Methodism versus Pentecostalism: A Quest for Charismatic Identity in Bori City

By

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Abstract

Methodism as a movement meant to restore the move of the Holy Spirit in 18th century church helped to bring back the satisfaction of the spiritually hungry Christians who were not at home with the lukewarmness of the church at that point in time. It was unfortunate that Methodism and its attendant Methodist Church couldn't maintain her spiritual topography in the contemporary Christianity and thereby losing her identity. Consequently, Pentecostalism arose with sword to slaughter Methodism and all it represents and Methodism was struggling to survive this onslaught. This was a concern to every meaning historian and sociologist about the present identity struggle between Methodism and Pentecostalism in society. Primary and secondary sources of data collection were adopted which were descriptive analyzed. Findings among others were that there is identity struggle between Methodism and Pentecostalism in Nigeria. This has resulted to different crimes that were identified with Nigeria churches who applied different means and measures to still maintain their height in the architectural platform of religious environment and recommended that Christian bodies should come together to address this ugly monster raising its head should Christianity ventures to survive the attack of the Civil society and other competing religious faith.

Key words: Methodism, Pentecostalism, Charismatic and Identity, Christianity

Introduction

Orthodox churches believe that the bible is complete word of God that nothing needed to be added or subtracted. In order word from the time of the apostles until the present day they believe that the bible has sustained the church. They believe that God has given His revelation and that revelation is complete. The Orthodox sees the Bible- the book of revelation as complete, efficient, sufficient, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative and any attempt to add to the bible or to claim further revelation from God apart from it, have always resulted in cults, heresy, or compromising the standard of God which weakens the body of Christ. It is obviously true that the Charismatics are trying to deny that they add to Scripture but their views on prophetic utterances, the gifts of prophesy and revelation

proves that because according to MacArthur (1978:25) they charismatic Pentecostals or New Religious Movements as the names may suggest undermine the uniqueness and authority of the Bible. They held above the biblical authority new revelation, dreams, and visions as binding on believers. Some of the Charismatic argue that people do not understand what they mean by prophetic utterances and new revelation especially among the non-Charismatic. However they deny making effort to change the scripture or to equal it rather, what is happening is "the clearing of scripture" as it is applied to the contemporary settings.

Similarly, the Orthodox churches discourage Christians from loosely interpreting the meaning of inspiration and revelation, though the charismatic protest that the orthodox churches want to quench the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today as they believe that there is no room for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to empower Christians.

Keywords: Methodism according to Methodist Catechism is a company of believers which has grown out of the work of John Wesley. It is the movement of John Wesley and his group that brought great revival of England in the 18th and 19th century and after John Wesley's death in 1791the Church of England refused to admit John Wesley's group into their fold and in 1795 the group decided to come together with a name "Methodist movement". This Methodist movement that was evangelical and charismatic became the second world Pentecost in the history of the Christendom.

Pentecostalism and Charismatic ministry originated from the Biblical promise of Jesus at the end of the Gospel of Luke (Luke 24:49), "I am going to send you what my father has promised: but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high". It was to its fulfillment in the Acts of the Apostle chapter 2 in terms of experiential legitimacy that the promise was fulfilled. These scholars argued that this was the origin of Pentecostalism and Charismatic movement when they believed that the apostles and by extension all Christians were clothed with power and being clothes with power means being empowered for service among God's people.

Pentecostalism according to Ogbu Kalu (1998.25) originated from America and this claim has it that Pentecostalism genealogically is an "alternative pie" which started from Los Angeles as a humble root and flowered into a multimillion religious enterprises simply because it is a religion that is meant to travel. Pentecostalism harbors a strong missionary impulse within its genes"

David Martins (2002.320) in line with Ogbu Kalu said that there is a connection between Pentecostalism and English Language. To this effect, to attend a Pentecostal or evangelical church "in Latin America" one must understand and speak English language. That is to say that Pentecostalism manifested and was transmitted within the context of culture. Peter Berger opines that "Language is crucial in this cultural diffusion."

Pentecostalism is this guise emanated with sharp swords to fight and eliminate what is known as orthodox churches or the mainline churches. In comparative analysis this work examines the relativity of the main line churches in its compatibility with the orthodox churches the response of which imposes fear on the orthodox churches of it eliminative strategy by the Pentecostal movements. Methodism that was the second Pentecost of our time after the upper room experience of the apostles has been in this contemporary years reckoned among the orthodox churches.

Charismatic versus Catholicism

There is a strong connection between Roman Catholic Church especially where it concerns revelation. (Gabriel Moran (1963:20) opines that the view of revelation among the Charismatics and that of tradition among the Roman Catholics is one and the same thing.

Roman Catholic Concept of Tradition

Gabriel Moran said that the dogmatic tradition is the revealed truth made known by the Scripture before the death of the apostles. This dogmatic tradition is called the "primary revelation" such as:

Disciplinary tradition

This includes the practices and liturgical rites of the church in apostolic and post apostolic times that are not part of divine revelation in the scripture. This is called "Secondary Revelation" George Tavard (1959:246) said that "tradition was the overflow of the word outside sacred scripture which was neither separate from nor identical with Holy Writ; rather the content was the "other Scripture through which the Word made Himself known." MacArthur (1978:29) said that Kasper Schatzgeyer (1463-1527) was a Catholic who held the same view with the Charismatics that "an intimate revelation of the Holy Spirit is an everyday possibility, and once known beyond doubt, it is as binding as the teaching that came from Christ own mouth." The interpretation of the word tradition makes the Roman Catholic doctrinal teaching open-ended. There is always the possibility of adding something equal in authority to the scripture. The Roman Catholic council of Trent of 1546 as a counter measure of Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther in 1520 said that God has been giving revelation through Roman church since the New Testament era.

From the traditions ascribed to Christ and the apostles, it shows the infallibility of the Roman Church and Pope, a direct successor to the apostle Peter according to Roman Catholic dogma. So when Pope speaks, he does so with supreme authority of the apostle and it is infallible.

Two examples of infallible addition to Scripture and Tradition by Anne Fremantle (1963:136):

1. **The Dogma of Immaculate Conception**: On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius Ix proclaimed the dogma of Immaculate Conception. This doctrine states that Mary the mother of Jesus was born without original sin. Pope said that this doctrine was revealed by God and therefore must be believed firmly and constantly by all the Roman Catholic faithful.
2. On November 2, 1950, pope Pius XII formulated another doctrine that Mary was assumed bodily into heaven- that she never died. Papal edict concluded that "Hence if anyone, whom God forbid, should dare willfully deny or call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine Catholic faith."

These facts on ground depict 1. That they are revealed from outside the Scripture as part of disciplinary tradition and secondary revelation and, 2. That Roman Catholic faithful are admonish to believe them without question. This system and definitions allow for endless additional revelations that are equal to the Scripture in authority which may lead into spawning into error after error as the teachings are not found the in the Scripture. Once we allow for going beyond the scripture, the gates are wide open; and anything can pour through the dam.

Now can it be said like the Catholics that the Charismatic are also building certain traditions of their own outside the Scripture? E.g. the familiar term of "Being Slain in the Spirit," this among other practices of the Pentecostal charismatic are not biblically based and one can sum up that the Pentecostal Charismatic and Roman Catholic Methodology walk hand in hand at this point.

Pentecostal Charismatic in Africa

one may say that there are dynamic renewal movement going on the world over which have energize Christianity and make it give a fresh lease of life in the hearts and lives of the people. In African, missionary churches (orthodox) that traced their root from the west are all turning to charismatic renewal. But Gyadu said that the argument of the Charismatic movement is that the absence of the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit from

the church, particular in its older western contexts, turns it into something other than place to encounter God. This is where disparity lies. The Pentecostals see other churches with western contents as a place void of God's encounter. This alone brings the contention of spiritual and sacerdotal identity that has been troubling the contemporary society. There is a concern over these unhealthy rivalries growing their ugly tails in our society today and seek to proffer solution for cohesion and stability of the society.

Enthusiastic Form of Religion

However, the Pentecostals accused the mainline churches of not being a living church, in other word pneumatic Christianity. Pneumatic Christianity as enthusiastic form of religion gave much emphasis on radical conversion, baptism of the spirit, speaking in tongues, healing, deliverance, prophetic ministries, miracles and supernatural interventions.

Cox 1995 (4-5) on pneumatic Christianity opined that:

> They turn to it (Pentecostalism) because it is packed with promise…it is about abstract religious ideas' and it depicts a God who does not remain aloof but reaches down through the power of the spirit to touch human hearts, therefore…in our present time of social and cultural disarray, Pentecostalism is burgeoning everywhere in the world.

They explain away the reason and importance of pneumatic (Charismatic) Pentecostalism to people and why people embrace it with two hands. Pentecostalism makes meaning to people in their culture instead of westernizing their worship; they prefer to worship God in their cultural Milieu. Similarly, Africans seek identity in their method and mode of worship, but this intention is not bad as it were but the approach of it application negates the motive thereby creating an unhealthy social chaos and vices in the society. Cheating, fraud, brain washing, hypnotism, human sacrifices, deadly practices inform of deliverance from evil spirits and the more have caused mayhem to the society at large.

Frank Macchia (2006:13) lamented that this pneumatic acclaimed experiential presence of the Holy Spirit be it as it were, believed to be the promise that has been fulfilled through the Pentecost and is now being experienced by the church as an essential reality with eschatological implications. Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity is important to understanding world Christianity because even in most western contexts where the Christian presence is thought to be on the decline, churches of Pentecostal and charismatic persuasion, including many immigrant churches that possess a charismatic culture

(pneumatic churches)are doing well. To this effect many churches want to meet the demand of the time by claiming pneumatic while in the actual sense they have nothing to offer. Although in factionalism theory, the Pentecostals are performing latent function by giving hope to the people. They give them hope of God's open doors of riches, favour, healing, making wealth etc. The hope the Pentecostals provide, however real it is may not be ascertained but the fact remains that the fake hope help to keep them from committing suicide in the face of difficult situations.

This charismatic culture of Pentecostalism is what David Martin (2002: XII) described as the astonishing rise of Pentecostalism and associated Penumbra of charismatic Christianity he said that Pentecostalism/charismatic Christianity is the largest global shift in the religious market place over the last half century.

Charismatic Experience

The essence of Pentecost was dependent on the move of the Holy Spirit and its transcendence among the people and the church.

Contemporary manifestations of Pentecostalism according to Gyadu (2008.5) "Are often classified in terms of "charismatic renewal" as a result of their general orientation towards the restoration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which include speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, visions, revelations to the heart of dry denominationalism and moribund churches."

Be it as it may, the way charismatic pastors interpret the scripture in an inspiring way is one of the ways that attract members to them; example is the vision of the dry bones and its encounter is Ezekiel 37: to the Pentecostals the "valley of the dry bones" referred to the moribund Christianity or dead, orthodox churches paralyzed by neglect of the fundamental biblical truths of regeneration by water and the spirit, he said that these "dead orthodox churches" in the words of Pentecostals, and by relativism reduce the Bible into more text rather than active and living truth of divine inspiration. The charismatic renewal movements say the breath is a metaphor for the spirit of God that mould be upon the dead church to revive it. These types of interpretation of the scripture was portrays different in meaning and direction from the preaching and interpretation of the mainline churches. People like uniqueness and they go after it no matter the adverse effect. The Methodist in a move of checking this manipulation of their members by the Pentecostals formed a counter movement as a combatant group inform of the Methodist Evangelical Movement whose only work is to revive the spiritual life of the church, check

the mass exodus from the church and win more souls into the church. This led to the reviving the Pentecostal Charismatic life of Methodism.

That is what Jurgen Mottmann (1995. `95-196) called "vitalizing energy." He said that

> In the Holy Spirit the eternal God participates in our transitory life and we participate in the eternal life of God. This reciprocal community is an immense outflow source of energy. We have called the energies of the spirit which we charismatically experience vitalizing energies because they bring us to life.

Holy Spirit in Charismatic Identity

The Pentecostals claimed that the Charismatic movement of Pentecostalism is a pattern rooted in the emergence of the new era out of the old. The energetic power and manifestation of the Holy Spirit power in this new era is an experience. This experience that began by Christ and was promulgated at the day of Pentecost was the fire that spurred revivalism and evangelism charismatic of the Pentecostals because the Orthodox have lost grip of this experiences.

The Holy Spirit Identity among the Pentecostals is the origin of the charismatic ministry. Paul according to Acts 19:1-7 asked the Ephesians whether they received the Holy Spirit when they first believed and they answered that they had never heard if there was anything like the Holy Spirit. Paul after preaching to them placed hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

This act of the Holy Spirit that came upon them marked the advent of the charismatic identity in that peter was able to stand bold and preached to the crowd and about three thousand people were added to their ministry.

Charismatic Identity Outcome

The area of ministry where charisma of the charismatic is showcased is of paramount importance.

a. Revival: Ferguson Sinclair (1998:90) said that "A related aspect of the Pentecostals mirrored in what we often called a 'revival,' when professing believers are aroused and non-Christians are brought into the kingdom in large numbers, each with an individual sense of sin and need but in the context of a widespread sense of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit"

b. Inspiration: John MacArthur (1978:15) said that the Pentecostal charismatic identity is their stressing the point of divine inspiration. Their songs, utterances, prophecy, revelation experiences, dancing and worships are all divinely inspired and with this alone they are the living church while other churches are the dead churches.

The spirit of Charismatic anchored on the belief that whatever they do or say is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, direct revelation from God.

Rodman Williams (1971:16) said if one speaks in the fellowship of the Spirit the word of truth, it is neither his thought nor his reflection but the Spirit as the living God moves because he transcends human beings and human observations as it is today.

The reoccurring claims of inspiration in the charismatic identity of the Pentecostalism have imposed a strong challenge to the contemporary society whether it is really what they claim or something else. On this, Dewey Beegle (1973:140-141) opined that the inspiration is a continuous thing and not a thing of the past, through which men like Charles Wesley, Isaac watts, other contemporary hymn and song writers at the times of David and Solomon composed their Psalms. He said that had these men like Charles Wesley, Isaac watts, George Matheson and other inspired Hymn writer had lived in the time of David and Solomon, some of their hymns would have been included in the Hebrew canon**.**

c. Revelation: Revelation as one the major appealing magnetic factor of the charismatic nature of the Pentecostals or the New Religious Movements cannot be overemphasized. The Pentecostals, the Charismatic and the New Religious Movements in whatever name it bears is one and the same thing, who emphasizes that from their calling, preaching, prophesy, speaking in tongues, Scripture, rituals and belief are all revealed through the Holy Spirit, or by direct revelation from God. As observed earlier, Rodman Williams (1971:16) said that the Pentecostals or the New Religious Movements believe that Christians are still receiving revelations today by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He said that the bible is not the final source of God's revelation but simply a witness to additional revelation that God is giving today. By this Williams is claiming that Christians can add to the Bible and they can accept such additions as normative. He sees the revelation and the scriptural revelation as a "Model" of what the Holy Spirit is doing today.

Similarly, the Charismatic are making pyramid claims that God still speaks to them through tongues, prophecies and visions which Williams explained as" continuing

revelation or progressive revelation" MacArthur (1978:22). He said that the Orthodox Protestant churches believed that prophecy and the types of revelation of the old apostles ended with the New Testament and argued that it is absolutely misreading the New Testament and said that the dynamic thrust of the Holy Spirit has come alive again. Charismatic identity of African Christianity solicits for rereading of the scripture to make much meaning to the African man without which Christianity remains foreign to the Africans.

MacArthur said that there are disturbing claims because the possibilities of fraud and error and abuse by such present day charismatic prophets, preachers and pastors are very obvious which may sprout from the pretense of having a word from God. On this premise the Orthodox Churches and pastors call for the need for spiritual discernment.

The charismatic according to Williams strongly believe that charismatic prophecy are divine revelation equal to Scripture, though he denied trying to place contemporary experience on the same level of authority as the Bible, but what he tried to establish is that God does not just speak as authoritatively today just as he spoke to the biblical authors. He said that he is the living God and still speaks to his people today. The orthodox Churches especially among the protestant believe that God speaks and communicate with and to his people through the power of the Holy Spirit through the Scripture and not as the Pentecostal charismatic carries it which makes the uniqueness of the Scripture to be lost. MacArthur has this to say:

> If explanation fails to resolve the issue, the distinction between biblical authority and additional revelation seems to be artificial. Are some of God's words less authoritative than others? If Conservative Evangelicals adopts views that are practically identical to neo-orthodox positions such as that of De-wey Beegle, the uniqueness of the Scripture will be lost and the Church could mistakenly abandon its cornerstone. Once we see the Scripture as less than the final infallible authority for faith and practice, we have opened the doors to theological chaos.

Everyone and everybody can claim to be speaking God's revelation while it is true that some of these new revelations or words of prophecy may agree with the Scriptures, it is equally true that some of them may not.

On this premise the orthodox pastors or churches view of abandoning the uniqueness of the scripture, its normative nature as the only word of God is to invite 'a spiritual free-for-all,' which can cause confusion, error, and invasion of demonic spirits. In other words,

this is longing for the new esoteric approaches to church worship which breeds or is an invitation to Satan's counterfeit and criminality into churches' system.

Criminality in Nigerian society has been a matter of general concern to the generality of Nigerian populace. One may wonder how Nigerian society has been engulfed into the crime level she finds herself. This imposes challenges to the well meaning Nigerians because Nigerians outside the shores of this nation are synonymous with corruption and the idea is that Nigerian people everywhere are prone to crime. Prof. Oyeyemi Fadayomi of Elizade University, Ondo State (Guardian Newspaper Thursday September 13, 2018) lamented that the police strategy at attacking crime is failing. He said that the country is at crossroads in the area of security. Oyo State Police command arrested 27 year old man, Sodiq Rasheed, in (Sun Newspaper Tuesday August14th, 2018) possession of three human skulls along Ijebu-Ode/IdiAyunre road in Ibadan who wanted to use the skulls for Money rituals as requested by Islamic cleric, Alfa Haddi.

The greatest worry over this situation is how the church which is a moral agent has been identified with crime. World over, there is this ongoing rumours how criminality has come into the church with the spirit of capitalism and greed. Can it be said that the Church has missed her calling in shaping and re-shaping the society, directing her on the right way of moral economy? What more can lead to this trend of criminality that grips the church and how did it come about?

The rate Nigerian churches, the laity and clergy are involving in committing crime has imposed a social threat and concern. And it our findings that Charismatic Identity struggles between the Pentecostals and the Mainline churches has made churches lost focus of her moral character molding of the society. This distraction is what this work is addressing so that the moral decadence that engulfed the society can be trashed.

Almost all Dailies and magazines are filled with the stories involving one pastor or men of God involved in one misdemeanor or another, ranging from drug trafficking, duping people through prayers, the use of charms and other devilish things. Let the churches be it Pentecostal or Orthodox wake up by using the biblical ethics as a yardstick for character molding if our society will survive this ugly trend.

Conclusion: The idea of Pentecostalism as a Pneumatic Christianity create a problem to other churches in the identity struggle as much reveals the reason other Protestant and Catholic churches cannot believe to be dead churches. To this end, Harvey Cox (1995.8) said that it is secularity and not spirituality that the church may be heading for extinction

due to its encounter with Pentecostalism. He said that Pentecostalism Christianity as a pneumatic Christianity is sustaining the world Christianity. Pneumatic Christianity according Cox refers to "any form of Christianity that values, affirms, and consciously promotes the experiences of the spirit as part of normal Christian life and worship." There are other Christian bodies which do not answer Pentecostal or charismatic but have indigenous expression of Christianity that also emphasis the presence of the spirit in worship Pentecostalism contemporarily is the most globalized form of pneumatic Christianity which belongs to the large protestant family and shares the traditional evangelical theological emphasis on

1. The authority of the Bible
2. The centrality of the cross,
3. Regeneration as the way to salvation and
4. A call to holiness as the outflow of a new relationship with Christ. They lay emphasis on the experience and power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, care must be taken by the society over so acclaimed Pentecostals who perpetrate evils in the name of Pentecostalism. Moreover the mainline churches should continue in the proper way of biblical teaching as to unteach the evils teachings these wolf in sheep skin have taught the society. For our society to be morally sound there is need for the general public to be aware of the manipulative trend of some job seekers using the name of church and Pentecostal movement to defraud the gullible.

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