African Response to Christian Mission and the Rise of Christian Independent Churches in Nigeria

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Abstract

Despite seeming to contradict common sense, the statement "The ethical-genesis of Christianity in the emergence of Nigerian nationalism" contained a kernel of truth. As could be seen from this paper, both positive and negative aspects of Christianity's role in raising national consciousness were discussed. Evangelizations place a transformation of actual historical and political circumstances as part of liberation in Christ. The people to whom the gospel is preached are not impersonal, apolitical beings, but rather citizens of a world rife with oppression and human exploitation. Since there is a push to uphold democracy, human rights, the rule of law, enshrine security, and establish strong political, cultural, and economic institutions through religious and cultural practices, this research is pertinent to modern Nigerian citizens. Realizing how Africans' resistance to colonial power and dominance revived these unalienable human rights, which had been distorted by the arrival of the West, will have profound significance especially in the rise of independent churches.

Keywords: African, Churches, Movement, Institutions, Nationalism

Introduction

Independent church movements had started in 32 of the 41 countries and colonies south of the Sahara, in Madagascar, and in one country in North Africa by 1967 (Barrett, 1970). Of the five regions of Africa, southern Africa has experienced the greatest growth in the number of independent African churches (West Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, and Eastern Africa). More than 3,000 unique movements have emerged since 1872. According to Mayer (1962), the definition of independence is characterised by a reference to a tribe as a quasi-national political unit with a high level of political distinctiveness, sharing a common history, culture, and set of symbols but not necessarily possessing a unique language or culture of its own. According to Murdock (1959), the term "community" refers to any population group that is numerically larger than the one to which the members of an extended kinship group belong and that frequently shares a name, a language, a culture, or a territory. Depending on the point of view, different types of religious movements have been referred to as separatist, schismatic, sectarian, secessionist, heretical, dissident, splinter, break-off, breakaway, protest, proselytic, spiritual, evangelical, revivalist, pentecostal, ecstatic, enthusiastic, perfectionist, charismatic, prophetic, prophet healing, the rapeutic, ethiopian, zionist, messianic, millennial, apocalyptic, eschatological, chiliastic, judaistic, israelitist, magico–religious, nativistic, neopagan, traditionalist, syncretistic, quasi-Christian, post-Christian, non-Christian, or anti-Christian movements or cults, in addition to the terms independent or African independent churches or church movements (Barrett, 1970). In order to define independence, Barrett (1970) used four related definitions: independence; a territory not under the control of any other power; the idea that each congregation of a church is an autonomous, egalitarian society free from any external ecclesiastical control; and the polity based on this idea. Our operational working definitions for this research paper will be based on the third definition under the concept of independence. The fact that these churches have survived is one amazing quality. They frequently spread due to the involvement of the tribes, the establishment of new organisations, the recruitment of new followers, persecution, natural disasters, and missions.

The Origin of African Churches in Nigeria: A Historical Overview

On the 12th of April 1799, 16 clergy and 9 laypeople from the established Church of England met and made the decision to establish the Church Missionary Society. A few evangelists like Charles Simon and Rev. John Venn, who later held the position of secretary, were among these clergymen. One of the greatest parliamentarians in British history, William Wilberforce, was among the lay members and fought to end the slave trade. The spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the pagan world, including Africa, was their primary objective. They got going seriously and sent missionaries to Sierra Leone, particularly to Freetown, where the descendants of freed slaves lived. A few years later, Fowell Buxton, one of the forerunners of this admirable endeavour, claimed to have seen the solution to Africa's problems when he awoke early one morning. He believed that Africans should be enlisted to help restore Africa (Oosthuizen, 1968). Oosthuizen (1968) asserts that when missionaries and schoolteachers work together, agriculture will flourish, avenues for legal commerce will open up, human confidence will be inspired, and civilization will advance as a natural result. Christianity is the primary cause of this happy change.

The expedition of 1841, which arrived at the mouth of the Niger, was the result of this vision. However, the expedition only partially succeeded as a result of the sudden deaths of many of its members within a short period of time. Nevertheless, the Akus in Freetown urgently requested that the Anglican and Methodist missionaries travel to Badagry. The travellers from Trinidad-Hausa who visited Badagry were the ones who first informed the Akus about the city. After reaching Lagos by 1852, Christianity had already reached Abeokuta. The C.M.S. in particular wanted to establish independent, self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating African churches through their missionary work (Ogunbile, 2001). So, they trained Africans in skilled labour and taught them how to run churches and schools, teaching them how to support themselves. With the hope that soon there would be African bishops, the Africans quickly understood this education and began to put their talents and skills to use as assistant bishops, ministers, catechists, and schoolmasters could be produced locally. Such bishops would intensify their efforts to win more converts in order to found numerous centres. Bishop Ajayi Crowther, James Johnson, and many others were among the first to receive an education. But many Africans were shocked to learn that the

Europeans weren't content with seeing the results of their labours. Their lack of respect for Africans' wisdom and dignity weakened their spirituality and caused numerous crises, which jeopardised the C.M.S.'s missionary work as many members left the churches.

While the majority of white missionaries lacked a university degree, many Africans became highly educated and attained it. Many of them were quickly granted honorary degrees to make up for this shortcoming so they wouldn't be replaced by Africans (Ogunrinade, 2009). Such events made African Christians aware of the disrespectful attitudes of the European missionaries toward them, which paved the way for independence movements. The poor treatment of James Johnson was the root of the crisis that gave rise to the African church. His desire to found an African Independent Church was greatly sparked while he was studying there in Sierra Leone. He travelled to Lagos to help establish the Native Pastorate Church as a result of this point of view. The C.M.S. organised this so that Native Americans could support and reproduce themselves. He was sent to Abeokuta in the hope that he would establish a native national church there as a native bishop in Abeokuta, a native independent country not subject to a foreign government. However, European missionaries employed the local ministers to rebel against him and oppose his pious system of discipline. He was once more transferred from Abeokuta to Lagos to take the position of vicar at St. Paul's Breadfruit. According to Oosthuizen (1968), independence in Nigeria could not be equated with colour; rather, it was a desire for rebirth, independence, and, it might be added, for establishing a new community within the city. However, there has been a backlash against the paternalism of white missionaries. The Islamic brotherhoods have grown stronger, particularly in Ibadan, the city that was described from a separatist point of view.

Rise of African Churches (from 1888)

Both the remote and prevailing factors must be taken into consideration when telling the tale of Aladura's emergence in Nigeria and the rise of prophetic or spiritual churches beginning at the turn of the 20th century. Generally speaking, distant factors that have aided in the Aladura upsurge are emerging African churches' stories of success. These churches first appeared in portions of Yoruba territory and quickly spread to the nation's northern regions. In general, the

Baptist (1888), Anglican (1891, 1901), and Methodist churches were impacted by the Mission (1917). Other primary causes contributed to the series of ecclesiastical revolutions led by Africans within the various Mission churches, in addition to the critical issues of personality conflicts, racial discrimination, prejudice, and polygamy. According to Anderson 91999), the following are some of them:

1. the sterility of Mission Christianity in the face of a growing desire for a prompt and effective resolution of life's most important issues through the means of a dynamic religious faith that could prevent a return to either the traditional religion or Islam.
2. Mission ambivalence and insensitivity on the subject of indigenous leadership in the church. iii. Mission disregard for, or misunderstanding of, Africa's cultural past, particularly in relation to her religious heritage and belief. This was almost always the main reason why mission leaders at home or abroad, their agents, whether white or black, and the numerous African converts, were so dissatisfied.
3. Both the Methodist Missionary Society (MMS) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which later became the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS), agreed in principle to indigenous leadership and autonomy. For instance, the Rev. Henry Venn, a seasoned CMS secretary, was the inspiration behind the Native Pastorate System. The package stated that Mission Stations should develop into the following kinds of churches: self-governing, self-supporting, and self-financing.

However, it quickly became clear in practise that the majority of Mission officials exhibited significant hesitation in ensuring the opposite, which was one of the bold demands for a policy they considered advantageous to them and essential to the survival of the Christian faith in their country. From the beginning, Africans had been actively involved in the project of evangelising their homeland, both in terms of recognising the need for evangelization and drawing benevolent outsiders' attention to this fact. Additionally, the local population supported the mission enterprise financially and morally by providing the essential personnel as well. In actuality, Africans themselves gave the European missionaries the assistance they required. Perhaps nationalistic sentiments started to emerge in the church before

cultural nationalism in Africa. The African congregations appeared to be financially stable and to have a well-organized church government. They also had no shortage of qualified men to oversee ministerial matters in the church. Despite this possibility, a decision on African leadership in the different Mission Churches was not made quickly enough. As a result, internal revolutions occurred in the three mission churches already mentioned, securing for the Africans firm control of their churches under local leadership and with a guarantee of financial support. In this way, it would seem that Africans had already resolved the crucial issues of indigenous leadership, self-hood, and church government a few decades, or years, prior to the emergence of prophetic churches in Nigeria.

The African Church Organization (Inc.), the Native (Ebenezer) Baptist Church, the United Native African Church, and the United African Methodist Church are some of the more recent churches. Because they emerged from Baptist, Anglican, or Methodist traditions, they have retained many of the liturgical practises of their respective parent churches. However, as part of the effort to indigenize Christianity on Nigerian soil, the presentation and preservation of the Gospel message in the local languages became a crucial concern for Nigeria's newer churches. These new churches, led by indigenous people, incorporated traditional forms into their liturgy, particularly in the field of music.

Inevitably, the issue of interior evangelism under indigenous control became of paramount importance as soon as the one issue of church autonomy was resolved through Africans' aggressiveness rather than the Missions' compromise. As a result, it was approached with a lot of enthusiasm and determination. The strategy was vigorously pursued, and soon branches of the various emancipated or defecting churches could be found all over southern Nigeria and Yoruba land.

Increased Prophetic Churches (1910)

The case of the emergence of prophetic churches in Nigeria from 1910 onwards, or thereabouts, sparked by the activities of notable figures such as Garrick Sokari Braide in Delta and his counterparts in Yoruba land a few years later, would seem to belong to an epoch in the history of Christianity in Ni, when contrasted with the developments in west Africa in which Prophet Wade Harris of Ivory Coast (now

Cote d'Ivoire) blazed a trail. The following are some of the things that most likely contributed to the emergence of prophetic or prophetic churches in the nation:

i. The mission's on-going futility and the absence of a fulfilling spirituality. The kind of subdued pietism found within the African and Mission churches themselves served to support this. This point is exemplified by the establishment of, or presence of Freemason Fraternities, the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity, and organisations similar to them in these churches;
ii. Mission's disregard for Africa's contribution to evangelization and tact in handling aspirants in this regard; and
iii. Prolonged instruction in catechism. The initial interest of converts may fade before the end of the year or more of instruction necessary before undergoing the rite of baptism, which frequently hampered the growth of mission churches. Before being baptised, it may be necessary for them to be able to read the Bible, the catechism, and the prayer book.

Therefore, the Mission Churches encountered what might be described as "conflict situations" in both the church and on the mission field, arising from various but connected circumstances beginning with Garrick Braide. The position taken by mission leaders on these matters had a significant impact on how Christianity developed in Nigeria.

A young prophet named Moses Tunolase Orimolade moved his base from the Yoruba hinterland to Lagos around 1925. The Cherubim and Seraphim society was created as a result of his work and is also an outgrowth of the Anglican Church in Lagos. Later, like-minded churches began to emerge as Pentecostal (Spiritual), Prophet, or Aladura (Prayer)-type churches. Their incursions into the Yoruba homeland, other regions of the nation, and as far away as Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa, as well as their current overseas activities, are unequivocal evidence of the aggressive evangelistic practises of these churches. Such policies are founded on a steadfast faith and a deeply ingrained spirituality.

The issue of typology is one of the most fascinating aspects of the development of Aladura - Prophet or Prophetic-churches in Nigeria. The names of the churches are chosen by the churches themselves, either as a result of divine revelation from

God or in response to public mockery. The names of the Cherubim and Seraphim, which were revealed, are a good example of the first. The adoption of "Aladura" as a reference for the collective of churches falling under this category serves as an illustration of the other type. Aladura is a Yoruba word that means "one who prays."

According to scholars, churches with the aforementioned characteristics have been categorised as "Prophetic," "Spiritual," "Independent," "Separatist," or "Indigenous" (Ogunbile, 2001). The last three references, however, could be applied to both the Prophetic-Type Churches that developed later and the African churches that encouraged African dominance in Mission-led churches. It is also important to note that both types of churches evolved along nearly the same paths, ultimately severing ties with their parent churches. When it was no longer possible for them to co-exist in cooperation, they had to come to a decision to part ways. Most often, the Africanists and Aladurans, respectively, known as the Protestors or the Reformers, were excommunicated from the Mission churches (Ogunrinade, 2009). A degree of autonomy could have been granted to, for example, the Africanists and the problem of separate existence may have been avoided if Mission authorities had shown an honesty-loving attitude in the first place.

Why African Indigenous Churches Are Emerging in Nigeria

i. The role of Henry Venn
ii. Nationalistic sentiment
iii. Mass movement
iv. Contextual variables
v. A desire to indigenously evangelise
vi. Drive for a more pristine version of Christianity
vii. The ability to use one's leadership abilities

Impact of Indigenous Churches on the Community

The emergence of African Indigenous churches upended her surroundings and brought about radical changes to the community system. Both positive and negative effects were felt, and the adverse reaction almost undid the good deeds of the main churches' emergence. A contextualization that replaced some cultural customs with Christian ethics was almost implemented in society. The immediate

population, including traditionalists, rulers, Mohammedans, governments, and individuals, responded quickly and sharply to the emergence.

The Traditional Societies' Response

The Aladura Movement was initially welcomed and supported by both traditional leaders and their subjects, and it advanced without interruption at first. However, later events led to divergent views and behaviours, particularly among the traditional rulers. For example, the use of Babalola's "Water of Life" (Omi Iye) by the people of Efon Alaye, Ekiti, resulted in a broad and immediate departure from the attachment to the traditional idols and charms that this prophet's water had come to replace. Because of this, the Aladura presence and faith threatened the traditional healers or diviners-priests, who soon became hostile to them (Anderson, 1999).

Muslim communities response

Babalola's experiences in Ilofa his hometown, and Offa, both Muslim concentrations, may provide clues about the nature of the relationship that existed between Christianity and Islam in Yoruba land when it came to the treatment of Aladura prophets and followers in Muslim Communities during the revivals. Following this pattern of enduring opposition and escalating hostility, it was claimed that Mohammedans (Muslims) frequently complained that the "Aladura" were getting out of control and spent a significant amount of time demeaning the Mohammedans' (Muslims') religion rather than sharing the gospel (Ogunbile, 2001).

Response from Mission Churches

Contextualization in Worship: Africans in general and Nigerians in particular have rejected the Christian faith as it is practised in Western culture. Africans were unable to reconcile Christian principles of equality (equity) before God with the oppressions brought about by slavery and imperialist colonial laws. The Western-backed oppressive apartheid regimes in South Africa and South West Africa (Namibia), as well as the gorilla-style armed conflicts in Nyasaland, now Malawi, and former Southern and Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia, respectively), all cast doubt on the Western view of Christianity. Nigerians were starting to reject the Western style of worship because they preferred to express

themselves through hand clapping, drumming, and chorus singing rather than relying solely on hymnals. The style of worship gradually changed to include dancing, hand clapping, singing in the local tongue, and drumming. The mainline churches eventually followed the Evangelicals/Pentecostals when they started to lose members to these groups, which the youth perceived as being more alive. As the Pentecostals introduced fire brand prayer, the mainline churches changed their style of worship and stopped reading prayers from the prayer book. Mainline churches, like the Methodist and Anglican, continued their operations after independence without mentioning England, where they had previously had their corporate headquarters. Their independence enables them to implement significant reforms in their worship and administrative practises. Even in terms of management and policy, they ceased to be subservient to any foreign hegemony. For instance, the ordination of homosexuals as priests was recently opposed by the Anglican Communion and the Methodist of Nigeria. The majority of African priests in the Methodist Church now have the power to overturn any unfavourable proposals made to the church's World Congress.

Aggressive Evangelistic Activity: Without a doubt, the last ten decades have seen aggressive evangelistic activity, innovation, mission initiatives, and rapid church growth throughout the world. The door of the gospel has been opened in previously off-limits communist territory, especially in Russia, where Bibles were once smuggled. Since the Lord desires that everyone in every nation hear the gospel, the Word of God is now openly preached as a result of the fall of communism (Luke 24:47). The biggest church in Ukraine belongs to Nigerian pastor Sunday Adelaja. Even though there will be significant apostasy in the last days (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:3), the Lord will still save more souls.

Growth in the Establishment of Independent Churches: The number of independent churches and denominations has increased dramatically over the past 100 years. Congregations have been forming on a weekly basis over the past ten years, especially in urban areas like Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Owerri, etc. These denominations come in many different shapes and sizes and operate out of sheds or one-room apartments. In addition to new knowledge and technology, the Lord is preparing and anointing the church for a last-days crusade and evangelism.

Vast Distribution of Bibles and Literatures in Dialect: The expansion of the church in Nigeria over the past forty years has been significantly aided by the printing, translation, and distribution of the Bible. Reading the Bible in one's mother tongue by those who did not attend school has been greatly encouraged by the translation of the Bible into Nigerian languages. The Bible Society of Nigeria (BSN) was founded in 1966 and is a member of the United Bible Societies, a global organisation. BSN has completed the Bible's translation into 19 Nigerian languages and is currently working on the remaining 9. They also release portions of the New Testament, Bibles, and other literature in both English and regional tongues. Through its wide-area network and depots situated in each of Nigeria's six zones, BSN also distributes the scriptures to every corner of the country. Next to the US, BSN is the world's second-largest distributor of the Bible. Nigeria Bible Translation Trust, based in Jos, Plateau State, is another indigenous organisation that was founded in 1976. They also train people in the necessary technical skills, prepare literacy materials and books in Nigerian languages, send missionaries to people who don't have access to the Bible in their mother tongues, teach people to read and write in their native tongues, and translate the Bible for the people using native speakers as translators. The New Testament has been translated into seven Nigerian languages so far, with work continuing on 20 more. By combining the efforts of churches and other organisations, the entire Bible is now available in 19 Nigerian languages, the New Testament in 48 languages, and translations of the Old Testament in 17 languages and the New Testament in 31 languages. Nigeria has made significant progress in evangelization through the planting of churches, evangelization through literature, Bible distribution, and the dispatch of missionaries to numerous parts of the globe. Over 40 African nations now have mission fields established by Calvary Ministries (CAPRO), which was founded by Youth Corps members in 1975. Since then, highly educated youths have joined the wave of missionaries who have left the country to work in various Arab nations like Sudan and Libya, where Islam is the only official state religion. Similar to the missionaries from Europe and America who came to evangelise Africa in the 19th century, they risk their lives, leave their lucrative jobs, and pursue the course of preaching the gospel without compensation. As Nigerian and other African missionaries have been actively evangelising other continents, the old order is now giving way to the new.

Leadership Restructuring: The Cultural Revolution and Culture Theologizing continued to have a significant impact on how Christianity was practised in African churches (Ogungbile, 2001). The majority of the Pentecostal churches that make up the African Indigenous Churches have localised and contextualised Christianity in Africa. Thousands of indigenous churches carried on the style they developed during the founding and movement periods, and it has undergone such drastic change in response to Christianity. This is due to the preaching of a comprehensive gospel of salvation, which frequently includes the deliverance from sorcery, evil, spirits, poverty, and disease (Anderson, 1999). The continuity of the Indigenous Churches to manage and lead the peculiarity is not properly disseminated as a result of the various changes and influences coming from the western churches they adopted. The Indigenous Churches' traditions serve as the cornerstone of their identity and are the basis for their customs. When there is an influence and it is properly affecting their leadership, it is difficult to administer the custom. It is crucial that Africans administer the needs and traditions while also managing the biblical teachings. The teachings of the church's leaders are emphasised through the use of the native tongue, and the culture, tradition, and traditional method of preaching can be valued and preserved.

An African General Cause of This Phenomenon

The attitudes of the missionary enterprise toward the fundamentals of some time-honoured institutions, such as the family unit, family land, polygamous economy, lineages, traditional religion, the ancestor cult, the magical worldview, divination, and similar practises, were despicable. Another example is the pervasive denigration of tribal religion by missionaries. Numerous missionary agencies, a lack of land, personal disputes, political unrest, a desire for ancestor worship, natives' love of pomp and circumstance, unnecessary delays in the establishment of autonomous mission churches, missionaries' ignorance of African psychology, language, and avarice, ambition, imperiousness, and incorrect biblical interpretation are additional causes of independence.

For convenience, the background causes can be divided into eight categories, including: **Historical factors**: The majority of case studies on independence have been written from the historical and descriptive points of view, and causes are

presented in terms of a people's history and the missions that worked among them, usually as local factors specific to the case being studied.

Political factors: Ethiopianism and other separatist movements were primarily interpreted as the religious branch of African nationalism paving the way for political independence. This was done to account for African opposition to colonial paternalism. African nationalism that was expressed through the church is referred to as Ethiopianism (1875–1900). Nationalism in and of itself means rejection of foreign dominance. Ethiopianism is associated with the Negro race and Africa. Before 1914, Africans used the church as a training ground for handling their own affairs. The critical faculties had grown as a result of their education. Africans became more accustomed to the British parliamentary democracy because the church's financial burden fell on them. Africans with education embraced Christianity wholeheartedly. They thought that by embracing Christianity, they were strengthening their countries. Additionally, they held the view that political independence could not be attained until Christianity was firmly established and under African control. Political independence would be simple to achieve once they had achieved independence in the management of church affairs.

The African response to missions on polygyny-related issues, the ancestral cult, the earth goddess, the traditional African family, colonial factors (such as white settlers, the duration of the colonial presence, etc.), and community structure are additional factors that contributed to the nationalistic movement. Other concerns include factors related to the missionary presence's duration, areas of scriptures in the vernacular, etc (Barrett, 1970). The missions had previously had complete control over both the church and the scriptures up until this point. Their interpretation was final because only they had access to the Hebrew and Greek sources. However, a significant shift occurred with the release of African translations, making it possible to distinguish between scriptures and missions. Although a large portion of the missionary force had not yet learned the vernacular and spoke to them in African languages, Africans believed that God was speaking to them through these scriptures in the vernacular that was enshrined the soul of their people.

According to Onunwa (1991), who cited Turner, some black pastors were refused permission by the missionaries to lead the churches, in addition to culture, missionary education, and political objectives that led to the creation of independent churches. Due to this, black pastors and other black workers were compelled to begin agitating for control of the pulpit. Religious movements may also have a fundamental explanation based on sociological factors. According to Nwosu (1993), the relationship between nationalism and the mission in Africa was frequently discussed in favour of instruction, gospel values, and Christian principles taught in churches. Despite this, Nwosu brought up issues that questioned European dominance, strengthening nationalism in Nigeria and throughout Africa. These include the cultural genocide that missionaries committed against Africa, their support for colonialism there, their opposition to African leadership in mission churches, their control over the system for delivering education, and their historiography, among other things. These factors made it practical for nationalists like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo, among others, to begin calling for political independence. The need for political self-expression was seen as the origin of these movements rather than the clash of opposing personalities; they served as stopgap measures for disgruntled nationalism. **Economic factors:** In all of these instances, the argument is made that the fundamental circumstance from which movements emerge is economic deprivation; these movements are economic protests against the exploitation of tribal lands or other riches by colonial powers. **Sociological factors:** Movements were caused by colonial colour-bar policies, which were in place elsewhere and in South Africa with prevalent cases of racial discrimination and white settlement. Reasons for this case include tribal or racial tensions, pressure groups, the struggle between elites and masses for power, etc.

Ethnic, non-religious, religious, and theological factors are among the additional contributing factors (Barrett, 1970 and Ndiokwere, 1995). The migration of Europeans, including missionaries, and their families into Africa resulted in less social interaction with Africans, particularly in East and South Africa, and was compared to the hostile relationship between Jews and Samaritans. As a result, there was a communication gap that frequently resulted in racial and religious slurs.

Lack of gospel adaptation to African religion and cultural context is another theory of causative phenomenon in independent church movements. In Africa, the arrival of Christian missions inspired a lot of hope. Their message received a remarkable response, particularly in West Africa. Early on, due to their burgeoning membership, the missionaries were frequently overburdened with the task of establishing churches and had little time to understand the logic of adapting their message within the context of African indigenous beliefs and systems of thought. The theory of disillusionment is another. Because there were so many European missionaries who wanted to settle in West Africa, all of the top positions in the church hierarchy were only open to white clergy. The black clergy lost faith in their ability to receive equal treatment in terms of job opportunities after receiving education on par with that of their white counterparts (Kalu, 1997). Nationalism, according to Nwankwo (1992), is a strategy for achieving national self-determination. Nationalism in the Nigerian context should be understood as people identifying with the goals and interests of their country, particularly when it comes to issues involving its independence and sovereignty. For the purposes of this essay, nationalism and nationalist movements are defined as national self-assertion against the demeaning tendencies of colonialism. Evangelizations place a transformation of actual historical and political circumstances as part of liberation in Christ. The people to whom the gospel is preached are not impersonal, apolitical beings, but rather citizens of a world rife with oppression and human exploitation.

Missionary Factor: An Ethical-Genesis of Nigeria Nationalism

We have been discussing various authors' contributions to the role of Christianity in raising national consciousness in the previous subheading, including Barrett (1970), Kalu (1997), Onunwa (1991), Nwosu (1993), Ajayi (1969), Ayandele (1966), Turner (1967), and Ndiokwere (1995). These books described a wide range of phenomena that strengthened nationalism in Nigeria during the colonial era, including movements, figures, prophets and prophetesses, liturgies, healing, sermons, dreams and visions, holy cities, and countless others. The majority of these recent authors have backgrounds in anthropology, sociology, social psychology, history, political science, and other fields that are concerned with the social issue that independence represents.

At this juncture, we will examine how the missionary factor sparked the ethical genesis of Nigerian nationalism. Nigerian nationalism was nurtured in the church built by white missionaries. Before the first Nigerian-owned press appeared after 1879, it was not only the only forum for nationalist expression, but it also occupied the majority of nationalist attention until after 1914. Well-known experts in constitutional development and the rise of nationalism in Nigeria have overlooked this crucial ethical point. At this point, a key biblical idea that immediately resonated with African societies was the idea of love and the numerous equivalent terms used in African vernacular scripture translations emerged. These terms include agape, philia, and philadelphia, which are various Greek terms for love. According to Barrett (1970), philia denotes social love, or the affection of friends and within the Christian community; while agape takes the special form of philadelphia, or love for the brotherhood. Agape is primarily the distinctive activity of the divine nature, the redemptive goodness of God manifested towards the undeserving. This most intricate biblical theme has many facets. Most of these missions such as love as service, love as sacrifice, love as forgiveness, love as caring, love as compassion, love as charity, and love in its social manifestation as peace, had exemplary records in the societies they served and gave their lives for. However, there was a crucial component missing. According to the New Testament, brotherly love is "the willingness to serve and sacrifice, to forgive and make allowances, to share and sympathise, to lift up the fallen or down-trodden, and restore the erring in a community whose very existence is due to the mercy of God and the sacrificial death of his Christ" (Barrett, 1970).

The nationalists realised that the best way to show perfect brotherly love was to be willing to serve and sacrifice their energy for the sake of our beloved countries, Nigeria and Africa, respectively. They fought to restore the honour and respect for our country by frequently using biblical principles to push for independence in the areas of religion, business, society, culture, and politics. The challenge for Nigerian Christian nationalists was how to discuss God with people who were not only rendered less than human but also diminished and devalued in society, not just non-believers. Indeed, that is the benefit of gospel liberation praxis. By letting go of all of the "old person's" egotism and entering the world of the other as a "new person," one is able to change that world. The goal is to recover and incorporate elements of Christian spirituality that have been somewhat overlooked, including

the biblical element, the historical element, and the element of individual commitment to immoral, exploitational, dehumanising, and unjust structures that violate God's law. The missionaries' Christian message contains the makings of a revolution. A proper motif of liberation is the exodus experience. I have actually seen the suffering of my people in Egypt, Yahweh declared. I have heard them scream in protest at their masters. I have paid attention to their suffering and have descended to save them from Egypt's power and to transport them from there to a lovely broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex.3:7-8). The white Christians were frequently shocked when Nigerian nationalists applied the exodus motif to the liberation motif, which is deeply ingrained in the biblical tradition.

Iwe (1985) asserts that a missionary church will view and understand power in terms of service, justice, love, and peace. If one were to travel throughout this nation, one would find little cemeteries tucked away in the forest along the roads where the valiant men and women who brought the Christian faith to this nation were laid to rest after giving their all. Their tenacity served as a solid foundation upon which Nigerian nationalistic movements built and continue to build their inspiration for nationalism. Nigeria will never be able to thank these men and women enough for giving their lives to advance the welfare and education of this country.

Conclusion

Given the aforementioned factors, Christianity may not have appeared to have made a significant difference in African nationalism to the average person. However, in their various viewpoints, Onunwa (1991) and Nwosu (1993) have identified, respectively, the positive and negative effects of Christianity on the rise of nationalism in colonial Africa. According to Onunwa, the teachings of Christianity helped to advance Nigerian nationalism. The gospel values, missionary education, the Bible's translation into various indigenous languages, the emergence of independent churches, spiritual consciousness, and the expansion of economic opportunities all served as vehicles for teaching the Africans. We must admit that the introduction of Christianity to Africa more than four centuries ago was credited to European missionaries. Their work was neither simple nor admirable. Their unrealistic approach, which demanded nothing less

than the effective colonisation of all religions to convert them to Christianity, resulted in problems with their health, persecution, language or communication, culture, and transportation. Poor equality personnel, a lack of interpreters, financial difficulties, political intrigue, rivalry between various missionary bodies, and even death were characteristics of their missionary work. But these missionaries laid the groundwork for Africa's modern western education, industrial economy, and advances in science, medicine, and local literature.

The missionaries, however, were a small part of a larger European colonisation scheme in Africa. Their interactions with European traders, diplomats, and settlers must be taken into consideration in order to evaluate their actions appropriately. That Christianity supported nationalist movements through criticism of European Christian missionaries by African Christians is unarguable. Thus, the conquest, colonisation, and Christianization of tropical Africa in the 1900s contributed to the emergence of this anti-European disaffection. The call expressed Nigerians' desire to end the colonial relationship that persisted in the missionary endeavour and to make room for indigenous leadership and self-reliance. The cry for freedom from some Western missionaries' oppressive paternalism is reflected in the call. For Africans, it offers the possibility of a new social structure free from the inequities and absurdities of dominance by foreign institutions.

Recommendations

i. Modern Nigerian nationalism should prioritise providing the general populace with adequate security, employment, and good governance free from corruption, godfatherism, nepotism, statism, tribalism, and religious affiliation.

ii. The focus of modern Nigerians should be on technology transfer and indigenous technology development initiatives that will result in the country's industrial, nuclear, and to some extent, atomic energy development. The sum of all knowledge and expertise required for turning inputs, resources, and other factors of production (labour, capital, materials, etc.) into goods and services is what we can deduce is meant by technology in its broadest and most accurate sense. It is then that Nigeria will be able to address issues with food production, maize milling, groundnut processing, cocoa and palm produce, brewing, bricks, iron foundries, fertiliser, corrugated iron sheets, leather tanning, bolts, and nuts,

manufacturing of cars, ships, and aeroplanes, cotton textiles, machine tools, and food processing.

iii. Granted that modern nationalism is concerned with achieving political and economic independence by taking direct control of the productive forces of the economy in order to raise effectiveness and achieve self-reliance, the goals of modern nationalism should include achieving human dignity and freedom, international recognition, and respect. This is because development deals with raising the standard of living of people by generating and distributing wealth and resources equitably through improved techniques, strong institutions and technology. iv. Factors which hamper true nationalism in Nigeria such as indiscipline, tribalism, god-fatherism, the shortcomings of public officials and government organisations, lack of a solid and well-articulated ideology, official discrimination; weak political, economic, educational, and religious institutions must be addressed with the right political will.

v. True modern nationalism should be based on the rule of law, strong family, educational, political, religious, and economic institutions, as well as readily accessible, ethical mass media, cultural values, and national ideology, as well as an ideal form of leadership that leads by example and acknowledges the dignity of labour.

vi. Every Nigerian citizen should regard love for our nation as their first and foremost obligation as encapsulated in the national anthem. Since the motherland is the group of people to which the citizens are bound by shared mores and cultures and because they owe it to their country for the protection and advancement of the common good, this duty is based on the law of nature.

vii. Citizens must show interest in and concern for the welfare of their nation in order to truly love it. To move to another country (japa syndrome) for purely selfish reasons is in opposition to the spirit of Christianity, which places a higher value on loyalty and willingness to make sacrifices than worldly possessions

viii. Inter and intra religious communication (ecumenical spirit) should be encouraged to reduce incidences of religious discrimination while those who flout

the laws of the land under the guise of whatever religious tradition or conviction must be brought to book in line with extant laws of the land.

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