Christian Denominations and the Contemporary Trends

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to study 'denominations' in Christian Society. Denominationalism is the opposite of sectarianism. By definition, a sect is exclusive- separate. The word "denomination", on the other hand, is an inclusive term – an ecumenical term. It implies that the group referred to is but one member, called or dominated by a particular name, of a larger group- the Church- to which all denominations belong. Some selected denominations will be discussed in this article, looking at their origin and growth. The paper will also look at the ecumenical association of the denominations. When the different denominations come together as a Christian community, they bring with them the beautiful and rich traditions of their denominational background. In ecumenical spirit people from all ends of the theological spectrum whether they are conservatives, liberals, or somewhere in-between are expected to share their convictions even when they are not the same. In writing this research, sociological and analytical techniques were adopted. The different denominations started in a small way like mustard seed but they have given birth to variety of sects or proliferation of churches.

Keywords: Christian, Denominations, Church, Contemporary, Ecumenism

Introduction

The word denomination was adopted in England and America because it carried no implication of a negative value judgment (Puckett, 2001). The one Church is composed of ecclesiastical groups or denominations. The conservatives accept denominations as God-given outward face of the true church. The "Branch Theory" holds that there are three great types of orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Anglicanism as "branches" of the one church. In the contemporary ecumenical movement, some have tended to consider the Church in its function rather than in

its essence, emphasizing its social and ethical aspects. The Church exists to serve the secular world. Religious freedom was a necessary condition to accommodate such diversity (Martin, 2001).

God's purpose for man is redemption, as is revealed in his mighty acts in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The Christian's duty calls for hearty participation in the work and societies of the world- so long as this is done with responsibility and freedom, in obedience to God. On the nature of the Church, citing Paul's view, it will be seen that the multiplicity of theologies does not fundamentally place the unity of the Church in doubt, for no congregation prescribes for itself a standard theology and no New Testament writing intends to offer such a theology. There were neither Pauline nor Johanine congregations (Kalu, 1978)

The Church is a community of faithful people sustained by the mysterious indwelling of Christ and by the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians, many impersonal images are used to describe the Church, but the overwhelming number of images are of personal, human, and existential. The author of Ephesians treats solely of the images "being built together into a dwelling place of God", and their joint heirs, membership, and participation in God's promise (Eph.2:18, 22:3-6).

The Church is a community of those who respond to the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:21). The heart and centre of Christ's ministry was the choosing and training of the disciples, thus committing the continuity of salvation in a community. The Christian incorporation in Christ is primarily and existentially by sacramental incorporation into the life of his Church (Kalu, 1978). It is by faith (Eph. 3:12) that they have access to the unsearchable riches of Christ and to see "the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things".

Denominations are provisional in character. Intercommunion means that "those who are communicants in the one body shall be privileged, on that ground alone, to be admitted to communion in the other body, without individual tests. Intercommunion would therefore involve as a minimum the recognition by the various denominations of one another's ministry and sacraments, with particular

reference to the Eurcharist. As Lambeth conference of 1930 put it, "should be the goal of, rather than a means to the restoration of union" (Kalu, 1978).

Sects in Medieval Christianity

In the Medieval time (500-1500 A.D) there was an uprising of different Christian sects referred to by the Roman Catholic authorities as heretics. Among these sects were the Hussite movement, Wyclifites, Waldensians and Humiliati, the templar and Free Spirit society, these groups were followers of the ideas of some persons. Another group that was influential at this time was the Brethren of the Common Life. The Hussite Movement were followers of Jan Hus (c. 1372-1415), a Bohemian reformer. He was a well-known preacher at 'Bethlehem Chapel' in Prague. Wyclifites were the followers of John Wyclif (1350-1415) an English priest. He was a lecturer in Oxford, influenced by nominalist philosophy, developed from the writings of William of Ockham. The Nominalists taught that many of the basic elements of Christianity could not be demonstrated by logic but must be accepted by faith. His radical ideas were powerful enough to inspire a movement.

Waldensians were called different names in different places, 'Cathars' was first applied to them in northern Europe about 1160 A.D. They were also called Publicans, Paterines (in Italy), Bougres or Bulgars in France, or Arians, Manichaeans or Marcionites. Around Albi the Cathars were Albigensians. The confusion over names reveals a confusion over ideas. But basically all these heresies were the same. They aimed to substitute a perfect elite for the corrupt clergy. Where they were numerous enough, as in Southern France, they organized churches and bishoprics, and constitute an alternative church. The majority were 'believers', who married, led normal lives, and 'received the consolamentum' only on their death beds, thus dying 'in the hands of the Good Men' (Johnson, 1976).

Lambert Le Begue (d. 1177) was the founder of 'The Templar', a humbly born parish priest and reformer in the diocese of Liege in France. The beguines, Beghards (Beguinus and Beghard, that is women and men) were religious people leading lives of chastity, without fixed rules, organization or final vows. They were in northern Europe. Mystical works stimulated the piety of these groups. The beguine

was most probably a corruption of Albigensians (the term for Cathar of southern France). They were mendicant in their style (Malcolm, 1992).

The 'Brethren of the Common Life' was founded by Gerard Groote (1340-1384), one of the more successful idealistic orders of the later Middle Ages. They were genuinely poor, they took their social work seriously, in some ways they adumbrated the Protestant reformers by their stress on the Bible and their distaste for elaborate forms of worship, such as polyphonic singing. This group was credited to have taught some influential men in church history like Desiderius Erasmus, Ignatius Loyola, Jean Calvin and Martin Luther. The Brethren of the Common Life were in Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland (Johnson, 1976).

Reformation 1500-1700

Martin Luther was the leader of the movement which has come to be known as the reformation in Germany. There were two other movements at that time, the Renaissance and Nationalism (Bainton, 1960). Renaissance : The Renaissance was identified at the core with the humanist movement, the liveliest current in Italian intellectual life from the fourteenth century and in European intellectual life at the turn of the sixteenth century. The Renaissance was preeminently the product of scholars and men of letters, yet the movement argues that ideas can have practical influence. The humanist's literary interest was in the authors of classical antiquity. The Italian humanists, especially, were responsible for the recovery of many classical texts. All humanists sought to read the ancients aright and to learn and to teach the pure, long-corrupted style of classical Latin. The humanists were the opposite of academic. The Roman orator Cicero was the chief prophet of the humanist creed. The humanists wrote orations in their closets for fun and gave an oratorical sound to their other forms of writing. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) was a humanist in England and Italy. He was a Dutch man form Rotterdam (Gray, 1973). In 1450 Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz invented the movable type of printing. This made available to many the books which had been the property of the few-institutions. It spread rapidly, and no long time elapsed before presses were established in every important town in Western and Central Europe. The immediate effect was that books became cheaper and more plentiful (South gate,

1966). The formation of a new reading public was perhaps the most significant effect of the Renaissance (Green, 1952).

Martin Luther was born in 1484, to Hans Luther a German, in Thuringia. His father worked in Mines, His mother was Margaretta, a farmer. They were Roman Catholics and frequently pray to Saint Anne, the patroness of miners. Luther claimed to have experienced depression as a youth and six months before his entry into the cloister. In 1505 before he entered cloister he experienced unexpected encounter with death, a sudden lightning struck him. The fear of death led him to accept a call or he interpreted it as a call from heaven to join the religious at Erfurt. As a youth he believe in the privileges the Church had to offer: sacraments, pilgrimages, indulgences, and the intercession of the saints.

The Mass was the focal point of the Church's means of grace. On the altar bread and wine became the flesh and blood of God, and the sacrifice of Calvary is re-enacted. The priest who performs the miracle of transforming the elements enjoys a power and privilege denied even to angels. The whole difference between the clergy and the laity rests on this (Bainton, 1960). He enjoyed his life in the cloister, before joining, he had look upon the cloister as a place of higher righteousness. But after becoming a monk he discovered levels within monasticism. Some monks were easygoing; some were strict. One of the privileges of the monastic life was that it emancipated or protected the monks from all distractions and freed him to save his soul by practicing the counsels of perfection.

He was transferred from Erfurt to Wittenberg, the Vicar of the Augustinian order, was Johann Von Staupitz. His spiritual difficulties persisted, he confessed frequently to his Superior, Johann Von Staupitz. As he was confessing frequently, his superior then advised him, to have something reasonable to confess such as murder, blasphemy, adultery- instead of unreasonable little things. He had emotional disturbance passing the bounds of objectivity.

At Wittenberg his superior advised him to study scripture, and he taught scriptures at Wittenberg University, Germany. He was very much interested in "justification by faith" (Roms 5:1). In 1517 he protested against the sale of indulgences in the

Church by a Dominican priest, Tetzel. The tradition of selling indulgences began with Pope Clement VI in 1343 as a treasury of merit enunciated in the bull "Unigenitus". As the controversy persisted, his superior relieved him of his vows, he was told to quiet the order. He could not be employed by the diocese because he was in conflict with the Cadinal Cajetan and the Archbishop of Trier who wanted him tried and sent to Rome to face inquisition court. He was however protected by German nobles, Scholars of the university and nationalists who viewed him as head of Germany reformation (Bainton, 1960).

Luther's theology was simple and straight forward as it was unsystematic and uncomplicated. It was derived from personal anxiety about his own salvation, his feelings of impossibility of complete confession of sin, and questioning the efficacy of the medieval sacramental system. The young priest found little help for his religious problems in the textbooks of the scholastic theologians. It was when he retraced his steps back to Augustine and through him to Paul, and through the apostle to the whole biblical tradition, that he learned his first evangelical lesson about faith, righteousness, and justification (Hugh, 1990).

Salvation as Luther understood it depends on a new relationship to God through faith in Jesus Christ rather than on any work one could do to merit God's favour. The righteousness of God is not so much divine requirement as forgiving grace. To have faith is not to assent intellectually to propositions about God, and the world, but to venture upon a radically new kind of trust-full life. To be justified is not to be made righteous so that one may stand without blemish before the bar of God's justice; to be justified is to be forgiven and accepted as righteous for Christ's sake (Hugh, 1990).

Benny Hinn was of the view that every great revival was accompanied by a revelation of the Holy Spirit. Even Martin Luther credits the great Reformation to the work of the Spirit. He said that Galatians was his favorite book in the Scripture because of the verse that says, "walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). But today few people know what it means to "walk" in the Spirit. The root of the word means in unison with, or connected to- even fellowship

with (Benny, 2004). The Lutheran Church was named after Martin Luther, it began in 1517.

JOHN CALVIN was born on July 10, 1509 in Noyon, a small Episcopal town in Picardy, France. He died on May 27,1564 in Geneva. He had a Roman Catholic background, studied in the University of Paris, where he finished his arts course and took a Master's degree. While in the University, he was attracted to the novel evangelical humanism and the eclectic spirituality of Erasmus. His father wanted him to be a lawyer rather than a priest. Between 1528 and 1533, he worked on his law degree in the schools of Bourges and Orleans. He received a degree (or licencie) in law.

He converted to Protestantism but the experiences of childhood and youth were significant for Calvin's entire life. So were the spiritual currents to which he was exposed in the old church. Calvinism was the creation of a devout sixteenth-century French Catholic. Calvin's spiritual formation at the University of Paris was of permanent importance to him. His conversion built on his evangelical humanism, he sought out like- minded fellow students and congenial mentors.

He established an academy in Geneva for the training of leaders for the Geneva Church and state in 1541. He became a preacher and pastor in Geneva in 1536. The position was accomplished not through a ceremony of ordination but by action of the town council. The subordination of church to city fathers in Geneva was similar to the situation in other towns that had broken with Rome (Bouwsma, 1989). Calvin began his pasturing in Strasbourg, taking care of French refugees. He remained in Strasbourg for three years, and in addition to pastoral duties, he lectured on the New Testament in the Strasbourg academy.

At Geneva, Calvin compiled Ecclesiastical Ordinances which spelled out what he believed necessary for a well-ordered church. These regulations vested the administration of the Church in four groups of officers: pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons. Calvin was a puritan, believe in regenerated spirit and the doctrine of predestination (Bouwsma,1989). He said, the "only bond of holy unity" in the Church was Christ. To maintain discipline within the community, he established a

"consistory" of "elders" that met privately. Calvin's clericalism was based on God's appointment. Pastors have been "called", as he had been, by a God whose calling they cannot reject. Pastors are ministers and helpers of their congregation.

As "God's school", Calvin's church was more like a humanist academy than a school of theology. Calvin was busily engage in publishing tracts and essays on particular problems, preparing commentaries on nearly every book in the Bible, preaching constantly, and carrying on a wide correspondence. Geneva was his main headquarters, but for a time he also lived in Strasbourg, which had become a shelter for French, German, English, and Scottish Protestant refugees (Hugh, 1990).

The two greatest Reformers of 15th-16th centuries are Luther and Calvin, they were much alike in their theological emphasis, they gave rise to two separate Protestant traditions. Lutherianism spread through Germany and the Scandinavian Countries, and from these European sources thence to America. Calvinism or the Reformed faith as it came to be known, moved from Switzerland into the Rhine valley, providing the theological impulse of the Huguenots in France, the Protestants in Holland, the Puritans of England and New England, and the Presbyterians of Scotland and America (Hugh, 1990).

Calvin was convinced from the Scriptures and his own experience that God is sovereign in the process of salvation, that it is God in Christ who takes the initiative and that we have nothing whatever within us deserving of God's favour. It was because he was so sure of the divine glory that he could speak of total depravity and predestination (Hugh, 1990).

Both Luther and Calvin rejected the Roman Catholic Church doctrine of transubstantiation. The debate on this doctrine came from Aristotle's theory of substance and accidents. Among the ordinary people, simple faith in the sacrament of bread and wine still abides. They do not understand the dispute, they do not argue whether the accidents are there without the substance; rather, they believe, in simple faith, that the body of Christ are truly contained there (Hugh, 1990).

Church of England

In the medieval society Church and State in Europe came to be seen a coterminous .Christianity (Church) became woven into the essential fabric of west European Society. At the apex of this society were the monarchs who acted as major ecclesiastical patrons. They were drawn into constant 'demarcation disputes' with the papacy. Much medieval political controversy involved monarchical efforts to restrain the theocratic pretensions of successive pontiffs (Medhurst and Moyser, 1988). There was yet no separation between church and state, or secularization.

Church of England began in 1536, king Henry 111 created the Church of England by breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church in England and the control of the Pope. Through the spread of the British Empire, the church of England moved round the world (Breuilly and Palman). With the break, the 'Church of England' became a national monarchically governed 'Church of England'. Both senior church appointments and the determination of doctrine were now ultimately matters for the crown. The Anglican Communion's international dimension was the product of later British colonizing enterprises (Medhurst and Moyer, 1988).

England was the center of the Christian humanism movement, and its impact on her religious history was lasting. Christian humanism elevated the Bible over all human voices that had presumed to speak for God. Some men became Protestants because they were imbued with Christian humanism. To such people, the Protestant revelation against the Church was the day break that Christian humanism prophesied(Charles,1973). The main reformist achievement was a certain curtailment of the superstitious element in religious practice- excessive cultism, devotion to images, pilgrimages, and the like, even codification and reform of the Canon law (Charles, 1973).

Religion was personal and routine. The government did not interfere with such religion if it was outwardly orthodox. Christianity of whatever theology is an evangelical faith. The Gospel must be preached, its demands explained, its emotional hold renewed. People for whom more than routine religion was possible needed instruction and uplifting; they need a cause. The Protestants were soon to be at their service. Although the Protestants preached a new theology and attacked

many well-loved religious usages, they spoke with the voice of the evangelist (Charles, 1973).

The leadership of the Church of England (Anglican) has been under the king initially, although it is now under the Archbishop of Canterbury. Many Anglican see themselves as Anglo-Catholics, they believe their church form part of a universal body of believers. Anglican shares the catholic creeds, the same scriptures, and the apostolic ministry. The original meaning of the word 'catholic' in the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch, where it is an adjective qualifying the word 'Church' means a 'worldwide' body of believers. The 'Catholic' later, came to mean 'orthodox' in distinction from those who deviated from the faith of the Church; the opposite of 'catholic' is not 'protestant' but 'heterodox' or 'sectarian'. In its proper historical context the opposite of protestant is not 'catholic' but 'papist'(Carey,1992).

Methodist Church

The Methodist began with John Wesley (1703-1791) and Charles Wesley (1707-1788) in England. They were descendants of a long line of ministers. Their parents, the Reverend Samuel and Susanna Wesley, raised them with the hope that they would one day become leaders in the Anglican Church. They belonged to the English Dissenter and Puritan background, and were brought up with strict moral principles. Samuel Wesley was for thirty-five years a rector of the small Parish in Epworth, England. He worked long hours overseeing the spiritual needs of several sub-urban towns.

At the age of seventeen, John graduated from the Charterhouse and went on to Christ Church, Oxford. At Oxford, John was very committed to his studies. He read influential writings of Thomas a'kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law. He read Kempis's the imitation of Christ, long considered one of Christianity's greatest manuals on spiritual devotion. With great interest he studied Jeremy Taylor's The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living, along with William Law's 'a serious call to a Devout and Holy Life' and a 'Treatise of Christian Perfection'. These writings, seemed to lay the foundation for John's spiritual journey and personal "awakening" in the years that followed.

He was also influenced by the tenets of the French reformer, John Calvin doctrine of predestination. According to this doctrine, people had no say in their own salvation; rather, salvation was predetermined or "predestined" by God (Liardon, 2008). By the spring of 1726, John was elected Fellow of Lincoln College and was appointed Greek Lecturer, and Moderator of the Classes. It was during this time, he pursued a doctrine of complete consecration and holiness in every area of life. The pursuit which influenced his spiritual aspirations for the next ten years and lay the groundwork for what would become the Methodist doctrine of Christian Perfection. His desired to pursue holiness arose because of Calvin's doctrine current at that time.

Between 1729 and 1734 he began to see fruit in his ministry. His brother Charles started to meet with several like-minded students to study, pray, and observe a series of daily disciplines together. John accepted their invitation to join them, and he was soon serving as their mentor and leader. The University students were called the "Bible Moth", "Bible Bigots", "Sacramentarians", "Methodists", "Holy Club", or "Enthusiasts" by other students, but over the next few years the group proved to be a force for good in the community.

Before the rise of the Wesley brothers, England was caught in the grip of the Calvinist belief that no one could know who was predestined to be saved. The Church of England's teaching was that the sacraments were the necessary duty of anyone who hoped he was predestined for salvation. The Methodist revival would transform England by teaching that not only could one know that one was saved, but also that one could receive that salvation immediately and have peace in ones heart thereafter. John Wesley's "methods" of pursuing holiness was added to this, his included "united societies" for believers to gather together regularly, focusing on prayer, fasting, and searching the scriptures.

On June 11, 1738, John Wesley preached a sermon entitled "salvation by faith", which was based on Eph.2:8. Because his preaching contradicted strict Calvinist doctrine, his message was considered an open threat to the Church of England. Throughout the course of the following year, John became increasingly unwelcome

at every church in London and the surrounding areas. John's group began holding meetings in small rooms, filled to capacity.

On New Year's Day, 1739 the Wesley brothers joined their friends of like-mind in a love feast. At midnight as they prayed and worshipped till about Three o'clock, the power of God moved in an unusual way in their midst. Every one present fell down, crying and weeping with joy. From that point on, because of their emphasis on the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Wesley brothers and their followers became known as "enthusiasts". A printed pamphlet was widely circulated that explained the Greek interpretation of "enthusiasts" as "possession by a divine spirit". Believing the "enthusiasts" had fallen prey of the wrong kind of Spirit, the Church of England shut its doors to them (Liardon, 2008).

Their meetings had a reputation of being emotional and unpredictable. They embarked on open-air preaching, which drew audiences bigger than any building in Britain could gather out of sheer curiosity. John was ecstatic and so invigorated by the experience, after he experienced the thrill of "field preaching", there was no turning back. He had found a willing audience, he knew that what he had to share was what they needed most. From then on, almost until his dying day, John preached to whoever would hear him. He preached wherever he could- in barns, fields, and towns squares. As the Holy Spirit moved among the crowds, people would cry out, shout for joy, and fall down under the power of God.

The Wesley's faced some of the same challenges that modern Charismatics/ Pentecostals do –the challenge of discerning between the godly experiences of grace and other types of spiritual or emotional manifestations. Needless to say, they operated under the power of the Holy Spirit and that anointing no doubt inform and empowered their preaching (Liardon,2008)

In 1740, Wesley set up his first base of operations in a building formerly abandoned for twenty years. It was purchased and made the first official meeting place of the London Methodist society. Not long after the first station established, John set up another headquarters in Bristol, where he had first preached in the open air.

In 1771, John continued itinerate mission work, keeping up his former peace of preaching daily and managing the demands of an international ministry. He met on a quarterly basis with a majority of the societies in the largest circuits of the chief districts throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland. For five decades, John Wesley traveled throughout the countryside, preaching, teaching, counseling and praying with tradesmen, labourers, farmers, and common folk of every kind. Converts became so many and their needs so overwhelming that Wesley ordained "lay preachers" who would follow in his wake to continue teaching and ministering to the new societies (Liardon,2008).

Breuilly and Palmer indicated that the Methodist denomination began in 1780, the 1780s were difficult decade for John Wesley. His wife passed away in 1781, in 1785, John Fletcher his chosen successor, unexpectedly died. Then in 1788, his beloved brother and co-labourer Charles died. On October 7, 1790, John preached his last outdoor sermon under an ash tree in the Church yard of Rye in kent. He died on March 2, 1791. At the time of his death, Wesley had 79,000 followers. Today there are Methodist Church, England and Worldwide with more than 70 million members.

John Wesley belongs theologically within the reformation movement. Except for his hymn-singing brother, Charles and his more doctrinaire colleague, George Whitefield, England produced no one of his stature. Two centuries after the continental Reformation, he seems more at home in the company of Luther, Calvin and some of the radical left-wing Reformers than with the new Spirits of the modern age. Gathering up into his person the major accents of Reformation theology-grace, repentance, justification, sanctification, the urgency of preaching, and evangelism- he set out single handedly to effect an evangelical revival within the settled precincts of the Church of England.

For fifty years Wesley traversed the English countryside, preaching the gospel, organizing churches and chapels, writing pamphlets, and counseling with the people. Untiring in his efforts to bring the Christian faith to the people, he preached in the open-air, enlisted lay workers, set up camp meetings, and laid before everyone the challenge of Christian life and the need for repentance. Following

upon Calvinistic orthodoxy and Anglican formalism, Methodism- as it was called derisively- brought fresh enthusiasm and new hope to the most neglected classes of English Society (Hugh,1990).

Advent of Protestant Missionaries in West Africa (1800 – 1960)

The planting of Christianity in West African may have begun with the non-white settlers from the ex-slave areas of the New World, who were settled at Freetown in Sierra Leone from 1791 onwards. To the several conservative waves of these ex-slaves were added during the next fifty years the cargoes of slave ships captured along the west coast by the British Navy and set free in Freetown harbor. The roofing timbers of a church at York on the Freetown peninsula all come from one such slave ship; the central pillars are still unmistakably sections of the masts (Beetham,1967). The first Negro settlers- from Nova Scotia, Jamaica and England- were already Christians before their return to the continent of their fathers. They were members of various Protestant denominations: Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.

Those with a tradition of lay preachers had such among them on arrival. In their new home they built their churches and chapels, and continued to worship according to their various traditions under the leadership of their lay preachers, except for the Anglicans for whom the Sierra Leone company provided a chaplain from Britain. In some cases it was twenty or thirty years before ordained ministers of their denominations came from Britain to minister to them. This first planting of a full Christian community among Africans was a genuine lay movement. Men took their faith with them to their new home and shared it with the recently freed captives landed in their midst from Dahomey, Nigeria, Cameroon and Congo (Beetham, 1967).

Within fifty years of the founding of Freetown, Christian congregations were to be found in many coastal towns in the Gambia, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Dahomey (Benin Rep.) and Nigeria. They owed their origin to the twin movement of Africans outwards from Freetown and Missionaries coming in from Europe, and later from the West Indies and America. Samuel Ajayi Crowther- one of the first six boys to enter the Grammar School of the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) at Fourah

Bay, Freetown in 1827 and later Bishop on the Niger-was an example of the former; Thomas Birch Freeman- the Methodist, who visited Kumasi in 1839, Abeokuta in 1842 and Abomey in 1843- of the latter. The somewhat similar founding in 1822 of a home for freed slaves in Liberia under American initiative led to the establishment there of churches which were likewise a reflection of the religious allegiance of the settlers. Monrovia, however, did not form the some springboard for the extension of the Christian faith along the west coast, since it lacked the kind of harbor that made Freetown the natural link with other trading posts which became the starting point of local Christian outreach. Missionaries were often led to make one town rather than another their centre through the urging of some ship's captain, himself a member of their church back home. This was why the Presbyterian, Hope Waddell sailed to Calabar from Liverpool and the Methodist, Joseph Dunwell to Cape Coast form Bristol (Beetham, 1967).

The European arm of this missionary movement, whether from the Basle Mission, the Church Missionary Society with its many continental missionaries, or the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, was a costly business. In the first twelve years of its work from 1828 at Christiansborg, Accra, the Basle Mission lost eight out of nine men from fever. The C.M.S. lost fifty- three men and women in Sierra Leone between 1804 and 1824. The Methodists in the fifteen years following 1835 had seventy-eight new appointments, men and wives, in the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Ghana, thirty of these died within a year of arrival (Beetham,1967).

Various influences can be traced to the astonishing extension of Christian Missionary activities in both the nineteenth and twentieth century West Africa. The growing imperialist policies of Europe, expansions of trade, exploration, medical advances were all contributory factors. Apart from those factors, the missionary movement itself had, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, been revolutionized by the far- reaching changes in the ideology organization of its home-base, and these in turn drastically increased its distinctive impact on West Africa.

John Wesley's challenged to the orthodox Anglican Church led to an enormous evangelicalism, which demanded a renewed zeal and commitment in the part of

the individual Christian, and a deep concern for a personal act of conversion (Olayiwola, 1984). Within twenty years of the death of the Methodist leader, some of the most important Protestant – missions were founded. The first was the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, followed by the London Missionary Society in 1795 and Church Missionary Society in 1799. The British and Foreign Bible Society was also established in 1804. There were other notable societies founded about this time in Scotland, the Netherlands, America, and a little later in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia.

Sierra Leone was one of the first centers of attention. Chaplains had ministered to the traders on the West African soil but made little impact on the Africans there. Zachary Macaulay, who was governor of the colony from 1794 to 1799, had taken twenty- five Sierra Leonean children to England for education, where they were baptized. From 1792 a huge number of Negro settlers had been brought to Sierra Leone form Nova Scotia, and most of them belonged to the evangelical churches.

Sierra Leone had been opened as a home for freed slaves, from England, then Nova Scotia, and in 1800 there came the Maroons form Jamaica, ex-slaves of the Spaniards. After the act of abolition of slavery, Sierra Leone became a crown colony and a centre for suppressing the slave trade. The first Church Missionary Society workers arrived in 1804 (Olayiwola, 1984). Reinforcements came later, and despite the usual climate and health troubles the colony was organized, into parishes and schools were established. In 1827 Fourah Bay College was founded and played a great role in West African education. Its first student was the freed Yoruba, Samuel Ajayi Crowther. By 1852, the Diocese of Sierra Leone was established, with an English Bishop, so that clergy no longer had to travel to England to be ordained. The Wesleyan Methodists sent a minister and three school masters in 1811 to Sierra Leone and they began continuous work.

In Liberia, missionaries enterprise and European occupation of the place were of tremendous effect. Liberia was a colony of freed slaves from United States, hosted first set of ex-slaves originally meant to settle in Sierra Leone. They moved down to Monrovia. The settlers had their own churches but went through troubled times

with the indigenous Africans. The American missionary societies saw Liberia as a field of activity and an entry into Muslim hinterland.

Wesleyan Methodists went to the Gambia in 1821. The missionaries began a slow operation of building up a community of freed slaves and their descendants (Olayiwola,1984). William De Graft of the Fanti race, was educated at Cape Coast, formed a society for promoting Christian knowledge, left Kumasi and settled at Dixcove. The Methodist missionaries came to help spread knowledge of the Bible. One of the leaders was Thomas Birch Freeman, who was an active Christian worker for twenty years. He visited Kumasi, Abomey, Badagry and Abeokuta (Olayiwola, 1984).

On September 24, 1842, the date which marks the effective beginning of missionary work in what is now Nigeria, Freeman, with two Fanti assistant missionaries, William de Graft and his wife, arrived Badagry. At Badagry they bought a plot of land and began holding prayer meetings, using a tent at first and later a small chapel constructed of bamboo. They gathered the chiefs and the people to explain the purpose of their coming. After some time, a large, more permanent mission-house was slowly constructed.

On December 11, 1842, Freeman left Badagry and moved to Abeokuta. He was received by the Christians warmly. On the day of his arrival he paid a visit to the king, Oba Sodeke and held a service in the afternoon, which the Oba attended. He left ten days later (Ferguson, 1971).

Freeman arrived Badagry on Christmas eve, and found there Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society. On Christmas day the two conducted services. Freeman returned to Ghana, leaving William de Graft and his wife to carry on the work at Badagry. William de Graft and his wife held regular services, and opened a day school, which they called the "Nursery of the Infant Church"; there were nearly fifty enrolments. Open-air preaching was a regular part of the ministry, and by July 1843, De Graft was able to baptize his first converts, five men and one woman (Ferguson, 1971).

The Cathedral Church of Saint James, Ota, in Ogun State was the second church storey-building in Nigeria. A carbon copy of the first built in Badagry. The building construction started in 1842, the missionaries sought the support of the inhabitants of the town to assist them in the construction. Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther was one of the priests who served in this church. He completed his translation of the Bible into Yoruba in this church. Oba Olukuori of Ota was one of those who laid the foundation of the storey building (Oseviza, 2009).

Christianity was introduced in the Niger Delta area during the second half of the Nineteenth century through the zeal and courage of the early missionaries. The pioneer of the missionaries were Rev. Hope Wadell (Methodist) who visited Bonny in 1850, Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther and his son Dandeson Crowther (Anglican). The commendable efforts of these missionaries were closely followed and consolidated by Bishop Hills and Tugwell. On invitation of the king of Bonny, Christianity was planted in Bonny in 1864. It later spread to Brass in 1868 and Opobo in 1878 (Ogan, 2008).

The pioneer missionary activities in Benin were traced to Bishop James Johnson (Anglican). He was consecrated bishop in London on the 18th of February 1900. He was thereafter transferred to the newly created Niger Delta Native Pastorate with the headquarters in Bonny. He undertook a vigorous tour of Benin and Niger Delta areas to evangelize in1901. In Warri and Sapele, he met native Christians from Sierra Leone, Ghana and Lagos but had no place of worship and there was no evangelism. Eme Ora already had an Anglican Church established by a lay man in 1898. In 1901 Bishop Johnson sent Mr. J.A. Oyesile a trained Catechist to Benin City as the first church agent. His duty was to evangelize and convert unbelievers to the Christian faith. Bishop Johnson's vision was that ultimately from his evangelization and the work of Oyesile, a church would be established in Benin city (Oviasu, 2002).

Record did not say Oyesile came with his wife, but he employed a house-boy Emmanuel Egiebo Ohuoba and he also made him church attendant. He sent the boy to the only government primary school in 1907. While with the catechist, he was given the function of ringing bell, teaching catechism, reading of lessons and

prayers in the Church on Sundays. He later became a teacher and the catechist recommended him for training at the Divinity Hall (Bible College), Osogbo. This was accepted by the Bishop, after the training he was ordained deacon in 1924. He was raised to full priest on 26th December 1926 at Abeokuta. His mother Aihokunla Ohuoba and a few others started church services at St. Mathew's CMS in Benin City in 1902 (Edokpolo-Nosa, 1995). Saint Mathew's CMS later became the Anglican Cathedral along Sokponba road, Benin City. Saint Mathew's Church began at Lagos street close to the present day mosque. The activities of the Muslims made the Christian moved out of Lagos street and they were accommodated by chief Ighile, the Ohuoba of Benin following the pleas of his son, Egiebo Ohuoba (Oviasu, 2002).

The second Anglican Church began with many Yoruba indigenes who had imbibed Christian religion from their towns. They did not feel at ease in Saint Mathew's Church as they could not organize services in Yoruba Language. They moved to Mr. Okoro Otun Akpata's house along Lagos street, Benin to start their own religious worship. In 1919, papa Okoro Otun gave a small piece of Land to the CMS from his plantation along Lagos street, where a small thatched hut had already been erected by the Yoruba Christians. It is the very site where the church beifry stands today in the Church premises. The first catechist was Mr. J.T. Babar, recruited around 1915, before 1920, very many Edo worshippers had withdrew from St. Mathew's to join the second church, St. Peter's Church (Osemwegie, 1988).

On November 2, 1902, Bishop James Johnson dedicated the first Anglican Church building at Sokponba road, Benin city for worship and named it "St. Mathew's CMS Church" (Oviasu,2002). With the first CMS Anglican Church firmly established in Benin , evangelism and church planting became the new focus of the members. Soon, it became the mother church of St. Peter's and St. James's CMS Churches in Benin City. Other flourishing Anglican churches were later established like St. Paul's Church along second East circular road, Rev. Payne Memorial Church, New Benin and St. David's Church at Evboneka. The founding of these churches have been made possible through the zeal of foreign and indigenous Anglican priests, catechists and the outstanding lay people (Uwagboe, 2003).

The hope of Edo people in St. Mathew's was dashed when in 1929 Rev. E.E. Ohuoba resigned from CMS Mission and moved away with people of like-mind to start Ebenezer UNA Church (now First African Church) at a place not very far from St. Mathew's. The reason given was grievances against the foreign missionaries who claimed he was not experience enough to be vicar of the church. He viewed it from racist angle and decided to move away (Edokpolo-Nosa, 1995).

Baptist Church

The "Baptist Movement" have no single "founder" (Imasogie, 2003) but since ancient time many sects held similar views on baptism as a form of regeneration among adults. This view has been held by Novatians, Donatists, Lollards , the Hussites and Ana-Baptists at different times. Church history can only permit one to legitimately claim that there were different people at different times from the first century through the sixteenth century who attempted to recover the Christian ideal and to practice obedience to Jesus Christ. These ideals they believe can only be exemplified in a church made up of regenerated adult baptized believers in Jesus Christ as revealed in the authoritative inspired word of God (Imasogie, 2003). Breuilly and Palmar is of the view that Baptist sect began in 1580.

The Baptist movement started in English soil, in 1644 the group known as 'Particular Baptists issued their first London Confession of Faith'. They emphasize baptism by immersion as ideal Christian baptism and rejected infant baptism, as no baptism at all. During the English civil war of the 1640s and 1650s, several Anglican priests joined the Baptist movement (Imasogie, 2003). The evangelical revival brought into Baptist faith by William Carey, who introduced Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 generated enthusiasm for mission work. Roger Williams started Baptist movement in America, at Rhode Island in 1636. From this small beginning, Baptist Faith spread to South Carolina, and Pennsylvania and throughout the United States of America (Imasogie, 2003).

The focal point of the Baptist theology is baptism. They hold that there is no where in the Bible where non-believers in Jesus Christ were baptized. To be a believer, one must be old enough to know that one is a sinner who must repent and accept Christ as the divine savior from sin. This is why Baptists insists that only an adult

who repents and accepts Christ is the proper candidate for baptism which qualifies one for church membership.

Baptists also contend that the Greek word transliterated "baptize" in English, means "to immerse under water" hence no other form of Baptism is spiritually valid. As a matter of fact, baptism by immersion is the only mode of baptism that dramatizes the believer's sharing in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ as described by Apostle Paul in Romans 6:3-4.

Baptist Mission in Nigeria

The Baptist Christian body was formed in 1914 at Idikan Baptist Church in Ibadan on March 11, 12th and 19th meeting held in 1914. It was called Yoruba Baptist Association with Dr. Mojola Agbebi as the first President. As the Baptist converted more members from other parts of Nigeria, namely: Sapele,Buguma, Kaduna, Zungeru, and Jos, a resolution was adopted to change the name of the "Yoruba Baptist Association" to "The Nigerian Baptist Convention" in March 12, 1919 conference (Ebhomienhen, 2003). The task of Baptists in Nigeria was entirely "Missionary" in that they consider themselves called out of darkness into the light of Jesus Christ. Membership of the convention comprises all the local Baptist churches that are off-shoot of the labours of the missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention in America.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention inherited from the Southern Baptist Convention in America sound biblical theology and mission policies which were built into its institutions and organizations. History was made in Jos in 1953, when the Home and Foreign Mission Board was officially inaugurated and charged with the responsibility of awakening the churches to spread the gospel message in the whole Nigeria (Ebhomienlen, 2003).

Baptist Mission in Edo

The Baptist Mission in Benin began with twenty nine men and four women, Edo indigenes who withdrew from Anglican Church in 1920-21. After withdrawing from CMS Church, this group organized an independent fellowship in a different location. They later approached the Nigerian Baptist Convention in Lagos. They

sent two of their members to Lagos to make the necessary arrangement. The spokesman among them was Francis Emogie Iyamu, the Baptist mission accepted their request and approved the establishment of the Benin Baptist Church in November 1921 (Uwagboe, 2003). The members moved away from CMS because of some grievances against the leadership. The first place of worship was the Benin Native Court hall located at the City centre. Rev. Aghogin Omatsola was directed to oversee and minister to the new Baptist Church in Benin. He was the superintendent of the Baptist churches in Sapele and Warri districts at the time (Uwagboe, 2003).

Many more individuals came forward as from that day to accept Christ and were enlisted in the membership of the Church. The first catechist was Obadiah Odiase Emokpae, who was first catechist and teacher under the Anglican Mission. All the members earlier listed including officers who had earlier had their baptism in the CMS Church were made to undergo fresh baptismal classes. After which they were formally baptized by immersion at the Ikpoba River by Rev. L.M. Duval on January22, 1922. They became the foundation members of the Baptist Church in Benin under the Nigerian Baptist Convention. With increase in membership they applied for land, the Benin monarch gave them land around Ugbague area along the present mission road. It was there the first church and school was built (Uwagboe, 2003)

In 1939 Baptist authorities issued circular regarding monogamy and polygamy members of the Convention partaking in church ordinance. The Baptist Conference or Convention refuse to compromise with polygamist members accepting full rights of the Mission. This lead to a split as there many polygamists. Many of those who withdrew from Anglican Church initially withdrew again to form Benin United Baptist Church. The American Baptist Mission withdrew from the Benin Baptist, their support on 15th April 1940 (Okeaya-Inneh, 2005).

The tradition this author is familiar with is that baptism washes away original sin and incorporates believers into Christ.

Pentecostal Christianity

Pentecostal Christianity began in 1906 with the manifestation of the Holy Spirit at the service held in Asuza street, Los Angeles. Reports of speaking in tongues, miraculous healings and people converted as the Holy Spirit 'fell on them' as they entered the Church, spread across the USA and into Europe. The situation was ripe for the birth of Pentecostalism. The emphasis on holiness and the belief in 'entire sanctification' which had started centuries earlier with Wesley and the Methodists had developed into the belief that this happened with baptism in the Holy Spirit (Howard, 1997).

Charismatic revivals began in the UK with the Apostolic Church and Assemblies of God in 1920s, it was viewed as the future of Christendom. It was the only sector of the Church growing in the UK and it was experiencing something akin to revival in Africa, Southeast Asia and South America (Howard, 1997).

By 1914 various independent Pentecostal groups came together to form the Assemblies of God. Fundamentalists had a more dogmatic interpretation of the Bible, clearer beliefs about the end of the world, as well as stronger nationalism. They separated themselves from the world partly because of 'holiness teaching' which gave them a desire to be pure, and partly because of what they saw as a decaying and depraved culture around them (Howard, 1997).

Efforts were made to produce T-shirts, Tracts, magazines, radio-broadcast and there was rise of Christian television. Owing to a Laissez faire regulation system, fundamentalists were able to buy airtime on TV networks. This started as filling Sunday morning slots and developed into wholly 'Christian' channels providing a mixture of family entertainment programmes and religious chat shows, healing services and mass rallies. Audiences were presented with emotionally frenzied meetings, supposed healings and other apparent manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as people being 'slain in the Spirit' at a touch from the evangelist's hand. Viewers were presented with statistics of thousands of converts and anecdotes of conversions and healings and asked for money to fund the programmes.

The electronic Church was seen as the means of fulfilling the 'great commission' of taking the gospel via satellite to all the peoples of the world, which fundamentalists believe is necessary before the second coming of Christ. Naturally fundamentalists viewers opened their wallets and the wealth of the tele-evangelists increased. Big name tele-evangelists like Morris Cerullo, Kenneth Copeland, Pat Robertson, and Oral Roberts developed a theology which suggested that it was God's intention for obedient Christians to be wealthy (Howard, 1997).

In Britain there are two distinct strands of what has been called the Charismatic movement. One remained doggedly outside the denominations; the other worked through all the main denominations, including non-evangelical and non-Protestant groups such as the Roman Catholic Church and the 'high Church' Anglican congregations. Both strands came into being in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The charismatic revival in the main stream denominations was the first to attract media attention and was called the Renewal Movement because participants saw themselves as renewing the charismatic gifts to the denominations. As Charismatics realized that they were not alone, they began arranging conferences and publishing pamphlets and magazines. By 1963 a movement was becoming established and the leaders were seeing it as God's visitation on the whole church rather than an reinvigoration of the increasingly stolid Pentecostal denominations.

In 1964, a Charismatics' charter was established and it was clearly based on working through established denominations, beyond and including the Pentecostals. The Uk movement saw itself as ecumenical and as bringing the Holy Spirit to the whole Church worldwide, but it later lead to division and sectarianism. It was similar to fundamentalism in that it was 'experience'- based and thus, to some extent, subjective and anti-intellectual.

By 1970s, the house churches had out grown their houses and were hiring school halls, warehouses and empty cinemas for their meetings. They also hosted large conventions, known as Bible weeks, which ten of thousands of Christians attended. They saw themselves as part of a worldwide movement of the Spirit of God, building his kingdom outside the denominations (Howard, 1997).

The Charismatic was a movement that came into being in the 20th century. The movement was a trans-denominational sect of (both independent and denominational) who emphasize "life in the Spirit". From the Western world, the movement spread to other parts of the globe. The growth has been tremendous in Africa, especially in the urban areas. The spread in the urban areas could be adduced to the fact that their messages address contemporary urban problems such as unemployment, loneness, inadequate health care and poor social services (Taiwo, 2010).

The Charismatic emphasize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues (an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit), healing, prophesy, and teaching. They are committed to the spread of the gospel and in the modern times engage in the use of modern technologies in evangelism. Success of this movement was seen in the dramatic increase of believers in the 20th century. Charismatic evangelistic activities has been held in churches, crusades, public places such as buses, markets, hospitals, schools, and prisons using the Bible, tracts, stickers, audio and video tapes (Taiwo,2010). Some of the fast growing charismatic Christian organizations in Nigeria are: The Living Faith Ministries, Deeper Christian Life Ministries, The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, Church of God Mission Inc., Christ Embassy (Love world Fellowship Inc.) they have all become denominations. In fact, every month, around 20 new religious groups or sects start up in Nigeria (Breuilly and Palmer, Sainsbury's Religions of the world).

The Assemblies of God Church opened a Bible Institute at old Umuahia in the 1940s. Rev. E.L. Philips, Rev. Wilfred Woko, and Rev. Abraham Ezenwata were teachers in the Institute, Pastor Gabriel Oyakhilome and Roland Okhirhia attended this Institute. In the 1940s some Assemblies of God Churches were already planted in Eastern Nigeria, Esan land and Benin division of the Western Nigeria. Bible School was also established at Idunwele- Ewu in 1949, the principal was Rev. R.L. Cimino, it was named Midwest Bible Institute approved in 1948 (Okhiria, 2019).

African Independent Churches

The African Independent Churches, some people refer to them as 'Aladura' churches, the pioneer leaders claimed to have received literature emanating from the Pentecostal Church known as Faith Tabernacle in Philadelphia, USA. From this source came the replacement of infant baptism by the desire for the 'second baptism of the Spirit, and the name Faith Tabernacle was equally adopted by these Nigerian groups, which were still without any dominant charismatic leader or prophet until 1925. Moses Tunolase and Christiana Abiodun became the first leaders while the members originally withdrew from Anglican Church in 1918 (Ndiokwere, 1981). The distinguishing features of the Aladura Churches are having an individual prophet or charismatic leader, the use of drums, dancing, symbols and rites. They believe the Holy Spirit fills men with new powers of prophecy, prayer, and healing. Some of these churches call themselves 'spiritual' churches, because they are the channels of God's spiritual power for the help of men in their present fears and problems. They instruct their members to reject traditional magic and medicines, and use only 'spiritual' methods such as prayer and faith, fasting and consecrated water, in their apprehension of the divine deliverance (Turner, 1967). The word 'Aladura' means the praying people. There are many sects in this category, examples are, 'The Church of the Lord' (Aladura) and 'Cherubim and Seraphim' in Nigeria.

Psychology/Sociology Perspective of Denominations

Different denominations are like different associations, or sects it brings variety as people make choices. Individuals join associations for personal reasons or move away from one to another. Some members move away from one association to another because of the leadership, tribal or racist problem. Some pastors are ambitious, those rubbing shoulder with the leader do not want to be transferred. If one of the senior men in the ministry is transferred, he may decide to start his own ministry.

Leadership charisma and being talented in some area such as having healing hand, gifted in prophecy, or oration. Some pastors claim to have more anointing than the bishop. Benny Hinn gave examples of his calling as a youth when he was not a Christian. His father sent him to a psychiatric when he said things about vision of

Jesus appearing to him. He came from Greek Orthodox background and attended Roman Catholic School. He later joined 'born again' Christians, accepted Jesus and the vision manifested in the ministry (Hinn, 2004).

Some individuals left one sect or association to another because of psychological reasons, a drug addict or drunken person converted that recovered or dropped the habit after conversion (Saliba, 1995). This person want to be safe in the new family or among the new sect.

As was reported in Adichie (2014) a woman left school after closing, went home took all her Roman Catholic religious objects to a rubbish dump. She set fire on them, and told her children somebody minister to her and she is saved. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. The following Sunday she went to a Pentecostal Church with her daughter and they began attending 'Revival Saints'. It was a Bible –believing church, not like St. Dominic's. The daughter said, her mother's words were not hers. She spoke them too rigidly, with a demeanor that belonged to someone else. There was a change in her behavior, before the strange conversion. On Easter Saturday the mother ran out of the kitchen and said, she saw an 'angel', which told her to leave 'Revival Saints' because the pastor was a wizard who attended nightly demonic meetings beneath the sea. So the woman left the Church and went to another, 'Miracle Spring'.

She saw another vision, this time the angel appeared in her bedroom, and told her to leave 'Miracle Spring' and join another, this time she went to 'Guiding Assembly'. It was in this church her Spirit found rest in the Lord. A Church of thumping and clapping, with a swirl of affluent people, the woman's spirit had found a home. It was a church full of the newly wealthy, she said, if she worshipped with the prosperous, God would bless her as he bless them.

The husband did not worry about her behavior because he was an agnostic, He said, prayers were delusional battles with imaginary traducers. When she was moving from one church to another, the children were worried. Their relatives had kept away from her madness. After her becoming a member of the Guiding Assembly her normal life began again, She began to wear jewelry again, to drink

Guinness stout and to fast only once a week (Adichie, 2014). The woman above had psychological problem, she was deprived and was seeking for satisfaction in new religious revival.

There are frequent changes from sect to another among the Denominations, this is because they are homogeneous, that is, all are Protestants and many are claiming to be Pentecostals.

Concern with personality has been a continuing psychological interest. Psychologists studying the new religions have endeavored to draw up a profile of those individuals who, apparently with little protracted consideration and less advice have embarked on a lifestyle that might drastically change their behavioral patterns (Saliba, 1995).

Characteristics of Denominations: (I) An increase in size would normally be the goal of an evangelical sect. As sect gains more adherents, this is a promise of success, it begins to reach out towards greater influence in society, whatever the roots of its ambition may be. Denomination is a sect in historical origin and doctrine but with little division in teachings the clergy emphasize based on their vision. (ii) Individual experiences count in Christian organization, purely personal ecstatic experience, comfort, mental and physical healing (Michael, 1973). A few members of any sect were likely to prosper, sometimes as a result of personal qualities and more often by chance, and as they become more responsible (iii) Pursuit of Holiness: Men in clerical career set themselves in pursuit of holiness. The aspirants look to cloister and bible colleges as a place of higher righteousness. One discovered levels within the clerics. Some are easy going, some are strict, while some are rigorists, heroic athletes, seeking to take heaven by storm. One of the privileges of being leaders in ministries was, it emancipated the sinner from all distractions and freed him to save his soul by practicing the counsels of perfection-charity, sobriety, love, fasting, vigils, chastity and mortifications of the flesh (Brainton, 1960). The above passage was about what Martin Luther experienced in the cloister. Protestantism was established on revelation of Martin Luther, that "the just shall live by faith" Roms. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, and Heb. 10:38. (iv) In the Orthodox Churches the sanctuary was the centre, the sacred was 'reserved', the spirit was

remote. There was a charismatic leader or charisma was attached to the leader of an office (Michael, 1973:91). With the denominations or sects the centre shifted since the 'spirit blows where it wills'. In the sect, facing the immediate presence of the spirit, the members form a compact, unified group. When there is strong organization it is usually motivated by the sect's mission in the world; the bonds between the members themselves are immediate, without the need for institutional formalization. The religious experience itself is the unifying force. In the church, however, where the spirit is remote and can be brought nearer only by formalized means, the bonds between the members weaken, and the unity of the structure require the establishment of legalistic bonds to replace religious ones (Michael,1973:93). One of the problem of denominations is rivalry in doctrine and missionary approach. As was pointed out by John G.Lake in his book on healing, a pastor Rev. Andrew Murray who had throat disease was healed through prayer. He wrote a book on divine healing that was widely circulated. He became a strong believer in divine healing and practiced it. The members of other churches then told their pastors to pray for them, so that they might be healed. In some instances, the pastors confessed that they had no faith and could not honestly pray with them for healing. Others made one excuse or another. So the circulation of the book became an embarrassment to them. They began to demand the withdrawal of Andrew Murray's book from circulation in the church (Liardon, 2009:211).

One of the problems with denomination is the founder's hearts, as this statement "man's heart is restless until it rests in God" (Edwards, 1970). This statement was first made by Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) in the primitive era. As a youth Augustine was first a teacher, organizing lectures in centers not cathedral as was the custom. Most of the Roman students did not pay him, he was disappointed. He joined the Manichean sect but did not find satisfaction. He converted to Christianity and began attending cathedral school. He studied Christian tradition in the cathedral under bishop Ambrose and was later ordained priest. When bishop Ambrose died, he was made bishop. As a Christian leader, he was sure of his daily bread and this put an end to his restlessness. When one looks at the history of church founders, many of them were youths whose hearts were restless.

The denominations in Africa may be defined as autonomous church groups with an all African membership and all African leadership. Some of them arose initially as breakaways from former mission churches and other African Instituted Churches or as a result of individual initiative by a charismatic personality (Mwaura, 2005). The Deeper Life Bible Church of Nigeria is an example of African Pentecostal Churches, strongly influenced by recent developments in international Pentecostalism. Like other Pentecostals the Deeper Life Bible Church identify with the central act of conversion in which the individual consecrates his or her life to Christ (Mwaura, 2005). It began as non-denominational Christian union in the 1970s in the University. It has witnessed tremendous growth in the country and is widely known outside Nigeria. In early 1973, William Folorunso Kumuyi began to hold a Bible study group fellowship in his flat on the Campus, attended mostly by students, the majority of whom were in the Lagos University Christian union. The establishment of Deeper Life Bible church can be dated to 7th November 1982, when its first Sunday worship service was held at Gbagada, a district on the mainland of Lagos. Prior to 1982, there had been a number of Deeper Life study groups in some major cities in Nigeria. As soon as Sunday worship started in Lagos, these other groups hold services too, mostly in 1983. Kumuyi was brought up by his Anglican parents but he later converted to the Apostolic Faith Church (Ojo, 1993). He was influenced by Apostolic Faith Church doctrines and the Pentecostals. As his Christian activities increase he began mailing Bible study tracts to friends, to participants and organizing evangelistic activities frowned upon by the leaders of Apostolic Faith Church. Who insisted that only ordained ministers could preach and teach. He was expelled from the church in 1975. After the expulsion he confined himself to organizing the Deeper Christian Life Ministry. He concentrated much of his time and energy on the group, organizing retreats, seminars widely advertised through handbills and posters. His evangelism was conducted in English. The groups became very popular with the educated elites- university students and graduates- because English was the medium of communication in the groups, and also the language used in the numerous Deeper Life publications. The use of English is characteristic of other charismatic groups in the country, because the members are drawn from various ethnics groups and generally made up of educated youths and students (Ojo,1993:166). In the first ten years Deeper Life was only a loose and informal Bible study group and attendants came from various

denominational backgrounds. After the first ten years a structured organization emerged and a new independent denomination. Ojo M.A. (1993:167) classified those who accepted membership after ten years real members because they do not attend any other church.

This group has been called from the religious sects they previously belonged. Once there is an unequivocal call there must be separation (Martin, 1929).

Conclusion

Protestant Reformation created many different denominational Churches in Europe and other parts of the world. Sectarian Christianity developed and reminded people of the demand for personal commitment. Sectarians often see themselves as more righteous or more faithful to the demands of Jesus. The Church founders recalled their childhood experiences which might be called 'numinous' experiences, that is, experiences of the presence of God and 'mystical' experiences (David, 1990). These experiences probably influence their future. Many different groups of spiritual seekers developed who eschewed the externals of religion and focused their search on God as the Beloved. Protestant mysticism was typically individualistic and puts great stress on personal enlightenment. A cardinal feature of Protestant mysticism was the emphasis on the divine element in the human being, the spark or ground of the soul, the divine image and "inner light" (Ursula, 2004).

Having different denominations has lead to proliferation of churches and pluralistic tendency. The different denominations have their traditions, religious formulas and styles of praying. There has been Eucharistic celebration in the Anglican, Calvinist, Lutheran churches. The founders of these denominations were former Roman Catholics. They wear vestments during services and the sects that broke away from the above copy the wearing of vestments. African Independent churches were characterized by a large measure of spontaneous religious response, this was referred to as 'primary prayer', on the grounds that spontaneous prayer is closer to the real feelings and actual religious experience of the worshippers (Aylward, 1975). Like the Evangelical Movement, the Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria context is a mixed grill drawing from a common Scriptural root,

transformed into shades of cultural contexts. Waves of Pentecostalism had come through imported as well as indigenous efforts. The culmination of various Pentecostal traditions have created a common trend that have become traditional and normative in most denominations. Part of this emergent tradition, produced the 'anointing' and 'break through' slogan. Although the Church began in a passionate blaze of the Spirit after Pentecost, its immediate impact was an unusual Missionary fervor characterized by unusual commitment to the faith, uncompromising proclamation of the unique gospel and miraculous demonstrations of the power of God (Asaju, 2010).

Media technology promotes evangelism in the various denominations, fostering the spread of the Gospel to all nations. Radio appeared to be a great medium for preaching the Gospel to all nations and a perfect way to disseminate the work of independent churches and Bible Institutes. Denomination is a form of 'class church', but it incorporates more of the less privileged members of society. Many denominations stated as sects, a sect is an organization. Oxford Advanced Lerner's Dictionary defined sect as 'group of people united (especially by religious) beliefs or opinions that differ from those more generally accepted'. Methodism originated as a sect and developed into a denomination (Michael, 1973). The sects that placed a major emphasis on individual anxiety and sin are most likely to become denomination. Using the phenomenological perspective of the inner meaning of religious phenomena to the participants involved in them, Michael suggests that the sect 'may be defined as a religious grouping based on the belief that the spirit is immediately present. And the church, on the other hand, may be defined as a religious grouping based on the belief that the spirit is remote. This, says Michael, turns the Sociology of religion into an 'ecology of the sacred', for the spirit blows where it wills (Michael, 1973).

Denominational 'sociologies' of religion grew up in Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism. It included matters of faith and they took certain theological positions. The shrinking influence of churches was one of the possible reasons for the rise of sects. High church attendance was a marked phenomenon in developing countries; it involves women more than men, most of which are non-working women and the occupational groups most involved in church religion tend to be 'traditional'

(Micheal 1973). Religion is a primary agent of social cohesion in any society, it binds together social groups. With increase in sects pluralism in the area of religious beliefs and institutions arise. Instead of one religious tradition maintaining a monopoly, there is a situation of competition between different religious groups social cohesion will now be at group level. Pluralism makes it more and more difficult for religion to maintain its credibility because society as a whole can no longer be enlisted to give it social confirmation. This happens because individuals who do not accept religious beliefs are no longer a socially segregated group representing a minor threat to the traditional religious system, but are distributed in many different areas of society. As a result, it becomes difficult to maintain the boundaries of a socially confirming group of believers except through the sectarian unit (Micheal, 1973).

The membership of a denomination forms a minority in society. For example, in 1975 the Methodists in Great Britain had 542000 members. Unlike a Church, a denomination does not identify with the state and approves of the separation of church and state. It is content to both co-exist with other denominations and churches and to cooperate with them. Membership of denominations is drawn from all levels of society though the lower working class is usually least likely to be represented. Denominations generally accept the norms and values of society, though they may impose some minor restrictions upon their members. For example, Methodists are against the consumption of alcohol but drinking in moderation does not result in exclusion from the denomination. A denomination has a hierarchy of paid officials and a bureaucratic structure, though there is a tendency for more lay preaching. Denominations typify religious organizations in the USA, where there is no established Church.

The term 'Church' refers to a large, formal organization with a hierarchy of officials. In theory it ministers to all members of a society. It recruits from all social strata, but in practice, higher status groups are usually over represented in its congregations. A Church identifies with the state and is integrated with the social and economic structure of society. A Church generally accepts the norms and values of society and frequently regards itself as the guardian of the established social order.

A Sect is a relatively small religious group. Its members are usually, though by no means always, drawn from the lower classes and the poor. Sects often reject many of the norms and values of the wider society and replace them with beliefs and practices which sometimes appear strange to the non- believer. They institute a strict pattern of behavior for members to follow and make strong claims on their loyalty.

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