

Charismatic Christianity and the Missionary Movement in Nigeria

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Abstract

Protestant churches in West Africa, with very few exceptions, were largely at the receiving end, and not part of the driving force, of the global missionary movement until the mid-1970s. By the late 1980s, the indigenous initiatives had moved African Christianity into the mainstream of the world missionary movement. Indeed, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, Nigeria has become the leading mission-sending country in Africa. With a missionary force of 5,300 spread abroad on four continents. Nigeria stimulated missionary activities in six significant ways. First, in the promotion of cross-cultural missions among the young educated middle class; second, in the establishment of missionary-training institutions; third, in sustaining transnational networking into other African countries; fourth, by initiating strategic planning in missions; fifth, by creating space for greater involvement of women in missions; and lastly, in initiating a significant missionary trend with reverse missions to the heartlands of Europe and North Africa. The paper maintains that Pentecostal-Charismatic organisations set the pace for Protestant churches in Africa to become missionary. Thus, the continuing growth of Pentecostal missions from Nigeria clearly indicates that Africa, long considered a mission field by the West, has now become a mission base.

Keywords: Pentecostal-Charismatic movements, cross-cultural missions, missionaries, trans-national networking, Nigerian Pentecostals

Introduction

I begin by asserting that Protestant churches in West Africa, with very few exceptions, were only at the receiving end, and not part, of the driving force of the global missionary movement until the late 1970s. Although a few Protestant churches have established missionary boards or agencies since the early 1950s, their missionary activities were quite small, poorly-funded, inefficiently-executed, and lacked the international outlook which characterised the Western missionary movement and which has dominated scholarship in mission studies. Among the earliest African involvement in missions was the Church of Lord (*Aladura*), an African

Independent Church, which sent its first set of missionaries to Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1953 (Turner, 1967), but this initiative could not be sustained for long. Contrastively, it was the Pentecostal-Charismatic movements that initiated cross-cultural missions involving the sending out of missionaries within Nigeria and to other African countries, mobilising groups of supporters for missions, and also established linkages with other missionary movements outside Africa. Eventually, by the late 1980s, these indigenous initiatives had moved African Christianity into the mainstream of the world missionary movement. Indeed, by the beginning of the 21st century, Nigeria had become the leading mission-sending country in Africa. With a missionary force of 5,300 with about 500 are spread abroad in about four continents, this is indicative of the strength of the Nigerian Pentecostal missions. This remarkable advance of Pentecostals and Charismatics in the sphere of missionary enterprise reflects strongly on the shift of the centre of gravity of Christianity from the Western to the non-Western world (Walls,1976). Operating largely on the faith principles of the Faith Missions (Fiedler, 1994), Nigerian Pentecostals and Charismatics have shown that commitment and vision are the driving force of missions, and not finance or elaborate organisational structures, which the Western mission agencies continued to enjoy in the 21st century. Therefore, this paper examines African initiatives in Christian missions as promoted by Nigerian Pentecostal Charismatic movements. The argument is that Pentecostal Charismatic organisations set the pace for Protestant churches in Africa to become missionary.

Charismatic Christianity in Nigeria has stimulated missionary activities in six significant ways. First, in the promotion of cross-cultural missions; second, in the establishment of missionary-training institutions; third, in sustaining trans-national networking into other West African countries; fourth, by initiating strategic planning in

missions; fifth, by creating space for greater involvement of women in missions; and lastly, in initiating a significant missionary trend with reverse missions to the heartlands of Europe and North Africa. None of the mainline Protestant churches have anything on the ground that can equal these activities of the Pentecostals and Charismatics. Indeed, through a critical evaluation of these issues, we will be able to appreciate a new understanding of missions in the 21st century.

The global missionary movement has substantially been grounded on the idea and model of a missionary society conceived by William Carey, a Baptist minister, as outlined in his 1792 historic tract, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.¹ According to Carey, a missionary society is made up of Christians subscribing to be members of a society that will have the following functions: the recruitment of missionaries; the sending out missionaries to mission fields; the provision of financial, material and prayer support to missionaries; and the receiving of reports from missionaries. The goal of such an enterprise is the preaching of the Gospel, the planting of churches, the teaching of converts, and the empowering of converts.

This model of missionary endeavour operated monopolistically until 1865 when Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Mission, introduced a new model of self-supporting and ascetic missionaries believing that finance should not be the sole determinant of how many missionaries are sent, how, when and where they are sent. This model later became known as the Faith Missions and its impact has been tremendous in the world missionary movement and Africa (Fiedler, 1994).² SIM/ECWA in Nigeria is one of the success stories

¹ William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester, 1792). See <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf>

² Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1994).

of the faith missions in Africa. Both the denominational mission and the Faith Missions models have continued to dominate the missionary movement until the rise of Pentecostal missions in the 20th century.

Western Protestant missions in Africa in the 19th and early 20th centuries achieved remarkable results in transforming the political and social landscape of the continent but at a very great cost in terms of mortality and huge material expenditure. Although indigenous African evangelists and missionaries built upon this foundation from the late 19th century, yet missionary endeavour remained marginal to the life of the Church in Nigeria. However, with the emergence of indigenous revivalist movements under the leadership of prophet-healers and the promotion of healing with its cultural affinity to the world views of the Africans, Christianity witnessed tremendous progress from the late 19th century. Lamin Sanneh (1989) has reminded us that the translation factor of missionary vernacularisation policy in the 19th century stimulated indigenous response in various ways to the Gospel.³ With the benefit of hindsight, 19th century Western missions in Africa were a story of heroism and God's miraculous intervention. How could we explain it that within 100 years, Christianity in tropical Africa has achieved such unprecedented success in displacing African Traditional Religion, and stopping the progress of Islam to the coast!

Evaluating Western Missions and Its Impact in Africa

Protestant missions, since the 1960s, substantially differ in various ways from Protestant missionary enterprises of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The fact that the 1960s were the era of independence from colonialism in many African countries, which in turn stimulated much nationalist feeling and sought to promote rapid development, did not affect missions greatly other than the

³Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989).

indigenisation of the leadership of the churches established by Western missions. Demographically, missions before the 1960s were associated with the Caucasian race of which the English-speaking people of Great Britain and North America were great players. Nevertheless, recent studies by Jon Miller (2003) and others have also revealed the important contributions of the German speaking people, largely represented by the Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel, Switzerland (or Basel Mission) as it is popularly known in West Africa.⁴ A recent doctoral study at the University of Ghana, Legon has further documented the role played by black missionaries from Jamaica and the West Indies (Kwakye, 2011).⁵

Secondly, mission as European institution was considered a civilising and humanitarian enterprise, an agent to promote substantial change among the nations and peoples among whom the missionaries and mission societies worked. Missionaries, as change agents, were the bearers of a whole civilisation, of a new religious culture, and a new social order. Education, Literacy, Legitimate Commerce, Medical Mission, Industrial Mission, and Agriculture were the means of promoting and sustaining this change. In this regard, according to some scholars, missions were a substantial ally of colonisation and European imperialism of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In contrast, a recent discourse by Brian Stanley (1990; Stanley, 2003,) and others have shown how Christian missions in the 20th century have been linked to the dynamics of anti-colonialism and decolonisation in the non-Western world.⁶

⁴ Jon Miller, *Missionary Zeal and Institutional Control: Organizational Contradictions in the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast, 1828-1917* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003)

⁵ Abraham Nana Opere Kwakye, 'The West Indian Families and The Development of The Presbyterian Church of Ghana: The Rediscovery of A Missing Heritage', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 2011.

⁶ Brian Stanley, ed. *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2003) See also B. Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), pp. 85-90, 98-101.

Thirdly, the development of Christian ecumenical organisations owes a great deal to the mission societies of the 19th century, and in certain spheres to their networking programmes. Hence, it is important that the centenary of the First International Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh, Scotland is celebrated from time to time.

Fourthly, the theological motive and goals of 19th missions differ somehow from missions after the 1960s. The Theology of Providence which largely characterised English missions in the 19th century⁷ has receded except for its resurgence among Nigerian Charismatics in the 1970s. Fifth, Protestant mission societies till the 1960s were sharply identified with the secular authorities of the countries where their headquarters were located. Because of this national identification, for most decades of the 19th century, the French did not welcome English missionaries in their West African colonies; neither did the English welcome the Germans in their own territories. For example, the Basel Missions were expelled from Ghana in March 1918 for the simple reason that Basel missionaries came from an enemy country (Miller, 2003).⁸ Likewise, German Baptists were also expelled from the Cameroons during the same First World War.

Sixth, technological progress and new forms of communications have eased the isolation of missionaries and opened a new vista for mission societies. The 19th -century missionaries generally were isolated in the mission fields where they worked, lacking means of communications, and only relied on letters sent through merchants' ships, which in many cases took months to be delivered. The most-substantial difference in missions since the 1960s is what Andrews Walls first mentioned in 1976 and which Philips Jenkins has recently recalled: that the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the Western world to the Global South or the non-Western world

⁸ Jon Miller, *Missionary Zeal and Institutional Control*, 200.

(Walls, 1976; Walls, 1998; Jenkins, 2007).⁹ Therefore, the worldwide boom which Christianity is experiencing into the 21st century, as Walls and Jenkins have predicted, will be Christianity fashioned from the experiences of people in the non-Western world. This global shift in Christian allegiance should engender reflection on the nature of mission enterprise emerging in the 21st century from the non-Western world. Although it is obvious that a new Christian tradition is emerging, Jenkins cautioned that the Christianity spreading in the Global South will be marked by 'the large presence of the poorer people on the planet' in its midst (Jenkins, 2007). This socio-economic reality and the new spirituality from the non-Western world call for further evaluation of the nature of missions from the Global South. While doing this, I further intend to discuss the implications of these issues for the mainline Protestant churches.

Recent interest in Protestant missions from Africa and Asia has continued to generate attention in both the academic and missionary circles. However, existing literature on missions in Africa has largely focused on Western missionaries and missions' agencies working in Africa. Contrastively, articles and books on indigenous African missions are limited in scope and content. Nevertheless, the growth of indigenous mission agencies in Nigeria, since the early 1970s, has become a significant development in Third World Missions (Thompson, 2004). Although these African initiatives have been noted by the early 1980s, the phenomenon has largely not been researched until the late 1990s. Andrew Walls (1978, 1996, 1998), was the first to suggest the shifting of the centre of Christianity from the Western world to Africa, Asia, and Latin America, while Steed and Sundkler (2000) in their monumental work on the history of the

⁹ Andrew F. Walls, 'Towards Understanding Africa's Place in Christian History' in J. S. Pobee, ed. *Religion in a Pluralistic Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 180-189. See also Andrew F. Walls, 'Africa in Christian History: Retrospect and Prospect.' *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 1, No 1, (1998), 2-16. Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Church in Africa, emphasised the roles played by Africans in the missionary expansion in the continent which had largely been neglected in previous studies. Ojo (1997) discussed the missionary enterprises of the Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as part of the African initiatives in missions, while Fiedler (1994) focused attention on the faith missions with some examples of those mission societies of African origin. Ter Haar (1998) explored the African Christian Diaspora communities in Europe as part of the globalisation of African Christianity, while Ojo (2008) further explored the missiological significance of the trans-national religious networks created by Nigerian neo-Pentecostal organisations in other African countries. However, there exists a wide lacuna in the scholarly literature on the history of indigenous Protestant missions in Africa, and this is what the present study seeks to fill. Therefore, this study explores Protestant missionary enterprises emanating from Nigeria and extending beyond its shores, as part of the forces contributing to the shift of the centre of Christianity from the Western world to the non-Western world (Bediako, 1996).

The Growth of Indigenous Pentecostal and Charismatic Missions: The growth of indigenous Pentecostal missions in Nigeria, which is rooted in the Charismatic Renewal of the early 1970s, has been a significant development in missions from the Global South. The evangelistic activities that characterised the Charismatic Renewal in the early 1970s provided the stimulus for cross-cultural missions by the end of that decade. In contrast to the mainline Protestant churches, which were products of missionary enterprises, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Nigeria with a little historical foundation in missions have devoted much attention and large resources to missions outside the borders of Nigeria. It is also of interest, from a cursory observation, that their foreign missionary enterprises began not with the official machinery of the

organizations, or of any missionary society, but with a determination that evangelistic activities need not be hindered by national and political frontiers. Secondly, a millennial expectation among Nigerian pioneer Charismatics in the 1970s provided the stimulus to vigorous evangelism and mission. Thirdly, some Charismatics held the view that Nigeria was economically buoyant in the 1970s because God had positioned Nigerians to take the Gospel to other African nations. As will be noted later, Benson Idahosa, a protégé of American tele-evangelists and the apostle of prosperity Gospel in Africa, was the first indigenous Pentecostal to initiate evangelistic and cross-cultural missions to other African countries from the late 1970s.

Within a decade of their existence, some Pentecostal and Charismatic organisations began to promote a keen interest in evangelism and later transformed the evangelistic activities into mission emphasis. Two outstanding ones were the Calvary Ministries established in 1975 and now based in Jos, Northern Nigeria with its international office in Lagos; and the Christian Missionary Foundation established in 1982 and based in Ibadan. These two mission organisations were founded by students and young graduates from the universities who have been immersed in the Charismatic revival. By the early 1980s, these two organisations have sent missionaries to unreached peoples in Nigeria and other African countries.¹⁰ More importantly, the Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have largely succeeded in stimulating the emergence of similar mission movements, and have encouraged the rapid growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in other African countries. By the mid-1990s, these organisations were already sending missionaries to Europe and, at the beginning of the 21st century, attention had been

¹⁰ The countries include Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Gambia, Niger, Uganda, Togo, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Benin Republic, Sudan, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Cameroon.

turned to the Arab world. The mission emphasis of the Nigerian Charismatic movement developed in three distinct stages. The first phase began in 1974 to the early 1980s, when Charismatics embarked on vigorous evangelistic activities to Christians and non-Christians within Nigeria in an attempt to spread the Charismatic revival. The establishment of the National Youth Service Scheme by the government of Yakubu Gowon in 1973¹¹ to foster national unity, which required graduates of all tertiary institutions in the country (colleges of education, polytechnics and universities) to undergo a 12-month national assignment in any state other than their states of origin, indirectly provided a divine vehicle that transported the Charismatic evangelists from the universities in the southern Nigeria to other parts of the country. The coming together of the revivalists from different institutions, eventually galvanised them to organise evangelism wherever they went. Lacking any denominational label, these youth graduates succeeded rather unnoticed in their evangelistic efforts to penetrate the Muslim strongholds in northern Nigeria.

The second stage, which started from about 1982 and progressed to the early 1990s, was characterised by mission consciousness, which the earlier evangelistic activities had stimulated. During this period, Nigerian mission-sending agencies initiated foreign missions into other African countries after their leaders had come into contact with other Africans and few Europeans. This experience broadened their mission perspectives and made them see the need for missions beyond their geographical boundaries. Moreover, more indigenous mission agencies were formed during this period. The third stage, beginning, from about 1993, marked the global expansion of African missions. The fervent indigenous initiatives associated with the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement, and the millennial expectation at the close of the

¹¹ Established by Decree No 24 of 22 May 1973 with a goal of developing common ties among Nigerian and promote national unity.

20th century created more impetus in missions and promoted more vigorous and expansive missions activities among Nigerian Charismatics. After the AD 2000 & Beyond movement had promoted the concept of ‘unreached people groups’, an awareness that many such people groups exist in Nigeria and in many African nations brought into being new mission strategies and networking. These strategies included the growth of Indigenous School of Missions where more Nigerian and African Charismatics were trained to work among the unreached people groups in cross-cultural missions. This period also witnessed the publication of church surveys in Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire, which documented the extent of Christian saturation and evangelistic work in each of these countries. This sharpened the focus of Charismatics as they began to see more need to broaden their missionary efforts into the wider world.¹²

Calvary Ministries, otherwise called CAPRO, an indigenous nondenominational, cross-cultural mission agency, is the first Charismatic organisation in West Africa to adopt a mission outlook. Its background could be traced to an evangelistic rally held on Christmas Day, 1974 in the old city of Zaria, by some young graduates undergoing the compulsory one-year national service in northern Nigeria. The rally was disrupted midway, by a mob suspected to be inspired by Islamic sentiments. A rethinking convinced these young graduates that there was a need for consistent evangelistic efforts to Muslims and non-Muslims in northern Nigeria. Consequently, Calvary Ministries was constituted in April 1975, and within a year, a young man, Amos Aderounmu, was enlisted as a full-time evangelist for the organisation, and evangelistic work started among the non-Muslim Maguzawa people of northwestern Nigeria¹³. On an invitation from a pastor, CAPRO embarked on an evangelistic rally

¹² Ojo, “The Dynamics of Indigenous Charismatic Missionary Enterprise in West Africa,” 5

¹³ Interview with Pastor Amos Aderounmu, CAPRO International Director, Ibadan, July 20, 2006.

into Niger Republic in 1977, marking the beginning of its foreign missions, which were later crystallised as cross-cultural missions to the Sahel region of West Africa, which were largely Francophone countries, and which at that time was reported to have few evangelical churches.

Calvary Ministries made major advances in the 1980s with a new orientation of establishing mission fields with resident missionaries rather than organizing occasional evangelistic programme, as was the case in the 1970s. In addition, CAPRO made a bold thrust in foreign missions. It started as an adventurous quest of an evangelist under CAPRO with some missionaries of Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade (WEC), a British mission society then working in the Gambia. A partnership then developed with WEC.¹⁴ The challenge it received from WEC to be the vanguard of indigenous mission agencies in West Africa set the ball rolling. Its first foreign missionary, Victoria Hassan, a nurse set the pace for single women missionaries in indigenous African missions. Arriving in the Gambia in 1980, she worked in the country for two-and-a-half years before returning to Nigeria to spearhead the Mobilisation and Awareness Team of CAPRO. From the Gambia, CAPRO extended its mission work to Guinea and by the mid-1980s to Senegal.¹⁵

CAPRO's foreign work took off smoothly because of the assistance received from WEC personnel who had been in the Gambia. This experience broadened the outlook of CAPRO leaders and provided the thrust for the later advance into other mission fields. Aderounmu and his wife, Clara, after their wedding in 1982 proceeded to the Gambia to take over from Victoria Hassan. In 1987, they left the Gambia to Guinea Conakry to begin indigenous missionary work in the country as a result of the liberalisation policy of the new

¹⁴ *Occupy*, Vol. 14, Nos 3 & 4, 1995, p. 28.

¹⁵ *Occupy*, Vol. 14, Nos 3 & 4, 1995, pp. 7 & 28.

government after the death of Sekou Toure, the country's first president, in 1984.¹⁶

Recent efforts since the 1990s included reaching the Arab world through missionaries who went as professionals in other specialisations such as computer engineers, Arabic scholars, and medical personnel. By 2005, there were CAPRO missionaries in Sudan, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates. In these countries, CAPRO fostered partnerships with local Christians and with other Arab mission networks to promote cross-cultural missions.

Overall, CAPRO made tremendous efforts in promoting indigenous African missions. The ministry targeted unreached ethnic groups, using effective evangelism, discipleship and church planting, raising and preparing indigenes to work among their people and giving them discipleship training.¹⁷ In addition, many efforts were concentrated on mission research to determine the state of Christianity in many localities. Lastly, there was the mobilisation of indigenous Christians to join the mission force and make the work self sustaining. In this last emphasis, the training programme undertaken through the School of Missions has yielded many results. For example, Cote d'Ivoire because of its strategic position in the Francophone world hosts a School of Mission for reaching Muslims in the Sahel region.¹⁸ A recent development was the beginning of a radio ministry in Niger Republic in addition to the rehabilitation of prostitutes, which has started in the early 1990s. The radio programme has been effective especially with the use of Hausa, a language widely-spoken in northern Nigeria and the Sahel.¹⁹ By 1992, the ministry had 136 full-time missionaries including 12 who were in training in her School of Mission.²⁰ The second School of Missions for French-speaking

¹⁶ *Occupy*, Vol., 11, No. 1, 1992, pp. 7 - 10, and Vol. 14, Nos 3 & 4, 1995, 28.

¹⁷ ("All you ever wanted to know about Calvary Ministries (Tract published by CAPRO).

¹⁸ Herbert Akparanta, *Occupy*, Vol 19, number 3, 2000 ND 3

¹⁹ Raymond Hassan, *Occupy*, Vol 23 No 1 (2004) 11-16

²⁰ NEMA, *The Directory of the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association*, (n.d.).

converts was opened near Lome, Togo in 2002. By 1998, the report of the ministry stated, “over 350 multinational missionary force is involved in mobilization... mercy ministries and church planting among 25 unreached people groups in all countries of Africa as of today.”²¹ By late 2005, CAPRO was pursuing cross-cultural missions in 20 African countries with about fifty (50) missionaries sponsored largely with about 80 per cent of the funding from Nigeria. Besides, CAPRO had more than 13 foreign mission fields as well as 31 home mission fields.²¹ Christian Missionary Foundation (CMF), another major mission sending agency, was established in September 1981 initially as an arm of the Christian Students’ Social Movement of Nigeria (CSSM), an indigenous inter-denominational student organisation. It was an attempt by some evangelical students in the late 1970s to introduce some social dimension into Christian witnessing that produced the Christian Students’ Social Movement of Nigeria on the university campuses in Southwestern Nigeria. Through its mobilisation, Christian students went into the rural areas with medical, social and agricultural missions, which eventually led to the formation of the Christian Missionary Foundation, initially as a special arm of CSSM, and later as an independent mission agency promoting cross-cultural missions within and outside Nigeria. Its membership and supporters were drawn from various walks of life and different backgrounds, but united to pursue missions. The vision of the Christian Missionary Foundation is encapsulated in its mission statement: Ministering the Whole Word to Whole Man in the Whole World.²²

The initial zeal of CMF led her into many evangelistic and development projects. Among such were the agricultural missions, pastoral missions, legal aid ministry, missions to the women, missions

²¹ Aderounmu interview, See *In Brief*, the official newsletter of CAPRO, July 1998,1- 2.

²² *Mission Focus: A Bulletin of the Christian Missionary Foundation (Nigeria)*, Maiden issue, 1982, 7.

to the armed forces, missions to the destitute and the disabled, and the Gospel Investment Enterprises, a mission-support programme conceived as a business venture with subscription of shares by members. However, by 1983 CMF had settled into missions to the unreached people groups in the rural areas and cross-cultural missions to other African countries.²³

CMF began extensive foreign mission work into other African countries in late 1982. This rapid growth was achieved through the mobilisation of students who participated as volunteers in the various evangelistic and mission activities. Some of these students undertook an evangelistic outreach to Cotonou, Benin Republic in October 1982, which marked the beginning of extensive indigenous mission work in that country. At the same time, a Nigerian graduate went to Cote d'Ivoire as a CMF missionary. Lastly from 1981, some Africans studying in Nigeria became associated with CMF, and upon their return of their countries, some of them were supported by CMF to begin mission activities in their countries. Later on, some partnerships were established and Nigerians were sent out as foreign missionaries to facilitate indigenous missions in some of these countries. For example, Miss Rose Kubeyinje went to Zimbabwe in 1983, while Dr Nwaogboso, a medical doctor, went to Namibia in 1995 initially as a member of the Nigeria's Technical Aid Corps, but seized the opportunity to begin mission work in the rural areas of Ovambia. From Namibia, he extended missionary work to Angola where a church was planted in Luanda in early 1999.²⁴

Other foreign mission enterprise in 1983 were to Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania, Cameroon and The Gambia; in 1985 mission work

²³ Reuben Ezemadu, 'Draft Proposal for a Nigerian Christian Missionary (NCMF)', a letter dated 15 June 1981, CMF Archives, Ibadan. See also CMF (Nigeria), 'Report of the Inaugural Meeting held at Idere (Ibarapa Division), 12 and 13 September 1981, p. 1, CMF archives. Reuben Ezemadu, *The Vision So Far: A Story of the Christian Missionary Foundation* (Ibadan, CMF, 1993).

²⁴ Interview with Reuben Ezemadu, Director, CMF, Ibadan 22 August 2006.

began in Liberia, United Kingdom in 1992, Central Africa Republic in 1996, Singapore and Togo in 1997, and Sudan in 2005. Of all the mission fields, the work in Benin Republic, Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire has been the most fruitful and has been maintained continuously since the 1980s largely because of the large personnel engaged in these mission fields and resources channelled into them. In Benin Republic in particular, by 2005 CMF had 165 missionaries working among 34 ethnic groups in the country. The work in Benin Republic included mobilisation, evangelism and church planting among unreached people groups, children ministries, strategic research, and medical missions. It also operated six schools of missions with the goal of enlisting more workers.²⁵

The objectives of the CMF missions in these African countries included evangelistic work to children and students, the mobilisation of indigenous Christians towards greater involvement in missions, the planting of indigenous churches among some of the unreached people groups, raising and training of indigenous missionaries, and developing and sustaining a flow of prayer and support for missions from the nationals of these countries.²⁶ The early success of CMF was largely due to its strategy of mobilising nationals and getting them involved in the mission enterprises. Secondly, most of the early missionaries were single men and women who were very idealistic about their goals and imbued with the conviction that it is worth dying for the sake of evangelising the world.

CMF missionaries were mostly college and university graduates recruited and trained in CMF School of Missions. Others were nationals from African countries mobilised and trained in the School of Mission in Nigeria to reach out to their unreached peoples. By September 2005, CMF was working among 60 people groups in 10

²⁵ *Missions Update: Christian Missionary Foundation Newsletter*, May-August 1999, 8.

²⁶ 'The Battle for the Soul of Republic of Benin' *Missions Update: Christian Missionary Foundation Newsletter*, January-June 2006, 6-7

African countries. Altogether there were 383 missionaries and field workers.²⁷ Different modalities have enabled Nigerian Charismatic churches to embark on transnational and cross-cultural missions. Principal among these was the buoyant economy of Nigeria in the 1970s which was derived from the rising price of crude oil in the world market, and which was partly reflected in vigorous foreign relations pursued by the government. The generous support the Nigerian government gave to the liberation movements in Southern Africa also enabled thousands of students from this region to receive university education on Nigerian scholarships. Besides, the buoyant economy attracted other Africans in search of jobs. The presence of large number Africans in Nigeria provided a wider horizon and stimulated a keen awareness of the possibility of missions to other parts of the continent and beyond. Some of these Africans who joined Nigerian Pentecostal organisations were the vanguards of new mission initiatives when they returned to their countries. Thus, the expansion of Nigeria's economic and political power stimulated equal responses from the educated elite who constituted a large percentage of the membership of Charismatic organisations.

Moreover, from the mid-1970s Pentecostals and Charismatic s held to the belief that God had given Nigerian Christians the responsibility of evangelising the African continent, and cross-cultural evangelism and mission enterprises were partly an implementation of this divine mandate. References were usually made to prophecies coming from certain quarters of the neo-Pentecostal constituency regarding Nigeria's enormous wealth in comparison to its neighbours, and the vibrancy of the Christian faith among educated youth in the country. In 1982, a leader of CSSM said that 'God expressly intends that Nigeria should be the base for the Gospel for West Africa and

²⁷ Interview with Emmanuel Dadie, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, May 2000.

indeed the whole world'²⁸ Even as late as 2005, another Pentecostal still affirmed this belief that 'there is a strategic role Nigeria has to play both in the world economy and in the fulfillment of God's agenda for Africa'.²⁹ This dominion theology has persisted among Nigerian Charismatics and has continued to influence the shape of their cross-cultural missions. Indeed, the success of the initial foray into other West African countries had, by the late 1970s, emboldened many Pentecostals as they considered their missionary activities invested with some divine mandate.

Another Nigerian group with strong involvement in cross-cultural missions is Deeper Christian Life Ministry or Deeper Life Bible Church as it is now popularly called. It is an independent Charismatic church with a strong evangelistic orientation, and it has promoted evangelism and missions in many African countries. Founded as a parachurch organisation in 1973 by W. F. Kumuyi, then a Mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos, Lagos, it began expansion programme in 1976. In 1983, it was institutionalised as a denomination with full Sunday services. From the early 1980s, the church sent out evangelists to many African countries, and this endeavour has resulted in the planting of churches and brought awareness to cross-cultural evangelism. Deeper Life Bible Church has few full-time missionaries, but most members were trained to be evangelists aiming to preach the Gospel to every person everywhere and at any time. Hence, each Deeper Life member regularly engages in evangelism. Besides, as was done in Ghana, the church followed strategic planning to plant at least a Deeper Life branch in the main town of every administrative district or local government in the country. The success of Deeper Life evangelistic programme could be

²⁸ CMF missionaries are those trained in Schools of Mission and went through the process of recruitment, while field workers are those mostly untrained and raised locally by missionaries to work with them in those locations.

²⁹ Emeka Nwankpa, 'Missionary Challenges Facing Nigeria Christians Today' an address read at the launching ceremony of MCMF on 15 May 1982 (typescript, CMS archives).

judged by statistics. Between 1988, when the first national church survey in Ghana was undertaken, and 1993 when the second survey was conducted, Deeper Life had grown from 5,704 members in 72 churches to a total membership of 20,832 in about 270 churches, indicating a membership growth rate of 265 Percent.³⁰

The Church Growth Conference for Africa held in Lagos, Nigeria in August 1992 under the auspices of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement and hosted by Deeper Life Bible Church brought together African church leaders to consider new strategies for evangelisation and mission in the continent. The 13,000 participants were drawn from over twenty African countries for the seven-day conference. With guest speakers such as C. Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif, USA and Luis Bush, the International Director of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, various issues relating to the evangelisation of the unreached people groups in the continent and vigorous church planting were considered.³¹ Certainly, the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement, since 1990, has fostered global networks of resources and information towards world evangelisation among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches as the 1992 conference has shown. Once again, Nigerian neo-Pentecostal churches were at the forefront of mobilising and initiating national mission movements in other African countries. The success of hosting such an ethnically diverse gathering strengthened the belief that Nigeria was playing a major leadership role in African indigenous missions.

The Living Faith Church, established in Nigeria, in 1983, by David Oyedepo, an architect, has fostered some missionary activities in many African countries while it promoted its emphasis on prosperity and 'productive faith'. Among its bold thrusts in Africa in recent

³⁰ Michael Adeyemi, *Africa in Prophecy: A Destined World Power* (Lagos, Concept Publications Ltd, 2005), 136.

³¹ National Church Survey 1993 Update (Accra: Ghana Evangelism Committee), 16 & 18.

times was the African Gospel Invasion Programme (AGIP) initiated in late 1995 by the founder. By early 1997, branches of the Living Faith Church have been established in capital cities of thirty African countries, and these were soon used for cross-cultural missions. Oyedepo's emphasis on material prosperity indirectly tapped into the discourse of modernity and offered a motivation to many young Africans seeking upward social mobility.

The growth of indigenous missions throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s was partly sustained by the mobilisation of Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association, which was formed in 1982, as a net working association of indigenous mission agencies, with the goals of fostering relationships among the mission agencies, creating a forum for the sharing of ideas and information, and encouraging and mobilising the Nigerian church for more mission involvement.³² Towards this end, NEMA established a training institution, Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute in Jos in 1987 to train cross-cultural missionaries. Eventually, when the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement started in 1990, it was mostly the members of NEMA that enthusiastically participated in the movement. Perhaps, the greatest mobilisation of NEMA was in promoting a new mission agenda, Vision 50:15, which will be discussed fully later.

Indigenous Missionary Training Institutions in Nigeria

The missionary training institutions, popularly called Schools of Missions in Nigeria, constituted another significant contemporary issue in indigenous mission initiatives in Africa. A renewed zeal and the perceived urgency of world evangelisation was a major factor that produced the schools of missions. Since the early 1990s, the school of missions has become a major institutional means of promoting cross-cultural missions across West Africa and fostering trans-national religious networking in the region. From a small beginning

³² Personal observation at the conference.

with only one school of Missions in 1982, two in 1992, it grew to 12 schools in 1999.³³ By the beginning of the new millennium, almost every independent mission agency had some form of the training programme. Notably, many of these schools lack basic infrastructures for formal learning but they all became an institutional strategy for survival. These missionary training institutions and the existing Bible colleges would place Nigeria with ‘the largest number of training institutions in entire Africa.’³⁴ Such developments made Larry Pate (1989: 45, 51) to remark that ‘on the spiritual scene, the non-Western missionary movement will soon be the world’s largest and most powerful missionary force, given its rapid growth rate’.

There are two types of missionary-training institutions: The schools linked to denominations, and those belonging to the independent mission agencies. The latter groups have great flexibility and are often of radically different structures, and they have greatly promoted African indigenous initiatives in missions. The first indigenous school of missions was the CAPRO School of Missions established in 1982 and located in Gana Ropp, near Jos, northern Nigeria. Between its inception and December 1999, the school graduated 36 sets. Initially, the school started as a training ground for evangelists in 1978. It later became a discipleship training school in 1981, and metamorphosed into a School of Missions in 1982. The CMF School of Missions began informally in 1983, transformed into a School of Missions about 1984, and began a full-time residential training programme in Idere, southwestern Nigeria in 1989 as the second missionary-training institution in the country. Ethnos School of Mission (ESOM), established in 1993 in Ibadan focused on training leaders and missionaries. The leadership aspect was included and emphasised to motivate church leaders and pastors to create

³³ <http://www.nematoday.org/about/missions.php?gotopage=index>

³⁴ Directory of NEMA, 7-18.

awareness that would help mobilise their congregations. The Men of Issachar Vision Ministries, another indigenous mission-sending agency established in the early 1990s with headquarters in Ibadan, started on its School of Missions in 2005.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God School of Missions in Ede, western Nigeria is the earliest of the denominational schools of missions. From inception in 1993 to 1999, it graduated 12 sets. The Nigerian Baptist Convention established its first School of Missions near Ogbomoso in 2001 and, by early 2006, had established two additional schools in northern Nigeria.

In all, the schools of missions, particularly those established by Pentecostal and Charismatic organisations emphasised practical experience and attitudinal orientation to missions as the bedrock of the training. Most of the courses were mission-oriented while some included practical ministry courses such as faith and healing, deliverance, spiritual warfare and so on. The curriculum, though never uniform, included three main components. First are courses geared towards producing practical skills in missions, second are theological courses, and thirdly are ministerial courses to foster attitudinal and behavioural change. The teachers were of varied backgrounds and qualifications. While the teachers in denominational schools were better-qualified and theologically-trained, some of those in independent setting emphasised practical skills more than theological education. For the students, commitment and interest were the prerequisites for admission and not the educational background. Hence, some of the schools, particularly in northern Nigeria, used indigenous languages as medium of instruction. Diverse factors could be discerned as promoting the rise of the schools of missions. Among these was the literacy level of their founders who recognised the value of training. The second was the inadequacy in the existing denominational Bible colleges on their low priority to train missionaries or to include enough

mission courses in the curriculum; third was the buoyant economy of the 1970s through the early 1980s which facilitated the setting up of many schools of missions, and the influence of Nigeria's involvement in the liberation movements in Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, which provided a trans-national orientation for the Charismatic organisations. Lastly, there was a heightened consciousness for world evangelisation and the commitment to be bearers of the Gospel. Added to this is the belief among Pentecostals and Charismatics that Africa as a whole, and particularly the rural areas, was dominated by the world of the spirits, full of widespread poverty, and that evangelism was the panacea to this problem.

Nigerian Pentecostals and Reverse Missions

Nigerian Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic churches have also made a significant impact in the promotion of reverse missions within global Christianity. Reverse missions broadly refers to the sending of missionaries to Europe and North America by churches and Christians from the non-Western world. This enterprise is aimed at re-evangelising these regions which were once the heartlands of Christianity and were also the vanguards of missionary movements from the 16th to the 20th century. It is a significant phenomenon with many social, political, and missiological implications, because the non-Western world, particularly Africa, Asia, and Latin America, was at the receiving end of Catholic and Protestant missions as mission fields till the late 20th century. But the tide had changed and non-Western world churches began to dictate the pace of growth and the essential features of world Christianity from the late twentieth century. Equally important was the fact that, despite lower economic development and a more recent history of contact with Christianity, the growth of missionary endeavours from the non-Western world, which rapidly gained momentum in the 1990s, has brought substantial geographical and demographic changes in world Christianity. In real

terms, the traditional 'missions fields' have now become the mission bases of renewed efforts to re-evangelise the secularised societies of Europe and North America. The remote background to the reversed direction of missions could be traced to several events which included the rise of indigenous African churches in the late 19th century, which rejected the Western cultural baggage of missions, especially liturgies produced in Western languages and religious symbols fashioned from, and steeped in, Western cultural norms, and the emergence of more educated and capable African Christian leadership from the 1960s. Other factors included the development of African Christian theologies from the 1960s, and the call for a moratorium on Christian missions from the Western world to the Third World by Dr John Gatu, a prominent leader of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa, during a missionary conference in the United States in 1971.

The most-significant factor sustaining reverse mission from Africa to the Western world was the increasing migration of Africans to the Western world from the 1980s and the creation of homogenous churches mostly along Pentecostal spirituality for these migrants to compensate for their traditional African worldviews. These Pentecostal churches which, according to Gerrie Ter Haar (1998), offered a halfway ticket to Paradise by the early 1990s to African migrants in Europe, were defining their missions as witnessing communities to the secularised and waning Western church. Confronted by the secularisation of the Western society and the decline in church attendance and public piety, these non-Western migrants took up a revivalist agenda and defined themselves as the historic, Bible-based Christians. At the same time, these immigrant Christians saw the Western church as being in a state of apostasy and in a spiritual wilderness that needed re-evangelisation. They soon came to the belief that there was a divine task to bring the

Gospel back to the former mission sending countries of Europe and to execute a God-given mandate to evangelise and re-invigorate the churches of their host communities. For example, by the turn of the 21st century in Germany, there were over 1,000 churches of migrant communities, and over 200 of these were founded by Africans. In England in the 1980s, some of these churches of immigrants bought and re-opened some abandoned buildings of the Church of England.³⁵ This bold initiative provided a bigger inspiration to strengthen the task of reviving the dying Western church. This reversal of missionary activities relocated Africans and Asians from the receiving end of missions to a position of giving to the Western world. Secondly, the founding of the Third World Missions Association (TWMA), in Portland, Oregon, USA, in May 1989 as a forum for mission sending agencies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to enhance their capacities to undertake extensive missionary endeavours introduced the institutional perspectives of non-Western missions and transformed them into a global force in world Christianity. The closure of some Arab countries to Western missionaries and the acceptance and success of African and Asian missionaries working among Arabs also proved quite significant in this process of reverse missions. By the mid-1990s, it was no longer a matter of possibility but a fact that the non-Western world was sending missionaries to re-evangelise Europe. Using mostly non-professional missionaries, non-Western churches achieved success in their missionary efforts. The Nigeria based, Deeper Life Bible Church was the first to crystallise into a branch in London about 1982 from

³⁵ Matthews A. Ojo (2007), 'Reverse Mission' in *Encyclopedia of Mission and Missionaries* edited by Jonathan Bonk. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 380-382. See also Jehu J. Hanciles, (2003), Migration and Mission: Some Implications for the Twenty-first-century Church. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 27(4), 146-153.

the gathering of some Nigerians who were studying in England. By mid-1984, a pastor has been sent to nurture the group. The August 1986 London Miracle Crusade, hosted by the London branch, was a major attempt to transcend cross-cultural barriers and reach the British populace. Prominent Church of England clergies and some political leaders were invited to the evangelistic meeting which was held in the Westminster Chapel, located between the Parliament and the Buckingham Palace. Pastor Kumuyi's message was particularly tailored to the secularised Western society as he challenged the congregation to seek alternative means to the frustrations of the Western society.³⁶ Similar programmes were held in the United States with some success. By the late 1990s, Deeper Life Bible churches had been established in other European countries and some successes were recorded in this cross-cultural ministry. By 1984, a Foursquare Gospel Church founded by Nigerians was already holding services in London. In 1986, the New Covenant Church was established by Paul Jinadu, a former leader of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, with its first branch in South London. Similarly, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, an indigenous Pentecostal church, began its expansion to the Western world in the mid-1990s. The hosting of the first Festival of Light, an all-night evangelistic programme, in London in 1996 marked its early attempt at cross-cultural evangelism. However, it has recorded much success in the United States where its branches in Washington DC, Dallas, and Chicago have achieved some penetration among other nationalities and become multi-cultural and multi-racial. For example, from one branch in the United States in 1996, the number had

³⁶ Personal experience while living in London, UK in the 1980s and 1990s.

increased to 231 in 2006. In late 2006, it achieved some remarkable success when it purchased a 580-acre land in Floyd near Dallas, Texas, and commenced building a camp modelled after 'Redemption Camp', its campground in Nigeria. Moreover, the church's annual Holy Ghost Congress, held every December in its expansive campground, the Redemption Camp, Lagos, Nigeria, attracts many nationals from all parts of the world. A more-recent success in cross-cultural missions from Nigeria to the Western world could be recorded in connection with 'the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for all Nations' or simply called Embassy of God, in Kiev, Ukraine. Ukraine, with its large population of members of Orthodox Churches, in the 1990s was a fertile religious environment for many proselytising foreign Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, mostly American, who landed with large material resources desperately needed in Ukraine. Although religious belief has been deeply rooted in the Ukrainian culture during the Communist era, there was a resurgence of religious fervour after the collapse of communism. Besides, official commitment to religious pluralism in the 1990s made Ukraine 'one of the most active and competitive "religious market places" in Eurasia'. It was in this era that Sunday Adelaja, a Nigerian, began a Bible study group with seven people at Kyiv Polytechnic Institute in 1993 and, in the following year, it was transformed into a church. The first convert, Natalia Potopayera, an alcoholic was a catalyst who drew thousands of other alcoholics, drug addicts, and their relatives to the church – all seeking relief from their burden. In April 1996, Love, a drug rehabilitation centre was opened which eventually, with the television programme and numerous publications, created much visibility for the church and got more

converts.³⁷ Its annual 'March for Jesus' mobilises members of the Embassy of God and many Christians from diverse backgrounds, and the march has been used as a symbolic commentary on the social and political life of Ukraine. The church with 25,000 members in 2005, of which 90 per cent are native Europeans, is the largest congregation in Europe. It has been successful with its social ministry to drug addicts and street children. Indeed, published testimonies from some of these converts have continued to attract more Ukrainians searching for solutions to their life crises.³⁸ By 1995, there were over 1,000 members and in 1997, it began to plant satellite churches outside Kiev. By 2004, there were 38 churches in Ukraine and, thereafter, missionaries were sent to 18 branches abroad, five of which were in the United States, four in Russia, two each in Belorussia. The church, which is built on prosperity theology, has television programmes reaching out to millions across Europe. The Embassy of God's vision is to transform the whole of Ukrainian society and, through that, affect the whole of Eastern Europe. The motivating factor was the claim of the founder that God wanted a missionary-church that would send out missionaries all over the world, especially to China and the Arab countries. This vision has been actualised in church planting, social ministries to drug addicts, street children and the poor, and a television programme. With an active prayer life and a theology of power encounter or spiritual warfare, Adelaja has been able to minister relevantly outside Africa and across cultures and denominational barriers. Just like other new evangelical churches in Ukraine, the success of Embassy of God partly rests on the active lay participation in the church which is more prominent than in the

³⁷ Embassy of God Church, *Look What the Lord Has Done* (Kyiv, 2005), 44-45.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 44-47.

traditional Ukrainian religious groups, by offering more emancipation to Ukrainian women and even allowing them pastoral leadership, which is not common in the traditional churches, effective usage of the media, and offering social empowerment and alternative lifestyle to the deprived and the underprivileged. Hence, there is a need to appreciate Nigerian Pentecostal missions as an aspect of reverse missions that is bringing a major shift in mission understanding, providing better sensibilities to, and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of world Christianity. Overall, reverse mission has been significant because it has moved the African Church from the periphery to the very centre stage of the missionary movement once dominated by Western missions. For the Western church, reverse missions brought a major shift in mission understanding, and this has provided better sensibilities to, and appreciation of, the multi-cultural nature of Christianity. The trend has also offered the old heartlands of Christianity a model for renewal and calls for structural reform of the church to grapple with the challenges of migration.

Pentecostal Missions and the New Strategic Planning in Missions: Equally important in this examination of Pentecostal missions is the role of strategic planning to enhance missions. In November 2005, the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association launched the Vision 50:15 which was a bold strategy for increasing the present 5,300 Nigerian cross-cultural missionaries to 50,000 missionaries by 2015.⁵⁰ Through effective strategies, it was hoped that these missionaries would reach the unreached people groups in northern Nigeria, and will further advance missions to 38 countries mostly in the Arab world, and finally to Jerusalem.

Vision 50:15 provided the Nigerian Charismatic Christianity a focal point of new missionary initiative and it was to be achieved through mobilisation, research, training of evangelists and missionaries, leadership development, and the promotion of tent-making ministries from its 95-member groups and churches. The funding for this bold mission enterprise was expected to be generated among all Nigerian stakeholders, both mission agencies and churches. Although NEMA is inter-denominational, the Pentecostal and Charismatic organisations have played major roles in the organisation than the mainline Protestant churches, and this project once again shows how Charismatics and Pentecostals are once again taking the leading role in cross-cultural missions in Africa. Although Vision 50:15 did not achieve its statistical goal, it has galvanised indigenous missions in Nigeria to set the agenda for world evangelisation.

Features of Pentecostal Missions in West Africa

From the discussion above, there exists a dichotomy between mission activities of mainline Protestant churches, and those of the Independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. While the former is more institutionalised, operated with full-time professional missionaries, and fully-funded, mission agencies established by independent Charismatic organisations operate as faith missions largely because of lack of any denominational base and support. Consequently, they often attract younger personnel who seem to have more mobility than denominational missionaries. So far, there are fewer linkages between the two, and where any of such exists, it is rather on personal levels among the missionaries. Overall, the Charismatic organisations are strong in missions, partly because the constituency of educated youths has global outlook resulting from their educational attainment and exposure to the Western world through the media.

Funding still constitutes an important dynamics for indigenous Pentecostal missions from Nigeria. Financial supports for the missionaries are rather inadequate and, in most cases, unable to support missionaries that have families. The head offices of most of the independent mission agencies were also unable to raise adequate funds to operate optimally. Consequently, not more than two missionary couples were posted to any mission field within and outside Nigeria, hence the missionaries were thinly spread over many fields and unable to offer social support to one another. Based on this, there may be a need for more partnership with local Christians and Westerners to achieving long-lasting results.

In the 1980s, single ladies dominated the missionary force, particularly in the missions of Charismatic organisations and churches. On the other hand, single ladies were a rarity in the denominational missions. Records of these single-female missionaries indicated conscientious service like their male counterparts. However, by the late 1990s, few females were responding and enlisting in missions partly because the agencies did not have institutional framework to cater for singleness in a cultural context where all were expected to marry. This gender issue calls for adjustments of existing mission structures in Nigeria. Generally, most Nigerian Pentecostal missionaries are not older than 50 years old, though most were recruited in their 20s. Missionaries in the mainline Protestant denominations tend to be older, apparently because of the longer duration of their theological training. There is no existing study on the success of the retention of missionaries in various Pentecostal organisations. Whereas CAPRO policy insists that missionaries marry within the organisation to ensure continuity in the missionary assignments, other mission agencies allow their missionaries to marry from outside the organisations.

Missionary-training institutions, which have stimulated and mobilised more people for missions in the 1980s, have in recent times

become a source of competition among the various agencies. Regardless of the challenge of personnel and funding, almost every mission agency has been rushing to establish its own School of Mission. In fact, the Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute, Jos, established as a joint venture, has been unable to grow appreciably because of these competing interests.

Conclusion

Nigeria has become the leading mission-sending country in the African continent. With a missionary force of 5,300, of which about 500 are spread abroad in about four continents, this is indicative of the strength of the Nigerian Pentecostal missions. Despite the deteriorating economic condition in the country, particularly at the beginning of the new millennium, evangelistic and missionary activities were still growing. These suggest that the evangelisation of the world does not rest on advanced material culture alone, which Western mission agencies have enjoyed, but as a Nigerian Pentecostal puts it, 'on the realization of a burden and vision for the unreached peoples'. The greatest contribution of the Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, as highlighted in this paper, is in mobilising and initiating mission movements from Nigeria, to other African countries, and in fostering substantial mission initiatives from Africa to the Western world. Indeed, the continuing growth of Pentecostal missions from Nigeria clearly indicates that Africa, long considered a mission field by the West, is now a mission base. Hence, the West is called upon to modify its missiological perspectives about African Christianity.

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