



Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria: A Pluralistic Moral Maxim

Patrick E. Nmah and Chukwudi Ani Amunnadi

Department of Religion and Human Relations

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka - Nigeria

E-Mail: patricknmah@yahoo.com

E-Mail: chukssolutioncit@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria provides one of the thorniest set of issues among the contemporary Nigerian Christians and in the modern academic debate in the study of religion. This could be confirmed by a quick survey of relevant books and articles on the topic. This research paper, while not pretending to say the last word on the debate, has the hope that the in-depth clarification this Christian fundamentalist moral aphorism in Nigeria may in some way enhance proper understanding among the fundamentalist groups, and, when adequately harnessed shall help for spiritual, economic, social and political development of Nigeria, and for the growth and unity among the larger Christian Community in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria is a moral maxim. It teaches morality based on selected gospel and epistles with much emphasis on “born again” (Jn. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:23), and to avoid illicit sexual relationships. In making a distinction between Pentecostal fundamentalism and fundamentalism, Anderson citing Spittle observes that fundamentalism was an intellectual, apologetic, argumentative, logical, rational reaction while Pentecostalism profoundly distrusted the intellectual enterprise and focused on withered piety, collapsed feeling and the decay of devotion (Anderson, 2008). According to Anderson (2008), because many of the early North American (white) Pentecostals came from churches that later became fundamentalist, Pentecostalism was profoundly influenced by fundamentalism. The original 20th century fundamentalist movements divided along clearly defined lines within constructive evangelical Protestantism as issues progressed. Many groupings, large and small, were produced by this schism. Neo-evangelicalism, Reformed and Lutheran confessionalism, the heritage movement and Paleo-Orthodoxy have all developed distinct identities, but

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

none of them acknowledge any more than an historical overlap with the fundamentalist movement and the term is seldom used of them. In this research work, we shall be using the words evangelical, fundamentalist, charismatic and Pentecostal interchangeably within Nigerian context.

The statement of the problem is to investigate why Christian fundamentalists in Nigeria have so many ideologies unlike their counterparts in America and Europe; and like their erstwhile counterparts, their negligence of the teachings of Jesus Christ. The relevance of this research work is to find out the possibility of harnessing these ideologies for the development of Nigeria. It can also provide useful insight that can inform the Nigerian Christians knowledge of the paradigm of Christian fundamentalism and to work out general concept(s) for the fundamentalist groups in Nigeria.

The research work shall rely on the dialectics of certain extant material such as that of Clifford (1991), Kalu (2008), Anderson (2008), Kukah (1993), Marsden (1980), Brashier (2001), Claplan (1987), and Hunt (2008) among others.

Fundamentalism: Its Etymological Derivation

Marsden (1987) defined Christian fundamentalism as militantly anti-modernist Protestant evangelicalism. Christian fundamentalists opposed both modernism in theology and the cultural changes that modernism endorsed. Many such churches adopted a “fighting style” and certain theological elements such as Dispensationalism, but it is not an organized movement and has no national body or official statement. The founders reacted against liberal theology, actively asserted that the following ideas were fundamental to the Christian faith: the inerrancy of the Bible, Sola Scriptura, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and the imminent personal return of Jesus Christ.

Fundamentalism is a term popularly used to describe strict adherence to Christian doctrines based on a literal interpretation of the Bible (Hunt, 2008). This usage derives from a late 19th and early 20th century Evans denominational Protestant movement that opposed the accommodation of Christian doctrine to modern scientific theory and philosophy. Fundamentalism was a movement among American evangelicals to assert biblical authority as over-against several aspects of modernity. The best description of fundamentalism, as it appears in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century as to recognize it as orthodox Christianity. Fundamentalists continued biblical and supernatural Christianity when many denominations defected. The name fundamentalist was coined in 1920 to designate those “doing battle royal for the fundamentals.”

In Christianity, the term fundamentalism is normally used to refer to the conservative part of evangelical Christianity, which is itself the most conservative wing of Protestant Christianity. Fundamentalist Christians typically believe that the Bible is inspired by God and is inerrant. They

reflect modern analysis of the Bible as a historical document written by authors who were attempting to promote their own evolving spiritual beliefs. Rather, they view the Bible as the word of God, internally consistent and free of error. The term “fundamentalist” derives from a 1909 publication “the fundamentals: A testimony to the truth” which promised five required Christian beliefs for those opposed to the modernist movement. It forbade also the teaching of any theory that denies the story of the divine creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.

By the late 1930s Christian fundamentalists had formed a sub-culture and had largely withdrawn from the rest of society. Following major revisions to Roman Catholic beliefs and practices during the Vatican II conferences in the 1960s, the term “fundamentalist” started to be used to refer to Catholics who rejected the changes, and wished to retain traditional beliefs and practices. Thus it becomes a commonly used word to describe the most conservative groups within Christianity: both Protestant and Catholic. Fundamentalism is a term popularly used to describe strict adherence to Christian doctrines based on a literal interpretation of the Bible. Christians who clung to the old belief that every word of the Bible was literally true – called biblical inerrancy. This is a claim that is based on belief but they do not follow or live by the rules or teachings of Jesus. The Protestant belief of “faith alone” which Calvin and Luther took from Saint Augustine, makes all of that at best optional or morality of any kind irrelevant. The only things they really see as “sin” is, matters of sex, not following their religious teachings, and questioning authority.

Fundamentalism: Its Historical Analysis, Beliefs and Practices

The rise of modern, Premillennialism (end-times theology) is common to a variety of religious splinter groups: the Plymouth Brethren (developed dispensationalism), the Millerites (became the Adventists), Mormons, Jehovah’s witnesses, and Pentecostals. Most of these churches try to discredit historic Christianity by claiming that all the prominent commentaries, all the church fathers, and even the Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Knox, and so on) were deluded by “man-made doctrines”. New revelation is claimed and their leaders even claimed to have received “new truth” or at other times “discovered truth” that had been lost since the apostles. Enthusiasm was whipped up on the false pretense that Christ’s coming was imminent. Frequent false predictions did not seem to deter this enthusiasm.

Dispensational premillennialism was marketed the same way as the cult-like groups for these groups the only scriptures addressed specifically to Christians were the gospel of John, Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation. Their moral code is that of the most brutal sections of the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments. One will hear “born again” (John) endlessly, but little relevance is paid at all to the other gospels of Mathew,

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

Mark and Luke that contain the core of Jesus most important moral teachings. The most teachings of Jesus thus become optional thus fundamentalists believe they are saved and their personal conduct, no matter how un-Christian, is forgiven. They construct God in their own image (Lawrence, 1989).

It should also be noted that these cult/splinter churches all hold Catholic and mainline Protestant churches as “spirits of the Antichrist”. Most of their claims are totally non-biblical such as “secret rapture” and the word “rapture” is not even in the KJV Bible at all. What they really preach is their own politics and the occult. Their leaders have no recognized credentials as theologians. Yet the damage they do to the emotional well being of others can not be calculated.

The term “fundamentalism” was also coined by Baptist editor Curtis Less Laws in 1920 to designate Christians who were ready “to do battle royal for the fundamentals”, the term quickly was adopted by all sides. Fundamentalism had multiple roots in British and American theology of the 19th century. One root was dispensationalism, a rediscovering of early Christian premillennialism in the 1830s in England as an out growth of applying the historical-grammatical method of hermeneutics to the entire Bible. It was a millenarian theory that divided all of time into different stages, called “dispensations”, which were seen as stages of God’s revelation. In the dispensational principle, Hartill (1947) categorized it as follows: (a) The dispensation of man to the fall of man (Gen.1:26-2:23). Moral condition of man in this era was one of perfection until sin came in. (b) The dispensation of conscience-“with knowledge”- from fall of man to flood 1656 years(Gen.3:7). Moral condition of man became worse and worse. (c) The dispensation of human government- from the flood to the confusion of tongues (Gen.8:1-11:9, 427 years). Moral condition of man so angered God that he destroyed their plan, through the confusion of tongues. (d) Dispensation of promise-from the call of Abraham to the Exodus-430 years (Gen. 11:10-15:21).moral condition of man made him to turn to the gods of the Egyptians and became idolatrous-Ezekiel 20:7-9. (e) Dispensation of law-from Sinai to Calvary-the exodus to the cross-1491 years (Ex.19:1-8). (f) The dispensation of grace-from the descent of the holy spirit to the descent of Christ- (Acts and Epistles). Moral condition indicates that man has fallen and became sinful. (g) The dispensation of judgment or tribulation-from the rapture of the church to the millennium (Rev.6-19; Dan.12:1; Jer.30:7). Moral condition of man shows that the earth now comprised a godless group of people from whom all restraint has been taken by the removal of the church. (h) The kingdom dispensation-from the descent of Christ to the great white throne judgment-1000 years (Psalms 2 and 11). In terms of moral condition of man under this circumstance, man is fallen and unrepentant (pp.13-18). In this theory, the world is on the verge of the last stage in which Christ would return. An important sign is the rebirth of Israel, support for which is the centerpiece of fundamentalist foreign policy.

A second stream came from Princeton theology in the mid-19th century, which developed the doctrine of inerrancy in response to higher criticism of the Bible. A third strand-and the name itself – came from a 12-volume study of the fundamentals, published 1910-1915. These volumes stressed several core beliefs of the fundamentalists which include:

- a. The inerrancy of the Bible;
- b. The literal nature of the biblical accounts, especially regarding Christ's miracles, and the creation account in Genesis;
- c. The virgin birth of Christ;
- d. The bodily resurrection of Christ;
- e. The substitutionary atonement of Christ on the cross (Brasher, 2001).

By the late 1920s the first two points had become central to fundamentalism. A fourth strand was the growing concern among many evangelical Christians with the fruits of modernism and the higher criticism of the Bible. This strand concentrated on opposition to Darwinism. A fifth strand was the strong sense of the need for public revivals a common theme among many evangelicals who did not become fundamentalists. Numerous efforts to form coordinating bodies failed, and the most influential treatise came much later, in Chafer (1947) systematic theology, who founded the Dallas Theological Seminary in 1924.

Much of the enthusiasm for mobilizing fundamentalism came from Bible Colleges, especially those modeled after the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. The Bible colleges prepared ministers who lacked college or seminary experience with intense study of the Bible, often using the Scofield Reference Bible of 1909, which was the King James Version with detailed notes explaining how to interpret Dispensationalist passages.

Fundamentalists in the 1920s devoted themselves to fighting the teaching of evolution in the nation's schools and colleges, both public and private. It revealed a growing chasm in American Christianity and two ways of finding truth, one "biblical" and one "scientific". They sought to ban evolution as a topic for study or at least, relegate it to the status of unproven theory perhaps taught alongside the biblical version of creation. Educators, scientists, and other distinguished laymen favoured evolution. Liberals saw a division between educated, tolerant Christians and narrow minded, tribal, obscurantist Christians.

There are variations among the fundamentalists. The original 20th century fundamentalist movement divided along clearly defined lines within conservative evangelical Protestantism as issues progressed. Many groupings, large and small, were produced on this schism. Neo-evangelicalism, Reformed and Lutheran Confessionalism, the Heritage movement and Paleo-Orthodoxy have all developed distinct identities, but none of them acknowledge any more than an historical overlap with the fundamentalist movement, and the terms is seldom used of them. For examples, American

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

evangelist Billy Graham came from a fundamentalist background, but parted company with the movement because of his choice, early in his ministry about 1950s, to cooperate with other Christians. He represents a movement that arose within fundamentalism, but has increasingly become distinct from it, known as neo-evangelicalism or new evangelicalism (a taxonomy coined by Harold J.O.C. Kenga, the “father of new evangelicalism”).

In the U.S.A., the fundamentalist – led moral majority emerged to challenge social and religious beliefs and practices. Today, fundamentalists are the most vocal group on a per-capita basis – who oppose abortion access, equal rights for homosexuals, same-sex marriage, protection for homosexuals from hate crimes, physician assisted suicide, the use of embryonic stem cells for medical research, comprehensive sexed classes in public schools, and so on. Most are law-abiding citizens, but about one-fourth (5% of the population) belong to assorted fringe churches and operate a kind of low-level terrorism such as attacks on abortion clinics, racism and anti-semitism, the militia movement among others. They are obsessed with conspiracy theories claiming Jews, Freemasons, Satan and so on control America and an apocalypse due any day. One bitter fundamentalist had this to say, “Democracy” is the cause of all world problems. Humans are under the law of God, and thus they cannot do anything they want or speak anything they wish to speak. Democracy ultimately started with Satan. Those who actually set up America, and drew up the laws were people who did not favour Christianity (Marty and Appleby, 1995). The Assemblies of God, Baptists, Methodists and other revival groups are regarded as part of fundamentalist group. Fundamentalists trace their roots back to the New Testament, but fundamentalism really arises at the end of the 19th century. They see themselves as “Keepers of both the Christian heritage of the first century and the American heritage of the puritans and the founding fathers (Caplan, 1987).

With some differences among themselves, fundamentalists insist on belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, the virgin birth and divinity of Jesus Christ, the vicarious and atoning character of his death, his bodily resurrection, and his second coming as the irreducible minimum of authentic Christianity. This minimum was reflected in such early declarations as the 14 point creed of the Niagara Bible Conference of 1878, and the 5 point statement of the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1910. To Hunt (2008), there are two immediate doctrinal sources for fundamentalist thought namely millenarianism and biblical inerrancy. Millenarianism, belief in the physical return of Christ to establish a 1,000 year earthly reign of blessedness, was a doctrine prevalent in English speaking Protestantism by the 1870s. At the same time, powerful conservative forces led by Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield opposed the growing use of literary and historical criticism in biblical studies, defending biblical inspiration and the inerrant authority of the Bible.

In the 1970s and 1980s, however, fundamentalism again became an influential force in the United States. Promoted by popular television evangelists and represented by such groups as the Moral Majority, the new politically oriented religious right opposes the influence of liberalism and secularism in American life. The term fundamentalist has also been used to describe members of militant Islamic groups.

Because Calvin, Luther, and Augustine all see humans as “depraved” and “born into sin” produces a very negative outlook on humanity. Their idea of the “elect” creates an attitude that made the fundamentalists to regard themselves as “chosen” above all others. This puts them at odds with “mainline” or liberal Protestant churches that reject the Augustinian notions of human depravity.

Fundamentalists see themselves as “keepers of both the Christian heritage of the first century and the American heritages of the puritans and the founding fathers,” though; the sense of religious mission associated with the puritans disappeared even before the American Revolution. The American Revolution was a conservative revolution unlike the violent French Revolution that set the stage for fascism and communism. While fundamentalism is a reaction against modernism, it also adopted all kinds of new beliefs and practices. Most of these churches have been infiltrated by non-Christian modern theology themselves such as Christian identity and Christian Reconstructionism. Much of this is loaded with the occult, racism and anti-semitism. Christian identity in particular is dangerous due to its apocalyptic theology that creates a mindset of paranoia and case of infiltration into churches.

Many of fundamentalist preachers were at best semi-literate who rejected most mainstream church and education in general. They tended to rely on the fallacy of the Bible being the only source of inspiration and preached their own opinions. This is how we got so many new cults/churches of today. In this way anything could be “the word of God.”

According to Kalu (2008), fundamentalism deployed cessationism to reject the present reality of the charismata saying that the spiritual gifts belonged to older generation and had ceased to be relevant. Fundamentalists are not anti-intellectual, but are enlightened apologists who counter liberal theology and skepticism by applying the same philosophical method and high criticism as their opponents. Decades later, the usage of the term fundamentalism had an extreme makeover. Pentecostalism and Muslim fundamentalism became birds of the same feather by opposing modernity and stressing the inerrancy of their respective sacred canons, nationalism, opposition to modernity and minority consciousness. They both claimed to be the authentic expression of their respective traditions; place stress on distinctive elements, activism, moralistic puritan ethics, and a combination of both intellectual and popular strands, and disagreed with the supremacy of reason over revelation, de-emphasis of the supernatural, and the permitting of

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

relativistic, universalistic ethics (Clifford, 1991). The American moral majority, that actually emerged when evangelicalism reinvented itself in the post-second world war era, became the signifier of this movement within Christianity.

Factors Responsible for the Growth of Fundamentalism in America vis-à-vis Nigeria

Already American evangelists had gone to work in other countries – not only Moody and Sankey who made their names by their meetings in British cities, but much earlier pioneers such as Adoniran Judson, the Baptist who had sailed in 1812 to begin nearly forty years of work in Burma. In 1900 John R. Mott, a Methodist layman who was prominent in the Young Men’s Christian Association like Moody, published a book advocating the evangelization of the world in this generation, the aim is for all men to know Jesus Christ as their saviour and becoming his real disciples. Thousands of students responded to dedicate their lives as missionaries. In the 1910s businessmen paid for the free distribution of missions of copies of twelve booklets on the fundamentals. Ninety essays defended the inerrancy of the Bible and the need to accept straight forwardly Christ’s virgin birth, his miracles, his death as a sacrifice satisfying the father’s just wrath against the sins of the world, and his physical resurrection and second coming (Edwards, 1998). From this protest came fundamentalism,’ a term of the 1920s to describe a movement cruder than the conservative scholarship in the fundamentals. It was easy to regard the fundamentalists as bigots, particularly when their favourite New Testament scholar, J. Gresham Machen, wrote a book to prove that ‘modern liberalism not only is a different religion from Christianity, but belongs to a totally different class of religions.’”

Biblical Christian (fundamentalist) paradigm is characterized by:

- (1) A central allegiance to God through Christ as revealed in the Christian scriptures.
- (2) A recognition of the difference between the inspired data of the scriptures and the fallible interpretations of theologizing human beings.
- (3) The primacy of the timeless content of the scriptures over the historic-cultural forms through which that content is communicated to human beings.
- (4) The dynamic nature of both essential Christianity and the theologizing process.
- (5) The primacy of the behavioural practice of faith-allegiance to God over the intellectual conceptualizing of Christian doctrine.
- (6) The need for openness to innovation and diversity in the development of helpful understandings of God and his workings

(Kraft, 1981). American fundamentalists (and other closed conservatives) have been characterized by a similar approach to issues such as evolution, biblical criticism, and cultural relativity.

Rather than considering the possibility of revising their worldview to incorporate any truth in the new ideas, fundamentalists have characteristically built their walls higher and thicker to keep themselves and their children insulated from concepts that they define as “anti-Christian” (Gorenberg, 2010). The result is frequently the opposite of their hopes. For, one way or another, many children of fundamentalists become exposed to such ideas and end up adopting them all uncritically in more or less total reaction against their fundamentalist ideology.

In America, the core factors that helped in the growth of fundamentalism include:

- i. ***Dispensationalism and Premillennialism:*** To Hunt (2008), one new factor that contributed to the fundamentalism growth is its interest in dispensationalism. Dispensationalism and premillennialism go together, but are not synonymous. Dispensational premillennialism is just one form of premillennial eschatology. Dispensationalism is associated with John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren in Plymouth, England about 1830. He obtained this theology from Margaret McDonald, who participated in a Scottish charismatic revival about the same time, received dispensationalism as part of a charismatic prophecy.
- ii. ***Princeton Theologians:*** Princeton Theological Seminary and the Princeton theologians demonstrated consistent biblical orthodoxy during the later nineteenth century. Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield developed what became known as Princeton school. It is a mindset which is conservative, biblical and orthodox. These two erudite men emphasize biblical inspiration; authority and inerrancy, positions, which stand out in stark contrast to the Liberal and critical attacks on biblical veracity.

By the 1890s, the Princeton school and the dispensationalists came together in what was called prophecy conferences. In 1895 the conferences issued a list of five points which they held as fundamental to the faith such as:

- a. Verbal inerrancy of the scripture.
- b. Christ’s deity and virgin birth.
- c. The bodily physical resurrection of Christ or the belief that Jesus died to redeem humankind.

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

- d. The physical return of Christ or second coming of Jesus Christ to initiate his thousand year rule of the earth, which came to be known as the millennium.

These factors either directly or indirectly gave rise to the Bible or theological colleges in Nigeria such as: Trinity (Union) Theological College, Umuahia; Trinity College of Ministerial Arts, Aba; Methodist Theological Institute Umuahia; Methodist Theological Institute, Sagamu; Theological College of Northern Nigeria, TCNN, Bukuru; Missionary Seminary of St. Paul, Abuja; School of Ministry Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Lagos; and International Bible Training Center, Enugu and Lagos for Deeper Life Bible Church of Nigeria among others.

Apart from the Zionist movement which is focused on possession of land, which is also often heard in the most of the fundamentalist groups prayer in Nigeria, there are other aspects of fundamentalism in the Bible that also galvanize the growth of Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria. For instance, a priest Mattathias (1 Macc. 2: 15-25), the founder of Maccabean revolt, the strongest form of resistance was armed struggle, insisted that, no sacrifice should be offered to Greek gods other than to Yahweh (Holder 1994). The people who struggled against the Seleucids are not simply national heroes, but are also spiritual role models for all Jews to follow as well as some Nigerian Christians (2 Macc. 6: 31). History is seen as a source of spiritual experiences, from which everyone can learn and gather spiritual strength. The rebellion of Mattathias and his sons of the family of Judas Maccabeus was a glorious struggle on behalf of God and his people and God had blessed this struggle with success. Like the Pharisees, Hasidim, Zealots, and so on the law has a central place in the theology. This created also fundamentalism consciousness among some Nigerian Christians.

In the New Testament, Paul's initial fundamentalist attitude was in defense of the law or in other words Judaism (Gal. 1:13; Acts 9: 1-2). He was a zealous member of the Pharisee party (Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5; Acts 23:6). This zeal made him to experience the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 8:1), He later became fundamentalist of "salvation by grace through faith" (Rom. 1:17). Meanwhile the influx of Gentiles into the church raised serious questions concerning their relation to Jewish laws and customs. A number of Jewish Christians were insisting that Gentiles must be circumcised and observe the Mosaic Law if they were to be received "at par" in the Christian community. According to Douglas (1980), upon his return to Antioch (C.AD 49), Paul, seeing in this Judaizing movement a threat to the very nature of the gospel, expressed his opposition in no uncertain terms: First he rebuked Peter publicly (Gal. 2:14), after the latter to avoid a breach with certain Judaizers, had separated himself from Gentile Christians. Secondly, hearing that the Judaizing heresy was infecting his recently established churches, Paul wrote a stinging letter of warning to the Galatians in which the Pauline credo, "Salvation by grace through faith," was forcefully presented (Gal. 1:13f).

Such concepts might have informed the formation of Methodist Evangelical Movement, Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Watchman Charismatic, Scripture Union Nigeria, Christian Association of Nigeria, Christian Council of Nigeria, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and so many similar groups operating in Nigeria.

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria: A Pluralistic Ideology

Clifford (1991) presents both Pentecostalism and radical Islamic groups in Africa as fundamentalists. The increasing conflict is as a result of competing fundamentalisms. Commentators connect the violent response of incensed Muslims in the last two decades with the implosion of Pentecostal-charismatic spirituality, since the mid 1970s, charismatic evangelical activities have intensified in the northern regions that had been preserved Muslim enclaves. A good example is the crusade by the German-born Reinhard Bannke in the ancient city of Kano in 1990. For one week, over a million people gathered every night in the stadium. He sent vans through the city to bring the blind, deaf, and street beggars. It is claimed that he healed many, but when he planned to return two years later, a riot broke out to signal Muslim resistance. Muslim youths have, during this same period, come under the ideological influences of international Muslim radicalism. The conjuncture of the two trends (the rise of youthful Islamic radicalism and youthful charismatic Pentecostalism) may have intensified the violent atmosphere. It should be emphasized that the demonization of Islam in Nigerian Pentecostal rhetoric and the lack of a dialogical theology and praxis among this rapidly growing form of Christianity may have caused much harm and hindered conflict transformation (Kalu, 2008). But Pentecostal political ethics must be understood from the dynamics of the political culture. The *d'awaah* and the great commission are like hypnotic drums calling followers to a modern form of a crusade. The demarcation of Nigeria into sharia and non-sharia states an intentional territorialization of Islam, a veritable attempt to demarcate sacred spaces and boundaries against infidels.

An interesting aspect of the new religious landscape has been the emergence of highly visible Christian spaces in the northern regions of Nigeria. In every northern city, space is divided between the ancient cities and the strangers' quarters on the outskirts, known as the Sabon Gari. As the southerners developed commercial power, these areas gained a distinctive southern Christian identity that charismatic groups constructed as redeemed spaces.

Another index of the hostile environment is the rise of an intense rivalry over the appropriation of the modern media as a propaganda tool. Muslims countered the charismatic insurgency by imitating the propagation techniques of the Christians who employed radio, television, tracts, and cassettes. The attraction of the media for the Pentecostal groups has become a major area of

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

research (Hackett, 1998). In response, Muslim vendors invaded the motor parks and public places with cassettes blaring Muslim songs and sermons. The da'wah call compelled Islamic evangelism to surge from the mosques into the larger public space. The geography of religious expression became important in understanding the new face of religion in Nigeria. Competition in the religious market intensified, which explains the easy resort to violence. In the new democratic dispensation, northern non-Islamic ethnic groups started to assert their autonomy, recover years of battered identity, and reject the politics of cultural domination and exclusion. They adopted Christianity as their cultural signifier and mark of identity, just as their opponents employed Islam. A number of issues became flash points: chieftaincy matters, pilgrimages, equal allocation of time and space in state-owned media, and the share of political offices all caused much debate. The unislamized communities revisited the imposed concept of one North and insisted that Muslim leaders would no longer govern them (Kalu, 2008). In the case of Zango Kataf, a violent encounter ensued when the Muslim Hausa rulers balked at the cultural renaissance.

In Nigeria, those who perform the hajj are called Alhaji/Alhaja, Christian pilgrims who have journeyed to the holy land have started to write JP or Jerusalem pilgrim after their names. Roman Catholic and Anglican patrons conduct a lucrative trade in bottles of water from Jordan and crucifixes that have been blessed in the holy sites on Mount Olive and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. According to Kalu (2008), the environment became volatile, because the youths in schools were recruited to serve as the vanguard. Conflicts boiled over in many secondary schools, polytechnics, and universities. At the tertiary levels, elections into student union government position took on the character of religious battles.

Another Pentecostal rhetoric is that Ishmael is not part of the covenant, thus making Islam the illegitimate religion of the bondwoman. Allah, it is claimed, was one of the 360 gods in the Ka'abah in the pre-Islamic period of Arabia and survived the reorganization of this temple after Mohammed's victory simply because his father was the priest of that particular deity before he died. Pentecostal cosmology demonizes the core symbols of Islam, such as the moon and star, as well as their rituals of power. This is quite crucial because, as Marscen (1987) argues, "The most striking feature of fundamentalism since the 1970s that distinguishes it from its forebears is its deep involvement in mainstream national politics. Fundamentalism has always had political implications. One of the several dynamics shaping early fundamentalists was a sense of alarm over the demise of a Christian culture. National revival, they argued, was the only adequate response. Salvation of souls, they affirmed, would restore righteousness to the culture. Born again people, they at least implied would choose upright leaders who honoured God's laws" (pp. 213-217).

Critics argue that Pentecostalism has been implicated in fundamentalism because of certain shared doctrinal affirmations; literalist use of the Bible;

and a preoccupation with economic, social, and political power. Thus, its emphases on church growth, winning converts, healing, deliverance, signs and wonders, and other expressions of divine power reflect a certain worldview that explains the Pentecostal response to the created order. Pirouet (1991) stated that some of these fundamentalist Christians are found in what is known as the “house-church” movement. They reject what they describe as the institutionalized and ‘purely nominal’ Christianity of the older churches; but they are inevitably developing institutions of their own, and are often rigidly controlled by leaders whom they believe to be specially guided by the spirit.

There is, in this context, the influence of western modern culture on Christianity. This culture has dazzled the world with its developing technology, and much of this technology seems to have formed part of the good news of Christ which was brought by western missionaries (Bowen, 1996). The gospel was seen as education, rapid transport, and technology healthcare – which all provided to be passports to progress in one way or another. With this culture, which has become known as modernity, came complete confidence in the power of human reason to control the environment and to expose much traditional culture as superstitious or childlike. Reason could ignore or explain away the world of the supernatural. This has happened with narratives in the Bible, traditional beliefs and symbolism, and the modern signs and wonders movement. We may criticize this western culture for its arrogance, narrowness and blindness to other realities, but no one today can ignore it. Many African societies are more attracted to western technology at the detriment of their traditional culture.

Under the influence of modernity – such as the era of enlightenment which is the out come of Renaissance and Protestant Reformation – evangelism has become the transmission or passing on of concepts, or ideas. People are asked to respond to these ideas by making a decision to invite Christ into their lives, and then to believe that he has come in, and not to expect to feel or to see anything different. Becoming a Christian is all about the individual and the mind. This is quite different from New Testament evangelism, which pointed to what was happening through God’s activity among human beings – whether this was the coming of Jesus (Acts 10: 38) or the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 1-13) or even signs and wonders (Luke 11:20). If nothing was happening, there was no good news. In the same way, becoming a Christian made a visible difference to people (Acts 8:18), just as it does today in most parts of the world. Westerners have learnt to be content with analyzing and understanding. The reason why the gospel has spread rapidly in Nigeria is that it has had a visible and dramatic effect on people’s lives.

As a result, various forms of fundamentalism have emerged in connection with all the major faiths. Jewish Zionism focuses on the land; Hinduism focuses on the nation; Christian fundamentalism focuses on the Bible while Muslim fundamentalism focuses on the practical effect of Islam

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

in order to make the world to sit up and take notice of it. To Bayley (1996), many westerners denied the possibility of any reality which cannot be detected and measured by physical means. Atheism is a common opinion about the way the world is. Yet there is obvious religious pluralism, and many people who believe in a transcendent being do so with a passionate tolerance for all other points of view. Fundamentalism flourishes in Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

According to Kukah (1993), in Nigeria, despite the fact that both Islam and Christianity function within the same polity, there are socio-political, religious and cultural variables which have to be understood if we are to grasp the complexities which determine the direction that Christians take in shaping their response to the challenges of the state and Islam. For instance, Christian missionaries in the North unlike the caliphal jihadists were not identified with enslavement and exploitation by those with whom they associated. Rather, the education, medical and social services which they offered were all to open up new horizons for those who had contact with them—reasons which account for the scramble for missionaries among many ethnic groups south of the Niger. Solid ethnic allegiance to ancestral homes among the Yoruba, for example, was also to offer a mechanism for the control of hostilities generated by religious difference in southern Nigeria, say among the Igbo, were between Catholics and Anglicans, while among the Yoruba, for whom religious identity is a much weaker force, divisions were determined by ancestral homes such as between Egba, Ekiti or Ijebu (kukah, 1993).

As to cooperation, Northern Christians sensing a threat from the campaigns of conversion to Islam embarked upon by the Northern premier, decided to form the Northern Christian Association (NCA). Again, in view of the problems arising from government policies towards the churches on such issues as ownership of schools, social, medical and other voluntary services, they all sensed a need to come together. Hence the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) was born in the early 1970s, and included the Catholic Church in its membership. The traumas of the civil war, the problems of the pursuit of the “three RS” (reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation) all took their toll, and the process of searching for a meaning and purpose in life found expression in the emergence of a brand of Christianity which sought to respond to these needs. In the 1970s, prayer, prophetic and healing houses began to emerge—all as support mechanisms and means of “surviving the peace” (Ekwensi, 1974). The thrust here was a search for the external manifestations of the gift of the spirit in such areas of life as material prosperity, protection from enemies, speaking in tongues, healing and so on. The conflict here is that these new Christians, like the born-again of the seventies who seemed to have targeted only the mainline churches, now engaged in intra-and inter-denominational squabbles leading to expulsions, resignations and at times physical attacks on fellow founders of churches. The advance in satellite technology expanded the frontiers of these changes

which, inspired by the prosperity of tele-evangelism in the United States, started to create links between themselves and the Americans. The internal rejuvenation of Christianity has led to the emergence of what Nigerians refer to as “mushroom churches.” But their spread has often been associated with a language that has led to the increase in fundamentalist fervour. This is so because beyond the need to rejuvenate Christianity, these Christian fundamentalists have tended to set themselves on a collision course with Islam, arguing that Muslims need to be converted since without Jesus Christ there is no life for anyone. It is at this point that the contest for religious space becomes rather confusing; for the result is that every aspect on national life is seen through the lenses of religion-government appointments, the civil service, and application of policy and so on. Against this background, such constitutional clauses as quota or the federal character which have been enshrined in the constitution of Nigeria to ensure national stability now seem redundant. However, this brand of Christianity has not sought to have a direct stake in the political process, nor has the influence of American evangelists gone beyond attempts by the religious leaders to extend and expand their personal fiefdoms (Clifford, 1991).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key question is whether African Pentecostalism can be branded with the iron of fundamentalism? There are seven reasons to address this issue. The character of African expressions of Christianity is often branded as conservative, but meaning of the terminology remains ambiguous. The movement’s focus is regarded as experiential and charismatic-driven in nature. Its recovery of the pneumatic resources of the scriptures has reshaped the religious landscape, catalyzed the charismatization of the mission-founded churches, and thereby transformed ministerial formation strategies. Moreover, the variety of theologies and practices within a movement that is notable for its diversity defies easy labeling. Even more notable is the movement’s lack of ideological militancy, whether in social or political spheres. There is no evidence that African Pentecostalism imbued with the political militancy and cultural ideology of the American Moral Majority (Marsden, 1980). Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria is reaction against ecclesiastical spiritual barrenness, unemployment, economic deprivation, tribalism, religious bigotry, the corruption of the secular government, social injustice, moral decadence and the like. It is pertinent at this juncture to recommend that:

- (a) The fundamentalists should engage themselves in centrifugal theology which is based on the New Testament paradigm of church’s mission through which Christians are required to go to others so that they might receive the gospel. A “go” theology

Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

rather than centripetal theology. A view of the church's mission which requires others to "come" to Christianity. A "come" theology is an Old Testament method through which God revealed himself to the nations (Hunter, 1983, p. 187).

- (b) There should be comity pattern of Christian mission. That is a mission strategy by which the participating fundamentalist missions agree to work in well-defined geographic areas which do not overlap or duplicate the outreach of others.
- (c) Fundamentalists should evolve a cultural mandate pattern of evangelism. It is Jesus' command to have concern for the neighbour; the mission and ministry of the church as it is expressed in social concerns.
- (d) The fundamentalist groups in Nigeria should focus more on the teachings of Jesus Christ instead of concentrating so much on the Old Testament and selected gospel and epistles.
- (e) These fundamentalist groups in Nigeria should avoid koinonitis disease, a disease in the pathology of church growth which occurs when too much fellowship which is not commiserate with moral virtues causes the church to look inward upon itself. That is church's inner nature and spiritual quality based on the true inwardness of Christ's teachings.
- (f) The fundamentalist groups in Nigeria should be the proponents of patriotism and morality.
- (g) The Christian fundamentalists, apart from their religious inclination, should focus political, economic, security, employment, cultural, social, justice and equity issues in Nigeria.

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