

African Renaissance

ISSN: 1744-2532 (Print) ISSN: 2516-5305 (Online)

- Indexed at: EBSCO, ProQuest, J-Gate and Sabinet. Also Indexed and accredited by IBSS and SCOPUS

Vol. 16, (Number 2), June 2019
pp 165 – 185

“Putting Old Wine in New Wine Skins”: The Place of African Indigenous Churches in the Nigerian Pentecostals

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2019/v16n2a8>

Akiti Glory Alamu

*Department Of Religions,
University Of Ilorin, P.M.B.1515, Ilorin,
Nigeria*

*E-Mail: Agalamufreelance2004@Yahoo.Com
Tel: +2348033736985*

Abstract

The phenomenon of Pentecostalism has been exhaustively discussed as a contemporary and topical issue. Thus, Pentecostalization of African Christianity has become a new phenomenon that has engaged the attention of many scholars since the mid-1960s. African, perhaps, Nigerian Pentecostalism, has constituted the fastest growing Christianity in the world. A handful of scholars have attributed this growth to the fact that they are distinct from the influence of the African Charismatic movements. In addition, some opine that Nigerian Pentecostals have no resemblance with African Instituted Churches. Despite the fact that some claim independence from the Pentecostals of Kenneth Haggin, Seymour, Topeka and Osborne, others subscribe to the fact that the above-named televangelists influenced the popularity of African perhaps Nigerian Pentecostalism. Out of these several submissions, the emphasis has to

be placed on historical fact. Pentecostalism as a religious movement that started in the 20th Century has its origin in the emergence and spread of the African Independent Churches and emphasizes on visible gifts of the Holy Spirit, faith, healing and miracles as evident in both Old and New Testaments. Besides, some of the features of African Indigenous Churches are re-enacted and re-emphasized in the Nigerian Pentecostals. The paper, therefore, adopted historical, theological and interpretative methods leading to the fact that the old wine in the new wineskins is the corresponding re-definition, re-emergence, continuity, and re-emphasis in the Nigerian Pentecostals that enhance the faith of both Pentecostal Christians and contemporary Neo-Pentecostal churches with new vigour and modern vitality. The paper, therefore, postulates that the emergence and spread of African Charismatic Movements immensely and tremendously contributed and still contribute to the phenomenal growth and popularity of Nigerian Pentecostalism. The paper concludes that the Holy Spirit, which though poses intellectual difficulty in scholarship, is the catalyst behind the old wine in the new wineskins.

Keywords: *Old and New Wine, Pentecostalism, African Christianity, Nigeria.*

Introduction

The phenomenon of Pentecostalism has been exhaustively debated and curiously interrogated as to the origin of the subject-matter. Meanwhile, current findings have revealed four schools of thought. As a matter of fact, the first school of thought pointed out that Pentecostalism started in Azusa Street in America around 1906. In the same vein, the second school of thought,, however, argued that Pentecostal phenomenon started from the great revival that blew in the 1970s with the likes of T.L. Osborne, Kenneth Haggin and among others. The third school averred that the wave of Pentecostalism commenced with the tele-evangelism of Late Archbishop Benson Idahosa, the founder of the Church of God Mission International Incorporated in the 1970s. And finally, some scholars argued that it started with the emergence of the African Indigenous Churches in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The current author *abinitio* subscribes to this position. Thus, some of these churches that came to the fore during this period highlighted included Cherubim and Seraphim Church in 1925, The Apostolic Church which later metamorphosed into Christ Apostolic Church in 1930, Celestial Church of Christ in 1947 and among others. Despite this curiosity, it is the

intention of this paper to examine and situate in perspective Pentecostal phenomenon within the Nigerian context and to show some elements of African Indigenous churches that are replicated in the Nigerian Pentecostals.

An Overview of Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is a radical and religious revival movement that evolved at the dawn of the 20th century Christianity, Pentecostalism in contemporary parlance emphasizes "Charismatic phenomenon which places its emphasis on the visible gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the gifts of speaking in tongue, faith healing and miracles. As a phenomenon, it has its background in the old and new Testaments.

Pentecostalism is commonly situated in the religious feast of the Jewish people celebrating 50 days after the Passover. This Old Testament "agricultural" celebration marks the beginning and offers a foundational set-up and terminology of the overwhelming religious conviction in the minds of the followers of Jesus Christ (Ukpong, 2008: 1). Thus, this unique experience exercises a permanent influence on the nascent Christian church, her spirituality and ministry. To this end, Dunn (2002: 961) asserts that:

Pentecost, meaning 50, is the Greek name for the O T feast of weeks, since this festival occurred on the 50th day (seven weeks) after Passover, along with the three annual pilgrimage feasts for the Jews. A harvest festival, it marked the beginning of the time when the people brought their offerings of first fruits. Lev. 23:15-21 provides the most detailed account of the ritual observed during the feast. The observance is also known as the feast of in-gathering (Ex 23:16) and Day of first fruits (Num 28:26).

Sequel to the above, it is obvious that the phenomenon of Pentecost could be considered as the commemoration or observance of religious consciousness of the Jews, celebrating the saving presence of Yahweh(God) as a Giver of the fruit of the land and to whom belongs the primal fruits. From the perspective of the Old Testament, Pentecost is a feast of the 'in-gathering' of human beings who recognise God as the Giver of the fruits of the earth. John McKenzie (1965:515), considering

the historical and biblical evidence of Pentecost supports the fact that it is a celebration of the agricultural feast. According to him;

As Pentecost is described, it is evidently an agricultural feast with no historical motif. It is probable that it was later in origin than Passover and did not take form until Israelites had become a primarily agricultural community in Canaan. The time of the festival in its original celebration must have been indefinite since the beginning of the grain harvest cannot be input at a certain day in the calendar. The beginning of the grain harvest corresponds with the feast of Mazzoth. When Pentecost and Mazzoth were combined and set on the 14th of Nisan, the feast of weeks received a regular date in the calendar 7 weeks (50 days) after Passover.

In the New Testament, the phenomenon of Pentecost assumed a new and different approach. The Feast of Pentecost, marked in the church as the day on which the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2) is the fulfilment of the promise of Jesus (John 16:7:13); (Acts 1:4, 14) is traditionally recognized as the commencement of the church as an institution. The Feast of Pentecost became a providential moment for the in-gathering of the people of God. The crux of this encounter according to the Acts of the Apostles is the descent of the glossolalic experience on the disciples, the discourse of Peter and the formation of the first Christian community. Ukpong (2008: 4) considers this as a tripod of the church: the Holy Spirit, The proclamation and the community. Again, Dunn (2002: 962) comments on the New Testament Pentecost thus:

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) implies the passing of the old system of worship, as well as the climax and fulfilment of the promises that system foreshadowed. For the church, Pentecost has become a time to celebrate God's bestowal of the gift of the spirit. Pentecost are modern Christians who believe in the possibility of receiving the same experience of the Holy Spirit of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:1-4).

It is the feeling and eagerness that was manifested in the early Christians during and after the Feast of Pentecost that has triggered the phenomenon of Pentecostalism in the contemporary era.

The modern Pentecostals take their name from a story recounted in (Acts 2). The plot describes how the confused followers of the recently crucified Rabbi they believed was the Messiah gathered in Jerusalem to mark the Jewish holiday called Pentecost that occurred fifty days after Passover (Ukpong, 2008: 4). The Pentecostal movement in the modern form supposedly and purportedly said to have started in 1906 after about decades of preliminary preparation and desires revealed in the holiness movement and the Wesleyan doctrines of sanctification. Its peculiar characteristic was the fact that it was led by an African-American William Seymour preacher with no theological formation. Its first adherents were poor domestic servant, janitors and days workers black and whites who had the audacity to claim that a new Pentecost was happening, the new Jerusalem was coming soon, and that they were its designated heralds and grateful first fruits (Ukpong, 2008: 5).

As earlier observed, there are four leading interpretative schools of thought on the origin of Pentecostal churches in Africa, with each implication for understanding their theology and wider social impact. However, only two relevant schools of thought shall be considered here. One school of thought represented by Paul Gifford (2004: 66) sees African Pentecostal churches as replication or derivative product of western Pentecostalism- more precisely, the sort of Pentecostalism associated with American television evangelist and conservative Christianity. A related argument acknowledges the black holiness preacher William Seymour and his Azusa street (in Los Angeles) revivals as the starting point of the modern day Pentecostalism in the early 20th century. Hollenweger (1999: 36) stresses further that Pentecostalism's break taking growth does not lie in a particular Pentecostal doctrine in spite of what Pentecostals think; the reasons for its growth lies in its black roots. The second school of thought, a more convincing interpretation, finds in African Pentecostal churches a new chapter in the African re-imagination of Christianity addressing concerns on African terms in a manner similar to the African Indigenous Churches. Along these lines, Ogbu Kalu (1998: 36) indicates that the Pentecostal churches are part of a continuing and indigenous effort that follows the failure of the missionary churches. They are not, in this historical evaluation, following the line of Azusa but have developed independently to meet their own requirement (Gornik, 2011: 33).

Origin of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

The phenomenon of Pentecostalism in contemporary Nigeria is not new as earlier pointed out. Ogbu Kalu (1998: 36) argues that the emergence of Pentecostalism in Africa and Nigeria in particular, could be dated back to the establishment of African Indigenous churches (AICS) between 1914 and 1947. These include the Christ Army Church, 1918; Christ Apostolic Church 1930; the Church of the Lord, Aladura 1947; Cherubim and Seraphim 1925; the Celestial Church of Christ 1947; and among others. Christianity is a salvation faith for African believers. Prior to practice and belief is the presence of God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Spirit of life, which in turn shapes practice; belief, and life. If such experience is central to African Christianity, it is not at odds with holding strong theological beliefs (Gornik, 2011: 34). Isiramen (2010: 307) opines that these churches exhibit elements found among Pentecostals such as healing, miracles, speaking in strange tongues, prophecy visions and dream. Thus, African Indigenous Churches possess vibrant contextual theology, local liturgy and live experience that is central to life in these churches. Daneel (1987: 65) maintains that the Independent churches are a constructive reinterpretation of Christianity in African terms.

Afe Adogame (2004: 494) clearly emphasizes the correct strands of African Independent Churches. He posits that they share many features and common typology, but each Aladura has its own religious dynamic. There are significant differences, especially in specific doctrines and details of ritual acts and performance, the charismatic personality of the founders, their organizational policies and foundation histories. Overall, the African Independent Churches emphasize the experience of the spirit, healing, testimony and a rejection of western modes of worship as imported by the missionaries (Pobee and Ositelu, 1998: 40-42).

Be that as it may, many Pentecostal churches have diametrically opposed and vehemently disagreed with this truth. Most of these churches believe that Pentecostal and charismatic churches sprang up in the seventies. On the other hand, Neo-Pentecostals came into Africa through some American faith healers and tele- evangelists like Kenneth Haggin, Kenneth Copeland, Oral Robert, T.L. Osborn and John Arazin (Isiramen, 2010: 307). Again, Isiramen argues that by 1968, the Nigerian born dynamic and charismatic preacher, late Archbishop Benson Idahosa emerged and founded the Church of God Mission Intl, Inc, with

headquarters in Benin City, Edo State. Eventually, he came to be recognised as the father of Neo-Pentecostalism in Nigeria. The middle of 1980 recorded an unprecedented upsurge of numerous neo-Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Some of the founders of these churches are William Kumuyi of the Deeper Life Bible Church, David Oyedepo of the Living Faith Church aka (Winners Chapel), Daniel Kolawole Olukoya of the Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, Chris Oyakhilome of the Believers Loveworld Assembly (Christ Embassy) and Temitope Balogun Joshua of the Synagogue Church of all Nations (Isiramen, 2010: 307-309).

In light of the foregoing, it is crystal clear and worth-asserting without contradiction that Pentecostalism started in Nigeria as a result of the emergence of African Indigenous churches in the 20th century. Most of the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches have their bearings from some of the African Indigenous Churches. For instance, the founder of The Redeemed Christian Church of God late Rev. Josiah Akindayomi left Cherubim and Seraphim to form a Christian body that flowered to RCCG. The founder of MFM, Rev. Olukoya also has CAC background. The implication of this is that the phenomenon of Pentecostal in Nigeria was not imported to us, and also it did not fill any social or religious vacuum. To this end, charismatic/Pentecostal affinities coalesce to constitute an overall culture in Nigeria.

The Features of Nigerian Pentecostals

Ukpong (2008: 6) observes that Pentecostalism is not a denomination rather a movement of Christians that integrates a firm belief in the experience of the disciples on the day of Pentecost, desiring with intensity to share in that experience through the power of the Holy Spirit manifesting spiritual gifts which include speaking in tongues, renewal of the church, the sanctification of individuals and the empowerment for service. Isiramen (2010: 306) buttresses further that Nigerian Pentecostals take it as an obligation to lead people to experience by themselves the power of the Holy Spirit, which they have experienced. Testimonies about the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives are therefore important features. Today, several testimonies have become a marketing strategy to advertise the product(s) of these Pentecostal churches.

Furthermore, Emielu (2010: 288) takes a step forward to include Pentecostal spirituality through music and worship. He adds that the pursuit of this spirituality has both personal and global historical implication, culminating in the growth of several Pentecostal and charismatic renewal movements worldwide, with the sole aim of actualizing the objectives of Pentecost. By implication, Nigerian Pentecostals introduce boisterous singing and dancing to their liturgy, Pentecostal worship is vibrant, ecstatic, jubilant, all-consuming and tailored towards the well being of the individual and the community at large (Emielu, 2010: 290). Corroborating the above, Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 5) aptly observes that the prevalence of a holistic spirituality is the hallmark of African Pentecostal churches. Gornik (2011:6) avers that all African Pentecostal churches emphasize the relevance of the worship of Jesus, celebrating joy and expectation of blessing.

Moreover, a strong awareness of the place of the Holy Ghost in the Christian life is evident by such charismatic activities as “the exercise of all the gifts of the spirit and a strong belief in the necessity, power and effectiveness of prayer in the life of a believer.” Prayer meetings where believers are given the opportunity to express their feelings freely are a common feature among the Pentecostals (Isiramen, 2010: 306). In addition, Pentecostal movements emphasize the Holy Spirit, voluntary association, grassroots, reading of the Bible, a heightened sense of personae virtue and discipline, and the reach of a global parish (David Martin, 2002: 27).

Another feature of Nigerian Pentecostals is prosperity preaching. Isiramen (2010: 200) bemoans the fact that church polity is aristocratic and its constitution has resemblance with that of a sole proprietorship of commercial enterprise. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 164) corroborates this assertion by stating that contemporary Pentecostalism is very much a Christianity of power and prosperity, and the Bible is used as guidance for those who want to prosper. Contemporary Pentecostal preaching is an account of the application of the principle of success and breakthrough. Ojo (2006: 298) reiterates the foregoing by asserting notably that two distinctive themes of Nigerian Pentecostalism are piety and power. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 164) underscores the fact that overemphasis in this regards has made the Pentecostal attitude towards the scripture with a general disrespect for ‘scientific exegesis’ and carefully ‘thought-out hermeneutics’.

A remarkable feature of Nigerian Pentecostalism is the spectacular flamboyant lifestyle of some of the church leaders. Not only that, schism within the church is another feature of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Isiramen (2010: 306) asserts that this appears to arise from the emphatic claims on the possession of divine revelation and scriptural authority. It gives rise to conflicts in revelation and their interpretation. Lastly, another feature is the security of life and cessation from systematic poverty.

Putting Old Wine in New Wineskins

As earlier indicated above, Ogbu Kalu (1998: 36) and Isiramen (2010: 307) support the fact that African perhaps Nigerian Pentecostals find their root in the emergence of the African Indigenous Churches. Isiramen (2010: 307) further observes that these churches exhibited elements or credentials found among Pentecostals such as healing, miracles, speaking in strange tongues, prophecy, vision and dream. Furthermore, these churches exemplified such Pentecostal phenomena such as clapping, drumming and African music. From all indications, it shows that the credentials of African Indigenous Churches cut across Acts of the Apostles 2, the event of Pentecost in Christian liturgy as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel in (Joel 2:28-32). Thus, these elements or credentials are re-enacted and re-emphasized today in the Nigerian Pentecostal churches. Miller (1997: 1) cited by Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 6) sees these new paradigm churches as changing the way Christianity looks and is experienced. He adds that "appropriating contemporary cultural forms, these churches are creating a new genre of worship music; they are restructuring the organizational character of institutional religion; they are democratizing access to the sacred by radicalizing the Protestant principle of the priesthood of all believers." It is of interest to note that these elements of African Indigenous Churches as re-enacted or exhibited in the Nigerian Pentecostal churches depict the 'Old wine in new wineskins'.

Some of the Old Wines in New Wineskins

Beliefs in Pentecostal gifts

African Indigenous Churches strongly believe in the endowments of the Holy Spirit, prophecies as well as the ability to speak in strange tongues (Kwabiah, 1983: 97). Interestingly, Nigerian Pentecostalism combines a personal relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit with the possibility of dramatic transformation (Ogbu, 1998: 55). This corroborates the position of Irenaeus as quoted by Gornik (2011: 289) that “for where the church is, there is the spirit of God; and where the spirit of God is, there is the church... Christian faith is neither unchanging nor static, but living and breathing in the spirit of God.”

As African Christianity has found succour in African Indigenous Churches, so also it has become a hotbed of Pentecostal/charismatic activity. Pentecostalism in both its older classical and newer charismatic forms has now taken over as the representative face of Christianity in Africa (Asamoah-Gyadu, (2013: 9). In African Christianity, the Holy Spirit with its possibility of dramatic transformation has chosen to use the Indigenous church movement for yet another spectacular and extraordinary advance. Today, Nigerian contemporary Pentecostals see the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidence of Pentecostalism. Of a truth, the Pentecostals trace their origin, name and dynamism to the first experience as recorded in (Acts 2: 1-4).

In the African Indigenous Churches (AICs), there is a strong belief in visions and dreams as well as the ability to interpret these phenomena (Kwabiah 1983: 98). This is to support the prophetic fulfilment of Joel (2:28; 32) in these churches. Today, the Pentecostals have re-invigorated the power of visions and dreams as efficacious in the direction and growth of the church. Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999: 153) comment on the place of the Holy Spirit, gifts of Vision, prophetic utterances and faith healing as follows:

Much emphasis is placed on the role of Holy Spirit in the various ministries of these churches. While much depends on the ingenuity of the leaders, they still refer to the Holy Spirit as the source of their gift of vision, prophetic utterances and healing. The Holy Spirit is not an academic subject to be debated, but to be experienced by the leaders and the followers. A re-enactment of the activities of the Holy Spirit in

the Acts is the norm for most of these churches and their leaders. In some cases, there may be heresies on the subject of the Holy Spirit, yet, He is still recognised as the power behind their activities.

Belief in Faith Healing

Some Nigerian church historians have consensus opinion that the "faithlessness" exhibited by the leaders of the mainline churches during the outbreak of the bubonic plague in 1918 prompted Nigerian Christian leaders to organize prayers that led to faith healing. The likes of Odubanjo, Akinyele, Moses Orimolade Tunolase, Babalola and among others were at the forefronts. The belief in faith healing and the prohibition in the use of both native and western medicine made them to be described as faith people (Kwabiah, 1983: 98). The effects on the answer of prayer and faith healing brought about astronomic growth and the various establishments of churches. This is a commonplace rehearsal in the Nigerian Pentecostals. Spontaneous prayer and faith healing are vehicles for mercurial growth of today's Pentecostals. This is evident in RCCG, Assemblies of God Church, Deeper Life Bible Church, Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church, Living Faith Church and others.

Liturgy

Gornik (2011: 54) argues that African Independent churches and African Pentecostalism are not a religion for the people, instead, they are a religion of the people. Because they are rooted in local communities and their local liturgies are encapsulated in the Pentecost (Acts 2). Their theology is not found in libraries, books or study carrels, but what occurs as persons and communities seek to turn all of life to Christ. African faith is living and breathing in the spirit of God. Again, there is a common practice of the use of airs and tunes (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 1999: 25). As a matter of fact, they make use of native music instruments, such as native drums, maracas, (sekere). Part of their liturgy includes native dancing, clapping and stamping of the foot. It is significant to note that the use of native airs and tunes, as well as native instruments, are means to indigenize the church. Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999: 31) describe this liturgy as an ingredient of African cultural manifestation. Nigerian Pentecostal churches naturally enjoy a more demonstrative form of worship. The exciting liturgy today is that members are fully

involved in the whole service from the beginning to the end. The individual is a heart and soul participant in the service and not the passive members who allow only the clergy and the key officials to be “*dramatis personae*.” Everybody participates in clapping, dancing, and singing. Prayer is also spontaneous and everyone is inspired to pray and deliver a message or give a testimony (Ayeboyin and Ishola, 1999: 25). Isiramen (2010: 314) substantiates the submissions of Kwabiah (1983: 98) and Ayeboyin and Ishola (1999: 154) by noting without equivocation that:

One incontestable fact about the upsurge in the number of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria is their spontaneous mode of service, which is uninhibited, unstructured, and accompanied by joyful shouting, swaying and singing, clapping of hands, dancing and moving around the church which is a part of the Nigerian cultural reality. The services are totally experiential and fully participatory, which can pass for true celebrations. The service is further marked with prophecies and testimonies of divine encounters and miracles.

In light of the above, it is clear that African Christianity is a dynamic reality that entails the above disquisition as observed by Isiramen. Gerrie ter Haar (2009: 98) remarks by corroborating Isiramen’s submission that African Christianity with many strands of liturgy finds theological expression in songs, dances, values, prayers, material representations, sermons, meals, baptisms, and communal reflections in relationship to God and God’s purpose in Christ. These are practices, creative activities that are learned and participated in over time. They are passed on through the generations, and they are adaptable. Knowing and responding to God can take the form of singing, praying in loud voices, and dancing. This is why attending to practices is so essential in the study of African Christianity.

Charismatic Leadership

The leaders of African Indigenous churches are generally people with some personal charismatic gifts (Kwabiah 1983: 98). This charismatic gift distinguishes these leaders from their followers. Thus, in the Nigerian Pentecostals, suffice it to say that charismatic leaders attract followers especially those with gifts of fivefold ministry. Macchia (2006: 158)

argues that the strength of these Pentecostals is not in the sense of tradition or theological brilliance, but in a powerful experience of communal praise, liberation and mission. He adds, that this movement tends towards an energized laity active in the realm of the Spirit in diverse and unique ways to build up the body of Christ and to function as witnesses for Christ to the world. No doubt, charismatic experience finds expression in a variety of spiritual gifts which are granted by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the entire community (Gelpi, 1971: 83). Ayegboyin and Ishola,(1999:154) however, acknowledge the problem associated with these leaders. According to them, "it is a general knowledge that some of these churches have gone to the extent of idolizing their leaders."

Ascetic Living expressed in frequent fasting

In fact, there is a strong belief in prayer and fasting. It is the belief of AICs that all prayers are heard by God (Kwabiah 1983: 98). Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999: 111) again stress that fasting is a spiritual exercise carried out at will or upon spiritual dictates or by revelations. They add that through fasting, especially the strenuous type, harmful elements are gotten rid of, the body relaxes and thus is free from many ailments. Spiritually, one who fasts, they believe would receive visions, heavenly revelations, divine wisdom and meanings of hidden things (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 1999: 111). In the Pentecostal churches today, fasting is declared periodically especially at the commencement of the Gregorian calendar year or during lectern period or at any particular period of the year. As matter as fact, fasting can be embarked upon by individual Christians as well as some Pentecostal leaders. This can also be done through revelation or the dictate of the Holy Spirit.

Women Leadership is effectively encouraged

\Women could hold any position of authority in the Independent African Churches. In fact, the priesthood is open to all believers (Kwabiah 1983:99). The AICs have elevated the uniqueness of women as many of these churches are led by women and they also play prominent roles in Pentecostal churches. They serve as Mothers-in-Israel, Prophetess, Overseers and women evangelists. In recent times, there are several of them who are now 'Bishops' and even 'Archbishops' with

many men serving under them (Ayeboyin and Ishola, 1999: 153). Today's Pentecostals are at home with women participation and leadership in the Nigerian churches.

The Use of Holy Water or Consecrated Water vis-a-vis Psalms

This is an essential characteristic feature of African Independent Churches (Kwabiah 1983:98). The use of Holy water or consecrated water coupled with the use of Psalm is for (*cura divina*) divine healing and for protection against witches, wizard and other forms of malevolent spirits. In some Pentecostal churches today, some of these are replicated in the form of foot washing and the use of either anointing oil or handkerchief. Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 122) gives an overview of the use of anointing materials in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movements in Nigeria. According to him, the use of olive oil as a material substance for healing and empowerment is not new in African pneumatic Christianity. It started with the older independent church prophets, but it has developed as a subculture within African Christianity, with anointing services now taking place in many historic mission churches too. The whole essence of these materials is that it takes indigenous worldviews of mystical causality and extraordinary evil seriously on the one hand and purveys interventionist piety that helps ordinary people cope with the fears and insecurities of life, with the demonic activities and incurable diseases on the other (Asamoah-Gyadu, 122). As a sacramental metaphor for the power of the Spirit, the anointing oil has become a part of the self-definition of contemporary Pentecostalism (Asamoah-Gyadu, 122). In the contemporary period, it is a form of innovation, upgrading and re-packaging to bring about pragmatic solutions to evil machinations, recovery of health, fortification, total wellbeing and all-round success in life. It is not out of place to add that anointing has many fangs, such as anointing for change, anointing for total recovery, anointing for leadership and breakthroughs, anointing for open doors, anointing for open heavens and *inter alia*.

Evangelistic Campaign

AICs organize serious evangelistic campaigns. They hold constant open-air preaching and also regular retreats on mountain tops as well as at sea sides.⁴³ Evangelistic campaigns aided the growth and development of the

AICs at their inception, and later, was the regular feature of open-air meetings. The Christ Apostolic Church's revival at Oke-Oye, Ilesha, launched this denomination into international fame. Most of the AICs leaders were and are itinerant preachers and evangelists who conducted and still conduct revival meetings. This was very true of Moses Orimolade, Babalola, Oshitelu, and among others (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 1999: 32). However, Nigerian Pentecostals have upgraded evangelistic measure by using mass-media, tele-evangelism, print media, and social media platform to reach out to people. Not only that, Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 60) remarkably observes in line with the above that Pentecostal movement has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to get the rank-and-file church member involved in ministry. Indeed, church-growth specialists have identified as the number one reason for the remarkable growth of Pentecostalism the unique ability of such churches to mobilize the laity for aggressive evangelism.

Absence of emphasis on training and providing any serious or elaborate depth of theological knowledge for their ministers

Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999: 155) argue that researches have shown that several of the leaders of AICs have no Bible or theological training whatsoever. One of the serious effects of this is that their teaching or preaching is usually of a rather low order and sermons show little or absolutely no sign of careful preparation. The result of this is that some of these churches engage in some practices which are not biblical. In fact, this absence of elaborate training is also evident in some Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches in contemporary times. Some lay claims to divine calling without theological training and those who venture into theological training would only spend a few months or weeks before graduation. Anderson (1999: 214) supports the above submission by noting that there is no need for theologically articulate clergy, because cerebral and clerical Christianity had, in the minds of many people, already failed them. What was needed was a demonstration of power by indigenous people to whom ordinary people could easily relate. This was the democratization of Christianity, for henceforth the mystery of the gospel would no longer be reserved for a select privileged and educated few, but would be revealed to whoever was willing to receive it.

Emphasis is placed on the Spiritual

Most of the founders and leaders of AICs are men in the quest for spiritual contemplation and all of them claim spiritual motivation for the founding of their organization (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 1999: 28). The AICs give a spiritual interpretation to virtually all occurrences especially misfortunes and failures in life hence deliverance is entertained. The Holy Spirit is believed to feature prominently in their worship as it manifests through visions, interpretation of dreams, ecstatic behaviour and prophetic utterances (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 1999: 29). All these are not new to Pentecostal spirituality. Thus, Nigerian Pentecostalism accommodates explicitly supernatural nuances like spiritual healing, exorcism, religious rituals and spiritual baptism and they represent Christian mainstream across Africa. The ideas of supernatural warfare and healing need not the slightest explanation, and certainly no apology. African Pentecostalism is not only a Bible used in historic ritualistic ways, but its promises are also reinvented and applied to contemporary situations (Asamoah-Gyadu, 162-163).

The Millennial reign and the Parousia

Lastly, the millennial reign of Christ as well as His second coming are the trademarks of African indigenous churches.

An Evaluation

Our exposé has shown that indeed old wine is re-circled and utilized if not modified in the midst of the Pentecostals. The evident of Acts 2 and Joel 2:28-32 is much felt in the Pentecostal churches today. The power of the Holy Spirit is indubitable as it is experienced by leaders and followers. They often see the Holy Spirit; as a propeller, vim, an energizer and a force behind any spiritual occurrence. The effects of the Holy Spirit do not sound intellectual, yet Nigerian Pentecostals do not take the Holy Spirit for granted.

It is important to note that the Nigerian Pentecostals have integrated into their liturgy cultural manifestation. This enables Pentecostal Christianity to be contextualized or domesticated within its host community and its worldview. Walls (1996: 113-114) is of the opinion that the Christian faith is effectively planted across a cultural frontier.

African Christianity itself is the reworking of the old and the new. The old is developing along the well-known lines of the new churches. Pentecostals are showing sympathy and respect for the indigenous churches as better reflecting or maintaining that continuity. Kwame Bediako (1997: 122-123) has polemically argued that the indigenous church is a translating church, reaching continually to the heart of the culture of its context and incarnating the translating word. According to him, translatability is the only true basis and starting point for seeking indigeneity. From this perspective, however, indigeneity does not lie at the end of a quest. Rather it is presumed within the very translatability of the Christian religion. Indigeneity is as much as a matter of recognition within the gospel as it is an achievement of actual Christian witness. Thus, this aspect of cultural continuum makes everybody a heart and soul participant in the Christian liturgy. The Pentecostal liturgy truly speaks the language of ordinary people. Gornik (2011:45) agrees with some African scholars on translation. To him, translation of Christian faith gives rise to a multiplicity of indigenous responses. Thus, translation is the full experience of a community as it encounters the gospel, as diametrically opposed to contextualization, a process of adaptively transferring a theology more associated with the work of a missionary or cross-cultural ministry. Williams (2000: 125) appositely asserts "the son is manifest in a single, paradigmatic figure, the spirit is manifest in the translatability of that into the contingent diversity of history." Allan Anderson (2004: 282) provides a similar observation. Pentecostalism with its flexibility or freedom in the spirit has an innate ability to make itself at home in almost any context. While, there is a stress on the transcultural nature of the gospel, with flexibility rooted in the spirit, Pentecostalism can and does take local cultural idioms seriously. This constitutes a dynamic that, along with Williams and Anderson's points, helps explain why Pentecostalism appears to be so globally adaptable. As a result, as Martin (2002: 25) has emphasized, Pentecostalism presents a flexible and strong cultural presence around the world.

Furthermore, the use of the holy water or consecrated water, as well as the use of psalm, is for curative purposes, protection and security. As earlier argued above, some of these elements are replicated and upgraded amongst the Pentecostals. For instance, foot washing, anointing oil, the use of handkerchief/ mantle, symbols among others - all these are geared towards building up or enhancing people's faith and to be connected to the source of miracles. Be that it may, many believers

would also condemn them because of the implications hence cultural values are attached to them. However, the faith of the believers should be paramount in the mind of the Pentecostal leaders

Apart from the above, serious attention should be given to theological training of both African Indigenous church leaders and Pentecostal leaders. The divine call of the individual is not a yardstick to measure a leader's vibrancy but the ability to undergo theological training from sound and reputable theological institutions in order to help his/her ministry.

Moreover, Pentecostal theology, as well as Pentecostal spirituality, is not a totally new concept to the Nigerians. Spirit possession or spiritual ecstasy is a common feature in various Pentecostals as well as AICS. It is, therefore, easy to understand how the new Pentecostal spirituality with its emphasis on spirit possession and its manifestations caught on easily with Nigerian Pentecostals. Acknowledging this fact, Emielu (2010: 290) submits that early Pentecostalism drew on African spirituality of belonging and bringing of self into worship and the enrichment of community life into Pentecostal Christianity.

In assessing clerical flamboyant lifestyle, one discovers that whenever there is a spiritual re-awakening, the ministers are the first to benefit from it materially. Material success becomes a yardstick for measuring the validity of ministers. Ukpong (2008: 181-182) asserts that this is often based on the material flamboyancy, and on the quality of physical structures erected by the ministers. Pentecostal ministers have created a kind of 'ministerial jealousy' in Nigeria. Pentecostal flamboyant lifestyle has affected priests and seminarians' alike. This is because we belong to a society that is flamboyant, a society that worships wealth or money and material possession.

Despite the foregoing assessment, both African Indigenous churches and the Pentecostals or the new paradigm churches are doing a better job of responding to the needs of their clientele than the historic churches. But more significantly, they are successfully mediating the sacred, bringing God to people and conveying the self-transcending and life-changing core of all genuine religion. They offer worship in a musical idiom that connects with the experience of broad sectors of the middle class; they have jettisoned aspects of organized religion that alienates many teenagers and youths, and they provide programming that emphasizes well-defined moral values and it not otherwise available in

the culture. In short, they offer people hope and meaning that is deeply rooted in the transcendent experience of the sacred (Miller, 1997: 3).

Conclusion

This paper has x-rayed the re-emergence of the features of African Indigenous churches in the Nigerian Pentecostals. The paper has also traced with a clear description of the history of Pentecostalism in Nigeria to the emergence of African indigenous churches in the early 20th century. Interestingly, it has also discovered that the Nigerian Pentecostalism was not the product of western tele-evangelists. The study has also shown that Nigerian Pentecostalism did not fill any social or spiritual vacuum. Equally, it would be puerile at this level of scholarship to think that Nigerian Pentecostals did and do not have an affinity with indigenous charismatic movements. Indeed, Nigerian Pentecostalism is a prescriptive chronicle of glossolalia and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church and its re-emergence in the contemporary Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches.

No doubt, the paper has exhaustively discussed the features of African indigenous churches as evident in the Nigerian Pentecostalism. The author has evaluated the paper to situate it within the context that these elements that find continuity in Nigerian Pentecostalism enhance the faith of the Pentecostals and also aid concentration and connection. As a matter of fact, Pentecostal flamboyant lifestyle exhibited by some pastors should be checkmated so as not to promote avarice, ministerial jealousy, witch hunting and character assassination. Furthermore, some Pentecostal ministers are selfish and self-centred; having the tendency of amassing wealth and becoming famous at the expense of their faithful poor. To this end, it is hereby recommended that the purpose of the church which is the holistic welfarism of the members as experienced in the apostolic age (Acts, 3) should be brought back squarely to the contemporary church. More so, it is obvious that some founding Pastors possess a lack of trust in their subordinates. Instead, some of them if not many become a sole proprietor of church enterprise or family affairs of which some sensitive positions are reserved for family ties. These churches suddenly become "one-man show" or all the family become members of the board of trustee. This attitude should be discontinued. Our effort has shown that there is lopsidedness on the part of wealth and prosperity preaching. Today's Pentecostal leaders have overstressed

prosperity gospel as if that is the only counsel of God. The paper lucidly shows that wealth and prosperity preaching should be moderately stressed as other counsels of God are also important and all-inclusive.

In spite of the foregoing, the Pentecostal and charismatic churches are doing a good job by responding to the local needs of their members as well as speaking liturgically and theologically the language of the members. In addition, they bring God to people by offering them hope and meaning that is inveterate in the transcendent. Lastly, they have become a haven and succour to those with existential challenges of life coupled with the fact that Nigerian Pentecostalism is also democratized.

References

- Adogame, A. (2004), "Engaging the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare: The Public Face of Aladura in Diaspora" *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 24: 4
- Anderson, A. (2004), *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Asamoah-Gyadu, J. K. (2013), *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context*, Oregon: WIPF & Stock
- Ayegboyin, D. and Ishola, S. A., (1999), *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective*, Lagos: Greater Heights Publications
- Bediako, K. (1997), *Christianity in Africa: the Renewal of a Non- Western Religion*. New York: Orbis Books,
- Daneel, M. L. (1987), *Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a study of African Independent Churches*, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press
- Dunn, J. D.G.(2002), "Pentecost Feast of" in S. Burges and E. Vander Mass, eds, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan
- Emielu, A. (2010) "Music and Pentecostalism in Nigeria: The Afro-American Influence" in S.O. Oyewole, et.al, eds. *Science in the Perspective of African Religion AFREL, Islam and Christianity*, Ilorin: LSI
- Gelpi, D. L., (1971), *Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint*, New York: Paulist Press
- Gifford, P. (2004), *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004
- Gornik, M. R. (2011), *Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City*, Grand Rapids: W.B Eerdmans Publishing Co

- Haar, G. T., (2009), *How God Became African: African Spirituality and Western Thought*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
- Hollenwenger, W. (1999), "The Black Roots of Pentecostalism" in W. Hollenwenger (ed) *Pentecostals after a Century*, Sheffield: Sheffield academic press
- Isiramen, C. O. (2010), "Pentecostalism and the Nigerian Socio-Economic Debacle: A therapy or a Delusion" in C.O Isiramen. et. al. eds *Religion and the Nigerian Nation: some Topical Issues*, Ibadan: En-Joy Press & Books
- Kalu, O. U.,(1998), "The Third Response: Pentecostalism and the reconstruction of Christian Experience in Africa 1970-1995" *Journal of African Christian Thought* 12
- Kwabiah, K. (1983), *Topics in the Historical and Religious Development of Christianity in West Africa*, Ilorin: Woye press Ltd
- Macchia, F. D., (2006), *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan
- Martin, D. (2002), *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, Oxford: Backwell
- Mckenzie, J.L., (1965), *Dictionary of the Bible*, London: Macmillan Publishing, co.
- Miller, D. E, (1997), *Reinventing American Pentecostalism: Christianity in the New Millenium*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- Ojo, M. A., (2006), *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movement in Modern Nigeria*, Trenton: African World Press
- Pobee, J. S. and Ositelu, G. (1998), *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts, and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches: A Challenge to Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva: WCC Publications
- Ukpong, D. P, (2008), *Nigerian Pentecostalism; Cases, Diagnosis and Prescription*, Uyo: Fruities' Publications
- Walls, A. F, (1996) *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, New York: Orbis Books
- Williams, R, (2000), *On Christian Theology*, Oxford: Backwell