



## ABSTRACT

*This paper tries to identify the values and culture of the African Religions. It cross-examines the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria. The paper intends to discuss the values of African religion and culture, Western Christian missionary impact in Africa religions and Cultures and the rise of the independent churches in Africa to identify the*

# VALUES IN AFRICAN RELIGIONS AND CULTURE: CROSS-EXAMINATION OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN NIGERIA

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## Introduction

The intention of this paper is to draw the attention of the followers of both Christianity and African traditional religions to the issues of values that are particularly African. The advent of Christianity on the continent of Africa has avoided for long and examination of the values that are particularly African and how far they can be seen or integrated into Christian corpus of her spiritual life. The way an African presents his/her intention / anxieties before God shows that there are values in his religion. In this paper, we are concerned about the contributions of Pentecostal movement in Nigeria and how they have effectively changed the manner of liturgical celebrations has brought new dimensions in Christian spirituality.

According to Thomas (1990), one most important question that faces Christendom in the continent of Africa is, is there salvation for people outside Christianity? Is there God's favour outside of what we might call the "3 B's" that is to say belonging to a



*values of the African religion and Christian understanding. African religion: since no term which adequately expresses the contents of African religion, there several descriptive terms like tribal-religion, ethnic religion or preliterate religions. Whatever the merits of these names, they are inadequate. These terms have evolutionist over-tones. The practice of African traditional is handed down from one generation to another. It is so significant that its value system remains perfect in the cultural hybrids of African's people and minds. Culture here Means the total way of life of given people. Thus, it includes any piece or patterns of behaviour, the attitude, norms, values, objects and skills, belief system, and world outlook which human beings learn and adopt as members of a given human group or society. Values refer to the ideas shared by members of a society as to what is good, right and desirable, something worth striving for. And norms are means while values are the ends. In other words, the mean difference between values and norms is that while values are abstract ' general concepts or ideas, norms are concrete behavioural rules or guidelines for people in a particular social system. The paper also made recommendations.*

**Keywords:** African religions, Culture, Cross-examination, Pentecostal movement, Nigeria

church, Baptism and belief in the past span of human history implies that a large population lived outside European history. However, today, we live in a world unified by media and travel. More and more people will find it incredible that one form of religion (the Christian religion) practiced somewhere in Europe and America should assert that stream of people struggling between life and death are damned because birth placed them far from Christianity. Every Christian and every church not wishing to be reduced to a shrill believers or sect that claims to possess the only truth must ask how salvation exists outside of Christian church faith and Baptism.

According to Vishigh (1994), the fundamental question of Christianity not finding salvation outside herself brings in elements that do not find any value in any other religion, particularly in our own case, African traditional religion.



This paper shall attempt to refute the above position, presumption, and establish a situation where the grace of God is found in all religions of the world and in particular, African traditional religion. Today, there is an expanding exploration, not of maps, but of human minds. When human beings leave behind their own world views and enter those of new countries and new peoples, some of their limited ideas are challenged, so it is with our issues. The exploration of the world queries the extent of God's plan. Can there be values only in Christianity? The African mind and African traditional religion say no. Values and salvation can be found in the African traditional religion. The world and Christianity must look beyond and must make efforts to discover in multi-dimensions of God's operation in the world. The paper cross-examines three elements thus western spirituality and values, African world views and Nigerian experience of Pentecostal movement.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was guided by sociological analytical method. This methodology is also common in other related field of studies which education is one of them. The method is concerned with explaining societal level facts such as typical religious belief and acting which directly has effects in human relation. The sources used were library documents both published and unpublished books and articles were used.

### **WESTERN SPIRITUALITY AND VALUES**

According to Vishigh (1994), the thirteen century was very crucial to the issues involved to the background of looking at values in African traditional religion as non- important. This was when Pope Innocent III, in the year 1208, prescribed a profession of faith to be made by Waldensions who wished to be reconciled with the Catholic Church, this profession of faith included the following statements:" We believe in our heart and confess with our lips that there is one church, not that of heretics, but the Holy Roman Catholic and apostolic church, outside of which we believe that no one is saved." Again, the fourth Lateran Council (1215) under the same Pope Innocent III, issued a definition of Catholic faith against the Anglican heretics, which included the statement, **extraecclesiannullasalus.**



There is one universal church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved. Going through this period, there were formidable series of papal and concillian documents, all affirming the necessity of being in the church and professing the church's faith for salvation. Yet, God who looks at the cultures of the world was preparing the church with the outpouring of the spirit whereby she would see other cultures, outside of her as valuable. The revelation of God's unfathomable knowledge cannot be overestimated. In this context, it was not long before God opened the windows of Roman Catholic Church through Pope John XXIII, whereby the Holy Spirit blow in. During the pontificate of Pope VI, the assembled body of Catholic bishops at the second vaticant council, the Holy Father referring to Christians who are not members of Roman Catholic Church, the council declared: They lovingly believe in God, the father almighty and in Christ, son of God savior.

They also recognized and received other sacraments within their own churches or Ecclestial communities. Many of them rejoice in the episcopate, celebrate the holy Eucharist and cultivate devotion towards the virgin Marry, mother of God. They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits, likewise we can only say that in some real way, they are joined with us in the holy spirit, for them also, he gives his gifts and grace and is thereby operative among them with His sanctifying power. According to Vishigh (1994), the brethren divided from us also carry out many of the sacred actions of the Christian religion. Undoubtedly in ways that vary according to the condition of each church or community, these can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community of salvation. It follows that these separated churches and communities, though they believe they suffer from defects already mentioned, have by no means been deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation.

For the spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as a means of salvation which derives their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church. There was further discussion concerning the faith of those who do not believe in Christianity. Here we were on the way to establish a position, where non-Christian religions were officially recognized as sharing in the unfathomable grace of God. Those who have not received the gospel are related to various ways of people of God. In the first place, there are



people to whom the covenant and promises were given, and from Christ was born according to the flesh. On the account of their father, these people remain dearest to God, for God does not repent of the gift. He makes nor of the calls he issues (cf Rom. 11:28- 29). The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, and those who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Jesus Christ or his Church, yet sincerely seek God, and moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do his will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does divine providence deny the help necessary. For salvation to those who without blame on their part have not yet arrived at explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to his grace.

Whatever goodness or truth is found among them is looked upon by the church as a Preparation for the gospel. She regards such qualities as given by him who enlightens all, so that they may finally have life. From the above statements about other religions and cultures the world. It would appear that a church prepared herself for positive dialogue with other People. Furthermore, the position has clearly shown that she can look at other religions and Ends some values in them.

### **AFRICAN WORLD VIEWS**

As Gwamna (1994) has said, an attempt of the research into African religions world views, therefore become necessary in order to help us uncover some of its artifacts, for a meaningful analysis. This is important, as it agrees with Mbiti (1969) has rightly observed, when wrote that African Nigerians background is not a rotten heap of superstitions, taboos and magic, it has a great deal of value in it. On this valuable heritage, African should adapt itself and not be dependent exclusively on imported goods. Mbiti's statement here sums up all of Africa's heritage as not a completely useless heap of naked past. This also helps to debunk dictortionist and sometimes reductionist views on African past, as at was held previously by few myopic writers on Africa. In fact, Levy Brubl's concept of prelogical penalty of the Africans or Emil Luggwig's views that the Africans are incapable of conceiving God, and therefore have no morality or values, becomes suspect and dictortionist in extreme. What those scholars depicted was their incapability to appreciate the major moving force



in African man, which was religious seed that affected all facets of his being, within which he gave explanations to his existential questions.

### **THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE OF PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS**

Vighigh (1994) examines the Pentecostal movement by saying first, exploring the avenues that made it possible for the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria to grow. In the first place, there was the problem of accommodating Christian beliefs to the realities of African social and cultural life. This was shown clearly in cases where missionaries were intolerant and ignorant of traditional religious beliefs and social practices of the African people. There has a total lack of understanding on the part of the missionaries, for example, beliefs in the power of the dead, the witches, and the incidence of polygamy. Due to contradictions and lack of understanding, many African Christians began to establish independent churches where some African values and expressions were used.

Pious Onyema Nwaobi has said: "Since the impact of civilization on this continent and since the advent of the missionary, the real spirit of the African has been suppressed. Whatever there was in African was stamped down as heathen... and the real question has been, if one accepts Christianity, does it mean that everything in one's former culture has died?" The second point is closely related to the first, there was a desire to have the church 'indigenized'. African churches did not see Christianity as an essentially European church. As a matter of fact, the old churches in Ethiopia and Algeria as well as Tunisia, where Augustine and Cyprian worked. These Churches were well established before some of European nations were evangelized. The third point has been an organizational one. Some authors describe this as **Negrophobia**.

In South Africa, missionary activities were seen as parts of white-controlled churches that have exercised a colour bar. The black African members were only given a subordinate role. It was due to this imbalance in the church administration that paved the way for Africans to set-up their churches as Nwaobi has noticed. Nigeria has established Pentecostal landscape, arguably the most dynamic in the whole of Africa often with a significant missionary impulses and theological influence on other African Christian. Although, Pentecostalism was imported into the country only two decades after the birth





of the movement in Los Angeles in the year 1900s, Nigerians were able to demonstrate it to serve their purpose. From its humble beginning in 1901 with only a handful of student in a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, Pentecostals have become the largest family Pentecostals.

As Ayuba (2012), said African Pentecostalism started in South Africa and owned its M origins to the work of John Graham Lake, who began his ministry as Methodist preacher but whom later prospered in the business world as an insurance executive. Although, the Pentecostal movement was imported into Nigeria in the 1920s, it was between that 1930s and 1960s that a number of African and European Pentecostal denominators visited the country and entered into affiliation with some of ml indigenes movements. From the country's 1970s charismatic revival emerged various independent trans-denominationalcharismaticministries, a number of which changed in the 1980s into fully fledge Neo-Pentecostal charismatic churches. Thus, it was in the 1970 that the first wave of evangelical growth swept the country through American groups such as scripture union and some denominational m **missions nan** by Baptism and assemblies of God.

The foundation for the 1970s Pentecostal movements and the "born again" spiritual rebirth phenomenon that swept through Nigeria was laid during the civil war (1967-1970). Politically, Christians in eastern Nigeria were upset because of the support that the federal government received from traditional Christian European countries especially Britain against the secessionists. Anti-western type Christianity began to develop and local people began to visit new prayer houses that emerged during the civil war to seek solutions for the social and I economic conditions caused by the conflict. Thus, new prayer houses were established in the rural areas in the war. When the civil war ended 1970, there was tremendous **growth** in evangelical movements and prayer groups supported by students throughout eastern Nigeria. The National Youths Service Corps schemeintroduced by the Federal **Government**, also aided the spread of evangelical movements.

## **CONCLUSION**

We have established the values of African religions and its relevance to Christianity today, and the western Christian behavior towards African religion.



The paper has brought out what led to Pentecostal movements or independent churches in Africa and the Nigerian experience. The paper shows that Christianity on the continent of Africa, takes a careful at African values and religion in its evangelizing efforts, it will have a far more **effect on** African continent.

### **Recommendations**

There should be constant dialogue between Christianity and African traditional religion. That African Christianity must a critical look and study of African values and {cultures in order to integrate them into mainstream of Christianity. The liturgical movements Bound in African religion should be integrated into the Christian life and worship since in African religions life, there is no distinction between religions life and social life.

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