

NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES AND THEIR IMPACT ON GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

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Introduction

One of the most discernible developments in World Christianity and mission study in recent years is the reverse flow of mission from the Global South to the North. A significant number of African preachers and missionaries from Latin America and Asia are taking the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to Europe and America. The majority of the ministers from Africa represent Pentecostal and Charismatic movements and it is perceptible that Nigerians and Ghanaians are major players in the planting and growth of these churches in the north Atlantic.

Accordingly, scholars consistently maintain that now more than ever before, Christianity which was previously referred to as the religion of the Global North: Europe and North America, is now primarily the religion of the Global South: Africa, Asia and Latin America. As the phenomenon of African diaspora becomes progressively a noteworthy part of the general global trend caused by economic, spiritual, social and political factors, Africans are migrating from their country of birth ostensibly to "seek for greener pastures". Several issues arise from the claims above. Firstly, the phenomena of globalization and migration have forced boundaries to become fluid and made cultural diversity a contemporary reality. As Africans migrate to other continents, especially Europe and America, with their African form of Christianity and theologies, a kind of multiculturalism has emerged within Western Christianity which begs for esteemed consideration. Secondly, as Daugherty observes, Christianity is increasingly becoming Pentecostal and the movement is profoundly impacting World Christianity, world cultures and even global politics¹. Thirdly, Andrew Walls' projection is increasingly becoming clearer that authentic Christianity -

is not only the one brought by missionaries... the field of African Christianity will not only be widely recognised as abundantly fertile for Christian theology, but it will also have implications for fresh possibilities in theology and mission.²

Fourthly, many scholars of African Christianity now agree with Ruth Marshall's view that,

Nigeria has been the site of Pentecostalism's greatest explosion on the African continent, and the movement's extraordinary growth shows no signs of slowing³

It is also evident that apart from the home front, Nigerian Pentecostal denominations are now proliferating internationally. Today, many of the Nigerian Pentecostal churches are firmly planted in western countries, such as France, Britain, Germany, Russia and the United States of America. It is for the above reasons that it is possible to articulate meaningfully the phenomenon of the Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal Churches and their Impact on Global Christianity

The place of the Immigrant Pentecostal Churches in the Taxonomy of Nigerian Christian Tradition

Sporadic attempts to plant Christianity in Nigeria began in the second half of the fifteenth century by the Portuguese Catholic Mission, but their commercial interest in gold, ivory and slaves as well as the daunting problems of health, prevented any but shallowest of roots to be struck.⁴ In Nigeria the institution of enduring Christianity, in the nineteenth century, is therefore credited to the mainline churches. From the 1840s, several foreign missionary organisations came to Nigeria for the purpose of mission. The foremost successful attempt was initiated from the Gold Coast through the resourcefulness of Thomas Birch Freeman who led a team of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission to Badagry, in South-West Nigeria, on September 23rd 1842. Hot on the heels of the Methodists came the Anglican Mission in December 1842⁵. The Church of Scotland Mission followed in the tracks when it sent out the Rev. Hope Masterdon Waddell, to inaugurate the United Presbyterian Mission in Old Calabar in 1846⁶. Rev. T.J Bowen, the

pioneer missionary of the Southern Baptist Mission who arrived in Badagry in 1850, represented the fourth missionary society. The beginning of what is today known as the Catholic Church in Nigeria came with the second wave of Catholic Mission expedition through the activities of the Societe de Mission Africaines (SMA) under the leadership of Fr. Francesco Xavier Borghero who arrived in Lagos via Porto Novo in September 1863⁷ In 1887 the Qua Iboe⁸ Missio, a Congregationalist assemblage, was founded by a Scottish missionary, Samuel Bill in the neighbourhood of the Qua Iboe River and Etinam⁹.

In 1893 a team led by Walter Gowans was dispatched by the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) to the northern region of Nigeria. Today, the SIM-related churches are designated Evangelical Churches Winning All (ECWA)¹⁰ All the above named missions came to Nigeria between 1792-1910, a period which Kenneth Latourette called the 'Great Century of Protestant Mission'¹¹. These churches are called historic, "mainstream" or "established" churches because they have already had long historical traditions of their own prior to their establishment in Nigeria. It is precisely in this sense that they are also sometimes called "mission churches".

The Ethiopian or African form of the mission churches began to emerge from the end of the 19th Century and the early part of the 20th Century. These include Native Baptist Church (1888), The United Native African Church (1891), The African Church (1901), The Christ Army Church and the United African Methodist Church (Eleja-1917). They disengaged from the Mission Churches predominantly because of their disinterestedness in Mission leadership and nationalistic feelings.¹² The mission and Ethiopian churches contributed to the nascent development of Christianity in Nigeria.

A remarkable phase in the historical development of Christianity in Nigeria was the emergence of the African Indigenous Churches in the early 20th century. They are popularly known as Ijo Aladura meaning the praying Church, (lit. "The church of those who pray") because, according to them, they devote quite a substantial time to saying prayers; and their constant theme is the power of prayer. Apart from this, the movement has helped to promote Christianity in a way that has appealed to the Africans.

It is on this basis that J.D.Y Peel acknowledged that through the AICs, Christianity was incarnated in African culture.¹³ Some of these churches include Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), The Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (C & S), The Church of the Lord Aladura , Worldwide (CLAW) and the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) Among some African Church historians, the argument over the years has been whether these Aladura can be described as Pentecostal Movements. While some assert that there is a world of difference between the two groups, others affirm that there is a close relationship between the two movements. Indeed, Oshun described these four churches as the core Aladura Pentecostals in Nigeria. He insists that they are Pentecostals because they grew as Movements of the Holy Spirit (perhaps, simultaneously with, or derivatively from, the Pentecostal outpouring of the last decade of the 19th century. He maintains that they are Aladura to the extent that they are prayer or prophet movements.

On the other hand, they are Pentecostal, to the extent that they are spiritual or spirit-movements, that is, they are committed to missions under the encouragement and stimulus of the Holy Spirit. Contributing to the debate, Asamoah-Gyadu contends that not only do AICs share religious and theological tendencies and emphases with indigenous classical and contemporary Pentecostal movements, but also, many of their practices previously condemned as belonging to the occult have been reinvented in contemporary Pentecostal spirituality.¹⁴ For these reasons, some scholars agree with J.D.Y Peel that Pentecostalism first came to Nigeria through the Aladura, when Apostolic Church missionaries came out to join the Prophet Babalola group in 1931.¹⁵

Whether *Aladura* movement is regarded as Pentecostal or not their contributions to the development of Christianity in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. It must be noted that the missionary outlook of Christianity was vigorously implemented by some of these indigenous churches. The exportation of African forms of Christianity to the West African sub-region and later beyond the continent of African was fired up by them. A good example is The Church of the Lord Aladura Worldwide (CLAW) that sent its missionaries to other African countries for the purpose of establishing more branches.

During the 1950s, Apostle Adejobi established CLAW churches in Sierra Leone and the northern part of the Gold Coast while Apostle Oduwole also founded some CLAW churches in Liberia and the southern part of the Gold Coast. By 1964, the first branch of the CLAW outside Africa was inaugurated by Primate Adeleke Adejobi in South London, thus fulfilling Primate Oshitelu's prophecy that the church would go beyond the African continent.¹⁶ The activation of missionary tendency of Christianity from Nigeria is seen as one of the outstanding contributions of AICs to the growth and expansion of Christianity. Other AICs of Nigerian extraction like Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church¹⁷, the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) and Christ's Apostolic Church established mission outreaches in Africa and even beyond.

The third stage of development of Christianity in Nigeria was the emergence of bona fide Pentecostalism. This movement has greatly impacted Christianity in Nigeria and other parts of the world. It has been noted by several scholars that Pentecostalism is the fastest growing strand of Christianity. David Barrett projects that if the growth continues, the population of Pentecostals would rise to 1,140 million or 44% of the total number of Christians by AD 2025.¹⁸ According to Matthews Ojo, membership of Pentecostal churches is substantial, with about 10 per cent of the 48 million Christians in Nigeria.¹⁹ Ayegboyin and Ukah classified them into Classical Pentecostals- these are foreign as far as their origin is concerned, and they include : The Faith Tabernacle Churches, The Apostolic Church, The Assemblies of God, The Apostolic Faith, African –American Gospel Church, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and Pentecostal Holiness Movement. The second group is the Indigenous Pentecostals, third is, The Charismatic/ Pentecostal group founded by Nigerians, while the last is the Neo Pentecostal Movement which is a conglomeration of a wide variety of assemblies with different kinds of doctrines and practices.

Exportation of Selected Nigerian Pentecostal Churches

The Pentecostal churches are selected for discussion in this paper because they are the most accomplished Christian organisations in Nigeria that have in recent times contributed more to the spread of

African Pentecostalism and the global development of Christianity. As mentioned earlier, the very first missionary initiative from Nigeria came from the AICs. However, the innovations and mission strategy of Pentecostals have built on the foundation laid by the AICs thus consolidating the dissemination of the Nigerian brand of Christianity to other nations of the world through migration and religious networking. Since 1970's, Nigerian Christianity has experienced dramatic developments with the explosion of Pentecostal revivals. The involvement of upward and mobile youth at this period was no doubt a tremendous blessing to the movement. Ruth Marshall observed that students' involvement in Pentecostalism in the early years helped to ensure that this was a movement of young people; many pastors, themselves not long out of university, were leading congregations where the average age was about twenty-five.²⁰

The Pentecostal movement significantly impacted Nigerian Christianity, with its emphasis on glossolalia and other elements of Pentecostalism. The rapid spread of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements in Africa since the 1970s constitutes a major development within contemporary African Christianity. Matthews Ojo points out that by the late 1970s, through contacts in international conferences hosted by evangelical groups and through evangelistic campaigns the Nigerian movements had planted branches in other African countries and stimulated the growth of the charismatic renewal in other African countries.²¹ It is important to acknowledge and appreciate Benson Idahosa who contributed immensely to the expansion of charismatic Christianity in Nigeria and other African countries. His religious networking was critical to the development of Christianity with implications on exportation of Christianity from Africa to the northern hemisphere.

Benson Idahosa's Television programme, which was known as 'The Redemption Hour' was aired in Nigeria and other African nations such as Togo, Ghana, Cameroon and Benin Republic. As the audience of Redemption Hour began to grow, Idahosa continued his evangelistic open air meetings which gained wide reception and diffusion to other African countries.²² Idahosa visited many African countries for missionary purposes and eventually planted over 6,000 churches in Africa and other parts of the world. His influence was impactful on

young Pentecostals for mission outreaches from Nigeria to other parts of the world. The appropriation of media technologies such as video, satellite broadcasting and internet are contemporary developments on religious transnational networking traceable to the foundation laid by Idahosa. In the light of this, Matthews Ojo corroborated that, undeniably, it was Benson Idahosa who was the leading figure in creating educational and material opportunities for other West African nationals, and who eventually had a lasting impact as he facilitated significant networks in the West African sub-region.²³

The presence of Nigerians and other Africans in Europe and the United State of America has been a major boost for the exportation of African Christianity to these continents through Pentecostalism. It is well known that Africans have been living in Europe and North and South America since the period of slave trade. It is estimated that about half of the total trade in slavery was in British hands, with a fleet of 192 slave ships with a capacity for 50,000 slaves.²⁴ It is estimated that about 24 million Africans were forcefully taken as slaves from the West Coast of African alone.²⁵ The development of plantations in European colonies and in West Indies, such as Jamaica, Tobago and the North America, made the demand for slaves grow rapidly.

The Lord Mansfield judgement of 1772 was significant for the settlement of black slaves as immigrants outside the continent of Africa. The missionary enterprise of Methodist Church led by a mulatto Thomas Birch Freeman, to Nigeria and Gold Coast attests to this fact that Nigerians and other Africans had settled in the diaspora before the new trend of mission outreach of the Pentecostals to Europe and America. The continual migration of Nigerians and African to these continents because of economic crisis, political upheavals, and other social challenges will continue to be the justification for their migration. Hence, the need for spiritual nourishment from their fellow brothers from Africa. Faith groups meet certain needs of migrants including the spiritual, social, cultural and sometimes material needs.²⁶

Typology of Nigerian Immigrant Churches: A view point

Nigerian immigrant churches may be classified into five groups which are: Nigerian Immigrant Mission Churches (NIMCs), Nigerian Immigrant Indigenous Churches (NIICs), Nigerian Immigrant

Classical Pentecostal Churches (NICPCs), Nigerian Initiated Immigrant Pentecostal Churches (NIIPCs) and the Independent Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal Churches (INIPCs)

- The Nigerian Immigrant Mission Churches (NIMCs) refer to the mainline, historic or mission Churches that have established their National Convention Churches abroad. For example, the Nigerian Baptist Convention has, in recent years, dispatched a number of missionaries as workers of the convention to establish churches in Great Britain and a few other countries in Africa. A good counterpart of the NIMC in Ghana is the Diaspora Mission established by the Presbyterian Church, Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana in affiliation with the United Reform Church of the United Kingdom in the 1960s. Kpobi reports of other missions' effort initiated by the Roman Catholic Church through the work of the Society for Missions (SMA) in Netherlands in 1990. A Ghanaian priest was posted to Netherlands to hold services in Twi and 'help shape the services for the Ghanaians in other ways'²⁷
- The Nigerian Immigrant Indigenous Churches (NIICs) are basically the Nigerian indigenous or Aladura Churches whose migrant leaders see themselves as African missionaries abroad. Even though, as Allan Anderson pointed out, a new form of "international" AICs which are independent of their African origins are being formed all over Europe and America²⁸, there are still a number of Aladura prophets, healers, evangelists, bishops and apostles who are loyal to their Aladura movements from "home". The mission of the indigenous immigrant churches are seen mainly in their efforts to indigenise Christianity among their own people, and they do this through the encouragement of local dialects in services, reading the Bible, preaching and singing hymns and choruses in local languages.
- Nigerian Immigrant Classical Pentecostal Churches (NICPCs) are the Mission based Pentecostal Churches (they were established in Nigeria by missionaries from foreign Pentecostal organisations.) In this group is The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel which started missionary exploits way

back in 1969, when it sent their first missionary, Rev Simon Odeleye to the Republic of Benin, followed by Ghana (1974), Liberia (1980), Cote D'Ivoire(1967) and 16 other countries in Africa. The Foursquare missionary adventure to Europe is more recent. It has established churches in Italy (2008) and London. (2014) It also has branches in France, Ireland, United Arab Republic, Hong Kong and the United States. The Apostolic Church (LAWNA) has also established churches in Liverpool and Manchester since 2014.

- The fourth type, Nigerian Initiated Immigrant Pentecostal Churches (NIIPCs) represent the home-grown Pentecostal churches, that are meticulously controlled, from Nigeria. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, The Winners' Chapel (Living Faith Church) and the Deeper Life Bible Church are in this group. INIPCs are the new-generation Pentecostal Churches established by Charismatic individuals as independent Christian groups. Quite a number of them have their base in the host countries, but they sometimes establish branches in their countries of origin. In this group are: Matthew Ashimolowo's Kingsway International Christian Centre, Tayo Adeyemi's New Wine Church in Woolwich, London and Sunday Adelaja's Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for all Nations in Ukraine.

This paper focuses on the exploits of the Nigerian Initiated Immigrant Pentecostal Churches (NIIPCs) and the Independent Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal Churches (INIPCs).

Some Nigerian Initiated Immigrant Pentecostal Churches (NIIPCs)

Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC) Deeper Life Bible Church founded by William Folorunso Kumuyi, started as a Bible Study group in 1973 at the University of Lagos. During its formative years, the group experienced stunning growth through its Home Caring Fellowships. Today, it is one of the oldest and largest Pentecostal Churches in Africa. The metamorphosis of the fellowship into an established congregation dates back to November 1982 when its first Sunday worship was held at Gbagada, an outlying district of the mainland of

Lagos, the then capital of Nigeria.²⁹ The Church has since spread all over Nigeria and beyond. Branches of Deeper Life Church outside Nigeria are located in countries like Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Lesotho, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, Togo, Cameroon and Zimbabwe. Outside Africa, there are branches of the DLBC in Britain, USA, Spain, India and the Philippines.³⁰ The branches mentioned above are from the current development of Deeper Life's growth outside Nigeria. Congregations have been established in most of the European countries and in recent years the church has made a remarkable visible presence in the United States of America.

Living Faith Church (Winners' Chapel)

Living Faith Church is a leading prosperity Pentecostal denomination in Nigeria. The Church was established in 1986 by Bishop David Oyedepo, the founder and presiding bishop of the Church Worldwide.³¹ The Living Faith Church has established at least one branch in the capital cities of about 30 African countries.³² The success of Living Faith Church in the diaspora is a testimony to the fact that the strength of Christian missionary enterprise in the contemporary age is in the mission initiated by Africans for Africans in the first hand and for the rest of the world in the second. To some extent this development prompted the Foreign Mission Mandate of the church which gave birth to two organisations: The African Invasion Programme (AIP) and the World Mission Agency (WMA).³³ By the year 2000 it was reported that the Commission, motivated by its programme called 'Mission to the World' (MTW) had expanded impressively beyond the shores of Africa. This mission policy of Living Faith accounts for its presence in over 300 cities and towns in Nigeria, and in over 35 nations in Africa, Europe and America.³⁴

The Redeemed Christian Church of God

The Redeemed Christian Church of God was founded by Pa Josiah Akindayomi in 1952. The Church is now one of the fastest growing Pentecostal denominations across the globe. The emergence of Pastor Enoch Adeboye as the General Overseer of the Church after Akindayomi brought the church to the limelight. His vision for

expansion was a catalyst for the numeric strength in membership and branches as far as demographic religious space is concerned in Nigeria. From 1981, when Adeboye took the mantle of leadership, the church has experienced dramatic changes that have placed her in an important position on the religious world map. At a geometric rate of almost 300 percent annually, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, under the leadership of Pastor Adeboye, continues to expand to all the nooks and crannies of the world.³⁵ It is observed that at least four factors are responsible for the rapid growth of RCCG.

First, the inauguration of Holy Ghost Festival which was started in 1998 and today attracts millions of worshippers. The second is the mission policy to have a member of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in every family in the world. Third, the policy to plant a parish in nations and within every two minutes' driving distance of developed nations and within every five minutes' walking distance of developing nations and finally, the dynamism of the RCCG leader.³⁶ This mission strategy of RCCG as observed has contributed immensely to the home mission as well as the foreign mission of the Church.

The RCCG is represented in more than 120 nations of the world and claims to have over 500,000 converts in all these nations.³⁷ In America it has opened more than 200 parishes in just over a decade, from Chicago and Atlanta to Washington and New York, and is training Americans of all races to help them reach beyond the African immigrant community. Even in Europe, the Church has gained tremendous growth. There are branches of RCCG in Belgium, Bulgaria, Romania, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.³⁸ In the United Kingdom alone, there are more than 352 parishes. The globalisation of Holy Ghost Service has helped to put the Church in the frontline as far as mission is concerned.

Through this vehicle of mission, branches have been planted in Australia, Russia, China, Bahamas, Fiji Islands, Japan, Hong Kong, Haiti and United Arab Emirates.

Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM)

Mountain of Fire and Miracles, also known as MFM, is one of the Pentecostal Churches that emerged in Nigeria in the late 1980s. The Founder of the Church is Dr Daniel Kolawole Olukoya. He was brought up in Christ's Apostolic Church, and this could have influenced his understanding of deliverance. The Church holds tenaciously to deliverance mission and the premium placed on it by the MFM has no doubt resulted in growth of the Church in and outside Nigeria. Ayegboyin clearly states that MFM demonstrates that deliverance is part of the church's help from real and imagined distresses.³⁹ This spiritualisation which has somewhat formed the basis for mission among the MFM leaders and membership is not limited to the territorial boundaries of Africa where evil is perceived not as mere illusion.

The Church has opened up mission outreaches in non-African countries to meet the spiritual needs of the African immigrants on the one hand, and to minister to non-African on the other hand. In line with this submission, Ayegboyin postulates that MFM presents the gospel with the assumption that the primal African and the Christian worldviews are spiritualized worldviews.⁴⁰ As part of the vision of MFM, they are to propagate the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ all over the world, to promote the revival of apostolic signs, wonders and miracles, and to bring together children of God who are lost.⁴¹ This vision has no doubt engendered mission by MFM out of Africa, especially in the northern hemisphere that is fast becoming "dead" as far as Christian doctrines and practices are concerned.

Afe Adogame explicates that prevalence and continuity of local epistemologies, spiritual constitution and agency in MFM's Christian ritual cosmology accounts for its popularity and swelling clientele, particularly within Nigeria religious milieu, but also beyond into the diaspora, such as United Kingdom.⁴² International church branches first started in London before spreading to United States, Canada, the rest of Europe and the Caribbean. The Church is now represented on every continent and is proudly visible and impactful as far as the spreading of the gospel is concerned.

Independent Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal Churches (INIPCs)
Apart from the Nigerian Initiated Pentecostal immigrant churches identified above, there is other Nigerian independent mission outreach reaching out to people in their host countries.

Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC)

A good example of Independent Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal Churches is the Kingsway International Christian Centre in London led by Charismatic Nigerian Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo. By 1998 KICC had become the largest Church in Britain, with over 5,000 members.⁴³ It has flourishing branches in Nigeria and a few other countries in Africa.

New Wine Church

This church was founded by the charismatic Pastor, Dr. Tayo Adeyem in Woolwich, London. Pastor Michael Olawore assumed leadership of the sprawling church after the demise of its founder. A rare innovation of this church is its organization of a Christmas Hamper campaign, which according to Olofinjana has ministered to the needs of over 120,000.⁴⁴

World Harvest Christian Centre

This church was founded by Pastor Wale Babatunde in 1995. The Church has branches in Nigeria and some African countries as well as in Canada. Apart from its mission apparatus which encourages and trains Christians to engage in mission, the organisation also has Christian Heritage and Reformation Trust 'which seeks to foster social reformation and revival in Britain'⁴⁵

Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations

In this category is also Sunday Adelaja's Word of Faith Bible Church, which started as a Bible Study Fellowship in 1993 in Kiev. With outstanding growth and prospects for further developments, the church adopted the name: Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations in 2002. With almost 30,000 members the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God has become the fastest growing church in Ukraine.

According to J.D.Y Peel, since there are very few Africans in Ukraine, Adelaja had no option but to spread his message to Ukrainians and the church has spread through the network of the Ukrainian diaspora, to Germany and the United States.⁴⁶ Some have argued that the designation of African Churches in the Diaspora cannot be sustained because of the development recorded in Adelaja's church. It has the membership strength of more than twenty five thousand worshippers most of whom are non-African Christians. We agree with Kpobi whose assessment harmonises with Hanciles that;

Recent migration movements, as a critical dimension of contemporary global transformations, have the potential to significantly affect the geographic and demographic contours of the world's major religions and provide a vital outlet for proselytism and missionary expansion⁴⁷

The Impact of Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal Churches on Global Christianity

African-led churches are becoming increasingly important in Europe and America where they are growing at a time when mainstream churches are in decline. Thus African Christianity has now formed an integral part of the landscape of World Christianity which manifest in the proliferation, growth and contributions to culture and society by African Churches.

The paradigm shift in mission is evident in the activities of Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal churches reaching out to people and setting the doctrinal standard to be followed. This was the reason why Andrew Walls argues that the world theological standards will no longer be set by Germany or Britain or the USA, but by Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁴⁸ The growth of Christianity in Nigeria, especially with the innovations from the Pentecostals, is having far reaching effects in mission outside Africa. The mandate of modern Pentecostalism that was launched in Azusa concerning mission is what is being kept alive by the Nigerian Pentecostal immigrants.

The huge presence of Nigerian immigrant churches in Europe, America, Asia and other parts of the world attests to this fact. The disfavoured position of Christianity in some of these places accounts for the flourishing of African missions, especially the Nigerian missionaries.

Apart from the fact that Nigerian immigrant Pentecostal churches serve as agents of expansion of Christianity and mission, they have helped to preserve sound theological teaching and have remained symbols of Christian orthodoxy in the face of postmodern theories that has drawn the Christians far into secularism. One example is the issue of homosexuality which is far gaining currency among the Christians in the Global North. The failure of Christian leaders from Europe and America to preserve Christian orthodoxy has laid the responsibility on African Pentecostals to do this. For instance, the pressure on African Anglicans to consider gay marriage by the mother church is far from what is obtainable among the Pentecostals.

As a result of the failure of mission oriented churches in Europe and America to assert Biblical authority in an era of secularism and homosexuality, languages encroaching on to the church lexicon, this gives opportunity to Africa Christian immigrants to voice out their opinion. The Nigerian immigrant Christians believe that they have a divine task in their migration, which is to execute a God-given mandate to evangelize and re-invigorate the churches of their host communities.

Some of the Nigerian immigrant Pentecostal Churches are meeting the social needs of people as part of their Christian mission. African Pentecostal Churches such as Kingsway International Christian Centre, New Wine Church and others responded to the crises in Haiti by donating huge sums of money to relief agencies such as Tearfund and Christian Aid. Sunday Adelaja is actively involved in the rehabilitation of drug addicts, reintegration of "sex workers" and caring for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized in Ukraine.

Another impact of Nigerian Pentecostalism on the global development of Christianity is in the area of contextualisation. The contextualized experiences and practices of Nigerian Christian immigrants in the diaspora have become a part of the process of domesticating Christianity which is making it practicable in places which are far from their continent. By implication, the contextualization of Christian faith as well as the decolonization of Christianity is being exported to foreign lands to demonstrate the flexibility and dynamics of Christianity.

The contextualization of the liturgy is no doubt helping the growth of Christianity in this diaspora. This development has attracted the interest of African Americans who regarded it as one of the practices of authentic Christianity. This is also attracting the Asian and Southern America immigrants in the diaspora which is a further tendency for the growth of Christianity from the global south. This is therefore having a far reaching effect on decolonization of Christianity.

The growing stride of Christianity in Nigeria especially through the Pentecostal movement is having great effect on the global development of Christianity. The contribution of Nigerian Christian immigrants to the development of Christianity cannot be disconnected with the home support and the influence. Pentecostalism is the fastest growing industry in Nigeria and the second most popular export (after crude oil). As a result of this, there is continuous competition in the religious market in Nigeria with almost ceaseless circle of activities of vigils, crusades, conventions, prayer sessions and deliverance programmes. This has been somewhat replicated in the overseas missions of these Pentecostal denominations which is one the strategies of mission expansion among the immigrants in the diaspora and it is undoubtedly making an impact on the development of global development of Christianity.

The emerging contributions of Nigerian Christianity and the Pentecostal churches in particular have come to the fore as far as mission is concerned. Therefore, any current and future writing of the history of church or ecumenism in the North Atlantic and at the global stage must reckon with the presence of Nigerian immigrant Christians and Nigerian Christianity where immigrant Christians in the diaspora emanated from.

The contributions to world Christianity by Nigerians in the diaspora have been remarkable. These contributions benefit all Christians in the diaspora. As a result, the unending varieties of Nigerian Pentecostal expressions have influenced African Christians through the presence and services of missionaries from outside Nigeria.

The presence of Nigerian Pentecostal denominations like Deeper Life Bible Church with more than 40 branches in the UK, New Covenant Church with more than 41 branches in the UK alone, The Redeemed

Christian Church of God with more than 700 churches in the UK, making it one of the largest and fastest-growing church denominations in the diaspora, Christian Victory Group, founded by Ade Omooba with relief initiatives for homeless people in London, Kingsway International Christian Centre which became the largest church in the UK around 1998, New Wine Church founded by the late Dr Tayo Adeyemi in 1993 is one of the largest churches now in the UK with a membership of around 3,000 people, Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries now have more than 80 branches in the UK and Sunday Adelaja of the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations which is the largest single congregation church in Ukraine attest to the fact that the exportation of Nigerian Christianity is making immense contribution to the development of Christianity in the diaspora.

By implication, the activities of Nigerian immigrant Christians and their involvement in mission have displaced the Europe and American missionaries from where they had earlier been active in mission activities. This feat is evidently a plus for outstanding missionary efforts of the Nigerian Christian in Europe and America, in particular, and other diaspora communities in general.

Conclusion

The discussions above show the contributions of Nigerian Immigrant Pentecostal Churches to the global development of Christianity. The preservation of Christian theology within the ambits of African culture and identity is no doubt a visible development in the history of Christian mission. The utilization of African religious networks is greatly impacting mission in this contemporary age. To this end, globalisation of Christian mission is greatly assisting the Nigerian Christian Immigrants in their quest for continued spread of the gospel. The appropriation of various media technology is making it possible for them to do the bidding of The Great Commission commanded by Jesus Christ. The growth of Pentecostalism in Africa and Nigeria in particular is evident of the success of mission outside the continent. As a result, we conclude that it is not out of place to say that the migration of Africans generally and Nigerians in particular, which is the most populous black nation of the world, is a blessing to the modern Christianity in every sense of their contributions to mission.

Notes

- 1 Dydron B. Daughrity *The Changing World of Christianity: The Global History of a Borderless Religion*, New York: Peter Lang, 2010, 128
- 2 A. Walls. 2000. "Of Ivory Towers and Ashrams: Some Reflection on Mission from Scholarship in Africa." *Journal of African Christian*. Vol.3, (1), 4
- 3 R. Marshall. 1993. Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria: An Overview. P. Gifford (Ed) *New Dimensions in African Christianity*. Ibadan: Sefer. 16
- 4 See Deji Ayegboyin & F.K.U Asonzeh. 2002. Taxonomy of Churches in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective. ORITA: Ibadan *Journal of Religious Studies*. XXXIV/1-2 June & December, 69
- 5 See Akin Omoyajowo "Revd. Henry Townsend" in J.A. Omoyajowo (ed) *Makers of the Church in Nigeria 1842-1947*, 15-28.
- 6 See E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1642-1914*, 7: In September 1875, Mary Mitchell Slessor arrived in Calabar as a Presbyterian missionary from the Church of Scotland Mission to strengthen the efforts of Waddell. She fought hard and bravely to abolish many of the cruel customs and traditions.
- 7 Fr. Borghero was delighted on arrival in Lagos to meet a small Catholic community made up of Africans who had been repatriated from Brazil.
- 8 Qua Iboe is a combination of two words Akwa which means "river" and Ibuno, which means "big".
- 9 See Peter Falk, *The growth of the Church in Africa*, Nigeria ACTS (CAPRO) 1997, 341.
- 10 The SIM changed her name in the 1950's to the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) See A. Ijagbemi, *Christian Missionary Activity in Nigeria: The Work of the SIM among the Yoruba 1908-1967*, Lagos, 1988.
- 11 It is so called because of four reasons: First, the emergence of great missionaries (William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Robert

Morris, David Livingstone etc) Second, the establishment of great movements (Faith Missions, Indigenous Missions, Student's Missions and Women Missions); Third, great progress was made in the establishment of missions institutions (educational, medical, social-orphanages etc). Finally, there was great enthusiasm championed by mission conferences. The period closes with the Edinburgh Conference held in 1910.

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