

A History of Charismatic Influence on the Anglican Church in Nigeria

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Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It is situated on the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. Its neighbors are Benin, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. The lower course of the River Niger flows south through the Western part of the country into the Gulf of Guinea. Swamps and mangrove forests border the southern coast; inland are hardwood forests. It is also surrounded on the southern side by the Atlantic Ocean and in the north by the Sahara desert.¹

The capital city is Abuja, while the commercial city is Lagos, which is also the tenth most populous city in the world. Land area is about 351,649 square miles, and the total area is 356,667 square miles. The population according to the World Factbook of the Central Intelligence Agency is about 162,470,737 in 2011, including more than 250 ethnic groups, such as the Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo 18%, Jaw 10%, Kanuri 4.9%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%. The official language is English, but more than 500 other indigenous languages are also used.²

According to a Central Intelligence Agency report, 50% of Nigerians are Muslims while 40 are Christians. The other 10% are people of indigenous beliefs.³ The Muslim population is expected to rise to 117 million in 2030.⁴ In the view of Patrick Johnstone, a Christian writer, Christianity makes up 51.3% of the population while Islam makes up 45.1%. Ethnic religion comprises 3.3% while non-Religious people represent 0.3% of the population.⁵

The various statistics of Nigeria conflict because religion is a very sensitive issue. The question of religion is exempted whenever a census is conducted. The questioner, therefore, determines religious statistics by educated guess. I am, however, of the view that Islam is growing faster than Christianity because of Muslims' emphasis on biological growth. The life expectancy for the population is 47.56 years. As of 2010 the life expectancy for males was 46.76 years; for females 48.41 years.⁶

¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "People and Society: Nigeria," under "The World Factbook: Africa: Nigeria," <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-fact-book/geo/ni.html> (accessed November 10, 2012).

² Central Intelligence Agency, "People and Society."

³ Central Intelligence Agency, "People and Society."

⁴ businessworldng.com/web/articles/1820/1.

⁵ Patrick J. G. Johnstone, Jason Mandryk, and Robyn Johnstone, *Operation World*, 21st century ed., upd. and rev ed. (Waynesboro, GA; Gerrards Cross, England: Authentic Lifestyle; WEC International, 2005), 798.

⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "People and Society."

Among Christians, 35.5% are Protestant, 24.5% are independent, 20.4% are Anglican, and 19.6% are Roman Catholics. As at 2005, the total number of Anglicans in Nigeria is put at 18.5 million.⁷ This number is the highest total of Anglicans in any part of the world; however, one may not find all of them at any given time in the churches on Sunday morning although they seem to be on the church register.

The Christian church in Nigeria has become a major force in Global Christianity. Nigeria has produced a number of highly influential figures in Christianity. The Anglican Church being the first church to be successfully established in Nigeria, it has continued to generate its own influence in global Anglicanism because of its vibrancy and growth. This paper, therefore, takes a look at the history of Charismatic influence in Nigeria and its effect on the Anglican Church. It posits that the Charismatic movement was a major channel through which the Anglican Church continued to be energized and relevant to Nigeria and to global Christianity.

History of Charismatic Movement in Nigeria

No experts agree on who the charismatics are. Whereas some scholars such as Afe Adogame⁸ use the words Pentecostal and Charismatic interchangeably, Ogbu Kalu,⁹ and Matthew Ojo¹⁰ see them as two different movements. He says that the term *charismatics* is generally applied to Christians within the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches who testify to the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ Kalu seems to present Pentecostalism as the bigger umbrella, including the charismatics. For the purpose of this paper, the term *charismatic* does not describe denominations but movements within missional churches such as the Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, and others, including the Baptists. As Kalu states, “The Charismatic goal were both to reevangelize the mainline churches as well as to win new souls for the kingdom.”¹² He observes different phases to the charismatic movement. First was between 1914-1938, which was not part of the Aladura movement of Moses Orimolade and others. This first phase however led to the formation of the Christ Apostolic church. The second phase included the Aladura movements of the Orimolade, Oshitelu, and others. The third was in 1970 after the Nigerian civil war.¹³

⁷<http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org.ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/wcd/esweb.asp?WCI=Detail&Mode=2&Detail=45&Key=nige&Instance=104725&LIndex=6>

⁸ Afe U. Adogame, *Who Is Afraid of the Holy Ghost? Pentecostalism and Globalization in Africa and Beyond* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 2011), xvii.

⁹ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 359.

¹⁰ Matthews A. Ojo, “The Charismatic Movement in Nigeria Today,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 19, no. 3 (July 1, 1995), 114., <http://ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000899139&site=eds-live> (accessed November 20, 2012).

¹¹ Ojo, “Charismatic Movement,” 114.

¹² Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 88.

¹³ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 88.

Early Contributors

Although this paper is not looking at the Aladura movements, it has to mention a few background issues of the charismatic influence in Nigeria. From the beginning of the 1880s, people raised the need for Africans to lead the churches in Africa. This desire led to splits in the Baptist, Anglican, and Methodist churches. They called themselves African churches because they all included the word *African* in their names. They were also instrumental to the nationalist movement.¹⁴

Braike (1885-1918). Just as the First World War started, Garrick Sokari Daketima Braide came into the limelight. He was born in the northern part of the Niger delta in southeastern Nigeria. Early in life, he was a fisherman and trader, and he was baptized in 1910. As a member of the prayer band in St. Andrews Church in the new Calabar district, he began to experience visions and dream with healing powers and prophetic utterances. Many people began to visit him at home and in the church to receive prayers. This activity increased the membership of the Anglican Church where he was a member, and people called him the second Elijah. He dug a well in front of his house and used the water to perform healing. He destroyed a lot of charms and idols from traditional worshippers. He began the Christ Army Church.¹⁵

Moses Orimolade was also important as a key figure in the birthing of the Aladura prayer movement. He founded the Cherubim and Seraphim movement with emphasis on healing and prayers. Ayo Babalola started the Christ apostolic church out of a combination of the Precious stone society in the Anglican Church and the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle. The role of Babalola in the revival of the 1930s made the revival an unforgettable event in the history of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.¹⁶

World Wide Pentecostalism

The origin of the modern Pentecostal movement is associated with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Charles Fox Parham's Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901. The majority of Pentecostals, however, link Pentecostalism to the revival that began with William Seymour's Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906.¹⁷ In the Azusa Street Revival, many people came from different parts of the world to receive this experience. The press also noticed the revival and published its existence throughout the whole of the United States and the world.¹⁸ This revival produced many denominations such as the Assemblies of God and the

¹⁴ Ojo, *The Charismatic Movement*, 114-18.

¹⁵ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 38.

¹⁶ Adogame, *Who Is Afraid of the Holy Ghost?: Pentecostalism and Globalization in Africa and Beyond* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Africa World, 2011).

¹⁷ Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 34.

¹⁸ Albrecht, *Rites*, 34.

Foursquare Gospel Church, which are mostly called classical Pentecostal churches. Cephas Omenyo observes that Pentecostalism from the beginning had a distinctive black culture that allows it to produce a black form of Christianity.¹⁹

Kalu suggests five additional components that are very crucial in the development of the charismatic movements in Nigeria. First is the Hour of Deliverance ministry that operated in Lagos prior to the country's civil war, the second was the charismatic explosion in the scripture union in eastern Nigeria between 1967-1975 and the third is the bloom hour of the freedom ministry during the civil war in 1969. Fourth is the growth of the Christian union movements in Nigeria's universities, which are discussed more fully in the following sections, and finally, the Benson Idahosa ministry linked the new Christianity with American televangelists.²⁰

Christian Unions in Nigerian Universities

In Nigerian universities, few major groups were established to help bring Christian students together: Student Christian Movement (SCM), Scripture Union (SU), and the Christian Union (CU). They provided the base for the beginning of the charismatic movements. The SCM was founded in 1940 by Dr. Francis Akanu Ibiam, a onetime Eastern Nigerian governor, and Chief Theophilus O. Ejiwumi, onetime secretary to the Western Region, who were introduced to SCM while studying in Britain.²¹

The SCM was established as a mission-oriented organization in British universities in the great missionary era of the nineteenth century. It encouraged students to pledge for missionary work after graduation. When Ibiam returned to Nigeria in 1935, he introduced SCM to pastors, evangelists, and teachers in the Church of Scotland Mission establishment in Eastern Nigeria where he worked because he was not able to travel to nearby cities with educational institutions.²²

When Ejiwumi finished his studies at University College, London, on government scholarship, he returned to Yaba Higher College in Lagos by 1940. As a lecturer, he immediately introduced SCM to the students, establishing a branch there.²³ Students who moved from Yaba Higher College started SCM when the University College, Ibadan was established in 1948 with Ejiwumi as a lecturer.

After 1944, the SCM branch in Ibadan became the center of SCM in Nigeria. Many British expatriates who were members of SCM came around to strengthen the group, and in the 1950s SCM groups were formed in the Nigeria colleges of arts and science in the three regions

¹⁹ Cephas Narh Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2002), 89.

²⁰ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 89.

²¹ Matthews A. Ojo, "The Contextual Significance of the Charismatic Movements in Independent Nigeria," *Africa* 58, no. 2 (January 1, 1988), 176. <http://ezproxy.asburyseminary.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0000805933&site=eds-live> (accessed November 20, 2012).

²² Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 176-77.

²³ Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 177.

of the country: Ibadan (West), Enugu (East), and Zaria (North). When these colleges became universities in the 1960s, SCM groups continued to grow and flourish. The SCM was so instrumental in shaping the lives of the students and the lecturers and until the mid-1960s the SCM was the only interdenominational at the Christian student organization in the universities of Ibadan, Ife, Lagos, Nsukka and Enugu.²⁴

The missionaries of the Church Missionary Society introduced the SU to Nigeria in 1844. They emphasized the daily reading of the Bible especially for children. The expatriate teachers brought the SU into educational institutions. In the early 1960s, SMC began to use the devotional literature of SU to supplement their activities in branches in different universities in Nigeria.

The CU also came from Britain. It was started in 1910 by conservative evangelical members of SCM in Cambridge University to challenge the liberal theology in the SCM. By 1928, the people who had left SMC came together to start the Inter-Varsity fellowship of the Evangelical Unions (IVF).²⁵ This split brought about a demarcation between the SCM with its liberal theological viewpoints and the conservative, evangelical IVF, their university fellowships adopted the name C.U.

As former IVF members were employed as teachers in Nigerian educational institutions, and the people who started Scripture Union in the secondary schools were involved with the Universities, CU groups were started in universities as alternatives to the SCM. The SCM emphasized that the gospel could be made relevant to society in terms of political and economic development, while the CU emphasized Bible study and the commitment of individual Christians. The two organizations became prominent influences in what happened to Christian spirituality on the campuses.

The lecturers and students worshipped together in the chapel with the assistance of lecturers in the religious studies department. These were people who were ordained in their churches, so they acted as chaplains and patrons. Both fellowships increased in numbers. As Ojo observes, throughout the 1960s the two groups (SCM and CU) were side by side until the Pentecostal movements arrived.²⁶

Ojo, who had done extensive research on Christian fellowships on campuses in Nigeria, says that the influence of the Pentecostal spirit in Nigeria in the 1960s and the 1970s were to some extent part of a worldwide movement.²⁷ Before 1960 the Pentecostal experiences as taught by the Pentecostals were limited to traditional Pentecostal denominations. In 1960 the Rev. Dennis J. Bennett, who was the rector of St. Mark's Church in Los Angeles, openly acknowledged the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After this event, many other non-Pentecostal denominations started acknowledging the experience. This was what some scholars refer to as *the Charismatic movement*,²⁸

²⁴ Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 177.

²⁵ Douglas L. Johnson, *Contending for the Faith: A History of the Evangelical Movement in the Universities and Colleges* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 66-83.

²⁶ Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 178.

²⁷ Ojo, *The Charismatic Movement*, 114-18.

²⁸ Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 179.

Ojo says that the greater involvement of the young people in Pentecostalism came as a result of the emergence of the *youth culture* in Britain and the USA, which saw a high increase in the student enrolment.²⁹ In Nigeria, more youths also were interested in going to school, which resulted in the establishment of more universities and other post-secondary institutions in the country and increased the spread of the charismatic revival. The baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is one major doctrine among both Pentecostals and charismatic movements.

The first week of January 1970, most of the leaders in the CU group in the Ibadan collectively experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The incidence led to the formation of a Tuesday prayer group for the people who had had this Pentecostal experience. They maintained their fellowship with the CU.³⁰ The group was also involved with vigorous evangelism. From 1970 they started to hold evangelistic retreats in some towns in the midwest, west, and eastern Nigeria, which they called *congress*. By the middle of 1970, the leaders of the group came together to form an independent and permanent organization: the world Action Team for Christ.³¹

For the next two or three years, the charismatic revival spread from the University of Ibadan to other Universities. The Universities of Ibadan and Ife became the foremost in this charismatic revival, and some of the graduates of these universities later became the founders and leaders of charismatic organizations. They also pioneered the evangelization of northern Nigeria.³²

Ojo's account put the whole influence on the campus fellowships of the Christian union from Western Nigeria since probably because he is from that part of Nigeria. Kalu however insists that the east was not spiritually quiet during the war. He writes, that when the schools closed as a result of the war, the new travelling secretary, Bill Roberts decided to hold Bible classes for students around the S.U house in Umuahia. The meeting soon developed into prayer camp which led to deep conversion, deliverance, village evangelism and relief work.³³

The meeting spurred young people into prayer and evangelistic bands in various villages. Many people had given their lives to Christ, and a lot of healing occurred in many of the hospitals that they visited. Youths began to refuse to take part in the oath taken in the village and refused all forms of idolatry. They became a threat to the status quo. Kalu states, "The young men by their open resistance exposed the compromising ethics of the members of the mainline churches."³⁴ The ministry of the young men under the leadership of Bill Roberts continued to

²⁹ Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 178.

³⁰ Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 179.

³¹ Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 179.

³² Ogbu Kalu, Wilhelmina Kalu, Nimi Wariboko, and Toyin Falola, *The Collected Essays of Ogbu Uke Kalu*, Vol. 2 (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2010), 321.; Ojo, "Contextual Significance," 175-92.

³³ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 89.

³⁴ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 90.

blossom with more converts from occultism and some Aladura churches. They started the hour of freedom.³⁵

By the end of the civil war in 1970 the hour of freedom members moved to Onitsha, the commercial town of the Eastern Nigeria to all the villages from the Eastern region. They were still members of the SU, but within ten years revival spread all over Igbo land. A number of the young people who belonged to the Aladura churches joined their parents but soon caused splits within the churches because of the challenge of the use of rituals and symbols in their liturgy.³⁶

As mentioned previously, Idahosa, who was converted in early 1960s under the Assemblies of God in Benin City, built up his ministry through the support of Pa. G. Elton, a Welsh Missionary of the Apostolic Church. This man mentored many young men who were eager to grow. He connected Idahosa with the ministry of Gordon Lindsay and sponsored him to attend Christ for the Nation Bible Institute in Dallas, Texas.³⁷ Idahosa returned and began a miracle center and television missionaries, a Bible school, and a musical group, which all grew rapidly. The leaders of the Hour of Deliverance from Lagos, Elton of the Apostolic Church, Emma Harris, a Baptist missionary, and a few older charismatic leaders were the source of support for these young people.³⁸

By 1973, the Federal government of Nigeria established the National Youth service corps, which was compulsory for the university graduates, and they were posted outside their regions as a way of integrating the country. This posting was a good opportunity to go to different areas of the country, especially the northern part of Nigeria in order to establish various charismatic groups.³⁹ Because they had the government backing to go to different parts of the country, some of them became travelling secretaries for the fellowship of Christian students.⁴⁰

Some of these vibrant charismatic youths were posted to teach in villages where they continued to preach and pray for people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A central body was founded in 1973 called Christian Youth Corpers. They also attended Sunday services in the mainline churches, which they considered cold. This led some to begin Evangelistic groups for reaching out to people within the church. They were also in the youth groups and the prayer bands.⁴¹

Conclusion

³⁵ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 90.

³⁶ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 90.

³⁷ He did not complete the course because he claimed that the fire of God was in his bones; Ruthanne Garlock, *Fire in His Bones: The Story of Benson Idahosa* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1981), 197.

³⁸ Ogbu Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007), 509, 91-92.

³⁹ Edmund Akanya, telephone interview by author, November 11, 2012.

⁴⁰ The Christian Union of the Northern Universities.

⁴¹ Akanya, telephone interview.

The strength of the Anglican Church in Nigeria has continued to be the liturgical base, coupled with the influence of the charismatic revival of the 70s and 80s. It is therefore appropriate to continue to explore how this influence has impacted the Anglican Church in different aspects of ministry and church life.