



Differential Dimensions between Pentecostals and Aladura Movements in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper analyzed the historical origin of the Pentecostal and the Aladura churches and also gave the differences between the two religious organizations. The paper used literary and descriptive narratives in its approach to the issues discussed and depended largely on library materials.

Introduction

Pentecostal and Aladura churches fall within the realm of new religious movement, the former having both foreign and African origin whereas the later is purely of African orientation and origin. Peel has recorded that the history of independent churches in Nigeria dates back to the 1880's (1). It must be noted that schism within the church is neither peculiar to Africa not Nigeria, but rather a global phenomenon within Christendom. In this vein, Babalola noted that Christianity had no sooner triumphed in the Roman Empire than it began to break into various autonomous groups (149).

This schism has often been said to have led to the emergence of independent churches. With respect to the Aladura types of the independent churches, Mitchell has argued that they arose because of the desire among Africans to achieve a purer form of Christianity by way of relying exclusively on active supplication to God in prayer for solution to any of their problems as against the use of traditional medicines and other worldly compromise of the historic churches (150). Related to this, was the desire among Africans to make Christianity more relevant to the needs of daily Life. To this, Tasié

described it as “contextualization of Christian gospel” (32-42). Other causal factors to the emergence of Aladura churches include development of Nationalistic fronts, socio-economic factor, evidenced in the great influenza epidemic of 1918. Aladura churches are churches that have made prayer, healing and a very simple evangelical preaching the centre of their religious life. Pentecostal on the other hand, emerged in Nigeria in the early and the mid 1970’s following the visit of T.L. Osborn and Ernest Angley, American-based Pentecostal preachers, to Nigeria (Offiong 39). Pentecostalism, as experiential Christianity, emphasizes second baptism which manifests in speaking in tongues. The Pentecostal believes that after the first baptism with water one should be baptized by the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal churches and organization have continued to grow tremendously. It is in this vein, Dominguez Summarized their impact on Christendom thus:

Now, in the third millennium, the number of Pentecostals and charismatic’s probably exceed the number of Protestants and orthodox combined. Pentecostal statistics shows 200 million members designated as non-international Pentecostals. In addition, there were 200 million charismatic’s in the main protestant denominations and Catholicism, a total of over 400 million (2).

Offiong maintained the phenomenal growth of these churches and organization is partly as a result of their vigorous activities such as regular open air crusades, retreats and conventions which are advertised over the radio and the television as well as large posters of commercial sizes, banners and handbills (40). Owing to the growing impact of Pentecostalism and the survival of the Aladura churches in the face of the Pentecostal influence taking over both the historic and Aladura churches. This study attempts to examine the differences between the Pentecostal and the Aladura churches, with particular reference to the following religious categories: doctrinal, institutional, ritual, experiential, mythic and ethical dimension as advanced by Ninian Smart (42).

Concept Clarification

Concept like words mean different thing to different people. Since most concepts generally lack universally accepted theories and because of such limitations, there are used and interpreted in different ways by different analyst and scholars. Therefore, there is need to have penetrating analysis so as to grasp their innate meaning and relationship to this study.

Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is derived from the term Pentecost where the first Christian festival celebrated the decension of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus. This is occasion by speaking in tongues. Pentecostalism therefore derives its name from this behaviours, hence, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues is referred to as "glossolalia." Pentecostal churches derives their characteristics base on the fact that they have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit there are capable to speak in tongues.

Aladura

Aladura churches are African independent prophet healing churches which arouse in Yoruba land from 1918 and elsewhere in Nigeria and are known as the "Aladura" churches. The Yoruba term "Aladura" mean praying people" (Turner in Offiong 124) cherubim and seraphim, Christ Apostolic church and the celestial church of Christ are typical examples of the Aladura churches. The Aladura churches create a thorough synthesis of Christian and Africa ritual forms. They are very African in form although they claim to be Christian (Turner in Offiong 124).

They are founded through the work of prophet healers and are independent of European missionary control. The Aladura churches in Nigeria are characterised by revelation from the Holy Spirit and rituals. Other characteristic include, drumming, hand clapping, ritual taboos, use of incense, perfume, wearing of white soutane and the removal of

foot wear during worship (Offiong 47). Offiong asserts that there are other type of Aladura church who prefers to take the Pentecostal name and do not necessarily wear white garment but their practices make them Aladura base church.

Historical Origin of Pentecostalism

The Jewish feast of Pentecost which was celebrated immediately after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus witnessed a unique divine phenomenon of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciple of Jesus, this spectacular event recorded by Luke the Evangelist and Physician in Acts 2 gave rise to the brand of Christianity known to us as Pentecostalism (Dunn in Nkwoka 80). Pentecostalism is an experimental Christianity resulting in the baptism of the believer in the Holy Spirit, evidence in speaking in tongues. Pentecostalism therefore derives its name from this behaviour, therefore, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues is referred to as “glossolalia” (Offiong 17). Modern Pentecostalism which can be called the second historic Pentecost of the Christian church has its roots in the scholarly debate which are in two schools.

The first school owed its origin back to the 19th century. Holiness and higher life movement in England and America emphasized “second blessing” sanctification and baptism in the Holy Spirit as an endowment of Power for service. The second school of thought trace the origin of modern day Pentecostalism to January 1, 1901, when Agnes Ozman, then a student of Charles Parham’s Bethel Bible school in Topeka in Kansas, spoke in tongues (Offiong 17). Nwoka quoting Dunn highlighted that “with this re-discovery of the Holy empowerment, Parham founded a new church movement called “Apostolic Faith.” Parham’s bible school of 1905 at Houston, Texas convinced William Joseph Seymour, an African-American preacher of the tongues-attested baptism. Then in April 1906, Seymour began the famous three-year Azusa street revival in a former African Methodist Episcopal church building at Los Angeles (80). Dunn affirmed this three-year long meeting was the launching pad of twentieth century Pentecostalism (618).

Dominguez in Nowaka identifies four waves of Pentecostalism to include; the classical Pentecostal movement of 1901 Pioneered by Parham and Seymour, the Neo-Pentecostal movement begun by Revd. Dennis Bennett of the Anglican Church in 1960, The Catholic charismatic Renewal Movement of 1967 started by students and faculty of Duquesne University and the Evangelicals started in 1981 at Fuller Theological Seminary with John Wimber (80). It is important to note that all these four waves originated in the United States and in this century have been globalised and has given way for Pentecostalism to find its way to the shores of Nigeria.

Historical Origin of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

The emergence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is traceable to two sources, being the indigenous and the European American influence. The indigenous Pentecostal experience is evident in the fact that, these groups existed before the advent of the European American Pentecostal influence. These groups had the real Holy Spirit baptism and experience it even when the American or European preachers or their literature had not reached the Nigerian shores. In this vein, Offiong quoted Turner thus:

It is the spiritual or Aladura churches that Turner refers to as “Nigerian Pentecostalism”. Although it is true that faith, healing, prophesy, dreams, visions, ecstasy, trances, speaking in tongues and various forms of spirit possession are common features of the Aladura churches (10).

Other traditional spiritual revivals include the Ijaw spiritual movement led by Braide whose Pentecostal practices included prophesy which was attested to in his charismatic ministry (Offiong 12). Offiong further stated that the Ibibio land in Akwa Ibom State experienced a Pentecostal revival movement six years before the arrival of the western Pentecostal type of revival. It accompanied healings, prophesies usually accompanied by African spiritual movements. Church movement like “Obere Okaime” are offshoot of this movement (18). This and other spirited movement are

similar to European American Pentecostal spirituality. They share the same qualities such as healing, prophesy, speaking in tongues, casting out of evil etcetera with the western type of Pentecostal movement.

The emergence of European American Pentecostal movement in Nigeria according to Offiong became felt in the early and mid 1970s following the visit of T.L. Osborn and Earnest Angley, American- based Pentecostal preachers, to Nigeria (39). The country has from then till date experienced an overwhelming influence of Pentecostal/revivalist activities. Some of the Pentecostal movement owe its origin to the western oriented type, while some are founded by Nigerians who breakaway from mainline/protestant churches. Offiong citing Hackett stated that the new breed churches and organizations seem to owe their origin to non-indigenous influences. They are new in the sense that although they are founded by Nigerians, they borrow their language, doctrine, technique, forms and concepts from American evangelical and Pentecostal traditions (39).

Offiong also maintained that the international or foreign Pentecostal groups got their way to Nigeria through relationship with indigenous members and ministers in the country (46). There were other indigenous preachers who were originally of western Pentecostal churches and left to establish their own groups and added more impact to the Pentecostal influence in Nigeria: such groups includes, Revival Valley, which gave birth to Christian Central Chapel (Bishop Emma Isong), Revelation Ministry (Fubara Emmanuel) etc. Another example is the fact that, some people hold it that Emma Isong started his Pentecostal ministry as a result of Ernest Angley's visit to Calabar.

Some examples of Pentecostal churches and organizations in Nigeria include, the Apostolic faith, Deeper life bible church, the Redeemed Christian church, full gospel business fellowship international, Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria and Presbyterian young people association (Offiong 40). There are other most recent Pentecostal

organization, these include, Winners chapel, Redeemed Christian church, Christ Embassy, House on the Rock, synagogue church of all nations (Modernize Aladura Church) etc.

Historical Origin of Aladura in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the spiritual churches are often referred to as the Aladura churches. Aladura is the term, meaning the “praying people,” it is a title given to those movements that arose in western Nigeria. The most well known are the Christ Apostolic church (1922), the cherubim and seraphim (1925), the church of the Lord (Aladura) (1930), and the celestial church of Christ (1947). In Eastern Nigeria, a prophet movement centred around the charismatic figure of Garrick Braide, took place in 1915 and eventually became the Christ Army church. Today there are many independent churches including the rapidly expanding Brotherhood of the cross and star (1956) (Offiong 4).

Aladura churches fall within the African independent churches which broke away from the mission churches which though led by Africans, asserted their independence from mission support and control still retained the forms of doctrines, worship and policy of the mission churches. A good example of this church in Nigeria is United African Native Church. It was after this first group that the prophet healers and others came up. Hence, Hackett has classified the African church and prophet healing church under independent church while Sundkler classified them into Ethiopian and Zionist sub-type (Hackett 212).

Generally, in theological and liturgical matters, independent churches usually resemble the parent orthodox churches from which they sprang, but they reveal certain African cultural forms such as the toleration of polygamy (Ray 208). This practice is not accepted in the parent orthodox church. The Ethiopian (the first group of independent churches) has representation almost in all the regions of Africa. Turner commenting on new religious movement enumerated the countries where they sprang:

United African Native Church in Nigeria (1891), the first Ethiopian Church in Rhodesias (1910), the

African Greek Orthodox church East Africa (1929) and the Bagalla Free church in Botswana (1937) (Ray, 209).

The second group of independent church consists of the prophet healer churches or Aladura churches (as they are popularly called in Nigeria). They are also called; prayer or spiritual churches. It is this group that Sunkler refers to as Zionist churches. Churches in this group have made a thorough synthesis of Christian and African ritual forms. They emphasized prayer and healing, prophecy and revelation from the Holy Spirit. More than any other sects, this group has championed the Africanization of Christianity. Again, Turner lists the Aladura churches in African countries and gave date of their origin as follows:

The prophet-healing type is found in Shembe's Wazarites in Natal (1911), Some of the Harris Churches in the Ivory Coast (1915), in Ghana and Musama Disco christo (1922), are the Eeden (formerly Eden Revival) church (1963) the cherubim and most Aladura churches in Nigeria (1925), Zion Christian church in south Africa (1925) and most other Zionists, the African Apostolic (1932), African Israel church Mineveh of Kenya (1942), the Spiritual Healing church of Botswana (1952), Zambia's Lumpa church of Alice Lenshina (1953), and the Maria Legion of Kenya (1963) (Turner 212).

The prophet-healing churches mentioned above are just representatives. Myriad of others have emerged. There are yet other categories which are late comers. They cannot be classified as the Ethiopian or the prophet-healing sub-type. Aladura churches although classified among the African Independent churches, or African New Religious movement and defined, by Turner as new religious movement founded in Africa, by Africans and primarily for Africans, has been criticized by Mbon base on the fact that African Independent

churches, Aladura churches inclusive have found universal acceptability example is Brotherhood of the Cross and Star.

Differences between Pentecostal and Aladura Churches

1. Doctrinal Dimension

Doctrines are set of beliefs or principles held by a religious group. The major difference in doctrines between the Pentecostal churches and organisations and the Aladura and spiritual churches are that the later emphasizes rituals and traditions created by their leaders. Such traditions include the use of ritual objects and performance of ritual assignments. The former (Pentecostals) see these practices as being in congruent with traditional religion (Offiong 48).

Offiong further asserts that the Pentecostals criticizes the Aladura /spiritual churches for mixing up Christian beliefs and practices with African traditional beliefs and practices which the Pentecostals consider to be demonic (49). The Aladura/spiritual healing churches belief in the Supreme God as well as the existence of angels and their corresponding duties has parallel in the primal religious belief in God as well as the existence of lesser gods or beings, this particular belief system makes them different from the Pentecostal who belief in Jesus as the only son of God, and in God alone. The Pentecostal church do not belief in the existence of lesser or small god. This Aladura belief system is one of the reasons why the Pentecostal church considers them demonic. In the Aladura churches there is evidence of continuity of traditional religious beliefs concerning the agency of evil spirits, witches as explanation of misfortunes to people as well as the theories of evil, of which the Aladura claims to offer spiritual help through prayers for those possessed.

The Pentecostals are different in this direction, because they emphasizes prosperity gospel. The Pentecostals are basically interested in the material welfare of their members. In this vein, whereas the Aladura are interested in the spiritual welfare of their members, that is being free from witchcraft, sickness and spiritual forces. The Pentecostals are interested in the prosperity of their

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members, which can only be seen in acquiring material wealth like living in good houses, driving the best cars, good education and general prosperity.

Again, as it is the case in the shrines and sanctuaries of most traditional religion, where officiating ministers must wear cap during worship, the Aladura churches have a corresponding practice whereby all the ordained members of the church wear cap during worship. However, today this practice has been copied by the Pentecostal churches where those who have been ordained Bishops also wear cap. The different here is that the pastors in the Pentecostal church do not wear cap during church worship except those ordain as Bishop. On the other hand, the Aladura prophets tend to wear cap during church fellowship.

Another important doctrinal differences between the Aladura and Pentecostal is while the former emphasizing or base its teaching from the Old Testament, the later, base its teaching from the New Testament. Aladura churches pay particular attention to the Psalms, proverbs, the prophet, Job and the wisdom literature more than they do to the New Testament. One may account for this predilection from the fact that the Old Testament section of the Bible contains features in harmony with the traditional religious practices. It is in this vein, Offiong posited thus:

The Aladura churches cite Biblical passages to justify their beliefs and practices. Example, Apostle Israel Akinade of the cherubim and Seraphim draws examples from the Old Testament Bible to justify ritual bath and the burning of incense in their churches is a replica of Prophet Elisha to cure Naaman's disease and Zachariah's incense burning in Luke 1:5-13 (8).

Furthermore, differences are observed in the Pentecostal practices of the "Lord's prayer," here the Pentecostals do not practically emphasizes this practices as very strong form of prayer in the church,

on the other hand, the Aladura church emulating the historic church emphasized the Lord's prayer as a very strong form of prayer in the church. More so, the "Apostle Creed" is emphasized in the Aladura church but silent in the Pentecostal church. The Pentecostal is more interested in speaking in tongues and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Among the Aladura churches what is emphasized in the Apostle Creed is "I believed in the Holy church of the Elect" instead of the Holy Catholic church.

Aladura churches belief in the existence of "Hell fire," resurrection of the dead on the day of judgement, everlasting joy in God's kingdom to be inaugurated by the messiah (the parousia). Although the Pentecostal also belief in this doctrine, they emphasize that members should be born again to enable them enter the kingdom of God. The Pentecostal also belief that once one is born again, he/she is liable to enjoy material prosperity here on earth.

Generally speaking, sermons and church service are unusually prolonged in the Aladura churches, whereas in the Pentecostal churches, church services are made very short and interesting to members. Funeral practices in both the Aladura and the Pentecostal are similar as both do not allow dead or deceased member to be brought into the church, rather pastor or prophet conduct the funeral service at the decease compound or house.

Doctrinally, the Aladura rejects the use of native medicine but allow some aspect of traditional religion, such as the use of candle, incense, holy water and oil, the Pentecostal church do not use such religious objects like candles and incense, but the two are similar in the use of holy water and oil for spiritual and faith healing. Some Aladura churches do not encourage the use of western medicine. For instance, Christ Apostolic church, cherubim and seraphim believe in faith healing but allow the use of modern medical treatment (Horton 89). Pentecostal churches are different in this sense because almost all Pentecostal belief in faith-healing and members are encourage to have a good life, thus, they encourage members to patronize western medicine for proper medical care.

Aladura churches have a well developed angelology and indeed members compare their roles here on earth with those of innumerable Angels in heaven. This belief system is different from the Pentecostal church, who although understand the roles of angels in the Bible, but do not give any special reverence to them. In fact, in Pentecostal church the angels are not mention at all. It is Christ alone that is the ultimate foundation of the Pentecostal church.

The major difference between the Aladura churches and the Pentecostal churches is belief and doctrine of wearing white garment, removal of shoes at worship place, chair or benches are not to be sat on during prayers, rather, worshippers are expected to prostrate, kneel or lie down facing the floor as a sign of humility before God. For instance, Brotherhood of the Cross and Star members are told to knock their head on the floor three times in honour to God; with respect to the removal of shoes, reference is made to the old testament scriptures experience of Moses in the burning bush whereby Moses heard a voice which asked him to remove his footwear for he stood on a holy land (Exodus: 3:5). Pentecostal on the other hand, do not wear white garment, members are allow to dress in whatever fashion and style to church and members wear footwear into the church. This point clearly portrays the fact that Aladura churches base their beliefs and doctrines on the Old Testament principles while the Pentecostal base theirs on the New Testament.

2. Institutional Dimension

Under this dimension the differences observed in the Aladura church from that of the Pentecostal churches is the fact that the Aladura churches like the traditional religion conceive of the fact that certain forests, trees, rocks and mountain have sacred power because of their belief that they are habitat of gods hence such places are set aside for religious purposes. For instance, the BCS designate a stream in Biakpan as Holy stream that can cure diseases (Odey 77). The office of the Aladura church leaders is more like the office of or seen by the members as the office of a prophet or visionary which is a parallel of a diviner or fortune-teller in African religion, whereas Pentecostal see the preacher as a man of God. It is important to note that today, many

Pentecostal church also practice these aspect of prophesying and seeing vision, because it is appealing to members. From the above, Becken suggested that pastors in the Pentecostal churches should be called “healer rather than pastors, in his words: “Healing is actually an essential part of the role of these pastors and almost every act of worship in their church is dominated by this healing motive” (135)

Institutionally, the Aladura churches have a hierarchical order of its officials similar to that obtained in the Pentecostal church, whereas the Pentecostal church designates the branch of their churches with the original name as given by the founder of the church, example Christ Embassy, Winners Chapel, Redeem Christian church etc. The Aladura churches designate their various branches with appellation such as mounts, bethel as with the cherubim and seraphim and BCS. Similarly, the Aladura place of worship is referred to as “House of Prayer” as against the term “church.” Another difference in this dimension is the fact that difference office or rank attracted different qualification. For instance, in the Pentecostal church before one can be consecrated as a pastor, he must be a degree holder, and must have undergone certain training in the church college or seminary. The Aladura church on the other hand, may consecrate any member of the church into any office only by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as well as one’s dedication to the church activities, not necessarily requiring a university degree. Also, in Aladura church, every rank warranted a new clerical outfit that may be worn after the ordination, whereas in the Pentecostal church, any clerical office do not warrant any clerical outfit but a tie, suit, jacket, and expensive shoes. More so, institutionally, in both Pentecostal and Aladura, male and female members are allowed to handle clerical offices.

3. Ritual Dimension

Bellah in Robertson commented that “it is in religious rituals that man transforms his religious symbols and experience to symbolic action, thereby uniting once more the worshiper and the worshipped (271). In the Aladura churches, there is evidence of religious acculturation from the traditional religion prevalent in their faith-healing procedures. In this vein, Turner reports that “in this church, in

place of magical “pagan treatment,” there is the innocuous use of Holy water, Holy oil, Holy sand, palm fronds, mystic candles and incense as physical agent for divine healing power together with fasting as a spiritual discipline and all set in a context of prayer” (146). These ritual practices put a striking difference from the Pentecostal church who although use holy oil in their faith-healing ministry do not apply the use of other ritual object as the Aladura church.

Again, there is no restriction in practices such as removal of shoes in prayer house, menstruating women and couple who had sexual intercourse from entering the church among the Pentecostal churches. The Aladura church on the other hand, emphasizes these practices and some even encourage eating pork, rats, snakes, dogs, snails, use of alcohol and tobacco. Offiong also noted that some Aladura churches tolerate Polygamy following the practices of some of their founders. For instance, late Bishop Etim Akpan Otong of National Assembly church of Nigeria and S. B.J. Oschaffa of the celestial church of Christ married many wives (48).

Feasting is a common ritual practice of the Aladura church. In fact, feasting is more like what is practice in the Pentecostal churches as Holy Communion. However, It is important to note that, today most Pentecostal churches use feasting to captivate the minds of their new members. The Aladura churches create a synthesis of Christian and African ritual forms (Hackett in Offiong 47). They are characterised by drumming, hand clapping, ritual taboos, use of incense, and perfume curing service accompanied by individual spontaneous prayers and shouts of “Holy,” “Hallelujah” etc. Members in these Aladura churches address fellow members as sisters and brothers. In some Aladura churches, for instance, the BCS, they have a special way of greeting “peace of the Lord be onto you” responded by “peace”. Members in some Aladura churches see their spiritual leaders as “God” or the son of God” (Jesus) in his second coming. Thus they answer title such as the “son of man” “king of king” “Lord of Lord.” However, this aspect is also related to the Pentecostal churches where the pastors are called “man of God,” “Daddy,” “father” “papa in the Lord etc. Member of the Pentecostal churches maintain that the title

the give their pastor is difference from directly addressing an ordinary human being as God as observed in the Aladura churches.

Aladura churches have many anniversaries and conventions observed from time to time at various periods of the year to mark one important event or the other in the history of the church, whereas the Pentecostal churches have a minimize church anniversaries and celebration. Pentecostals is more of bible base, emphasis is on being born again and being active in church service. Sacrament of the Baptism is mainly for adult members and new members; infant baptism is not accepted in the Pentecostal churches. Again, Aladura practice baptism by immersion in the stream or river. On the other hand, Pentecostal churches often times have a small well in the church premises mainly for baptism, they also practice baptism by sprinkling of water.

Furthermore, Aladura churches have what is known as a rebaptism for new members who had already been baptised. This they maintain serves for continuous washing away of sin. It is also a form of ritual bath to wash away evil spirit and sicknesses. This practice is not obtainable in the Pentecostal church (oral interview). The ritual of the Lord's supper or Holy Communion is difference between the Aladura and the Pentecostal church in the sense that in the former, only those that are pure in spirit are allow to receive these communion, that is, those without menstruation for the female, male who are polygamous are allow to take Holy communion in some Aladura churches although some are completely against it, especially the modernize type of Aladura churches. For the Pentecostal, everybody is entitle to the Holy Communion, young or old people of all age irrespective of spiritual purification (oral interview). Turner on this note remarked:

in this respect that the lords supper is usually neglected by most independent churches. Some he said have discarded it altogether, while others who feel like continuing with it do so very frequently and without understanding,

while others see it as a special rite for an inner circle or more sanctified members (147).

As stated earlier, marriage solemnization in the Aladura churches is accepted and polygamy is tolerated in some Aladura churches whereas the Pentecostal forbid polygamy and promotes monogamy though is not a prerequisite for the Holy Eucharist as practice in the Historic churches. Celebration of the birth of Christ is observed in both the Pentecostal and Aladura churches the differences in this practices is the fact that in the Pentecostal church at eve of the event, members are expected to carry out a night Virgil where the church telecast the teachings of the founder of the church to all the branches nationwide, whereas, in the Aladura churches, members observe a Virgil night with fasting and prayers.

The good Friday service is the remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is observe in both the Aladura and the Pentecostal church, the difference observed is the fact that among the Aladura, members observed it in a special religious place. For instance the BCS at this event visit the Holy land (Biakpan), in cherubim and seraphim it is observed in the "wilderness, or on a hill top, or by the sea-side or whichever is available (Nweneka, 48). On the other hand, the Pentecostal observes this event in their church premises.

4. Experiential Dimension

Praying and fasting are central part of the religious experience in Aladura churches. Praying follows the accepted general order of invocation, praises and adoration. During prayer most Aladura churches invoke the names of various angels and address God by endless praise names before actual request are made. During their church praises, the Aladura church are characterized by drumming, handclapping, ritual taboos (Offiong 47). Using of bell, seeing vision and prophecy during church services and both the church leaders and congregation are liable to see vision during worship. In the Pentecostal church there is nothing like invocation and seeing vision during church service. What is prominent among the Pentecostal is speaking in tongues. Pentecostal church although encourage members to fast,

fasting is not prominent as it is with the Aladura church. However, it is important to note that today, some Pentecostal church accompanies prophecy and seeing vision during church service example is synagogue church of all nation.

5. Mythic Dimension

Under this dimension both the Aladura and the Pentecostal are similar in their practices of the myth of origin of the Christian religion. They both celebrate the birth of Christ, death, ascension and crucifixion etc. The only difference in this dimension is that the Aladura especially have chains of celebration allotted to the life and times of the founder of their churches.

6. Ethical Dimension

Ethical dimension is an essential feature of every religious organization. In this sense, both the Pentecostal and the Aladura churches have in common excessive ethical principles in the church aim at making members morally upright. The differences observed between the two organization is the fact that the Aladura place more emphasis on the old testament ethical values found mostly in the covenant (the ten commandment), while the Pentecostal places more emphasis on the New Testament basically on the teaching of Christ. However, it is important to note that today most Aladura churches have become more Pentecostal in nature and they appear to emphasize both the old and New Testament ethical values (Offiong 47).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have seen that Aladura emerged as a result of dissatisfaction on the part of African because of the style of mainline churches ritual and worship which was westernize in nature and Aladura are characterized by prayer and healing whereas, the Pentecostal churches has its origin trace to the European influence and pattern of Christianity. However, the paper also portrays that before the advent of European based Pentecostalism, there had been evident of African oriented Pentecostal church in the likes of the Ijaw spiritual movement led by Braide whose Pentecostal practices

included prophecies which was attested to in his charismatic ministry (Offiong 12). From the foregoing, we can conclude that there are differences between these two organizations. However, the Aladura churches in order to stand the taste of time have adapted some of the characteristics and qualities of the Pentecostal churches. Many of them today have taken Pentecostal names and practices but are still Aladura in Nature.

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