to quit from its abode and possession and relocate to hell. The Holy Spirit is invoked by force as Fire! to come and consume the works of the enemies. The Aladura, Praying people are confided to the name based on their business of praying always and everywhere, although special places are designated for prayer ground on monthly bases for gaining God's interventions and to behold his presence. People flock into these places to have congregational common prayer, crusade, prayers, sacrifices, miracle healing, praises to God and God's favor.

Divine Healing: This is a prevalent trend in the activities of the African Independent Pentecostal churches. Sickness could be one the reasons the Africans rush into Indigenous Pentecostal churches due to the fact that, they believe in the prophetic power of the pastors, evangelists and prophets of the church. The truism is that, the prophets and pastor prove reliable and trust worthy to perform the divine healing through the power of the Holy Spirit

working in them. They equally bear witness to the healing power of Jesus. They emphatically command the sickness and ailing evil spirits and forces by force to Move out, In the name of Jesus! Sometimes symbols are used such as: Holy Anointing Oil, Holy Water, Different colours of Candles, Cross or crucifix, white clothes, sand, leaves, roots, stems with incantations and strict warning instructions. Divine healing entails Spiritual, rebirth²⁰ and physical healings.

Music and Songs: Africans cherish music and songs. Music and songs are the therapy for the souls of human beings in Africa. They soothe human's heart, give pleasure to the wearied, bring comfort and consolation to the afflicted and bring happiness to all and sundry. The Independent churches enjoy the worship to the fullest by applying copious styles of music and songs. The melody derives from it, aid to prolong the quest for beholding the presence of God and makes the service to be lively and enjoyable. The truism is that, Africans are happy people, expressing their joy through music, songs and dances in different steps, gestures and demonstrations. The African Independent Churches integrate African cultural music in their Churches. Each independent church has a peculiar way of dancing and beating the instruments and to the rhythm. For instance; Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial Church of Christ has different styles and mode of dancing in the church; singing, clapping of hands beating the drums, calabash and the gongs and waving of hands.

Attention to women: The position of women is explicitly appreciated and adequately recognized in the African indigenous church movements. Contrary to the mainline denominations, the Indigenous churches give attention to women. Some women attained the position of: Bishop, priest, pastors, evangelist and deacon in African Independent churches. Although some women in the mainline churches, such as: the Anglican, Methodist and Baptist Churches challenged the authority and have been granted the consent to be ordained pastors, priests and are now, the quest for bishopric is highly on discourse. Women are given leadership in various levels in church, both mainline and independent indigenous churches. Some women are now founding new churches of their own, becoming General Overseers, Bishops and Apostles of the churches.

Emphasis on Spiritual Gift: Apparently, the founders of African Independent Churches claimed to have encountered God in a dream, trance or vision and

²⁰ Shimawua Dominic, *The Rise and Growth of Indigenous Churches in Africa* (Nigeria: Lenrad Print, 2013), 19.

have been given the gifts: healing, prophesy, prayer and discernment of the spirits, speaking in tongues and gift of interpretation of prophesy, dreams, signs and forces of nature. God is the dispenser of power and spiritual gifts. The need for spiritual gifts is paramount to enable the members to combat the work of the evil forces prevalently confronting the populace. Thus, Spiritual interpretation is given to: barrenness, misfortune, poverty, illness, prolonged pregnancy and disappointment²¹. They have the notion of being the dispenser of the Holy Spirit. They often embark on war confrontation of Satan, witches and evil spirits²². To enable the Holy Spirit to come and take control of the worship, the Cherubim and Seraphim and the Christ Apostolic Churches tend to sweep the floor prior to the commencement of the routine worship to purify the arena and sweep away the evil spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to take over the worshipping members.

Causes of the Springing up of the African Independent Churches

Africans are people of God in regard to anthropological revelation from the study of man and phenomenal environment. As the religion of Christianity develops and extended to the continent of Africa, the populace that had been engrossed with the affairs of indigenous religion welcomed the new doctrine of Christianity, then tested it, and endeavoured to assimilate it into the cultural pattern of African style of worship in order to feel free to express their mode of worship in African ways. Some of the Africans in the mainline churches could not feel free to worship the Transcended in the European rites so; they plunge into proliferation of various African Independent churches.

Emphasis on Indigenous Leadership

The exhibition of magnanimousness and forbearance of some of the mainline church missionaries like Henry Venn of the Anglican Church, Bishop Joseph Shanahan²³ Cssp of the Roman Catholic Church, the Nun of Calabar, Mother Mary Charles Magdalen Walker²⁴ RSC, the Founder of the first native Catholic

²¹ Deji Isaac Ayegboyin And s. Ademola Ishola, African Indigenous Church, 2013, 18.

²² Shimawua, Dominic, The Rise and growth of Indigenous Churches in Africa, 2013, 19.

²³ Sister Caroline N Mbonu, Sister Mary Charles Magdalen Walker: Inspiration of the Founding Charism of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus (Jos: Fab Anieh Nigeria Limited 2010), 5.

²⁴ Memoirs of Mother Mary Gertrude Waturuocha, HHCJ A Testimony of an Eye Witness: On the Life and work of Mother Mary Charles Magdalene Walker(RSC) 1881-1966.

nuns; the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus and other missionaries that played the role of encouraging the African indigenes to assume the leadership role in Church affairs. These indefatigable missionaries had foresight, endowed with the Holy Spirit, crushed human inclinations of pride and prejudice; they empowered the African indigenes to work hard to take proper authority to man the affairs of the future development of the religion of Christianity in Africa. This leadership empowerment enabled the Africans to work assiduously, claimed the authority to establish indigenous independent Churches.

Leadership Tussle among the Mainline Churches

The African Christians were dissatisfied with the tussles emerging between the European Christian leaders and the African Christian in authority. A good example is the case of the White Anglicans in Nigeria opposing the good ideas of Bishop Ajayi Crowther, the financial committee of the Niger mission did not recognize his authority and some decisions were taken without his approval. Being the head the committee, they denied him the use of ship for easy transportation on water²⁵. The emergence of this sectionalism and racism displeased the indigenous newly converted Christians in Nigeria; consequently new ideas of breaking from the main missionaries began to be nurtured, strategized and masterminded. The rise of independent African churches exploded, people need freedom from the crushing of the European churches.

The desire to Africanize Christianity

Africans desire to worship God in spirit and truth. The call for the Africans to rise and embrace Christianity in African way has its base on the scripture which testifies; 'Let Ethiopia stretch out her hand to God' psalm 68:31. Africa being in the generation of Noah, Genesis 10: 6, through Cush and Put, had come to know the gospel of Jesus Christ brought by the European Christians; they took the bold step to worship God in African ways. Africans hunger to feel the presence of God in African way, to experience the magnanimous love of God in African culture and thus, express the benevolence heart of God towards the Africans.

Foundress of the First Indigenous Congregation in the Nigeria Church.(Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, 2012), 58.

²⁵ Shimawua Dominic, *The Rise and Growth of Indigenous Churches in Africa* (Markurdi: Lanrad Print, 2013), 11.

They explicitly demonstrate the joyous freedom of worshipping God in African mode. Most of the African Independent churches reject out rightly the European rites of worship and culminate the worship of God using African rites. The liturgy was made more of African, as the use of drumming; dreaming, singing²⁶, dancing, clapping and prophetic movements were vehemently portraying the manifestation of African culture and tradition.

Leadership Freedom

Most individuals who bolted out from the mainline churches are grossly seeking for freedom to gain hold of leadership in the church. They felt they equally possess the gift of leadership to give reasonable suggestion, contribution and decision in the affairs of the church. The activities of most of the mainline churches are regulated, at times do not give room for the illiterates or semi-literates in the church to voice out and give their opinion and suggestions to the administration of the church. The Independent Churches have strongly shown that the illiterates can possess charisma to contribute to the administrative welfare of the church. The illiterate and semi-literate individuals split from their main churches to found another church of their own with different doctrines. The church authorities feel free to take decision on the churches and lead the followers into the directions the Holy Spirit points the leaders.

Doctrinal Conflict

The mainline Church missionaries came to evangelize the African indigenes with the replica of the European and American cultures rooted in the Bible the instrumental bed rock of the Christian evangelization. African culture accepts and promotes polygamous marriage contrary to the doctrine of the early Christian missionaries that, uphold one wife and one husband. The truism is that, the African indigenes desire to worship God free from European culture and rites. Thus, conflict erupted in matters pertaining marrying more than one wife. Some Africans were not comfortable on the doctrine; this cause proliferation of African Independent churches, the doctrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary is also a bone of contention in Christendom, coupled with other contradictory issues on doctrinal faith.

The Effect of African Independent Churches

²⁶ Deji Isaac and S. Ademola Ishola, African Indigenous Churches (Bukuru African Christian Textbook, 2013), 15.

Proliferation of Churches: African Independent Churches fail to maintain consistency, patience and trust with the leaders, especially the weak and indolent ones. Consequently intolerance tends to creep in to destabilize the affairs of the church. Opposition to the authorities arises to challenge certain issues that might have been contradictory to the acceptable truth. Some impatient church worshippers seize the opportunity to disengage with the form main churches. Often times proliferation arises due to the boring pattern of the church's services, which got couple members to feel imbalance in spirit, as a result they pull out to form another church in order to correct the mistakes of the former. Separation of churches occurs at the internal crises of leadership tussle and lack of adequate recognition and appreciation of the members who make untiring efforts to keep the church functioning. Conflicts generate increase in the rising of new churches in Africa. The tendency to integrate indigenous culture with the foreign cultural background in which the missionaries imbibe often accelerates the upsurge of independent churches in African land. The indigenous people of Africa enjoy worshipping God in African lively mode. The danger of the utopian inclination is the consequence of individuals establishing both true and untrue Churches, fellowshipping, gospel, ministries and miracle centers clouded with deception and contradictions to the gospel truth of the life of Jesus Christ.

Women Empowerment: The African Independent Churches give women prominent position. Women are not neglected in the involvement of church activities. They are given chances to participate in the leadership forum of the church. In the mainline churches, women accompanied the clergies to disseminate the gospel of Jesus Christ, played famine roles of teaching, nursing and counseling the women, girls and children. These women worked under the dictate of the men folk who hold the authorities of the church. Thus, in African Independent Churches, women are empowered to hold authorities in Churches such as: Bishops, Priests, Pastors, Evangelists, Deaconates and President or Chair lady of church organizations and associations. It is pertinent to acknowledge that, women utilize opportunity to establish churches of their own and became church founders like the men counterpart. The women Church founders take decisions and direct the affairs of their churches in the ways the Holy Spirit gives them direction.

Vibrant worship: Africans are vibrant in nature. The African Independent Churches are noted to be vibrant in their mode of worship. In congruence to the mode of worship in the African Traditional Religion, which integrates: beating of

gong, drums and calabash, bells, clashing of symbols, flute and lyre and other instruments that are designated to arouse the spirits? Africans approach God; the Supreme Being, the Transcended and Almighty with music and dances as the Holy Bible prescribes in Psalms 100 and 150. To Africanize Christianity, the African Independent Churches infused the African approaches of mode of worship suitable into the beliefs and practices of Christianity. They make noise to God with shouts of joy in praises and singing and dancing with clapping of hands. This expression in worship has extended to the mainline churches in African land through the act of enculturation.

Recommendations

The Christendom in Africa should endeavour to harmonize the system of worship for the promotion of unity. In African culture, there are sorts of barbaric activities that some African Independent Churches have integrated into their system of worship which are opposed by Christianity, and it needs to be eradicated. Christianity upholds echoing the good news of the life, death, resurrection and good works of Jesus Christ especially his redemptive work to save mankind from sin and eternal damnation.

The role of women in various churches ought to be highly noticed and recommended to give maximum solidarity in church's activities. The African independent churches appreciated the roles of women in leadership, which should be extended to mainline churches where women are yet to be given recognition in the church's decisive matters.

The members of the church should discern the Spirit that inspires them to move into the establishment of churches of their own choices and styles. They ought to endeavour to practice what they preach, imbibe the spirit of patience, Humility, obedience, cooperation and love to remain and maintain the integrity of their churches. This will help to curtail proliferation of churches.

Conclusion

The spreading of Christianity in Africa has seemly yielded fruits in terms of new evangelization. Prophets are individuals who are specially called by God to administer to the people the futuristic events that might have influence in their lives. They pronounce joyful and sad activities that had not happened but might likely happen to some persons or place.

The Holy Spirit is the major sources of power and authority behind every manifestation of any miracle performed by the men of God using the mighty name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit inspires, propels, fills and directs the prophecy of the Major Prophets in Africa. It is pertinent to acknowledge the fact that, the Holy Spirit has never ceased to penetrate the hearts of the authentic Christians to model their lives and inebriate them to exhibit God' favor, mercy, compassion.

Notwithstanding, the Africans being religious in all glimpse of their being grew up spiritually to the height of producing prophets, Bishops, priests, pastors and Evangelists in various churches. The springing up of Indigenous Churches formed and established by the Indigenous men of God gave rise to the Pentecostal movements in Africa. Some individuals acclaimed they were moved, inspired, propelled and instructed in dream, trance or vision to begin a church, while some originated from the main church through the process of schism. Thus, several leaders of Independent churches were excommunicated or dismissed from the older missionary churches due to challenged problems in leadership tussle and fund. These independent church founders and leaders of the Pentecostal churches formed formidable prophetic movements in Africa. The great challenges confronting the African indigenous independent churches are the issue of proliferation of churches and inadequate training of the pastors and elders that hold the leadership of the independent churches in Africa. Notwithstanding, the Springing up of the African Independent Churches has added value the vibrant mode of worshipping God in Africa.

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