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THE PENTECOSTAL TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIAN CHURCH LIFE¹

Ayuk Ausaji Ayuk

1. Introduction

The fact that Pentecostal movement has touched every facet of the Nigerian society and church life is not an overstatement. The “Spirit” movement in the Nigerian church and society in general is unprecedented. It is almost impossible for any one to say that there is a Nigerian who has not heard the word of God. This is so, because of the Pentecostal spirit in the country.

The mainline denominations like the Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic Church, etc. are still in existence, but the fact remains that many of these churches have been transformed to the Pentecostal style of worship. This is how strong the Pentecostal impact is in Nigeria. It is this kind of spirit that has led to the spreading of churches all over the country and beyond, hence church growth—an off shoot of Pentecostalism.

The main thrust of this paper is to unravel the contributions of the Pentecostal movement to church growth and spiritual awakening in Nigeria. The core of this awakening is the transformation of other churches towards the Pentecostal “spirit” of worship. It is not about style, but the imbibing of a belief system. The Holy Spirit has been neglected and its power denied until the coming of the Pentecostal movement. The Spirit’s power has now been restored and it is practically “moving mountains.” The word has spread unprecedented, and many have been healed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹ An earlier version of the paper was read at the International Symposium on Non-western Pentecostalism, May 2001, Anaheim, CA, USA.

The paper would also be looking at the challenges the church is facing today as a result of its growth and how they should be handled. It is one thing for the church to grow and another to maintain its momentum as Christ's body. The devil has a way of coming back at God and this should be recognized and destroyed before it is too late.

This paper therefore has a "double-edged sword" to affirm and at the same time rebut and address the problems that associate with the spirit power and church growth.

2. The Church: Past and Today

At first the Pentecostals were looked upon with disdain and disrespect. They were a laughing stock without a strong theological background. The mainline denominations took them for granted and never wanted to do anything with them. But today the mainline denominations are towing to the Pentecostal way to avoid the loss of members to the Pentecostal churches.

"The first shall be the last and the last first" is practically what happened in the Nigerian situation. The Pentecostals have overtaken the Fundamental churches and have catapulted them into melting pots of the word of God, and the winning of souls for Christ.

The churches in Nigeria were before filled with older persons. The youths were not attracted to the church. I personally was not attracted to the church as a youth. It was for that very reason that the Lord called me into the ministry to lead young men and women to Christ. But last year when I visited Nigeria after thirteen years, the churches were full of both young and older people. A demonstration of the spirit power was lacking in the seventies and very early eighties.

3. Renewal

How did this happen? Will be the likely question anybody would want to ask. This was possible as a result of the following reasons:

3.1 Loss of Membership to Pentecostals

According to Moses Umanah (*Christian World*, January-march 2000 Vol.4 No. 3) "The dawn of the Pentecostals afflicted deep cut into the psyche of hitherto existing Orthodox Churches." The Orthodox churches

abhorred everything Pentecostal at first, but when their members began to look for other means to deal with their problems, they decided to accept the Pentecostals” (Umanah 2000: 20).

“If you can’t beat them, join them” is a political slogan that is also applicable to the church today. The mainline denominations could not afford to continue losing their members due to the fact that they were not able to provide for them the needed remedy to their problems. So they had to accommodate Pentecostal practices in order for them to maintain their membership. In an attempt to maintain their churches they blossom as others were also attracted to the phenomenal movement of the Holy Spirit. Yes, almost everybody is beginning to see the significance of God in his/her life because of the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit power can never be limited.

3.2 The Acceptance of “Spirit World”

It is not surprising that Nigerians are easily “carried away” by the S/spirit movement. By nature they are spiritual. I do not quite know how to make this more explicit. It is not like other humans are not spiritual, but it is just that they are more attune to the spiritual than the physical. A Nigerian by nature looks at life from a spiritual dimension rather than from a rational point of view. The concept of a supreme being is so ingrained in the mind set of a Nigerian that it is impossible for him/her not to associate every aspect of his or her life to God. The mainline denominations were operating from the mindset of the West, so they could not reach the Nigerian properly, but with the advent of the Pentecostal spirit they were awoken from their deep slumber.

3.3 The Lively Worship

The Nigerians are very active people. They do not like anything solemn. Moreover, they like to sing and swing and move. That is the nature of a Nigerian, which invariably is the nature of Pentecostalism. This makes me see very clearly the importance of contextualization. The spirit of Pentecostalism is the spirit of a Nigerian and so they can easily marry. And the relationship sticks like glue. It is not like it is only in Nigeria that Pentecostalism has succeeded so far; it is just that it has succeeded so far in Nigeria because it is closely aligned to the Nigerian way of life and worldview. We have to recognize this if we want to make progress in other parts of the world. This is in agreement with Jules-Rosette’s observation that “Third World countries are creating ideologies

which bring a synthesis of indigenous and Western religious beliefs as part of the growth of New Religious Movements. Often such movements, typified by developments in Africa, represent the interests and life experiences of distinct and sometimes emerging social groups. These theological constructs may then be subject to the process of globalization and, in doing so, appeal to localized communities” (Hunt 2000:2).²

3.4 The Healing Ministry

C. Peter Wagner looks at church growth as the result of miraculous healing, as indicated in the case of Nigeria. This was made very clear in his book *How to Have a Healing Ministry without Making your Church Sick*. In the book, he narrated the story of two leprosy person who became Christian as a result of the being healed (1988:72) This is one thing the Pentecostals brought back to life in the Nigerian churches. The devil has been usurping this power until the coming of the Pentecostals. Many persons use to flock to faith healers or witch doctors to get healing, but today they go to churches because the power of the Holy Spirit has been restored in full force.

This makes me to think that the saying “to see is to believe” is very much engrossed in all human beings. The Israelites were also looking for signs and wonders. Jesus however, was not very happy about this, because it makes faith irrelevant. The evidence of trust without any physical manifestation is what Christianity is all about, that is what Jesus tried to impress in the minds of his disciples. But the fact still remains that human beings are more convinced and persuaded, when something miraculous and dramatic happens. Miracles do not necessarily make Christians. It is the revealing power of the Holy Spirit that makes Christians (1 Cor 2:10). Miracles maybe performed, but it is the convincing and revealing power of the Holy Spirit that makes persons respond to the Christian faith. Not every person who sees the miracles turns to God (1 Cor 2:14). Only those persons, whom God has chosen to reveal himself to, respond appropriately (1 Cor 1:26-30). If miracles were the determinants of a person’s faith the whole world will either be for Christ or the devil. The devil usurps the power of God sometimes and people are generally amazed by such powers (Acts 8:9-11), but not every person will take these experiences seriously. In the same manner not all persons who see miracles from God are touched by the Holy Spirit to take them as revelations from God. And respond appropriately to the

² As quoting Jules-Rosette, p. 2.

Christian faith or accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Miracles should therefore not be seen as the driving force behind people acceptance of Jesus as their personal savior. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that intervenes and makes them begin to see things differently.

4. Historical Background of Christianity in Nigeria

The earliest missionary activities in Nigeria took place in the nineteenth century. The southern part of Nigeria was the first to be inhabited by Christians. The southern part of Nigeria is mostly composed of the Igbos (east) and Yorubas (west). The Yoruba tribe is traditionally Protestant and the Igbo tribe was evangelized by the Roman Catholic Church. However there were other Protestant denominations. The Presbyterian Church came in the early twentieth century in the Niger Delta area and has missionary activity in the middle belt as well. Generally, the Roman Catholics and Anglicans each controlled areas in Southern Nigeria.

After World War 1 other denominations and smaller sects, such as the Brethren, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's witnesses and other groups worked in different areas of the country.

Later on small groups from the mainline denominations broke off to form African Churches. These independent movements started as early as the late nineteenth century. It is said that they were mostly ritually and doctrinally identical to the mother churches however, more African music and later dance mixed with the imported church services. This is exactly why the Pentecostal movement is successful in Nigeria—the free flow of the spirit in music and dance. That is the African (Nigerian) way of expressing himself or herself to God.

The Pentecostals were first taken note of in the 1970s and in the 80s the Pentecostal churches created a dramatic impact in the lives of the people. The movement came like a flash, it was derided but then it took foothold of the place and captured its own oppressors and scorners. Such is the power of the Holy Spirit. We may not fathom it, but it will surely move. We may not know where it is coming from or where it is going, but it would surely take its course. We can never undermine God it is only ourselves.

While it is true that some narrow minded mainline denominations still feel awkward about the Pentecostal movement, the fact remains that they are still creating a better impact in the lives of the people around the

globe. They are carrying many along with the waves that are slow and steady towards the kingdom of God.

Though churches in Nigeria still stand under their banner or umbrellas, but many of them have become Pentecostal by nature, while maintaining their names and doctrine. They may not have disappeared with the emergence of Pentecostalism; they have rather metamorphosed into Pentecostal style of worship to fit in the trend of the growing churches in Nigeria.

The Pentecostal movement has reached a stage that it should no longer be looking for an identity but rather away of building a fellowship of believers with the end goal of totally transforming others. The Pentecostal movement should be thinking of reaching out to others, rather than isolating itself. We do not build the kingdom by moving out but by fellowshipping with one another.

Church growth in Nigeria today is phenomenal and the shift in worship is also phenomenal. Who will have thought the Pentecostals will penetrate the mainstream of the Protestant group. Today it is different. The mode of worship in almost all denominations is charismatic and so Pentecostalism will fit in naturally and that is what happened.

5. Contributions to Nigeria Church Life

The Pentecostal movement has not only touched individual lives it has also touched other Christian institutions as said earlier. Obed Minchakpu succinctly put it this way: "An explosive spiritual awakening in the African nations is also reshaping Catholic and Anglican churches. Arising wave of charismatic revivalism has touched Christian churches all across Nigeria. All levels of Nigerian society have been affected by the revival, which has been building slowly for decades. Even some fanatical Muslims who formerly persecuted Christians have professed Christianity in recent month" (2001:1).

This is exactly how the Pentecostal movement has been able to touch every facet of the Nigerian life. It is something noteworthy. Without this kind of spirit, Nigeria would be in total chaos today. Nigerian have been stricken by many atrocities and violent devil attacks, but the presence of the Pentecostal movement has helped to put things in their right place at least to a minimal degree (Minchakpu 2001:2).

The present President of Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo, is himself touched by the spirit of Pentecostalism. He even looks at his prison experience from 1995 to 1998 as a means of God drawing him

closer to himself. When a person of such stature begins to see God in his life, there must be something remarkable, going around where he is; there is really a change in the life of Obansanjo. He has changed his perspective. The Holy Spirit has touched him. I hope he remains a source of blessing for Nigeria. The following are some of the contributions the Pentecostals have made in Nigeria.

5.1 Transformation of Mainline Denominations

Pentecostals have also urged Christians in Nigeria to renounce their ties to occultism and groups such as Reformed Ogboni Fraternity the Rosicrucian order, the Masonic lodge and various African fraternities that promote spiritism (Minchakpu 2001:2).

The Pentecostals are the ones presently purging out the impurities in the mainline denominations. The mainline denominations have been syncretistic in nature for quite sometime, but with the strong influence of the Pentecostals they are beginning to realize their short-comings. In essence it is the pentecostals who are putting the house of God in order today.

5.2 Missions

The contributions of the Pentecostal movement are not limited to the Nigerian situation alone. The Pentecostal churches have gone beyond the boundaries of Nigeria to also plant churches. According to Stephen Hunts (In his paper "The "New" Black Pentecostal Churches in Britain 2000) "The popular media of the contemporary Pentecostal movement has made much of the apparent fresh 'revival' in Britain, in terms of mass converts and rapid congregational growth, among West Africans, mostly Nigerian, churches" (Hunts 2000:1). In 1985, the RCCG "planted" its first church in Britain with only four people in attendance. They now have about fifty churches of varying sizes and a membership somewhere in the region of two hundred thousand, mostly in London and the midlands, but also with sizeable representation in a number of Britain's larger urban areas (Hunts 2000:1). That is remarkable by all means. They are breaking grounds in foreign land. That is a demonstration of the spirit power.

The missionary endeavors of the Pentecostal churches from Nigeria are not limited to Britain alone, but have also touched lives across Africa and the world in general. There are many missionaries from RCCG and Deeper Life to many countries of the world. The Pentecostals have

therefore contributed immensely in reaching- out to many Nigerians, transformation of the mainline denominations, missionary endeavors and spiritual awakening.

5.3 Church Growth

Church growth basically is the main area in which much has been done. Nigeria is said to have the fastest growing churches in the whole world today. This phenomenal growth of churches has not stagnated as in the case of Korea. Churches are still growing and new churches are built everyday. It is not only the Pentecostal churches that are growing, but also the mainline denominations. However, it is because of the Pentecostal spirit that has been imbibed that they are growing like never before. The challenge of the church today is to train workers that would nurture the faith of the many Christians.

6. Theology

The Pentecostals offer a futuristic kingdom of God (Hunt 2001:2). This theological perspective tended to conceptualize both a present and future hope of deliverance from the conditions of this world (Aldred 1999 in Hunts: 2). Scholars like Cope tend to look at this perspective as escapism from reality (1984:13). The central message of Jesus Christ was about the coming kingdom. He said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it" (John 17:16). The world is a place to be purified, in order for its inhabitant to qualify for the kingdom of God. Christians generally do not have any message other than this, but the fact is only the Pentecostals emphasize the coming of the kingdom of God.

The churches also emphasize the need to be "born-again," the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the importance of the charismata and a great deal of emphasis is placed on miracles and faith healing (Hunt 2001:3). The word of God is held as infallible and the basis of all teachings.

Apart from this theological orientation the Pentecostals also emphasize personal purity. I feel this should be every other Christian's theology. Theology should be based on the Bible, no more, any less. Anything outside the Bible is not Christian and should not be taken seriously. And however profound your theology may be, if it is not giving life to people but rather confusion, then it is worthless. Theology should be contextualized, in order for it to make meaning in the lives of its consumers. Kofi Appiah-Kubi succinctly put this way:

That the Gospel has come to remain in Africa cannot be denied, but now our theological reflections must be addressed to the real contextual African situations. Our question must not be what Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, or any other Karl has to say, but rather what God would have us do in our living concrete condition (Appiah-Kubi 1983:viii).

Western theologians have written a lot of theological books. But only a handful of professional theologians are interested in what has been said by these very articulate theologians, who have contributed immensely to the enrichment of libraries. It becomes imperative for us to think again, as to the relevance of these great books to church life. Theology is therefore relevant when it answers the questions of the context in which it is done.

Many scholars have always looked upon the Pentecostals as “not having a profound theology” and somehow many Pentecostals seem to accept that. And it makes me wonder what theology is all about if it is not the articulation of our understanding of God and how we should relate with Him as written in the word. The Pentecostals have not been exempted from this articulation. They have their own theology. It may not have been organized and systematized in the early period of Pentecostalism. But I think many Pentecostals are beginning to write down what they believe in an organized and systematic way. That also is theology. Nobody can judge it except the word of God.

7. Social Action

The Pentecostals are vigorously involved with the political life of Nigeria. They pray for the country and are involved in some government activities. Their preaching is not devoid of political innuendoes and a call for appropriate actions to be taken. For me that is social action in a way. They depend on God to help them in influencing certain actions in the country. Nigerians generally believe that it is God that has intervened in the changes that have taken place in the country politically. They think that God has answered their prayers. God has therefore acted in a political situation. However, there is still much to be done in this area, the Pentecostals should be grossly involve in helping set up organizations that can help in the alleviation of life in the country. People are generally in the church, so they should be influenced in the right way. The church should be involve in poverty alleviation programs, Aids awareness programs—there are many Nigerian young men dying of Aids today. The

church cannot deny the fact that, she is the embodiment of life in totality. It is suppose to touch all ramification of life—social, economic, political, and otherwise not only spiritual. Spirituality is the key to life, not life in itself. It opens the “gate way” to every other aspect of life.

8. Challenges

The growth of the church in Nigeria is accompanied by inherent challenges. The devil is always looking for ways to destroy what God is doing and it is our responsibility to respond appropriately in order stop him from destroying the work of God. Some of the challenges church is experiencing today are as follows:

8.1 Church Leadership

Many Nigerians are today taking advantage of the respond of people to the word of God. And so churches have sprung up in all nooks and corners of Nigeria, with different agendum from that of the legitimate preachers of the word. The challenge we are faced with is to help innocent Christians from the schemes of the “false prophets” (Matt 7:15). Many of these unsuspecting Christians are being misled to worship the devil because of the miracles (magic) and healing they are able to perform. Most a times they are abused in different ways.

8.2 Lack of Adequately Trained Leaders

This is one of the biggest problems the church is facing today in Nigeria. There are many leaders without adequate training. The hungry Christians are not properly fed and sometimes led astray by their “blind” leaders. The fact here is that, many churches have been established by persons who have neither good experience in well established churches or formal training in Bible Schools and so the churches have no good direction in terms of their doctrinal beliefs and good church management. This has led to the splitting of so many churches that end up being split again. As a result of this fact the members of these churches do not in the real sense of the word know how to live their Christian life.

If the leaders of these churches know the word of God, not just the content, because I am sure many of them can quote the whole bible for you, but rather how to interpret it and apply it to their daily life the churches will not be splitting at the rate it is now happening.

The lack of formal training has led to syncretistic beliefs that are destroying rather than building the church as the body of Christ. The root cause of this is the fact that there are not so many seminaries and Bible Schools that can help consolidate these independent churches. Moreover, not so many denominations are encouraging their pastors to have formal training in Bible Schools and seminaries. They look at this as worldly. Some of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria look at education as a kind of corruption rather than the enhancing of ones spiritual well being.

8.3 Lack of Personal Accountability

Many have responded but they have not yet internalized the values of Pentecostalism. This is because there are not enough trained leaders to nurture their faith in Jesus Christ. In short transformation has not taken place. What I mean by this is the fact that some Christians who religiously attend Pentecostal churches sometimes engage in actions that can be looked upon as unchristian. They do not see themselves as having the responsibility to live their life according to the teaching of the word of God. This may be because some of them see the church as a place to go and receive blessings rather than as a place to go and enrich oneself with the word of God.

This also stems from the fact that some church leaders are not clean. They use the church as a place to enrich themselves materially. Even with the phenomenal church growth many persons even Christians look at leaders with suspicion. This may not be an isolated problem with Nigeria alone, but it is worth looking at, in order to address the situation. Similar cases have happened in other parts of the world, but we cannot accept the situation as normal. We have to be accountable to our God.

8.4 Hostile Socio-Context

There is wide spread criminality, corruption, and Tribalism that has continued to bring about political, economic, and social problems. Church growth in Nigeria has been accompanied with social unrest and political instability. The more churches are growing in Nigeria, the more problems Christians are experiencing with the Moslems in Nigeria. Apart from the civil war Nigeria experienced sometime ago there has never been a time Nigeria has experience upheaval than now. The Moslems do not want to see the church grow. They are angered by the growth of the church and so they are doing everything to stop the church from growing in the northern part of Nigeria. Moslems in the northern part of Nigeria

have killed many Christians just because they are afraid of Moslems being evangelized. This is not surprising, the Moslems leaders are threaten by the fact they might lose their political influence if the church continues to grow at the rate it is growing right now.

For the first time since the independence of Nigeria has Moslems demanded the implementation of Shariah law in the northern part of Nigeria. A Christian head of state presently rules Nigeria and so the Moslems are doing everything to frustrate him. The demand for the implementation of Shariah law in Nigeria is a direct affront on Christianity. Nigeria has never operated on the Christian law so we wonder why the Moslems are now crying for the implementation of Shariah law in the northern part of Nigeria where majority are Moslems. The message is very clear: The Moslems want to show that they are still around and in power as they have always been. But the power of God will always be supreme in all situations.

Coupled with the attempt to "Talibanize" Nigeria by Moslems is Corruption and Criminality that has continued to rock Nigeria like never before. This has made many of us to question the relevance of church growth in Nigeria. We hope and pray that the church can be able to touch every facet of the Nigerian life and bring about peace and tranquility.

8.5 Dealing with Cases of Polygamy

Some Nigerians traditionally are polygamous or may have come from a Moslem background that accepts polygamy and have now accepted the Christian faith. The question now is: How do we deal with cases of this nature? Do we allow the polygamist to continue keeping his wives? Then others will also be encouraged to marry more than one wife, which per the Christian teaching is wrong. Do we ask the polygamist to divorce his wives and keep just one? Then we might be causing a social problem. This is one of the most difficult moral problems that have to be dealt with. There is no way we can run away from the truth, we have to deal with it squarely. And how to deal with it, is the question that keeps troubling me.

8.6 Rise of Occultism

Occultists are now hiding under the cover of Pentecostals. It is true that the Pentecostals are already dealing with this problem within the Christian circle, but how about those who are using miraculous (magic) power to attract people to worship false gods or the devil in short? Is this

our problem? Well, what I think we can do is to continue preaching the word of God in order to crystallize the devil's power over the innocent.

8.7 Conflicts between the Moslems and the Christians

The Moslems, I would like to think do not like the fact that churches are growing tremendously in all parts of Nigeria. They are threatened by the presence of Christians. And are in constant armed fight with Christians when mass evangelisms are organised in the northern part of Nigeria. Many lives have been lost as a result of this fact. Religion is a political factor in Nigeria. The Moslems have been in power for a very long time. It is only of recent that a Christian became a president and this is aggravating the whole situation. The Moslem leaders are now trying to implement the Sharia Law in the northern part of Nigeria, which means Christians in this part of the country would be subjected to the Sharia Law. This is causing a lot of problems in the country. We hope a lasting solution will be sought as soon as possible.

9. Recommendations

First, training centers should be established for biblical, theological, and missiological training. This will ease the problem of inadequate church leaders. The present situation of training is very poor. Most pastors are trained in the universities. I do not think the universities are giving much credence to pastoral training. They are more concern with academics than ministry.

Second, much work should be done to concretize the Pentecostal theology. The proliferation of churches is due to the fact that there is no concrete Pentecostal theology. This is very dangerous, since there is nothing to follow; they can fall for anything that is there. This does not mean that the Pentecostals have no theology. It just means that the Holy Spirit must not be misused. Sometimes when we say, "As the spirit leads," people do a lot of "crazy" things. This should be controlled and put in its right perspective. There are cases of some leaders saying this is what God wants us to do, when in fact it is not in harmony with the faith. Situations like this can be avoided if there is a concrete theology.

Third, a regulation should be set in the accepting of groups into the Pentecostal fold to avoid heretical teaching. Any form of teaching that is not biblical should be rejected. The influx of churches should be controlled. Somehow, people are generally beginning to look at the

church as a kind of business. This is ridiculous. Many people set up churches to make money of people. Qualifications should be set up for those who desire to serve God.

10. Conclusion

Pentecostalism is at cross roads in Nigeria. There is no doubt about the fact that it has “broken” many grounds. However, there is still much to be done, in order for it to fully take foothold. The churches in Nigeria from my point of view are not yet as well organized as their counterparts in Korea and other parts of the world. Their structures are not well founded to enable them fulfill the missiological mandate of the church. Yes, they are already involved in missions, but not as much as they would have if they were well organize. One of the reasons why they are not organized is poor ministerial and missiological training for the missionaries to be. They are not well equipped to do missions. Their educational background is too shallow to allow them to perform as much, especially in foreign countries. It becomes imperative then for mission centers to be set up across the country to help in the training programs of the church.

The Christians must be made to go beyond their faith, into acting what they believe. Faith should be accompanied by action on the part of the Christian. This is the biblical mandate, but this is not what is seen in the life of many. And so, the question many Nigerians are always asking, including me is: Why is Nigeria still morally bankrupt despite the fact that the churches are not only full, they are over flowing with people. This is a terrible blow on Pentecostalism that needs to be ironout. We cannot over look this problem and say, human beings will always be humans and so there is nothing we can do about it. We can do something about it. We should be transformed. That is what it means to encounter the power of the Holy Spirit. Nigeria is said to be the poorest oil producing country, this is so because there are so many unscrupulous government officials and some of them might be members of a church. How can we reconcile this? Religiosity and spirituality without action is dead dogma.

Nigeria is the most blessed country in Africa, in terms of mineral resources, fertile soil and very good climatic conditions. Yet, we are considered a poor nation. The problem I think is spiritual. I am not trying to “spiritualize” everything here as some may think. I am being realistic, in the sense that we who claim to be closer to God are suppose to know

how to live our life better. And, so I think Christian values must be internalized and lived. If not our faith will be useless. I am not supposing that Christians should be well to do. What I am saying in essence is that Christians who are not able to manage their resources well and have the know-how must be having a spiritual problem. And I mean it with all my heart.

The impact has been created; it is now left for it to be solidified in the life of the people. The true essence of a Christian is seen in the way he/she lives his life. You cannot be what you are not; you can only be what you are. We can either be children of the devil or children of God. If we are the children of God we should be acting the way God demands us to be.

What happened in Nigeria is phenomenal, not just because of the remarkable church growth, but because of the transformation of many churches to the Pentecostal way of worship and also the Pentecostal drive to win souls for Christ. More so, is the full acceptance of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians even today?

The key to all these, is the agreement of two worldviews. Contextualization, therefore is the key to church growth. Pentecostalism has succeeded so far in Latin America, Africa, and some parts of Asia because it speaks to the heart of people. That is exactly what human beings want. Contextualisation, however, should not be confused with nationalism. Nationalism is the greatest threat to Christianity today. This is something that must be given careful study. We can see it very clearly. This is not actually a Nigerian situation it is a worldwide situation whereby mission organizations are continually feeling it is better to deal with nationals even when we know an alien is more qualified to do the job. I don't think this is the plan of God for us. Ability should be given consideration not nationality. A national becomes more important when he/she can do the job better for the glory of God.

As we speculate on what God has done and will continue to do, let us bear in mind these things so that the name of God will be glorified.

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