



Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism: A Black Religious Schizophrenia, 1910-2010

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ABSTRACT

The paper x-rayed the origins and growth of Pentecostalism in American and African milieu. It is a comparative study. Finding showed that in spite of African Pentecostals being African initiated churches, American Pentecostalism has direct or indirect influence on Nigerian Pentecostal spirituality. Making use of the hermeneutical circle, I related the biblical teachings of pneumatology, faith healing, economic and spiritual empowerment to demonstrate their inherent compatibility and their application in the emergence of Pentecostal programmes in American and African Pentecostalism as is related to social crisis, the dislocation of masses brought on by economic deprivation, urbanization, the break up of traditional society and consequence loss of traditional values. The method of approach is analytical based on the review of related literature.

INTRODUCTION

It is the position of this paper that, if the diverse Pentecostal groups in this country Nigeria endowed with sound moral, spiritual, aesthetic and evangelistic gifts as they could engage in a strong criticism of prosperity theology, a return to holiness ethic, the blossoming of intercession ministry, a massive charismatization of the mainline churches and intellectual development, the future stability and prosperity of the nation could be guaranteed. The aim of this paper is to create awareness of true is that American and to a large extent European Pentecostals have much influence on Nigerian Pentecostalism.

The Pentecostals display assertiveness and resistance in the face of economic deprivation, unemployment, urbanization, loss of traditional values, dehumanization of black, and witchcrafting to the status quo in their struggle

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

for a better life. The strength of this research work is that it generates information that can instil correct academic knowledge on the contemporary Nigerians that will in turn galvanize them into appreciating African initiated churches. Africa and Nigeria shall be used interchangeably.

Classification and taxonomy

The book of Acts and the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians 12 and 14 indicate that speaking tongues, prophecy and miraculous healings are among other 'spiritual gifts' or charismata mentioned several times in the above books. Nevertheless, throughout the two thousand year history of Christianity there have been reports of charismata associated with the emergence of Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century (Anderson, 2008). It seems that the decline in the practice of spiritual gifts began quite early, as the Montanist movement in the second century believed that the gifts of the spirit had been restored to their former importance in their movement. Monasticism itself was originally a charismatic movement that reacted to what seemed to be cold orthodoxy, claiming the sympathies and probably the allegiance of the famous African theologian Tertullian (c. 155-220). Speaking in tongues and prophecy were common among Montanus and his disciples, and they believed in 'progressive revelation', so distasteful and destabilizing for the church seeking to establish itself and even more so as it became increasingly identified with the heresy of Gnosticism and millennialist excesses.

Most of the surviving sources for information on Montanism, however, came from opponents like Eusebius, who said that Montanus was 'wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving, and speaking and uttering strange things (Taylor, 1972). If these biased reports are to be believed, the Montanists saw the spiritual gifts as the exclusive possession of the prophets. No less a person than Tertullian in his challenge to Marcion affirmed that gifts of the spirit such as prophecy (which he defined as prediction and revelation), visions, ecstasy and interpretation of tongues were 'forthcoming from my side without any difficulty', and elsewhere he writes that healing, revelation and exorcism were among the joys available to Christians (Kelsey, 1981).

A variety of overlapping terms exist for these forms of Christianity: African Initiated Churches (AICs), African indigenous churches and African Instituted Churches. The abbreviation AICs covers them all. Those who wish to point out that AICs exhibit African cultural forms, describe them as indigenous, and soon. These terms have largely been imposed upon such groups, and may not be the way they would describe themselves. Some scholars argue that independent churches or religious movements demonstrate syncretism or partial integration between aspects of Christian belief and African traditional religion, but the degree to which this happens varies, and has often been exaggerated.

Christians in the mainline Pentecostal churches commonly use Pentecostalism to refer to a second experience of the Spirit, subsequent to conversion and accompanied by speaking in tongues (Milne, 1993). It is also called baptism in the Spirit or Charismatic Renewal (Livingstone, 1980). Its adherents share a common belief in the possibility of receiving the same experience and gifts as did the first Christians ‘on the day of Pentecost’ (Acts 2:1-4). The definitions of Pentecostalism given by Milne (1993) and Livingstone (1980) will form our operational definition.

While the term “African” is appropriate, given that these Christian groupings formed in Africa, AICs differs from one another. Not all African cultural systems are the same: regional variations occur among West, East and Southern Africans, and the AICs will reflect these Africans tend to have in common a belief that ancestral spirits interact with the living (a belief also shared by many Asian peoples). As the discussion of classification below shows, the various AICs also differ widely in their organizational forms. Some resemble western Christian denominations (Ethiopian type), while others may not (Zionist types). Some have large numbers of affiliates located all over a country (the Zion Christian Church of South Africa), while others may consist only of an extended family and their acquaintances meeting in a house or out of doors.

Recently, the idea that AICs are indigenous to Africa has to be surrendered, as AICs can now be found in Europe (e.g Germany, Britain) and the United States. In such cases, the term “African” suggests the content of origin, rather than of location.

Location

African Initiated churches are found across Africa; they are particularly well-documented in Southern Africa and West Africa.

Origins

During the colonial period, many black converts to Christianity were unable fully to reconcile their beliefs with teachings of their church leaders, split from their parent churches. The reasons for these splits were usually either:

- i) Political—an effort to escape white control,
- ii) Historical—many of the parent churches, particularly those from a protestant tradition, had themselves emerged from a process of schism and synthesis; and
- iii) Cultural—the result of trying to accumulate Christian belief within an African worldview.

There are thousands of African Initiated churches (more than 10,000 in South Africa alone) and each one has its own characteristics, Ecclesiologists, missiologists and sociologists and others have tried to group them according to common characteristics, though disagreements have arisen about which characteristics are most significant, and which taxonomy is most accurate.

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

Ethiopian Churches

Ethiopian churches generally retain the Christian doctrines of their mother church in an unreformed state. Ethiopian African Initiated churches, which are recently-formed protestant congregations, mostly in Southern Africa, arose from the Ethiopian movement of the late nineteenth century, which taught that African Christian churches should be under the control of black people. They should not be confused with Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church or Coptic Orthodox church, which have a much longer and an utterly distinct doctrinal history. Some denominations that arose from the Ethiopian movement have united with these earlier denominations.

Zionist Churches

Zionist churches, such as Zion Christian Church, trace their origin to the Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, founded by John Alexander. Dowie, with its headquarters at Zion City, near Chicago in the USA. They are found chiefly in Southern Africa. In the early 1900s, Zionist missionaries went to South Africa from the USA, and established congregations. They emphasized divine healing, abstention from pork, and the wearing of white robes. The Zionist missionaries were followed by Pentecostal ones, whose teaching was concentrated on spiritual gifts and baptism in the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of this. The predominately white Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa arose out of this missionary effort and emphasizes the Pentecostal teaching.

The Black Zionists retained much of the original Zionist tradition. The Zionists split into several different denominations, although the reason for this was the rapid growth of the movement than divisions. A split in the Zionist movement in the USA meant that after 1980 few missionaries came to Southern Africa. The movement in Southern Africa and its growth has been the result of black leadership and initiated. As time passed some Zionist groups began to mix aspects of traditional African beliefs such as ancestor veneration with Christian doctrine. Many Zionists stress faith-healing and revelation, and in many congregations the leader is viewed as a prophet.

American and African Pentecostalism: Its origins

According to Simpson (1978), in 1619 twenty Africans were sold as slaves to settlers in Jamestown, Virginia, by the Captain of a Dutch man-of-war. In 1624, a Negro child was baptized and from that time on Negroes were baptized in most of the oldest churches in the South. As the number of black Christians increased, peculiar problems arose for the white church members. Clergymen were reproached for admitting Negroes into the church while they were held as slaves. Opposition to the Christening of Negroes gradually disappeared when laws were enacted providing that slaves did not become free through accepting the Christian faith and baptism. As a result of racism,

unemployment demonization of blackness and other related social injustice, new religious sects characterized with visions, dreams, prophecies, prosperity gospel and faith healing came into existence in North America before the American Revolution.

The Great Awaken of the 1740s (Protestant revivals, especially in the New England colonies) established the model for the periodic revivals which have continued for more than two hundred years. At times, these were interdenominational comprising Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. Shortly after 1900, a large number of new sects appeared in the mountainous regions of North Carolina and Tennessee and spread rapidly through the growing mill towns.

In many of the clandestine prayer meetings held in a cabin slave quarters or in a grave of trees that was believed to be sacred, an upturned iron kettle or pot was used in an attempt to deaden the sounds of the singing and shouting. In this case, black owner in relation to Christianity reflect the embracing of the black identity; a return to and a search for roots, a unity of the blacks; it is the renouncing of the “American Christ” insofar as his followers are paternalistic, condescending and restricted. The call to humanity by white Christians and their attempts to put down the responsive rage of black youth in the name of love, as well as sending them off to war without providing them equal employment at home leads to a rejection of Jesus by these black youth (Simpson, 1978, p.246).

Among those who have written extensively about black theology and the relationship between black power and black theology are Albert B. Cleage, James H. Cone, Joseph R. Washington, Jr. and Garraud S. Willmore. Cleage (1969) argues that the illusion that Jesus was white dominated the world for nearly 500 years only because white Europeans dominated the world for that length of time. To Cleage, the historic truth is emerging:

Jesus was the non-white leader of a non-white people struggling for national liberation against the rule of a white nation, Rome. The intermingling of the races in Africa and the Mediterranean area is an established fact. That nation Israel was a mixture of Chaldeans, Egyptians, Medianites, Ethiopians, Kushites, Babylonians and other black peoples, all of whom were already mixed with the black people of central Africa.

In Black theology and Black power, Cone (1969) defines black power as “an affirmation of the humanity of blacks in spite of white racism”. He asserts that “only blacks know the extent of white oppression, and that only blacks are prepared to risk all to be free”. Black power, then, seeks conflict rather than understanding, and black support but not white good will. To Cone (1969), the goal of black power is consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ and that “black rebellion is a manifestation of God himself actively involved in the present day affairs of men for the purpose of liberating a people”. In his theology, “being black in America has very little to do with skin colour. One development going back to the beginning of the twentieth century is the appearance of new types of churches. Many of these represented doctrinal splits within established churches. These secessions

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

adopted names like “Holiness” “Church of God” “Apostolic” and “Pentecostal”. Other religious, or quasi-religious, groups emphasizing “nationalistic” or racial qualities, including the Black Muslims, have appeared. A second development within the black religious community has been the serving by many middle-class Negroes of their affiliations with the Baptist and Methodist churches and the joining of Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. A third trend is the tendency of the black intellectual to reject the church as irrelevant to the difficult realities of race. A fourth trend is some increase in participation in “interracial churches”.

One of the main attractions of the black church has been the opportunity it has given its adherents to participate in an organized group, to compete for prestige and offices, and to win acclaim. The black combined “serving the Lord” with fighting the “Job Ceiling” and demanding equal economic opportunity. Although the 1807 Act abolished the slave trade, it did not end racism, notions of white supremacy, or the demonization of blackness, black people and Africa or children of a lesser God. Black theology refers to a variety of black theologies which have as their base the liberation of the marginalized, especially the injustice done towards blacks in America and South African contexts. Black theology mixes Christianity with the civil rights and black power movements. Black theology was particularly influential in South Africa and Namibia for motivating resistance to apartheid.

The beginnings of North American Pentecostalism in the Azusa Street revival of Los Angeles resulted in a category of ordinary, but ‘called’ people called ‘missionaries’ fanning out to every corner of the globe within a remarkable short space of time.

1. Pentecostal roots: the apostolic faith

According to Goff (1988), in 1900 Charles Fox Parham, a former Methodist minister, opened Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas and about 40 students were enrolled. Their only text book was the Bible and Parham gave the students the assignment of discovering some certain common evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, before he left on a preaching trip. The students reached the conclusion that the biblical evidence of the baptism in the Spirit was speaking in tongues, which they told Parham on his return. The 31 December, 1900 was set aside for praying for this experience. A “watch night” service was held with great expectation. Throughout 1 January, they prayed and waited until finally at 11pm, Agnes Ozman asked Parham to lay hands on her to receive the gift of the Spirit. She was reportedly the first to speak in tongues, followed by others in the next three days, including Parham. For two years there was little acceptance of this experience.

In 1903 Parham preached at Holiness missions in Kansas and Missouri, where there were many experiences of tongues and healings. By 1905 there were said to be about a thousand who had received the baptism in the spirit, and the movement was now known as the “Apostolic Faith” (Faupel, 1966). In the same year Parham started preaching in Texas and began a Bible

College in Houston, where a black preacher named William Joseph Seymour, a son of freed slaves, was allowed to listen to Parham's lectures outside the classroom through a half-opened door, and in spite of this racism he became convinced of Parham's view. The leadership of the movement was soon to pass to Seymour and take an international dimension (Anderson, 1979).

2. The Azusa Street revival

In 1906 Seymour was invited to preach at a black Holiness Church in Los Angeles, where his sermon on tongues caused the church building to be locked against him. Members of this church continued meeting in a house with Seymour for prayer. Seymour's black Baptist host asked the preacher to lay hands on him, fell to the floor as if unconscious and began speaking in tongues. Seven others including Seymour were "struck from their chairs" the same day, receiving the same experience. For three days and nights the house was filled with people praying and rejoicing continuously and boldly. White soon joined this group and the house became too small. They moved into an old storage shed in Azusa Street (a former building of the African Methodist Episcopal Church) where the Apostolic Faith mission was born (Faupel, 1996). With a sawdust-sprinkled floor and wooden planks to sit on, daily meetings commenced at about ten in the morning and usually lasted well into the night for the next three years.

3. The African roots

Many theories about the origins of Pentecostalism are being propounded. But the generation of the movement from a black church rooted in the African American culture of the nineteenth century is an extremely significant fact (Robeck, 1993). Many early manifestations of the Pentecostalism were found in the religious expressions of the slaves and were themselves a reflection of the African religious culture from which they had been wrenched (Anderson, 1991). Seymour himself was deeply affected by black slave spirituality (Nelson, 1981). To Mackrobert (1988), citing a black Pentecostal scholar Leonard Lovett said that "black Pentecostalism emerged out of the context of the brokenness of the black existence; their holistic view of religion had its roots in African religion" (pp.77-78).

Hollenweger (1986) considers the main features of this African American spirituality to be oral liturgy, narrative theology and witness, the maximum participation of the whole community in worship and service, the inclusion of visions and dreams into public worship and understanding the relationship between body and mind manifested by healing through prayer (pp. 5-6). Macrobert (1988) adds that rhythmic hand clapping, the antiphonal participation of the congregation in the sermon, the immediacy of God in the services and baptism by immersion (all common Pentecostal practices) are "survivals of Africanisms." These expressions were fundamental to early

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism and remain in the movement to this day. The African roots of Pentecostalism help explain its significance in the third world today.

Nigerian Pentecostalism: its origins and growth

In 1910, the first pattern of Pentecostalism was launched by an Anglican deacon as an indigenous prophetic movement that later became known as Christ Army. Following an influenza epidemic in 1918, revivals flare within the mission churches and the Christ Army Church. Spirit-filled groups also expand, including those known by the Yoruba word Aladura (“praying people”).

Early aladura churches include the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society founded in 1925, and the Church of the Lord (Aladura) founded in 1930. Around 1918, an Anglican formed a prayer group known as the Precious Stone (Diamond) Society to heal influenza victims. The group left the Anglican Church in the early 1920s and affiliated with Faith Tabernacle, a church based in Philadelphia (Anderson, 2001; Gaiya, 2002)

1930 – 1960 during the 1930s, Joseph Babalola of Faith Tabernacle leads a group that converts thousands. 1932, his movement initiated ties with the Pentecostal Apostolic Church of Great Britain authorities but the association dissolves over the use of modern medicine. In 1941, Babalola founded the independent Christ Apostolic Church, which is estimated to have over a million members by 1990 (Anderson, 2001) foreign Pentecostal denominations such as the Welsh Apostolic Church (1931), the Assemblies of God (1939) and the Foursquare Gospel Church (1954) are also introduced in this period.

In 1950s the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) as an African initiated church (AIC) founded by the Rev Samuel Bilehou Joseph Oschoffa (raised in Methodism) on 29 September, 1947 in Port-Novo Supreme Headquarters Tchakou arrived Nigeria from Benin in 1960. The CCC is a church that claims to be prophetic with Christian background and a tradition located in Aladura churches. The faithful are called ‘Celestials’. The name of the church is inspired by a vision by which Jesus word have said that church members adore him as do the angels in heaven.

It claims inspiration from God through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit among the faithful. Its doctrinal teachings are based on the Bible and any superstition or animist belief from traditional African religions is excluded as in other churches in Aladura movement. Tobacco alcohol and eating pork are forbidden. The faithful must remove their shoes for prayer and in the place of worship. Men and women are separated at the church. Menstruating women and those who have recently given birth are unclean and can not attend the church for seven days in the first case after which they would be “sanctified, and forty days in the second case”. Only men who are anointed are allowed access to the altar.

In 1952, a former member of the Cherubim and Seraphim society, Pa Josiah Akindayomi, founded the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Under Enoch Adejare Adeboye, the church becomes increasingly Pentecostal in theology and practise and grows from an estimated 42 congregations in 1980 to around 7,000 in 2004 with followers in more than 90 countries, including the US (Anderson, 2001). Originating in evangelical student reveals, a wave of Pentecostal expansion spawns new churches in the 1960s and 70s. A leader of this expansion is Benson Idahosa, one of the African most influential Pentecostal preachers. Idahosa established the Church of God Mission International in 1972. In 1974, the Pentecostal umbrella organization Grace of God Ministry was founded in Eastern Nigeria. The Deeper Life Bible Church is founded in 1975, and soon becomes one of Nigerian largest new-Pentecostal churches with an estimated 350,000 members 1993 (Ojo, 2004; Olupona, 2003 and Gaiya, 2002).

1980s–present, new charismatic churches grew throughout the 1980s and 2010s. In 1986, David Oyedepo founded Living Faith Outreach Worldwide, popularly known as “Winners Chapel”.

Forum’s 2006 Pentecostal survey suggests that renewalists including charismatics and Pentecostals–accounts for approximately three-in-ten Nigerians. The survey finds also that roughly six-in-ten protestants in Nigeria are either Pentecostal or charismatic, and three-in-ten Nigerian Catholics surveyed can be classified as charismatic.

The growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is evidently more physical than spiritual, moral and intellectual and this could be the resultant effect of the observable shift in the focus of the leadership of the Pentecostal churches. The future of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is dependent on the effectiveness or otherwise of the Pentecostal churches in attention to the spiritual and physical needs of their flocks. Many are in church today because they either desire relief from the socio-economic miseries of their existence or deliverance from some demonic forces. The Pentecostal churches that wish to remain relevant beyond the present-era are those investing in the tutorship of their followers regarding the eternal value Christian virtues, not on mundane rewards, but on immortal existence beyond the physical one.

The growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria was bred by the critical perception of young Christian students in most southern Nigeria universities that the mainline churches such as Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic among others, which had tremendous influence on their upbringing had become too cold, docile and devoid of the resurrection power that the Apostles of old received in the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Thus, the new age Pentecostalism which was initially confined to campuses began to grow in leaps and bounds, first in the consciousness of their converts or proselytes on campuses, and later extended beyond the limited confines of the country to other parts of the world. The expansion of the reach of Pentecostalism was facilitated by the economic and political

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

crises of the 1980s, which naturally and psychologically created adherents who were drawn from pool of frustrated and marginalized people in the larger Nigerian society.

Today, Pentecostalism has become a booming trade mark of a Christian evangelistic crusade in Nigeria. The messages of healing, miracles and prosperity have often received wider acceptance among the populace that has seen the hope of the oil boom collapse into the spiral of economic decline, social and economic decadence. Pentecostal churches in the country have continued to feast on the psychology of the masses who genuinely are desirous of relief from their sordid existential realities. True, while there may be some faithful Pentecostal pastors who are committed to the course of promoting God's kingdom on earth, several others have continued to pursue the preoccupation as a commercial venture, and utilize any means to accumulate profits. Recently, the National Broadcasting Commission in Nigeria (NBC) clamped down on the broadcast of unverified miracle claims by some Tele-Evangelists in an effort to sanitize the among of Christian religious programmes on the country's numerous television stations.

On finance, the Pentecostal pastors emphasized the importance of sowing 'seed faith' to their flocks during ministrations. The biblical injunction in Malachi 3:10 has become trite and jade: 'Bring you all the tithes into the store house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing'. Some of the African Pentecostal pastors who did not see strength in African Christianity resorted to the utilization of occult powers in order to remain relevant to their congregations. There have been several exposes on some miracle-working pastors who were indicted for being neck-deep in occultist practices and rituals. Such names as Primate Olabayo-Evangelical churches of Yahweh, Prophet T.B. Joshua-Synagogue of All Nations; Pastor Chris Oyakhilome-Christ Embassy; and the late Pastor Rev (founder) Samuel B.J. Oschoffa-Celestial Church of Christ among others had been linked to occultist practices.

Pentecostals believe that the coming of spirit brings the ability to perform 'signs and wonders' in the name of Christ to accompany and authenticate their evangelism (Anderson, 1999). Pentecostals all over the world, but especially in the third world, see the role of healing as good news for the poor and afflicted. Early 20th century Pentecostal newsletters and periodicals abounded with 'thousands of testimonies of physical healings, exorcisms and deliverances'. The 'signs and wonders' promoted by independent Pentecostals Evangelists led to the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches in many parts of the world, although have seldom been without controversy. The Pentecostal understanding of the preaching of the world in evangelism was that 'signs and wonders' should accompany it, and divine healing in particular was an indispensable part of Pentecostal evangelistic methodology (Saayman, 1993).

Indeed, many cultures of the world, and especially in Africa, a major attraction for Pentecostalism have been its emphasis on healing. In these cultures, the religious specialist or 'person of God' has power to heal the sick and ward off evil spirits and sorcery. This holistic function, which does not separate the 'physical' from the 'spiritual', is restored in Pentecostalism, and indigenous peoples see it as a "powerful" religion to meet human needs. For some Pentecostals, faith in God's power to heal directly through prayer resulted in a rejection of other methods of healing. The numerous healing reported by Pentecostal evangelists confirmed that God's word was true, God's power was evidently on their efforts, and the result was that many were persuaded to become Christians.

This emphasis on healing is so much parts of the Pentecostal evangelism, especially in Africa, that large campaigns and tent crusade preceded by great publicity is frequently used in order to reach as many 'unevangelized' people as possible. Hollenweger (1972) says that Pentecostals are 'efficient evangelists' because of the power of their existence. Again, the expansion of Pentecostalism in Africa in the 21st century can be attributed, at least partially, to cultural factors. Hollenweger (1972) sees the 'oral structures' of Pentecostalism, like Christianity itself, to be the reason for its initial growth, and not in any 'particular Pentecostal doctrine'.

Hollenweger's (1972) list of characteristics of these structures is well known: Oral liturgy, narrative theology and witness, reconciliatory and participant community, the inclusion of visions and dreams in worship, and understanding the relationship between body and mind revealed in healing and prayer and liturgical dance. These are also predominantly African cultural features, evident in the leadership of the African American Azusa street revival leader William Seymour, whose 'spirituality lay in his past'. His Pentecostal experience meant more than speaking in tongues and included loving in the face of hateful racism. To Hollenweger (1972), Seymour represents the 'reconciling Pentecostal experience' and a 'congregation where every body is a Pentecostal contributor to the liturgy. Seymour's Pentecostalism is 'the oral missionary movement', with spiritual power to overcome racism and chauvinism.

To Hollenweger (1972), oral structures could be seen in Pentecostal music and liturgy, pointing out that spontaneity and enthusiasm, rather than leading to an absence of liturgy, produce flexible and oral liturgies memorized by the Pentecostal congregation. The important element of these liturgies is active participation of every member in the congregation. Pentecostal liturgy has social and revolutionary implications, in that it empowers marginalized people. It takes as acceptable what ordinary people have in the worship of God and thus overcomes 'the real barriers of race, social status, and education'.

Some of the main methods employed by the new churches are very similar to those used by most Pentecostals including door-to-door evangelism, meetings held in home of interested inquirers, preaching in trains, buses, on street corners, markets and at places of public concourse, and 'tent crusades'

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

held all over the continent (Gifford, 1992). Access to modern communications has resulted in the popularizing of Western style (especially North American) of independent Pentecostal 'televangelists' several of whom make regular visits to Africa and broadcast their own television programmes there, public scandals notwithstanding.

Black Pentecostalism: a religious schizophrenia

It is a truism that Pentecostals in Africa are African Initiated Churches (AICs), but they were either directly or indirectly influenced by the European or American Pentecostalism. Thus dependent upon the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Baptist, Wesleyan, Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers and similar missionary bodies that evangelized Africa. For instance, Harris and Braide left the Sierra Leone based Methodist Mission about 1914–18 because the mission abandoned the pneumatic values of the kerygma (Ndubuisi, 1997). The legend Augustus Ehurien Nwogu of Old Umuahia in Abia state Nigeria was a product of this early 20th century church development. The spiritual experience he had thus led to his reconversion from the Niger Delta Pastorate (NDP) to the Faith Tabernacle Congregation (FTC) in 1930. He later separated from the FTC because in 1931, he introduced holiness Christianity to FTC which the church rejected. Following this spiritual crisis, he severed relations with the FTC thence he named his group "Church of Jesus Christ" (CJC) in 1934 with another branch at Port Harcourt where he had secured a clerical job in the Nigerian Dockyard (Nigerian Port Authority - NEPA). In 1939 he affiliated with American Assemblies of God Mission (AGM) and so lost his CJC identity.

There are other Pentecostal movements within the mainline churches in the contemporary Africa such as: Evangelical Fellowship in Anglican Communion of Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Methodist Evangelical movement of Methodist Church Nigeria, Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria etc. To Achunike (2004), at first, the implosion of Pentecostalism as Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria (CCRN) provoked the publishing of guidelines for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria by the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria.

Some of the AICs founders who received western civilization especially mission education were exposed to certain American Pentecostal literature and correspondence such as writings and preachings of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland dealing on subjects like "Prosperity" "gospel", "faith healing", or "word" originating in North American independent Charismatic movements. Other literature included that of Faith Tabernacle, Baptist and Apostolic Faith magazines, videos, films, drama and newsletters. Simpson (1978) book on "Black religions in the New World"; Cleage (1968) "Black Messiah"; Hollensweger (1972) "The Pentecostals"; Cone (1969) "Black theology and black power" among others spurred the founders of AICs on the issues of pneumatology, black power (black identity), evangelism, problem of unemployment, racism, visions, dreams, prophecies, and other related

matters. The “Great Awakening” of the 1740s (Protestant revivals), especially in the New England colonies) after the American Revolution has established the model for the periodic revivals which have continued for more than two hundred years.

Religion and politics among the Pentecostals

This can be categorized into three streams namely:

1. ***Pentecostal political activism originates with the founding of Christian Students’ Social Movement of Nigeria in 1977***

The emphasis of this early activism is on the spiritual forces that govern politics and on bringing about reform through prayer (Freston, 2001). In the 1980s, Pentecostals became active in the Christian Association of Nigeria. Founded in 1976, the Association initially includes only Catholic and mainline Protestants, but by 1988 it incorporates churches associated with the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, a Pentecostal umbrella group, and the organization of African instituted churches (Freston, 2001).

2. ***The period of Islamization, 1979–1999***

a. Under a succession of Muslim military dictators, the Association became increasingly political and functions almost as “an unofficial opposition to the regime” (Freston, 2001).

b. In 1986, under General Babangida, Nigeria became a member of the organization of the Islamic Conference (now organization for Islamic corporation), triggering numerous Pentecostal protests. Benson Idahosa threatened to call for a Christian boycott of newspapers favouring Islamization. In 1987, Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, a leading Muslim cleric, stokes further controversy by publicly declaring that Muslims will never allow non-Muslims to assume political leadership in Nigeria. In response, Pentecostal leaders ally with other Christians in Kaduna state and launched a campaign to field candidates in the 1988 local government elections (Ojo, 2004; Amadi, 2004).

c. Pentecostals and other evangelicals compete at various levels in the 1993 elections, with priests, deacons, prophets, apostle and evangelists emerging as governors, deputy governors, local government chairmen and councilors.

3. ***The Presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo, 1999-2007***

In the 1999 elections, Pentecostals support Olusegun Obasanjo of People’s Democratic Party. For many Protestants leaders, he symbolizes the restoration of Christian control over government. A Baptist, Obasanjo had served as military ruler from 1976–79. In 1995, while in prison, Obasanjo claims that he is a “born again”. As he was elected, he called for national prayer and fasting to assure a successful transition. In 1999, Pentecostal leaders conducted an all-night prayer meeting for the new president (Freston,

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

2001; Ojo, 2004). Anyim Pius Anyim of People's Democratic Party and a member of Assemblies of God were elected as senator and latter became senate president and secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria. Sam Egwu, a member of Assemblies of God was also elected as Governor of Ebonyi State (1999-2007).

In explaining the story of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, the progressive expansion of poverty, urbanization ignorance, hunger, disease, poor quality education, unemployment, exploitation, alienation, oppression, witchcrafting, mal-administration, ecclesiastical poor leadership and dispossession in Nigeria since independent has continued to influence the resort of Nigerians to a search for the spiritual essence of their being. The socio-economic and political adversities in the country provide a fertile ground for the planting, germination, growth and balkanization of all forms of religion. The emergence of a global cultural system which is the consequence of a variety of social and cultural developments, came to a large extent explain the growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

Challenges of the Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria

One of the main criticisms levelled against the new Pentecostal churches is that, they propagate a prosperity gospel, the 'Faith' or 'Word' movement originating in North American independent charismatic movement particularly found in the preaching and writings of Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland. Gifford (1992) proposes that it is 'Americanization' rather than any 'American quality' that is responsible for the growth of these churches. He sees this new phenomenon as a type of neo-colonialism propagated by American 'prosperity preachers', a sort of conspiracy theory. Belief in the efficacy of charms and amulets was substituted with the introduction of holy oil, handkerchief and holy water. Some features common to the Pentecostals include:

- i. preaching of the prosperity messages; and
- ii. faith healing and performance of miracles (combined with prosperity messages become the 'wealth and health gospel')

Types of Pentecostal movements

These Pentecostal churches whose historical origins are found at the beginning of this century and who subscribe to the "initial evidence" theory that speaking in tongues is the evidence of the "baptism in the Spirit" are sometimes referred to as "classical Pentecostals". The largest of these is the Assemblies of God, mainly a white church in the USA but largest in Brazil. Classical Pentecostals are themselves divided into various types, which are as distinct as other divisions within Pentecostalism. Lederle (1988) speaks on three main doctrinal groupings of classical Pentecostals.

1. Wesleyan Holiness Pentecostals predominantly black church of God in Christ, the Church of God (Cleveland) and the Pentecostal Holiness Church among others, all of which were a direct development from the Holiness Movement.
2. Baptist Pentecostals of which the Assemblies of God is the largest.
3. Oneness Pentecostals mostly “two stage” churches, developing after the ‘new issue’ division of 1916 which rejected Trinitarianism. The largest of these churches is the United Pentecostal church, which is particularly strong in Colombia (Wagner, 1973).

Another wave of Pentecostalism in Nigeria occurred simultaneously with the emergence of the charismatic movement in the mainstream churches. The Charismatic movement was viewed as a rebellious movement tainted with doctrinal errors by the mainstream church leaders, particularly by many Anglican, Roman Catholic bishops and pastors. Many of the adherents of the Charismatic movement were reprimanded by their church leaders. While some in the charismatic movement joined the Pentecostal churches, others founded their own churches, which were structured like the Pentecostal churches (Gifford, 1994).

Pentecostalism has become an increasingly prominent feature of African’s religious and political landscape. The movement’s growth has been particularly dramatic since the era of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s. According to recent figures from the World Christian Database (2006), Pentecostals now represent 12% or about 107 million of African’s population of nearly 1890 million people. This includes individuals who belong to classical Pentecostal denominations, such as the Assemblies of God or Apostolic Faith Mission, that were founded in the early 20th century, as well as those who belong to Pentecostal denominations or churches that have formed more recently such as the Deeper Life Bible Church in Nigeria. Charismatic members of non-Pentecostal denominations, who in Africa are drawn mainly from Catholic and Protestant Churches and African Instituted Churches (AICs), number an additional 40 million, or approximately 5% of the population. As recently as 1970, Pentecostals and Charismatics combined to represent less than 5% Africans.

Though Pentecostalism’s dramatic expansion has left almost no part of sub-Saharan Africa unaffected, the extent of its growth varies across the region. At the upper end, according to the World Christian Database (2000), are Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Kenya, Angola, Zambia and Uganda, in all of which Pentecostals and Charismatics represent more than 20% of the national populations. At the lower end are Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Madagascar and Sudan, where Pentecostals and Charismatics make up less than 10% of the population. Countries where the Pentecostal and Charismatic

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

population is between 10% and 20% include Congo-Brazzaville, the Central Africa Republic, Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Mozambique.

While nationalist movements drove African politics during the era of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s, and mainline church leaders were deeply involved in the continent's efforts at democratization in the 1980s and early 1990s (Gifford, 1995), Pentecostals have become increasingly important political actors in the last 15 years as illustrated below.

1. In 1991 Zambia became the first former British colony in Africa to change a president through democratic multiparty elections and the winner, Frederick Chiluba, was an avowed Pentecostal who claimed to have received the gift of tongues at a crusade conducted by a Pentecostal evangelist Reinhard Bonnke. After taking office, Chiluba invited a group of Pentecostal ministers to "cleanse" the presidential palace of evil spirits and publicly dedicated Zambia and its government to "the Lordship of Jesus Christ" (Freston, 2001)

2. In Kenya, Pentecostals actively campaigned against and helped defeat President Mwai Kibaki's draft constitution in November, 2005, largely because it provided for the establishment of Muslim personal law court.

Beyond electoral politics, Pentecostalism has penetrated important sectors of African public life. In Uganda and Kenya, for example, Pentecostals and evangelicals control numerous radio and television stations (Bengali, 2006). In Nigeria, the Pentecostal Redeemed Christian Church of God produces Christian-themed movies that have beaten secular rivals at the box office (Murphy, 2006). In 2003, Ghana's national airline, Ghana Airways, invited a Ghanaian-born, London-based Pentecostal evangelist to conduct a "deliverance service" "to save the organization from its recurring financial failure (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005).

As part of Pentecostal missionary strategy television and videos are used. Certain African Pentecostal characteristics in utilizing media as a means of evangelism include certain aspects of today's media that constitute a challenge to the churches in the West do exist in Africa such as internet addiction disorder based on cyber sex, cyber gambling, and cyber information such as chat rooms (Kalu, 2008). Some media strategy include radio, television, video-and-audio cassettes, glamorous house magazines, handbills, posters, billboards, books, availability of clothes such as T-shirts, caps, fashion etc.

The theology of Pentecostalism in America and Africa

The Theology of Pentecostalism in Africa is structured on the bases of faith healing, prosperity gospel, visions, exorcisms, miracles, the Godhead, baptism, soteriology, eschatology, passions, ecclesiology, Bible prophecy, prayer, fasting, witnessing, leadership, morality and sanctification derived from John Wesley and John Fletcher's doctrine of holiness. It is geared towards pneumatological theory, Pentecostal and ecumenical perspective.

The Pentecostal movement is related to social crisis, dislocation of masses brought on by socio-economic deprivation, the break up of traditional society and the consequent loss of traditional values. Pentecostals display assertiveness and resistance to the status quo in their struggle for a better life. The important Pentecostal emphases include the appeal to the supernatural and the group's eschatological expectation; reflect the adherents' search for health and well being.

In Africa, Pentecostalism has a keen emphasis on transformation, gifts of the spirit, salvation and materialism. African Pentecostals are the specific African initiatives, appropriations and contributions to the growth, significance and impact of Pentecostalism as a global phenomenon. Contemporary African Christianity is growing tremendously in part because of the neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic salvific discourse that treats material well-being as if it were an end in itself. Issues involved in the African Pentecostal theology include:

1. Reverse Mission–The rhetoric and language of reverse mission within and the continent is one that is found in the mouth of some pastors, “We are re-evangelizing Africa, Europe, America” “Europe is a dark continent” “Britain or Nigeria is no longer a Christian country” “I am called by God to start a church in Britain, America, Nigeria, Ghana” and so on.
2. High view of scripture–Its belief and practice is based on sola scriptura.
3. There is also concept of healing and deliverance.
4. They belief also in the efficacy of prayers.
5. Like American Pentecostalism, African Pentecostalism believes also in prosperity gospel.
6. African Pentecostal theology emphasizes on praise and worship.
7. Hope–Phrases like “we go survive” (that is I will survive), “we are still alive” (“we are still here and well”) all demonstrate hope.

CONCLUSION

None of the earlier manifestations of spiritual gifts and speaking in tongues, such as those recorded in the early church among the montanists, Anabaptists during the Reformation, and among Quakers, French Huguenots, Shakers, and Mormons (Kelsey, 1981) had any direct influence upon Pentecostalism. Its immediate background was the North American Holiness Movement (Anderson, 1979) on the teaching of John Wesley, who was himself influenced by the Moravians, and an off shoot of German Pietism (Land, 1993). Pietism emphasis the importance of feeling in Christian experience and encouraged a personal relationship with God. The Moravian Movement had a profound effect upon Wesley and the Methodist revival.

Black American and Nigerian Pentecostalism

Wesley's doctrine of a second blessing that he called sanctification or "perfect love" was a central emphasis of early Methodism. This teaching of a crisis experience subsequent to conversion was Wesley's main contribution to Pentecostalism. Eventually in the late 19th century a polarization within Methodism occurred between those who believed Wesley's "second blessing" teaching and those who did not. The latter remained within mainstream Methodism. North American revivalism stressed the role of the emotions in changing the life of an individual.

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