THE SOURCE AND EXPLOSION OF AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

Samson Kolawole Oyeku

UMCA Theological College, Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria.
kolaplusoyeku@yahoo.com
08038004668

Abstract

The Holy Spirit led the Early Church which was a community where freedom of expression and spontaneity that characterized its worship may not have been very different from that of many Pentecostal churches today. The beginning, spread and explosion of the Pentecostal movement is extraordinarily great globally, more especially among many African Indigenous Churches with a Pentecostal zeal. Presently, Christians can be found in almost every country in the world. Although Christianity has been gradually expanding since its earliest days, its globalizing presence is not old in human history. The effects of Pentecostal movements can be categorically felt across the globe today, and there is hardly a Christian denomination or sect which has not in one way or the other been influenced by this movement. One of the obvious questions that arise is that, what accounts for the beginning, explosive and extraordinary growth of African Pentecostalism and Globalization? This paper traces the source or the beginning of the Pentecostal movement and the rapid explosion involved in its spread across the globe in general and Africa in particular, between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries of the present era. The positive and negative impacts of the movement's on African Christianity are also examined. Since the topic has to do with church history, the study uses the historical perspective and qualitative method which is Africanist in approach to church historiography, which is marked by total and objective commitment to Africa.

Keywords: Source, Explosion, African, Pentecostalism, Globalization.

Introduction

The Christian Church was born to the old world of Roman Empire. Many nations and tribes with a history far longer than that of Rome were under its control. The city of Rome was the center of the empire, and all the powers of government were in the hands of the emperor.[1] The people of the time enjoyed the benefits of Roman rule and civilization, while the chief among them was the Roman peace, the *Pax Romana*.[2] The people who lived during the Pentecost, experienced a 'global' experience, which was the coincidence of annual Jewish festival.

Pentecostalism, with its spiritual fervour, in the area of manifestations of spiritual gifts (*Charismata*), association with the holiness movement, baptism in the Holy Spirit as a motive or incentive of power signified by speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*) [3] and Fellowship of the beiievers (Acts 2:42) of the first Century Apostolic Christianity has made it an international movement early, in its ecclesiastical history, particularly in Africa. This paper traces the source or origin of the Pentecostal movement and its spread across the globe generally and Africa in particular, between twentieth and twenty-first centuries of our dispensation. The historical approach and qualitative method is used to achieve this purpose, while positive and negative impacts of African Pentecostalism are not left out.

The History and Global Spread of the Pentecostal Movement

Historically, Pentecostalism became an international movement in the 20th century, when a movement began that would eventually sweep through much of Christianity. The movement is called the Pentecostal or Charismatic. Etymologically, Pentecostalism refers to the outpouring of the Spirit over the early disciples, as related in the book of Acts chapter two, which took place on the day of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, 6th day of Sivan, A.D. 30. This is discovered as the very founding day of the physical/visible Christian Church, which has been acclaimed as the real founding day of this movement which again made its re-appearance in ecclesiastical history in the twentieth century.[4] The belief of Pentecostals is that, the experience of the 120 people in the upper room including the disciples on the day of Pentecost, known as the "baptism in the Holy Spirit", should be standard for all Christians. Most Pentecostals believe that, the first sign or "initial evidence" of this second baptism is speaking in a language unknown to the speaker, [5] which should be the principle or fact in the life of every believer, irrespective of culture, language, race and Church.

The emergence of Pentecostal Movement can be traced to have grown out of the Holiness Revival of the second half of the 19thcentury. Among the nation's lower and middle-class groups, this revival was an expression of both social and theological discontent. Holiness followers disapproved of the godlessness in mainline denominations, as well as, the growing wealth and lack of simplicity of their Churches. They formed new religious communities' committed to seeking perfection in Christ, since they were discontent to remain in mainline Churches. Just like the early church experienced in the book of Acts, these former mainline Churches- Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists were experiencing a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Holiness Revival produced a hunger for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which is a divine empowerment of believers and for other spiritual gifts promised to the New Testament such as healing and prophecy.[6]This serves as predecessor to the Pentecostal Movement. In contrast to this, Synanargues that:

> From John Wesley, the Pentecostals inherited the idea of a subsequent crisis experienced variously called "entire

sanctification", "perfect love" "Christian perfection", or "heart purity". It was John Wesley who posited such a possibility in his influential tract, a plain Account of Christian perfection (1766). It was from Wesley that the Holiness Movement developed the theology of a "second blessing". It was Wesley's College, John Fletcher, however, who first called this second blessing a "baptism in the Holy Spirit" an experience which brought spiritual power to the recipient as well as inner cleaning. This was explained in his major work, Checks to Antinomianism (1771). During the Nineteenth Century, thousands of Methodists claimed to receive this experience, although no one at the time saw any connection with this spirituality and speaking in tongues or any of the other charisms.[7]

Holiness Movement in the 19th Century

Both in America and around the world, all Pentecostals for the first decade practically had been active in camp meetings as well as holiness churches. Majority of them were either people from kindred movements that had adopted the Methodist view of the second blessings, former Methodists. In the years before 1900, American Methodism experienced a major holiness revival in a crusade following the Civil War that originated in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In this crusade, the holiness movement drew large crowds to its camp meetings and thousands claimed to receive the second blessing of sanctification in these meetings.

It can be said that dozens of new denominations emerged on the American scene.[8]For instance, between 1867 and 1880, the holiness movement increasing force within the Methodist churches as well as, in other denominations. Many holiness movement members felt that this movement might revive the churches and bring new life to Christianity worldwide. After 1875, the American holiness movement, influenced by the Keswick emphasis began to stress the Pentecostal aspects of the second blessings, some calling the experience "Pentecostal sanctification". An entire hymn singing was produced which focused on the upper room, and characterized by "old time Pentecostal power" for those who stayed longer at the altars. All the hymns of the early Pentecostal movement were practically produced by holiness writers celebrating the second blessing as both a cleansing and an endowment of power.[9]

At this juncture, it should be understood that prior to 1901, the first Pentecostal Churches in the world were produced by the holiness movements. Most of their perfectionistic teachings were retained after becoming Pentecostal. Among them were predominantly African-American Church of God in Christ (1897), the Pentecostal Holiness Church (1898), the Church of God with headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee (1906), and other smaller groups. These churches which had been formed as "second blessing" holiness

denominations, simply added the baptism in the Holy Spirit with glossolalia as "initial evidence" of a "third blessing".

The Source of Pentecostalism in the 20th Century

A holiness teacher in the city of Topeka, Kansas in a Bible School, Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929), and former Methodist pastor conducted the first "Pentecostals" in the modern sense, which appeared on the scene in 1901. In January, of the said year, Parham assigned the students at the Bible School to study the Bible to find out the scriptural evidence for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Referring to the Pentecost account in Acts chapter two, they concluded that speaking in tongues was the confirmation of receiving the Holy Spirit. Just as the world entered the Twentieth Century, the Pentecostal movement began during the first days of 1901.The first person to receive infilling of the Holy Spirit was a lady named Miss Agnes Ozman, one of the Parham's Bible School students. She spoke in tongues after Parham laid hands on her and prayed for her to receive the power of Holy Spirit[10]on the very first day of the new century, January 1st, 1901. The Holy Ghost baptism with speaking in tongues marked a turning point in Charles Fox Parham's Ministry. As a result of this Topeka Pentecost, Parham formulated the doctrine that speaking in tongues was the "Bible evidence" of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It should be understood later that this doctrine later became globally accepted as the distinguishing mark of modern Pentecostalism. Immediately after *glossolalia* experience, Parham started teaching that tongue was a supernatural impartation of human languages for the purpose of world evangelization. He henceforth taught that missionaries need not study foreign languages since they would be able to preach in miraculous tongues all over the world. Armed with this new theology, Parham founded a Church movement which he called the "Apostolic Faith" and began a whirlwind revival tour of the American Middle West to promote his exciting new experience.[11]

Pentecostalism achieved worldwide attention through the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1906. The revival was led by the African-American preacher William Joseph Seymour. He learnt about personal receiving of the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy or the ability to speak in tongues, [12]in a Bible School that Parham conducted in Houston, Texas in 1905. What came to be known as the "Azusa Street revival" has been described as follows:

> Men and women would shout, weep, dance, and fall, into trances, speak and sing in tongues, and interpret their messages into English. In true Quaker fashion, anyone who felt "moved by the spirit" would preach or sing. There was no robed choir, but there was an abundance of religious enthusiasm.[13]

William was invited and pastored a black holiness Church in 1906. In a former African Methodist Church, he opened the historic meeting in April, 1906. The Azusa Street

"Apostolic Faith Mission" conducted various daily and weekly services where thousands of seekers received the tongues of baptism for over three years. The Apostolic Faith spread word of revival, Joseph sent free of charge a paper to some fifty thousand subscribers. From Azusa Street Pentecostalism spread rapidly around the world and continue its advance toward becoming a force in Christianity.

It should be noted that from the beginning, early Pentecostals never desired new denominations, but rather felt they should call all Christians back to what they believed to be apostolic faith. Anywhere they find themselves Holy Spirit should be their guidance in practice and in deed. But other groups opposed their teachings and Holiness Churches began to organize denominations. Examples of such Pentecostal Churches includes Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God (Tomlinson), the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and the United Pentecostal Church International among all.[14]

One may think of Pentecostalism as the more radical wing of the holiness movement, so radical that the holiness (latter) churches took steps to separate themselves from the Pentecostals (former). Pentecostals found the validity of their theology in their experience, especially the experiences of speaking in tongues and healing. For Holiness Churches, glossolalia or speaking in tongues was not merely a sign of God's "second blessing", but it was the sign.[15] Among the other Pentecostal Churches using the title "Church of God", one of the more interesting is that over which A. J. Tomlinson was the general overseer. Starting as a Holiness Church in 1886, this church of God turned Pentecostal and suffered many divisions.[16]Jesus suffered persecution, likewise the Apostles of old experienced it which led to the expansion of gospel during their dispensation and the same thing is happening today.

The Growth of African Pentecostalism and Globalization

History clearly records that, the Portuguese desired to explore and discover and this was made possible by the invention of advanced ships and more sophisticated scientific instruments of navigation such as the compass. Not that alone, they wanted to expand their trade and spread Christianity to the continent of Africa. The Christian motive was certainly important for Prince Henry, the Navigator, of Portugal. He hoped that a Christian king might be found in Africa to help fight the growth of Islam which was then threatening Southern Europe.[17] Summarily, this can serve as the first wave, consisting primarily of colonial mission churches, successfully introduced Christianity to Africa. One can boldly say that, this period began with the earliest colonial administrations and lasted roughly until the beginning of the First World War.[18]

The second wave or movement may be loosely grouped under the label "African Independent Churches" (AICs). This movement drew away from established forms or manners of missionary that brought Christianity during and after the first and second world wars. The period lasted until the 1970s and was typical or characterized by the

indigenization of established churches. However, the mission church served as the basic model, it differed in that African ministers took the lead in melding established Christian doctrine with local belief. This syncretic form of Christianity such as the use of local or traditional medicine - the belief not against the Scriptures or tenets of the Christian religion[19] reached its peak in the 1960s. This type of Christianity belief gradually giving way in the early 1980s to the "born again" that the historians and scholars studying this phenomenon characterized as the "third wave" Pentecostalism of Christianity in the continent of Africa. This is a religion that seems very unusual and especially suited to the African situation. This third wave is far bigger and more dynamic than the previous ones. This is because the movement represents one of the most popular, fastest growing religious movements within contemporary world Christianity. The growth of the Pentecostal movement in twentieth and twenty-first century in Africa and the African Diaspora leads to a recognition of Pentecostalism as an essential part of the globalization process but also as a product or consequence of it.[20]

Explosion of African Pentecostalism and Christianity

Christians can be found today in almost every nation in the world. Although Christianity has been gradually expanding since its earliest days, its everywhere presence around the world is not long in human history. The global Christian movement began with Christ and His disciples in Jerusalem, in what many today are referring to as the "Global South" that is Africa, Asia and Latin America.[21]The Church in the Global South began to expand rapidly and continued to grow throughout the 20th century. The most vigorous growth was in Africa, exploding from 10 million Christians in A.D. 1900 to 360 million in A.D. 2000. There is no indication that vigorous growth in the Global South will slow down during the 21st century, as the Church continues dreadful and powerful growth in Latin American, Africa, Asia and Oceania.[22]

The forerunners of Pentecostalism in Africa were those who were persecuted out of historic mission denominations for pursuing spiritualties sometimes in an immoral ways perceived by church authority as members of the occult. Some of these prophets are Garrick SokariBraide of the Niger Delta, William Wade Harris of Ghana, Isaiah Shembe of South Africa, Simon Kimbangu of the Congo, ÒkéAdéolá of Cherubim and Seraphim ÒnàÌwàMímó, Ìgbòho, Nigeria among others. These prophets challenged Africans to throw away their traditional resources of help and turn toward the living God through Jesus Christ, in the nineteenth century. When the prophets had left the scene, many of these revivalist prophetic campaigns only resulted in independent churches. The prophetic movements were thus followed by the emergence of the popular spiritual, Aladura or Zionist churches known collectively as "African Independent" or "African Initiated" "Prophet-healing" ,"Spirit" or "Spiritual" Churches (AICs). Healing became the single most important activity in the AICs, they affirm that only healing by faith is scriptural, and forbids the use of medicine to its members. In most cases, this has been carried into such an extreme as to revert to pagan incantations, charms and rituals. At last, it has become disagreement and arguments to regard these older AICs as Pentecostal

without qualification. Therefore, since then, African Pentecostalism has flourished in many directions.[23]

Classical Pentecostal denominations have gained much importance on the continent. For instance, in South Africa, the Assemblies of God, Apostolic Faith Mission and the Full Gospel Church of God belong to this tradition. Other Pentecostal collectivities found in Africa: New Pentecostal Churches (NPCs), trans-denominational Pentecostal fellowships like the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International (FGBMFI), Women Aglow and Intercessors for Africa, and Charismatic Renewal Groups of the mainline churches. Together with itinerant international Pentecostal Preachers and prophets, these have taken over the religious landscape as the new faces of African Christianity.[24] For the clarity between Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches, Allan explain their differences thus:

> Most AICs can be called 'Pentecostal', many of them have few connections with classical Pentecostal Pentecostalism and are very different from it in several ways. There are external differences like the use of healing symbolism including blessed water, many other symbolic ritual objects representing power and protection, forms of government and hierarchical patterns of leadership (sometimes including hereditary leadership, not a stranger to western Pentecostalism), the use of some African cultural practices and the wearing of distinctive robes or uniforms. They also differ fundamentally in their approach to African religions and culture, in liturgy, healing practices and in their unique contribution to Christianity in a broader African context. This distinct and innovative approach often differs sharply from those Pentecostal and Charismatic who are more heavily influenced by western Pentecostalism.[25]

Today in Africa, we are not only have major Western mission-related Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God originating from the United States, but also African-initiated ones like William F. Kumuyi's of Deeper Christian Life Mission International. Other Pentecostal denomination examples in Nigeria are, Assemblies of God in Nigeria (AGN), The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) by Enoch AdejareAdeboye, Christ Embasy by Christian Oyakhilome, The Faith Tabernacle Church, The Apostolic Church, The Apostolic Faith, The Latter Rain Assembly by TundeBakare, Household of God by Chris Okotie, Church of God Mission founded by Benson Idahosa, and the like. In addition, there are the multitudinous "mega" independent NPCs like Mensa Otabil's International Central Gospel Church in Ghana. David O. Oyedepo's Living Faith Church or Winners' Chapel in Nigeria; and Andrew Wutawanashe's Family of God in Zimbabwe, which were also born out of Local initiatives.The largest single Christian congregation in Western Europe since Christianity began in Nigeria is Pastor Mathew Ashimolowo's Kingsway International Christian Center (KICC) in London.[26]

The Pentecostalism Impacts on African Christianity

At all levels of African civil life, be it religion, health and politics have been felt the involvement of "Pentecostal" or "Spirit filled" Christianity in Africa. The Classical Pentecostals, the Charismatics | Neo-Pentecostals and the Third-Wavers" have played both functioning and abnormal functioning roles in the political arena. Some of the positive impacts include the following:

Provision of protection through the blood of Jesus Christ: Pastors of these Pentecostal Churches have served as providers of supernatural protection for politicians seeking to make solid power by placing themselves in a strong defensive position in office. Many Politicians went to these Pastors to know the mind of God concerning the posts they are seeking for and if there is any problem, then, the way out from such challenge(s). In African Countries like Ghana, Zambia and Nigeria, politicians have courted the friendship of popular charismatic leaders in order to take advantage of a movement with a massive youthful following to achieve political ends. In Ghana for instance, Bishop Duncan-Williams virtually served as the Chaplain to the Rawlings government.[27] The former president of Zambia, Frederick Chiluba, not only declared Zambia a Christian nation when he took office in 1991, but also put in appearances at Pentecostal crusades and conventions.[28] In Nigeria, some of the presidential candidates consulted Pastor E. A. Adeboye, to know their fate as regards 2015 National Presidential election and even beyond.

Spirituality and Prayer: Pentecostalism has stirred up Africans an eagerness for spiritual life in the material world, and a request for a knowledge gained by participation and practice with God in prayers. Considerate attentions by people are now giving to their prayer lives. Pentecostalism is well known for encouraging spirituality that hates or abominates confinement and standardization, while provoking a close experience of the Holy Spirit in Christian's life. Many Africans now go after a spirituality that is manifested in power since an in-breaking of the Divine in the ordinary is a proof of the validity and authenticity of a religious life of an individual.[29]

Teaching, Proclamation and Preaching: Preaching, proclamation and teaching are done from the formal defense of the faith perspectives. There is an earnest effort to explain religious conviction in Africa, which is manifested in evangelistic renewal across churches. The attention that is given to the Bible by the Pentecostals through the use of bible dictionaries, commentaries and encyclopedias, has provoked the lecturers in the Seminaries and Theological institutions in Africa to give a renewed zeal to ministry of preaching and teaching. This renewed zeal for evangelization has led to the incorporation of courses in evangelization- methods and techniques of evangelization- in the curriculum of some seminaries and theological faculties.[30]

Healing and Deliverance Ministry:A successful implementation of a healing and deliverance ministry which is believed to pave way for good health, success and

prósperity in life and also makes possible the realization of God-given abilities. The appeal to the work of demons and witches come in handy as explanations, when things are not going well. The cross of Christ is not just a symbol of weaknesses, but also one of victory over sin, the world and death. Pentecostals draw attention to the fact that the gospel is about restoration, so it is expected that the transformation of the personality would be manifest in personal health, well-being and care.In short, salvation is holistic and includes spiritual as well as physical abundance. This salvation gives a holistic meaning that includes "a sense of well-being evidenced in freedom from sickness, poverty and misfortune as well as in deliverance from sin, evil[31] and curses that may destroy someone's destiny. The examples of negative impacts includes viz:

Wealth and Prosperity Ministrations: Pentecostalism with the message of abundant life and blessing is making worldly prosperity a measurement for authentic Christianity.[32] Poverty has become a symptom of sinfulness, to the extent that some people consider those who are poor as sinners, not born a new. Preaching against sins is rare. It is the prosperity of members of a church that dictates whether the church is worshipping God rightly or wrong.

Pentecostal Clerical Flamboyant Lifestyle: Material success is becoming a yardstick for measuring validity of ministers in Africa. This is often based on the material flamboyancy, and on the quality of physical structures erected of "ministerial jealousy" in Africa. This cancer in Pentecostal world is spreading wide in African Christendom. The challenges of living good and giving the best to God encouraged in Pentecostalism is having negative effects on the churches, whose Master had no place to lay his head in the word (Luk.9:58),[33] thereby subjecting Himself to the charity of committed friends.

Conclusion

Christianity can be described as complex and global-oriented. African Pentecostal Spirit's Christianity is alive and healthy. The Christian mission is a kind of global movement around the world who are involved in missions, evangelism and the global Church, which is one of the focuses for African Pentecostalism. The positive and negative impacts of African Pentecostalism movements can be felt across the globe today.

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