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## Christianity in Western Africa (18)

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## (18) CHRISTIANITY IN WESTERN AFRICA

Isaac Deji Ayegboyin and Samson Adetunji Fatokun

Country	Religion	Pop_2010	Pct_2010	Pop_2025	Pct_2025	GrPct_1970_2025
Western Africa	Christians	110,757,000	36.0%	166,033,000	36.3%	2.7%
Western Africa	Independents	37,699,000	12.2%	52,823,000	11.6%	2.3%
Western Africa	African-initiated	34,915,000	11.3%			
Western Africa	Orthodox	97,400	0.0%	137,000	0.0%	2.3%
Western Africa	Protestants	60,190,000	19.5%	79,850,000	17.5%	1.9%
Western Africa	Anglicans	20,440,000	6.6%			
Western Africa	Pentecostal	14,761,000	4.8%			
Western Africa	Evangelical churches	6,255,000	2.0%			
Western Africa	Baptist	5,768,000	1.9%			
Western Africa	Methodist	4,316,000	1.4%			
Western Africa	United churches Reformed, Presbyterian	3,350,000	1.1%			
Western Africa	Roman Catholics	1,856,000	0.6%			
Western Africa	Pentecostals/ Charismatics	36,188,000	11.8%	55,788,000	12.2%	2.9%
Western Africa	Evangelicals	64,592,000	21.0%	96,811,000	21.2%	2.7%
Western Africa	Muslims	42,532,000	13.8%	62,412,000	13.7%	2.6%
Western Africa	adherents of traditional African religions	158,898,000	51.6%	246,130,000	53.8%	3.0%
Western Africa	Baha'is	37,040,000	12.0%	42,975,000	9.4%	1.0%
Western Africa	adherents of new religious movements	200,000	0.1%	278,000	0.1%	2.2%
Western Africa	Hindus	56,100	0.0%	76,300	0.0%	2.1%
Western Africa	Buddhists	39,900	0.0%	53,900	0.0%	2.0%
Western Africa	Buddhists	30,000	0.0%	38,900	0.0%	1.7%
Western Africa	Chinese folk religionists	5,800	0.0%	8,600	0.0%	2.6%
Western Africa	Sikhs	3,800	0.0%	5,500	0.0%	2.5%
Western Africa	Jews	1,600	0.0%	1,700	0.0%	0.1%
Western Africa	people professing no religion	951,000	0.3%	1,470,000	0.3%	2.9%
<b>Western Africa</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>307,982,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>457,071,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>

Source: Centre for the Study of World Christianity (CSGC), Boston, Gordon-Conwell TS

### Defining the Scope

West Africa, which is the westernmost sub-region of the African continent, consists of eighteen countries. Along the coast are Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Landlocked countries include Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. The three island nations are Sao Tome and Principe, Cape Verde and Saint Helena.

### **Developmental Process and Effects of Christian Faith**

Appraising the development, expansion and effects of Christian faith in West Africa is an intricate undertaking because of the uneven nature in the advancement of Christianity in this sub-region. Peter Falk overlooks some nuances in his classification and distinguishes three broad categories: first, countries with minority churches but with a Christian presence (Senegal, Gambia, Guinea and Portuguese Guinea); second, countries with older churches but many unbaptized members (Sierra Leone and Liberia); and third are all others which are said to have growing churches but with new challenges.<sup>1</sup>

#### **When did Christianity Start in West Africa?**

It is pretty difficult to fix exact dates for the early advances of Christian faith in West Africa. Some anthropologists and archaeologists excavated a variety of ornamental crosses in the artwork of the Tuareg, a tribal people of the Sahara, some of whom still live in the counties of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Some scholars hold that the crosses discovered are a resounding corroboration of an early Christian presence in West Africa, while others contend that the crosses unearthed merely represent the four directions of the magnet or needle compass. Be that as it may, whatever Christian influence on the Tuareg apparently then existed has become extinct. Today, nearly all the people in that region of the Sahara are Muslims.

#### **Early Christian Outreach in West Africa**

As one scans through the history of the development of Christianity in North Africa, one comes to grips with the fact that Christianity is not foreign to the African continent because the active influence of Christianity on the continent dates back to the early centuries of the Ancient Christianity period. Incidentally, there are no indications whatsoever that the influence of the celebrated North African Church extended to West Africa. It is obvious that, by the time the Catholic missionaries who introduced Christianity in some parts of West Africa arrived in the fifteenth century, they had to contend with the challenges of converting the adherents of African indigenous religions and Islam.

##### *Phase One: The Portuguese Mission to West Africa*

Portugal was the first western nation to introduce Christianity to West Africa. Some Catholic missionaries accompanied a team of over six hundred Portuguese explorers in pursuit of Prince Henry the Navigator's dream of discovering a sea route to the locale of gold deposits in West Africa and the site of spices in India. After a series of expeditions between 1422 and 1445, some of the explorers and missionaries reached the Senegal River on the West African Coast in 1445. From this time, Portuguese trading ships made steady voyages down the coast of West Africa. They established outposts in Shama in 1471 and another in Elmina where, on 20th January 1482, they celebrated mass and prayed for the conversion of the native peoples to Christianity and also for the prosperity of the church which they intended to establish in that region. Indeed, one of the motives of Prince Henry was to establish what Pobe called *Republica Christiana* in which the mission lands would become the common property of all Christian countries.<sup>2</sup> It is important however to mention that the Christian mission zealously embarked upon by Prince Henry and his emissary came as a package with diverse motives, the others of which were as valuable to Portugal as evangelism. In fact, some scholars assert that the primary motive of the Portuguese was not to evangelize the people of West Africa, but to engage them in trade. Undoubtedly, shortly before then, news had

<sup>1</sup> Peter Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa*, Bukuru: ACTS, 1997, 313-62.

<sup>2</sup> John S Pobe, *AD 2000 and After The Future of God's Mission in Africa* Accra: Asempa 1991, 4.

reached Europe that gold was flourishing around Timbuktu and the Wangara areas down the western coast. That ostensibly explains why the King of Portugal, with the help of the Pope, ensured that Portugal had not only the spiritual but also the political and economic monopoly of the Guinea Coast trade and the sea route to India. In order to ward off all possible competitors from the lucrative traffic in gold and later in slaves, the King of Portugal built a fort at Elmina. As the discovery of lands along the West African coast and the fame of Portugal increased, Pope Nicholas V granted the Portuguese the right of *Patroado*. By this papal decree, Portugal was given the highest recognition to have sovereignty over all lands discovered in her expeditions. In 1494, Pope Alexander VI not only validated the privileges of *Patroado* given to the Portuguese but also shored it up with the Treaty of Tordesillas. This agreement made the Prince of Portugal responsible for the financial support and sustenance of the missionaries and gave him exclusive rights to all ecclesiastical appointments and revenues in Africa and parts of Brazil.<sup>3</sup> The enterprise was intended to help Portugal seize political and economic control of Africa from the Muslims. Within the vast lands allotted to Portugal, Catholic priests embarked on missionary ventures in four major areas in West Africa: Sao Tome and Principe, Elmina, Benin and Warri.

#### MISSIONARY VENTURES IN CAPE VERDE, SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE (1470-1707)

The two island nations – Cape Verde in the far west and Sao Tome and Principe farther south – were discovered and colonized by the Portuguese. Before the arrival of the Portuguese, the islands were sparsely populated. Soon, African slaves were imported there to work on the cotton and sugar plantations.<sup>4</sup> Sao Tome soon became an economic and spiritual centre. Huge amounts of sugar were exported from there to Europe. The two islands were created bishoprics in 1533 and 1534 respectively. Some Africans on the islands were converted, while a few were ordained. Several attempts were made by these bishoprics to introduce Christianity in the hinterland of the sub-region.

#### MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE AT ELMINA: (1482-1576)

Inside the Castle at Elmina, a church was built. From here, efforts were made by the priests to convert the inhabitants of Elmina. Apparently the King of Elmina and a handful of people were baptized. Diego d'Alvarengo's treatise to the King of Portugal further disclosed that, about twenty years after the diminutive conversion at Elmina, there was a mass conversion at Efutu. Regrettably, about a decade after these seemingly promising responses, nothing was left of these conversions at Elmina and Efutu.<sup>5</sup> The Roman Catholic work came to a halt in the Gold Coast in 1637 with not much to show for their efforts.

#### MISSIONARY PURSUITS IN BENIN CITY (1485-1707)

The earliest sphere of a Christian mission in Nigeria, in the fifteenth century, was in Benin, and it was pioneered by the missionaries who came with the Portuguese traders. In 1486, diplomatic ties were established between *Oba* Uzolua of Benin<sup>6</sup> and Joao Alfonso d'Aveiro on behalf of the King of Portugal. Consequently, the *Oba* allowed the Portuguese to build a trading post at Gwato. Relations between Benin

<sup>3</sup> The other side of the globe was allotted to Spain. The line of demarcation was the 45<sup>0</sup> west longitude through the Atlantic and Brazil.

<sup>4</sup> John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 2009, 49.

<sup>5</sup> See J. K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1994, 58; Lamin Sanneh *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, London, C. Hurst, 1983, 25.

<sup>6</sup> The *Oba* of Benin, or *Omo N'Oba*, *Emini mini mini* is the traditional ruler of the Edo people and head of the historic Eweka dynasty of the Great Benin Empire - a West African empire centered on Benin City, in modern-day Nigeria.

and Portugal grew stronger and trade in gold, palm oil, ivory and pepper in exchange for glassware, liquor, salt and manufactured goods increased. The Portuguese priests seized the opportunity which these positive developments brought in order to attempt the conversion of the king, hoping that the subjects would follow the king's example robotically. The attempts to convert the *Oba* of Benin met with failure. The *Oba* Uzolua and his successors demonstrated that they were interested only in commercial activities and in firearms and, in fact, had no serious intention of adopting a new religion which would undermine their sacred position within their own society. During the reign of *Oba* Orhogbua, a few conversions were made, but Christianity remained a minority religion restricted to the king's palace. A few attempts made in succeeding years also failed.

#### MISSION IN WARRI (1555-1807)

In 1555, the Bishop of Sao Tome, the Augustinian Gasper Cao, sent a mission to Warri.<sup>7</sup> The Augustinian monks called upon the *Olu* (King) of Warri who embraced Christianity to the point of allowing his son and heir to the throne not only to be baptized but also to adopt the name Sebastiao (Sebastine). When Sebastine succeeded his father as the *Olu*, he reinforced the relationship between Roman Catholicism and the palace by sending one of his sons, Domingo, to Portugal to be trained for the priesthood. Domingo did not remain celibate: after his ten years' stay in Portugal, he arrived in Warri with a Portuguese wife. But Domingo remained devoted to the faith. When Domingo's son, Antonio, became the *Olu*, he bolstered further the affinity between Roman Catholicism and the royal household. Indeed, for the next century and a half or so (1570-1733), Warri rulers were proclaimed as professing Christians. However, this royal household faith did not seem to have had much effect upon the common people. In any case, by the middle of the eighteenth century, Roman Catholicism had practically disappeared from Warri. The only fragments which then suggested that Christianity was ever known in the region were religious objects of art like crucifixes, statues of Christ, images of the Blessed Mary and some sacred vessels. Later, most of these were also brought out of the region by the slave trade.

#### *Factors Responsible for the Failure of the Second Missionary Enterprise*

The fundamental question to ask is: why did the attempts to plant Christianity in these initial prospective Christian centres fail?

Apart from the marginal success stories found in the Islands of Cape Verde and Sao Tome, the Portuguese mission enterprise, by and large, failed. Enduring missionary enterprise in West Africa had to wait until the nineteenth century. A number of factors were responsible for the failure of this mission. First, in the whole missionary adventure there were personal interests at play on the part of the Europeans as well as of the Africans. The missionaries worked with a lot of zeal and enthusiasm initially but soon their interest in trade outstripped their interest in missions. The Portuguese built a trade empire and claimed that it was by divine intervention that they were brought to trade in gold, in liquor and in slaves. It is extraordinary to learn that the state Council, *Mesa de consciencia e ordens*, advised King Felipe that 'priests should be brought to Warri on trading vessels but that they should support themselves by trading in slaves'. Second, the earliest missionaries adopted a militant stance. With the ideology called *Requerimiento*, the Portuguese attempted to coerce the Africans into converting or facing hostilities.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, a number of people who accepted the faith possibly did so under duress. Third, the Europeans exhibited a negative attitude towards African culture and they suppressed indigenous religions. They taught that Christianity and European culture were coterminous (one always alongside the other), and

<sup>7</sup> The Kingdom of Warri is a traditional state based on the town of Warri in Delta State, Nigeria.

<sup>8</sup> See J. S. Pobee, *Skenosis: Christian Faith in an African Context*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1992, 12.

they therefore created a so-called Christian community composed of their mixed-blood descendants and converts from the lower strata of society. African Christians were segregated so that they could leave their 'heathen' ways and imbibe approved 'civilized' ways. For many, the missionaries were seen to symbolize an extension of intolerable Portuguese interference in local affairs. Fourth, they adopted a faulty strategy: The Portuguese attempted to spread the faith by first converting the kings, believing that their subjects would thereby follow robotically. In most cases there was no mass conversion outside the palace. Along with this, they adopted the 'package deal' by which they offered European goods in exchange for acceptance of Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Fifth, numerous tropical diseases took their toll on personnel sent to the coast of West Africa. In fact, most of the earliest missionaries sent to the coast died young. Others were compelled to return to Europe on account of ill health. Consequently, there was the problem of stability and continuity. Important, also, was the fact that the territory granted by the Holy See to the King of Portugal to oversee, through the accord of *Patroado*, was too large and beyond the capacity of the human and material resources available. Finally, the presence of strong Muslim population and the challenges posed by Muslim missionaries, who were spreading Islamic civilization about this time, served as obstacles to the Portuguese missionary enterprise. Incidentally, Islam accommodated some of the practices of the Africans, such as polygyny, which the Portuguese rejected.

*Phase Two: European and American Missionary Enterprise in West Africa*

Enduring and successful missionary enterprise began in West Africa in the nineteenth century. This time, the initiative was dominated by the Protestant churches of Europe and America. The Catholics joined in the expedition almost half a century later. Three major factors contributed to the influx of the European and American missionaries into West Africa. The first was the abolition of the *Atlantic slave trade*. The second had to do with the *resettlement of freed slaves in Sierra Leone (1787) and Liberia (in 1822)*. The third was the *Evangelical Revival* and the consequent establishment of missionary societies.

The *Trans-Saharan slave trade*. Historically, the Portuguese initiated the transatlantic slave trade during the conclaves mission in 1441. In course of this mission, a Portuguese explorer, named Gon, captured some African slaves whom he presented to Prince Henry as gifts. Henry received these 'gifts', apparently with the intention of using them as a method of propagating the gospel. To demonstrate his aversion to the slave trade, Henry placed a ban on the further importation of slaves. However, after the death of Prince Henry, the ban on slave importation was lifted by his successors who were favourably disposed towards the trade. For almost a century or so, the Portuguese monopolized the obnoxious traffic which was later embraced by other European nations. The evils and sad effects of slavery and the slave trade have been well documented. It is important to note however that the campaign against slavery, embarked upon by Evangelical groups such the Clapham Sect, inspired the formation of overseas missionary bodies which planted Christianity in Africa. Bearing in mind that evangelism would be meaningless to slaves, the Clapham Sect saw the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery as necessary for the evangelism of Africa, and therefore fought for it tooth and nail.

The *foundation of Sierra Leone*. One of the significant achievements of the Evangelical Revival was the founding of Sierra Leone, the first West African country to be evangelized, which was founded as a home for freed slaves in 1787. By 1850, more than 50,000 former slaves, originally from many different parts of Africa, had resettled there. The uniqueness of this country stemmed from the fact

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<sup>9</sup> K.J. Agbeti, *West African Church History: Christian Missions and Church Foundation 1482-1919*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1986, 3.

that it served as the nursery and the mother of the church in West Africa. Among those liberated as former African slaves was a fairly large number of Christians who had a passion for missionary activity. They kept the fires of the gospel burning while they were in Sierra Leone. Quite a number of missionary societies, like the Church Missionary Society, the Methodist Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, used Sierra Leone as their mission headquarters in West Africa for several years. Sierra Leone also became the training base for Christianity in West Africa. Owing to the heavy mortality rate among Europeans, some of the more visionary European missionaries pressed for leadership training for Africans. Later, Christian institutions – like the famous Fourah Bay College in 1827 – were founded to assist and teach the Africans. Thus Sierra Leone, as the leader of church organization in West Africa, was the first to change from the system of a European monopoly on missions to the system of African-controlled missions, which was eventually assimilated by some African churches in West Africa. Samuel Ajayi Crowther, J.F. Schoen and S.W. Koelle remained pillars of Christianity in Sierra Leone due to their production of a grammar and the translation of the scriptures into West African languages.

The *establishment of Liberia (Land of the Freed)* is not unconnected with the history of the abolition of the slave trade. British success in resettling freed slaves in Sierra Leone encouraged the Americans to follow suit. Through this, the Americans hoped that the Negroes would be saved from humiliation and degradation which they were currently suffering in America, and at the same time make them serve as the instruments by which ‘civilization’ and Christianity would spread to the ‘darkest’ parts of Africa.<sup>10</sup> The first group of settlers, which consisted of 88 people, arrived at Shebro Island in 1820. For the next seventy years. (1821-1891), nearly 17,000 freed slaves from the USA settled along the coast of Liberia. Missionaries moved into the hinterland of these settlements, where they converted thousands of indigenous Liberians to the Christian faith. The introduction of Christianity and education in Liberia marked a great turning point in the political life of the Liberians. They ushered in a great political awareness among Africans. No wonder Liberia has won the distinction of being the foremost independent state in West Africa. A notable achievement of Liberia was the establishment of the radio station ELWA which was established by the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), broadcasting gospel programmes in over forty languages to all parts of Africa and the Middle East. Another remarkable achievement of the Liberian church was the exploits of the prophet William Harris, the impact of whose ministry was felt more in Ivory Coast and Western Ghana. Some of the ecumenical organizations in Liberia are the Liberia Evangelical Fundamental Fellowship and the Christian Rural Fellowship.

#### ***The Evangelical Revival and the Activation of Vibrant Missionary Enterprise in West Africa***

The Protestant revival movements in Europe and America were the results of a new religious and moral awakening which swept through the Protestant countries of Europe and America towards the close of the eighteenth century. This Protestant revival was popularly known as *Pietism* in Germany, the *Evangelical Movement* in Britain, and the *Great Awakening* in the USA. In religious spheres, these revivals gave rise to a strong and active desire to spread the gospel to the non-Christian peoples of Asia and Africa. The result was the formation of a number of missionary societies in Europe and America. These sent missionaries out to West Africa and other parts of the world. Before Evangelicals took to the stage, there were only three missionary societies, namely, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England (1649), the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1698), and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701).

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<sup>10</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 90.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Evangelical Revival led to the founding of more than ten broad-based Protestant missionary societies. These included the Baptist Missionary Society (1792); William Carey, on a voluntary basis, served as its first representative abroad. The year 1793, when Carey set out for India to proclaim the gospel, is generally held to be the outset of the era of modern missions. Among others was the London Missionary Society, which was organized as an ecumenical effort by the Anglicans, Methodists and Scottish Presbyterians in 1795. The society's vigorous strategy spread to India, China, Africa, Madagascar and the West Indies. Another mission was the Glasgow and Edinburgh Society (later, the Scottish Missionary Society), which was formed as an interdenominational missionary society in 1796. The Church Missionary Society was established in April 1798 by some members of the Evangelical wing of the Church of England to serve Africa and the East. Its first field of action was Sierra Leone in West Africa. The British and Foreign Bible Society was formed in 1804 with the aim of the wide distribution of the Bible in order that converts might have easy access to the Scriptures. Stimulated by the examples of the British societies, the Americans focused more attention on the formation of missionary societies of their own, based on the London Missionary Society. Among those which emerged was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which was founded in 1810. Many others soon followed. The most influential was the American Baptist Missionary Society and the General Missionary Convention (later known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society), both founded in 1814. In the UK, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society which was born and directed by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1813, began its very dynamic West African work in The Gambia in 1821. Quite a number of missionary societies sprang up on the continent of Europe. Prominent among them was the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, better known as Basel Mission, founded in Switzerland in 1815, with the main aim of training missionaries for overseas mission. Another effective mission was the North German Missionary Society, commonly known as the Bremen Mission, founded in the city of Bremen in 1836. The Bremen Mission was well known for its unique interest in the training of local leadership and the effective use of local languages.

Turning to Roman Catholic Missionary Societies, we see that, motivated by Protestant Evangelical fervour, the Roman Catholic Church also formed in this way own missionary societies in France and other parts of Europe. The Holy Ghost Fathers emerged as an Evangelical or missionary movement in 1841. This was followed by the formation of the *Societas Missionum ad Afros*, also known as the Society for African Missions (SMA) – founded in 1858 by Bishop Marion Bresillac, with intention of forming a society of young missionaries who would devote their lives to the conversion of Africans. This society started its work in Serra Leone in 1859, went to Dahomey (Benin) in 1860, Nigeria in 1867, and the Gold Coast in 1880.

All these societies and others formed later in Europe and America took seriously the evangelization of Africa and other lands. Their untiring efforts laid the foundation for the permanent establishment of the Christian faith in West Africa after the initial failure of the Portuguese missionary enterprise.

#### *The Impact*

Protestant influence may be discussed under three strands. The first was marked by the arrival of Protestant nations in Africa. Soon after the British made their incursion into West Africa, many other European countries like the Dutch, the Danes, the French, the Germans and the Swedes registered their presence. The French and the British gained the most ground during the 'Scramble for Africa'. Britain administered Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia and Sierra Leone throughout the colonial era. France, on the other hand, integrated Senegal, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Ivory Coast and Niger into French West Africa. Germany initially controlled Togoland, but after World War I and the consequent Treaty of Versailles, their land was divided into two between France and Britain. Only Liberia retained its independence – at the price of major territorial concessions. The second strand was the multiplication of missionary agencies

from Europe and America that established themselves. Most of the European nations mentioned above attempted missionary work. Some of them could a measure of success while others failed through a lack of focus. The third strand of Protestant influence was the training of national Christians to participate in mission. These contributed significantly to the establishment of the church, particularly in the hinterland of Africa. They propagated the gospel in their mother tongues and gave an African flavour to the spread of the Christian message on the continent. They also helped in developing grammars for indigenous languages which became the bedrock of the development and training of local leaders for the church.<sup>11</sup> In most cases, Africans proved more suitable for evangelistic work than their European counterparts.

#### *The Taxonomy of Churches in West Africa*

**The Gold Coast** (today's Ghana): Early efforts by Protestant churches to establish enduring mission stations failed. Anglican missionaries from England, sponsored by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, initiated missionary work in the middle of the eighteenth century when the Rev. Fr Thomas Thompson was sent to the Gold Coast in May 1751. He made some effort to go beyond chaplaincy confines to evangelise in the towns of Anomabu, Winneba and Tantom. Some of his Fante converts were ordained and trained in Europe as ministers. Jacobus Capitein and Philip Quaque are two of the better-known figures. Quaque served as an Anglican chaplain of the Colonial Forts for 55 years. He is claimed to have laid the foundation of Anglicanism which gave birth to some churches in other sectors later. Jacob Capitein also served as a key figure in the team of the first Bible translation project in the region. In spite of these apparent successes, it is generally held that, in missionary terms, these Fante missionaries did not achieve very much. The Anglican Church had to wait until the beginning of the twentieth century before it reactivated its evangelization work in the Gold Coast. The Basel Mission consequently became the first Protestant group to establish an enduring mission in the Gold Coast. Its first set of missionaries arrived at Osu, in Accra, on 18th December 1828. All four of these missionaries died. The challenges of malaria and adverse climatic conditions compelled the survivor of second batch of three, Andreas Riis, to relocate to Akropong in Akwapim, about 35km from Accra, where the Basel Mission established their remarkable mission station.<sup>12</sup> From 1843, the Basel Mission made tremendous strides when it engaged very effectively some freed African slaves from Jamaica in its wide evangelistic efforts. The Mission established a model Christian community called Salem as experimental encampments for their converts at Akropong and later in Osu. These quarters had their levels of authority and a code of social and religious behaviour. The Mission embraced the name Presbyterian Church of Gold Coast in 1926. At independence, the name was changed to the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG). Today, the PCG is one of the notable providers of sound formal education in Ghana. It is also heavily involved in overseas mission, especially in The Netherlands, Germany, and Austria. The Basel Mission was followed by the Wesleyan Methodists who were invited by a Fante study group in 1834. The Methodist Conference in Britain appointed Joseph Dunwell as a missionary to serve as spiritual guide for the Bible and prayer fellowship and he arrived on 1st January 1835. Within six months, membership rose to over 100 in Cape Coast and almost 70 in Anomabo. Dunwell died after just six months' work in the Gold Coast. He was succeeded by George Wrigley, who also died after fourteen months there. The third missionary, Thomas Birch Freeman, a "mulatto" (person born of one white parent and one black parent), initiated a vibrant native ministry through in-service training. This effort produced some early Methodist ministers and assistants, who embarked on hinterland mission in the Gold Coast, Dahomey, Togo and Nigeria. Freeman's missionary zeal for the well-being of the native population, as well as his long and distinguished career, earned him the

<sup>11</sup> Agbeti, *West African Church History*, Vol. 1, 6.

<sup>12</sup> See D.N.A. Kpobi, *Mission in Ghana: The Ecumenical Heritage*, Accra: Asempa, 2008, 70-3.

well deserved recognition as the ‘Father of Ghanaian Methodism’.<sup>13</sup> The North German Missionary Society (Bremen Mission) sent some missionaries to Gabon. When the mission there failed, they made a detour to the Eweland where they founded the Ewe Presbyterian Church in 1847. The Mission changed its name to Evangelical Presbyterian Church when its evangelistic outreach extended beyond Eweland. The African Methodist-Episcopal (AMEZion) Mission (an Afro-American group) founded her church also among the Ewes in Keta on the east coast of the Gold Coast in 1898.<sup>14</sup> There are two versions of the story of the emergence of the Baptist Convention in the Gold Coast. The first is that some Nigerian Baptists, particularly the Yoruba, established churches in the towns where they settled in order to trade. Indeed, there are quite a number of such churches, some dating back to the early 1920s in Kumasi, Cape Coast, Accra, Techiman, Sefwi-Bekwai and Tamale, to name just a few. The second version relates to the National Baptist Church which was founded by the Rev. Christian Mark Hayford. He became a Baptist while he spent time in Nigeria. Hayford established the Native Baptist Church in Cape Coast and Accra as part of the West African church movement proposed by Wilmot Blyden. Unlike the Yoruba Baptists, Hayford’s church stood for self-reliance and independence, in line with nationalistic aspirations. After his death in 1935, not much was heard about the National Baptist Church until quite recently when a church in Accra was named after him. The churches established by the Yoruba, on the other hand, with the collaboration of the Southern Baptist Convention and the indigenous Baptist churches, metamorphosed into the Ghana Baptist Convention in 1964. The Salvation Army, which was founded in Great Britain in 1865, established a branch at Agona Duakwa in 1922, and soon afterwards founded a relatively larger church in Accra.

**Nigeria:** The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was the first to sow the seeds of Christianity in the country. The Methodist pioneer Freeman, from the Gold Coast as already mentioned, arrived in Badagry on September 23rd 1842. Hot on the heels of the Methodists came the Anglican mission which was sponsored by the Church Missionary Society. The CSM missionary, Henry Townsend, arrived at Badagry in December 1842. The Church of Scotland Mission followed in its tracks when it dispatched the Rev. Hope Masterdon Waddell to pioneer the United Presbyterian Mission in Old Calabar among the Efik people in 1846.<sup>15</sup> The Rev. T.J. Bowen of the Southern Baptist Mission arrived at Badagry in 1850 as the leader of the fourth missionary society. The Roman Catholic Church, through the *Société des Missionnaires Africaines* (SMA) launched a second, successful, attempt between 1860 and 1868, and its impact was felt in Lagos, Onitsha and Kaduna. In order to solidify their gains, the SMA established an experimental Christian community in Topo – a narrow piece of land outside Lagos. In 1887, the Qua Iboe Mission, a Congregationalist assemblage, was founded by a Scottish missionary, Samuel Bill, in the neighbourhood of the Qua Iboe River and Etinam. In 1893, the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) sent three ministers – Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent and Rowland Bingham – to the northern region of Nigeria. Attempts by the SIM to establish churches in this region in the nineteenth century failed. However, a third attempt in 1901 resulted in the establishment of some churches in northern Nigeria. SIM-related churches were later designated Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA).<sup>16</sup> In 1904, the Sudan United Mission (SUM) was formed to assist the SIM in meeting the challenge of reaching the tribes in northern Nigeria.

<sup>13</sup> C. B. Essamuah, *Genuinely Ghanaian: A History of the Methodist Church, Ghana, 1961-2000*, Trenton: AWP, 2010, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Kpobi, *Mission in Ghana*, 70-3.

<sup>15</sup> See E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1642-1914*, 7: In September 1875, Mary Mitchell Slessor arrived in Calabar as a Presbyterian missionary from the Church of Scotland Mission to strengthen the efforts of Waddell. She fought hard and bravely to abolish many cruel customs and traditions.

<sup>16</sup> The SIM changed her name in the 1950s to the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) See A. Ijagbemi, *Christian Missionary Activity in Nigeria: The Work of the SIM among the Yoruba 1908-1967*, Lagos, 1988.

**In Senegal:** The Wesleyan Methodists pioneered missions in this area in 1821. Owing to adverse weather and disease, which depleted the number of white missionaries who ventured into Senegal, few achievements can be ascribed to them. Another principal challenge was the influx of North Africans who settled in Senegal and converted the native peoples to Islam. Consequently, Senegal is one of the places where, exceptionally, Christians are in the minority. A recent and reliable census shows that the entire Christian community of Senegal is only about 3% of the population. Most of these Christians live in the south among the Serer and Mandingo peoples. In recent times, the *Eglise de Dakar* and the Roman Catholics have recorded some breakthroughs. The *Eglise de Dakar* has supported some African medical missionaries who have offered clinical assistance and embarked on youth work. The Roman Catholic missions' successful agricultural ventures have also augmented the Christian presence in Senegal.

**The Gambia:** The great majority of the people are Muslims. That is not because the influence of the Evangelical Revival was not felt there. An Anglican chaplain arrived in 1816 and the Wesleyan Methodist Church attempted to establish a foothold in that country as early as in 1821. The efforts of the Methodists were, however, stalled because of the climate. Other protestant missions who tried to establish their mission stations were discouraged by the overwhelming allegiance of many Gambians to Islam and failed to make progress in the country. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some missionaries, like the Anglicans under the supervision of the USPG and a team from the Roman Catholic Church under the auspices of the Holy Ghost Fathers, also made many attempts, none of which yielded very encouraging results.

**Guinea:** The majority of the population, about 70%, are also Muslims, and only about 5% are Christians, while most of the people in the forest regions are adherents of African indigenous religions. A small party from the Baptist Missionary Society undertook a missionary enterprise in 1795. The following year, the Glasgow Missionary Society and the LMS made great efforts to establish their mission stations in the country. These efforts did not produce a large harvest of souls because of the climate and the high mortality rate of Christian workers. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the CMS from the West Indies and some Roman Catholic missionaries were able to register a marginal Christian presence in this area through their medical and educational institutions. In the twentieth century, the Christian and Missionary Alliance started work at Baro in the Niger Valley. In the 1930s, the CMA was able to establish its headquarters in Kankan where it still has some schools and a thriving printing press.

**Portuguese Guinea:** Most of the native population is Muslim. The Worldwide Evangelization Crusade started work there in 1939, and in 1973 they had five workers. The Protestant community numbered about 1,320. Generally, in this area it is not a thriving Christian mission.

**Ivory Coast:** The Christian church in Ivory Coast is in a minority; most people are strong adherents of traditional religion and Islam. The effects of William Wade Harris's movement<sup>17</sup> is still felt in Ivory Coast. Harrism is very strong in the rural areas, especially among the Ebire and Attie living in the south-east of Ivory Coast. Roman Catholics also exercise much influence in secular matters due to their legacy of educational institutions.

**Mali:** As in a number of regions in West Africa, Christians are in the minority in Mali. Until very recently, Christianity was strongly resisted by the indigenous Dogon people, but later a few of them embraced Christianity. Statistics show that, in spite of this effort, Christians constitute less than 1% of the population.

**Burkina Faso:** Almost half the population of Burkina Faso are Muslims, while less than 20% are Christians. Most of the Christians are Mossi and mainly Roman Catholics. The Catholics and a few

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<sup>17</sup> William Wade Harris (1860-1929), the so-called Black Elias of West Africa, was a Liberian Grebo evangelist, who preached in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Protestants who have ventured into the country have complained of adverse ecology and the people's insensitivity to the Christian mission.

**Benin:** The Spanish Capuchins and Thomas Birch Freeman made some efforts to evangelize Dahomey in the seventeenth century. Their efforts produced few results due to the unfavourable disposition of the King of Dahomey and persecution of the converts. Even the resilience of Father Borghero, which resulted in the establishment of a Christian community, was strongly opposed by traditional worshippers. Today, more than half of the Beninoise maintain that they are adherents of traditional religious beliefs, chiefly *Vodun* (a belief in spirits). It is claimed that about 25% are Christians, with the majority of them Roman Catholics.

**Niger:** 98% of the population of Niger are said to be Muslims. Missionaries from France tried, on a number of occasions, to establish their mission outposts in Niger. Most of the Christians – who are foreigners – constitute less than 1% of the population. The main challenge has to do with the indifferent disposition of the indigenous Christians towards reaching out to the adherents of indigenous religions with the gospel.

**Togo:** The Bremen Mission recorded much success in Togo, particularly in founding schools for children and catechists since 1847. The Bremen workers consolidated their mission with their successful involvement of the indigenous people in the Mission and the subsequent establishment of indigenous Christianity. The Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society also registered some missionary presence through the missionary efforts of Freeman and his team. The Roman Catholic Church is the third mission which is making successful waves in the country through its educational and medical enterprises.

#### *Phase Three: The Nativist or Ethiopian Churches*

Ethiopia occupies a very important position in the history of African politics and religion. The Psalmist's proclamation: 'Ambassadors will come from Egypt, Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to God' (Ps. 68:31) is understood to be a prediction of the entry of black Africans into the household of God. J.S. Pobe explains that this prophecy is construed by some Africans to mean a shift of Christianity's centre of gravity from the North (Euro-America) to the South (Africa).<sup>18</sup>

In Nigeria, the first of a long list of Ethiopian churches was the Native Baptist Church, which severed her relationship with the Southern (American) Baptist Church in March 1888. A couple of years later, a multi-denominational congregation, the United Native Church (UNA), was founded in Lagos. It celebrated its first anniversary in December 1902 with the dedication of its first chapel: the African Church, Bethel. The origins of the United African Methodist Church *Eleja* (UAMC) are traced to the high-handedness of the Rev. D.H. Loko who had the support of the Rev. G.O. Griffin, Chairman of the Lagos District, to excommunicate from the church worshippers who were known to be polygamists. Sixty-five polygamists who were excommunicated resolved to establish a separate 'organization which will not be governed or controlled by the missionaries'.<sup>19</sup>

In the Gold Coast, there were not less than four groups that may be described as precursors of African Indigenous Churches (AICs). One was motivated by the desire to achieve a purer Christian way of life. Three others seemed to have been inspired by nationalistic feelings. They aimed to achieve complete independence from European authority and standards of conduct. The first sect, the Methodist Society or *Akonomnsu* (Water Drinkers), which had its base at Anomabu, broke away from the Methodist congregation in 1862. The date suggests that this was the first secession from any mission establishment in Africa south of the Sahara. The sect, though claiming to strive for a purer form of Christianity, had a curious mixture of traditional religious ideas, both pseudo-Christian and anti-Christian. Apart from their

<sup>18</sup> J.S. Pobe, *AD 2000 and After: The Future of God's Mission in Africa*. Accra: Asempa, 1991, 53-61.

<sup>19</sup> See Deji Ayegboyin and Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches*, Greater Heights, 1997.

rigid stand against the drinking and selling of liquor, they pulled their children out of mission schools. They refused to pay church dues, and they also maintained that it was wrong for Christians to sweep the house or to cultivate the ground on which the palm tree grows, because wine and brooms came from that tree. The *Akonomnsu* Society had a rather short existence for, after a decade or so, the Methodist Church tried to deal with the accusation. In 1874, the church authorities took a firm stand against the buying and selling of liquor among the its members. Thus, the *Akonomnsu*'s justification for breaking away was dealt with and virtually nothing henceforth was heard about the society. The first church which was founded in Ghana with a nationalistic undertone was the National Baptist Church (referred to above). The main significance of this church is that it maintained a link with other separatist movements in West Africa. After the death of Hayford in 1935, not much was heard about the it. The Nigritian Church started as a congregation of some forty members of the Anomabu Methodist Church who dared to raise their voices against the Methodist authority's ruling regarding participation in singing bands. The dissidents felt that there was nothing wrong with Christians taking part in the *Fante* custom of dancing to the tune of singing bands. In 1907, when the Methodist ministers maintained their position and went ahead to carry out their threat to excommunicate the dissidents, they separated and went by the name 'The Nigritian Church'. The establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ) was influenced by the AMEZ, which started in New York as a dissident group in 1796. It was introduced to Ghana in 1898 by John Bryan Small who served as a sergeant in the West African Regiment, stationed in the Gold Coast before he went to the USA to be ordained. Bishop Small's church seemed to have been primarily interested in awakening colour consciousness. AMEZ was a totally black people's congregation and entirely governed by Africans.

It is important to note that these Ethiopian or African churches had no scruples over their manner of worship, nor were they motivated to fully indigenize Christianity. Consequently, they took over the structure and patterns of worship which they inherited, without modification from their parent mission churches. Those who see classifications of churches in Africa in terms of reactions to white people's cultural domination and power in the church refer to Ethiopianism as the first response.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Phase Four: African Indigenous Churches (AICs)*

The most dynamic phenomenon in African Christianity in the twentieth century was the growth of the AICs. They are the churches that made concerted efforts to adapt Christianity to the African condition rather than accept the foreign structure of western missionary religion.<sup>21</sup> The most widely accepted terms now are 'African Instituted Churches', 'African Indigenous Churches', 'African Initiatives in Christianity' and, most recently, 'African Initiated Christianity'.<sup>22</sup> They emerged from within the mainstream (or mission-planted) churches after the 1920s.

In Nigeria, the churches in this category are Christ Apostolic Church, the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement, Church of the Lord: (*Aladura*), Celestial Church of Christ, and the splinter groups which broke away from the four primary assemblages to set up their own places of worship.<sup>23</sup>

In the Gold Coast, the first prophetic movement with the most far-reaching impact was the one started by William Wade Harris between 1913 and 1915. His itinerary and working area covered mostly Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast. Even though he had a large following, he did not establish a church. After his death, the onus fell on his adherents, John Nackabah and Grace Tani, who established the Twelve Apostles Church which continues to spread Harris's teachings. The *Musama Disco Christo* Church (MDCC) is one

<sup>20</sup> See Ogbu Kalu, "The Third Response: Pentecostalism and the Reconstruction of Christian Experience in Africa, 1970-1995", *Journal of African Christian Thought* Vol. 1(2) 1993, 3.

<sup>21</sup> N. Smart, *The World's Religions: Old Traditions and Modern Transformations*, Cambridge: CUP, 1989, p. 524.

<sup>22</sup> J.S. Pobe and Gabriel Oshitelu, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches: A Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement*. Geneva: WCC, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> See Ayegboyin and Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches*.

of the oldest indigenous churches in West Africa. This church, like most other independent movements, began as a prayer group within the Methodist Church at Gomoa Oguan in 1919. The founder, Joseph Egyanka Appiah, Akaboa I, introduced a system of communal living for his followers in a new settlement called *Muzano* (God's own town) in the Central Region of Ghana. Other notable indigenous *sunsum sore* (spiritual churches)<sup>24</sup> include: *Odifo* (Prophet) Kwame Nkansa's African Faith Tabernacle which specializes in deliverance from the oppression of witchcraft and demonology, the Prophet Samuel Brako's Saviour's Church at Akim Osiem. In addition, Charles Komla Nutonuti 'Wovenu' founded the Apostles' Revelation Society near Keta in 1945 as a faith healing movement which enjoys much patronage.

The churches in this group have discernible characteristics in their historical context of emergence, doctrine, style of leadership and social impact which mark them out from the historic churches and later Pentecostal movements.

#### *Phase Five: Pentecostalism*

Another significant landmark in Christianity in the twentieth century was the emergence of the Pentecostals. The claim by some scholars that Pentecostalism was 'imported' into Africa has been contested.<sup>25</sup> It is obvious, at least, in the case of Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia, that some Pentecostal-like indigenous movements appeared in the second decade of the twentieth century as unprompted and autonomous prophetic mass organizations. A foremost example is the revivalist movement started by William Wade Harris in Liberia which had resounding impact in Ivory Coast and Ghana. Another one was led by prophet Garrick Braide in Nigeria. The Christ Army Church which emerged from Braide's movement is reputedly known as the first Pentecostal denomination in Nigeria. At least four strands of Pentecostalism may be distinguished in West Africa.

**Classical Pentecostals:** These churches are the institutionalized foreign Pentecostal organizations. They originated from Europe and America. In Nigeria, The Faith Tabernacle of Philadelphia, which was the first such organization, stamped her influence through contact with the leaders of *Okuta Iyebiye* (The Diamond Society) in 1923. Even though their influence on the indigenous Diamond Society was for only four years, some Faith Tabernacle churches, which were established in pockets of Nigeria, retained their designation. The second is the Apostolic Church, from Bradford (UK), whose delegation arrived in September 1931 by invitation from the indigenous leaders of the Faith Tabernacle who were being persecuted by the colonial authorities. The third – the Assemblies of God – was born in Nigeria when a group of indigenous Christians who went by the name 'The Church of Jesus Christ' in Umuahia, requested the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri, to send them a resident missionary. In June 1939, the Rev. and Mrs William Shirer met with the pastors and congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ. The agreement of affiliation, sanctioned in August 1939, resulted in the renaming of the Church of Jesus Christ as Assemblies of God. Others include: the Apostolic Faith and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

In Ghana during this period, a number of foreign Pentecostal churches from North America and Europe established their missions in the country. Notable among them are the Assemblies of God (AG), the Apostolic Church, the Elim Pentecostal Church (EPC), the Lutheran Church of Ghana and the Foursquare Gospel Church (FGC).

These churches, which were founded overseas in the early twentieth century, generally maintain four cardinal doctrines: instant salvation<sup>26</sup> (referred to as the finished work of Calvary doctrine), but with progression through life in a process of continual sanctification; an emphasis on baptism with (or in) the Holy Spirit as an endowment of power subsequent to conversion; *glossolalia* as the biblical evidence of

<sup>24</sup> See C.G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, London: SCM, 1962.

<sup>25</sup> See eg. Paul Gifford, "Prosperity: A new and Foreign Element in African Christianity" *Religion*, Vol. 20 (1990) 382.

<sup>26</sup> Indeed, there are Second Work Pentecostals who hold on to the three acts of grace: conversion, sanctification and baptism in the spirit. In this group are: the Church of God in Christ and the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

receiving baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the continuing validity of spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. In practice, the Classical Pentecostals, by contrast with the New Pentecostals, have a blend of extremist Wesleyan and Keswick views. They emphasize maturing into perfection after conversion, along with strict moral and dress codes.

**Indigenous Pentecostal Groups:** In Nigeria, there are home-grown Pentecostal groups, dating from the 1950s and 1960s. These were not set up under the auspices of foreign Pentecostal missions. The first in this group is the *Ogo Oluwa* Society, which blossomed into the Redeemed Christian Church of God in 1952. This church was founded by the Rev. Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi who initially belonged to the Cherubim and Seraphim Society. The founder of the church said he was warned in a vision not to affiliate with any 'foreign church'.<sup>27</sup> Others in this group include the Victory Gospel Church in Lagos, which was founded in 1958 by Pastor J.O. Olatunji; the Gospel Pentecostal Assembly, founded in Lagos in 1958 by Pastor Badejo; the Evangel Faith Mission (1962); The Gospel Faith Mission which was a merger of the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Gospel Mission (1962) and a few others.

In Ghana, the most significant development in indigenous Pentecostal missions occurred with the movement begun by Apostle Anim in 1927. Just as happened in Nigeria, Anim solicited the support of the Apostolic Church, England, which sent a delegation led by Pastor and Mrs James McKeown in 1937. Later, the schism in the classical movement formed, resulting in the springing up of three distinct groups, namely, the Apostolic Church (TAC), the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), and the blossoming and growing indigenous Church of Pentecost (COP).

**Charismatic and the New Pentecostal Churches:** Some scholars of new religious movements prefer to use the term 'Charismatic' to describe contemporary Pentecostal movements. Ojo,<sup>28</sup> for example, prefers characterizing the religious awakening of the late 1960s and 1970s as 'Charismatic revival'. Hackett<sup>29</sup> uses 'Charismatic' and 'Pentecostal' interchangeably. Ruth Marshall agrees with Ojo to position the genesis of this charismatic revival in Nigeria in the early 1970s.<sup>30</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu restricts 'Charismatic' to Pentecostal renewal movements that operate within historic mission denominations or mainstream churches.<sup>31</sup>

The Charismatic movement is a spiritual renewal rooted partly in the earlier wave of Pentecostalism, the origins of which historically demarcate Classical Pentecostalism from New Pentecostalism. The Charismatic movements resemble traditional Pentecostalism, manifesting such elements as *glossolalia*, prophecy, healing and deliverance. In the USA, the movements started in the 1950s first among Protestant churches, and later among Roman Catholics. Parrinder contends that it was from here that the movement spread outwards to Europe and other continents.<sup>32</sup>

The immediate background of charismatic movements in Nigeria was the evangelical awakening which erupted in the country's higher institutions in the 1970s. This was as a result of an intense incursion of charismatic Pentecostal ideas into university fellowships. These ideas later made inroads into the historic church bodies. The penetration was facilitated by the sporadic contacts which Pentecostal ministers and leaders had with university fellowships. With more mobility, greater prosperity and an increased

<sup>27</sup> See *Redemption Light Magazine*, Vol. 5(8) September 2000. 3-5.

<sup>28</sup> See Ojo M.A. "Deeper Life Bible Church of Nigeria" in P. Gifford (ed) *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, Ibadan: Sefer Books, 1992.

<sup>29</sup> Hackett, R.I.J. "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XXVIII/3 (1998).

<sup>30</sup> Ruth Marshall "God is Not a Democrat": Pentecostalism and Democratisation in Nigeria" in P. Gifford (ed) *Christianity and Africa's Democratisation*, Leiden: Brill Pub. 1995.

<sup>31</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "born of Water and The Spirit, Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Africa" in Ogbu Kalu (ed) *African Christianity: An African Story*, Pretoria: UP 389.

<sup>32</sup> G. Parrinder, "Charisma", *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 3, N.Y: S & S Macmillan.

circulation of Pentecostal literature, notably from Europe and America, a greater interest and acceptance of Pentecostal indoctrination became apparent in several organized student Christian bodies. Before the end of the 1970s, several multi-denominational Evangelical movements, Charismatic organizations as well as Bible study and prayer fellowships had sprouted all over Nigeria. Some of the earliest trans-denominational groups include The Hour of Freedom Evangelistic Association, in Onitsha (1970), The World Action Team for Christ (1970), The Soul Harvesters, in Warri (1971), Christ Ambassadors, Evangelistic team (1971), The Masters' Vessels Group, in Umuahia (1972), The Deeper Christian Life Fellowship, in Lagos (1973); The Grace of God Mission (1973), in Onitsha, and The Maranatha Evangelical Christian Ministry (1973). The attempts by some of these fellowships to initiate radical changes in the liturgy, Bible study and prayer meetings in the historic churches were violently rebuffed. Consequently, a few charismatic renewal movements left the historic churches. During the 1980s, a noticeable trend in charismatic advancement was the remodelling of a number of multi-denominational fellowships into denominational charismatic churches. Probably the first in this group was the *Ole-Ezi* (Prayer for the Spirit) Charismatic movement which became independent of the Anglican Church in the middle of 1970s. Another was Pastor W.F. Kumiya's Deeper Life Bible Church which was inaugurated at Gbagada, Lagos, in 1982.

The social setting of the 1980s gave birth to a plethora of Pentecostal groups, ministries, churches and para-churches competing for church membership. All over West Africa, churches evolved with so many complex varieties that they defy classification. Some are Signs and Wonders movements and quite a number are Healing and Deliverance ministries. A few which came out of the old-style Pentecostal congregations have a holiness emphasis. A number of these ministries are so recent that they lack institutionalized structures and management. Quite a number of the founders or leaders of these movements base their claims to authority on charismatic qualities. Most of these, as Marshall observes, are 'notoriously schismatic, owing partly to the struggle for clients in a competitive religious market'.<sup>33</sup> In Nigeria, we may list the following: Bishop David Oyedepo's Living Faith World Outreach (Winners chapel) which started at Kaduna in 1984; the Rev. George Adegboye's Rhema Chapel International Ministries at Ilorin in 1988, Bishop Francis Wale Oke's Christ Life Church, inaugurated at Ibadan in 1989. Others include the Rev. Kayode Olukoya's Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, Lagos, in 1989; Bishop Mike Okonkwo's Redeemed Evangelical Mission, and so on. Another interesting phenomenon during this period, which led to the rapid proliferation of Pentecostal Charismatic churches, was the rapidity with which schisms took place within the movement. The most notable ones include the Rev. Paul Jinadu's New Covenant Church which seceded from the International Foursquare Gospel Church, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor's Word of Life Bible Church which separated from Archbishop Idahosa's Church of God (Mission), and Dr Tunde Bakare's Latter Rain Assembly which broke away in 1989 from the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

In Ghana, the evangelical revivals of late 1950s and 1960s, coupled with the activities of students in Scripture Union (SU) and graduates of the Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES) in the 1960s and 1970s led to the evolution of many Christian Urban Fellowships and formation of para-church organizations. As in Nigeria, some of the leaders of these fellowships encouraged their members from mainstream churches to take the lead in the revival of their own churches. This trend significantly affected the growth of charismatic movements in the mainstream churches. Some of the early non-denominational revival movements<sup>34</sup> include the Ghana Evangelical Society (GES), led by Enoch Agbozo, the Hour of Visitation Choir and Evangelistic Association (HOVCEA), led by Brother Isaac Ababio; Youth Ambassadors for Christ (YAFCA), co-ordinated by Brother Owusu Afriyie, and Christian Outreach Fellowship (COF). Today, some of the celebrated new Pentecostal churches include Bishop Nicholas

<sup>33</sup> Ruth Marshall, "Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria: An Overview" in P. Gifford (ed) *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, Ibadan: Sefer Book 1992, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> See C.N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, Amsterdam: Boekencentrum, 2002, 95-6.

Duncan-Williams' Christian Action Faith Ministries International (CAFMI – 1980), Dr Mensah Otabil's Central Gospel Church (ICGC – 1984); Charles Agyin Asare's Word Miracle Church International (WMCI- 1987), and Lighthouse Chapel International (LHI – 1991), founded by Dag Heward-Mills.<sup>35</sup>

**Neo-Prophetism:** The latest strand of Pentecostalism which came under the purview of Gifford's discourse is Neo-Prophetism.<sup>36</sup> He mentions two movements in Ghana which are from Nigeria – namely, Abraham Chigbundu's Mark of Christ Ministries from Benin City, and the sprawling Prophet T.B. Joshua's Synagogue of All Nations, which has a branch in Accra. The most prominent Neo-Prophetic movements in Ghana include Prophet Salifu Amoako's Alive Chapel International (ACI-1994), Isaac Anto's International Christian Miracle Centre (ACMI-1999), Abubakar Bako of the Logos Rhema Foundation, and Most Senior Prophet Odeyifo Philip K Acquah's Church of Bethesda at Anyaa in Accra. These are prophetic movements which indulge in copious rituals with either water or 'holy' oil, or both, in their deliverance ministrations.

### Conclusion

Enduring and successful missionary enterprise began in West Africa in the nineteenth century. The concerted efforts of the Protestant churches of Europe and America laid the foundation for the permanent establishment of the Christian faith in West Africa after the initial failure of the Portuguese missionary enterprise. The roles of indigenous leadership and African initiatives in strengthening and proliferating the churches have been astounding. Today, the African initiatives are known to be not only Christian, but also truly evangelical, spiritual, Pentecostal and ecumenical with a both local and international appeal.

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<sup>35</sup> For a detailed discussion of Pentecostal phenomenon in Ghana, see J. Kwabena. *Asamoah-Gyadu, African Charismatics*, Leiden: Brill 2005; Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, Bloomington, IUP 2004, C. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*; E.K Larbi, *Pentecostalism - the Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, Accra; CPCS 2001.

<sup>36</sup> P. Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 83-111. See also very detailed discussion on the phenomenon in C.N. Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo, *Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana. Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol 1 (10 July 2006, 55-68).

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