

Chapter Eleven

Bakuzufu: Revival Movements and Indigenous Appropriation in African Christianity

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I. ANATOMY OF REVIVALISM

Bakuzufu is the Luganda word for being re-awakened, or renewed or even resurrected; it is a very apt description for the English word “revival”. Revivals are an endemic aspect of Christianity. At several points in time, a movement would flare up as certain elements in the gospel, either its charismatic/pneumatic resource or its ethical imperative, would be emphasized enough to compel a new expression of its spirituality and structure. There would be a great excitement and popular interest beyond what may have been witnessed in years. As Efraim Anderson said about *ngunza* movement or revivalism in the Congo, it was a different type of conversion from the normal reception of Christianity that was “quiet, almost passive, sometimes even routine-like confession to Christianity.” In revivals, there could be “a violent expression of feelings with tears and cries, with shaking and convulsion, with a falling to the ground and even unconsciousness.”⁴³³ Some have drawn attention to the element of individuality in such conversion experience without ignoring the communal impact. A revival is not the mere appearance of a new version of Christianity but one that elicits massive attention and acceptance; it brings

⁴³³ Efraim ANDERSON, *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo*, Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensa (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958), 101; Carl SUNDBERG, “Conversion and Contextual Conceptions of Christ”, in *Studia Missionalia Svecana*, LXXX, 1 (2000), 133.

a new life to an old religion. A major characteristic is to accelerate the pace of expansion, determine the new direction of growth and reshape the religious landscape. Some last long and have long-term consequences, while others may be short-lived. Each brings new faces and styles of leadership to the fore and may aid or mar the quality of the Biblical roots of the Christian expression; thus, not all revivals could be positive. Some have caused schism for the worse. At all times, revivals are the responses to the character of Christian living and message at certain times, in certain contexts, and may reflect the impact of external secular forces as people seek answers from the religious sphere. A revival may, therefore, reflect the turmoil and dislocation in a community. For instance, Janet Hodgson set the careers of Nxele and Ntsikana within the disquiet among the Xhosa in the nineteenth century.⁴³⁴

“During the nineteenth century the Xhosa—Cape frontier was moved eastward step by step, following conquests by the British Imperial and Cape Colonial forces. By the 1880s after one hundred years of war, the Xhosa-speaking people from the Zuurveld in the East Cape to Pondoland, had been incorporated under the British sovereignty, suffering dispossession of their ancestral land, destruction of their polities, and displacement and domination by alien rulers. Every aspect of their daily lives, their customs, and their beliefs had come under sustained attack from missionaries. But while the Xhosa lost the struggle to retain their political and socio-economic independence, “the colonization of consciousness” itself was never complete, even among the Western educated black elite. The battle for sacred power between the intruding culture and the indigenous cultures continued unabated. Over the years, a number of Christian symbols and rituals were appropriated into the African worldview, providing a spiritually liberating potential with profound political implications.”

In Africa, revivals occurred at different times right from the early insertion of the gospel into communities; people responded to the missionary message by deploying certain aspects of its doctrines to arouse communal interest in ways that the missionaries may not have wanted. Thus, the character of revivals, would include: (i) a response to a prevalent

⁴³⁴ In Richard ELPHICK & Rodney DAVENPORT (eds), *Christianity in South Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1997), 68.

religious structure, message and their implications; (ii) a tendency to privilege a certain dimension of the message found most appropriate, especially the charismatic resources; (iii) an effort to re-shape the interior of a prevalent religious tradition; (iv) by re-directing the core message to deeply felt needs within the community; and (v) thereby provide an answer to socio-economic, political needs and restore moral order by appeal to supernatural intervention and anchor. (vi) A revival may act as a counter-culture by weaving a new identity with religious fabric to enable the community's survival in the face of new challenges. (vii) It throws up a new leadership able to deploy religion in the explanation, prediction and control of space-time events. Thus, in spite of operating in the religious zone, revivals tend to have political overtones and could be perceived as alternative power nodes, and thereby would elicit resentment from power-holders.

In Africa, many revivals appeared amidst African efforts to cope with colonialism, white settlers and missionaries. Later, the challenges of modernity and globalization would trigger widespread revivals in the quest for supernatural responses. However, there should be caution with predominantly functionalist interpretations. A religious explanation would emphasize that God has constantly renewed His people through the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. This has occurred in many places at different times as an aspect of His love. For instance, it is said that Koreans enjoyed a massive revival just before the wars that traumatized generations; that the revival empowered their survival and recovery. It can also be claimed that a series of these charismatic revivals reshaped the face of African Christianity and catalyzed the massive growth that is a part of the shift of the center of gravity of Christianity to the south.

African Christianity experienced localized revivals in the nineteenth century but the frequency increased in the period, 1910-1947, when some revivals with a wide provenance (beyond country of origin) occurred. For instance, the *Balokole* (Luganda for *Saved Ones*) was a movement that flowed, like the waves of a river, from Rwanda through Uganda to Tanganyika and Sudan. The effects lasted through five decades. Similarly, the massive Pentecostal/charismatic revivals of the 1970s provide another example that has continued with great intensity through decades and covered the entire continent, including even those claiming either Moslem or communist ideologies.

II. TYPES OF REVIVALS IN AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

In the course of this broad time frame, five types could be detected:

Type 1: A diviner or religious leader from the traditional context would shift base by appropriating some aspects of Christian symbols and message to create a new synthesis or emergent religious form that could respond to the felt-needs of the community. In seventeenth century Kongo, Kimpa Vita started as an *nganga*, traditional diviner, a member of the *Marinda* secret cult to claim possession by a Christian patron saint, St Anthony. People perceived her as an *ngunza* or Christian prophetess; but her claims became too messianic for the authorities to suffer and she was executed as a witch. Nxele and Ntsikana achieved an identical status among the Xhosa in the nineteenth century in spite of their differences. Nxele wove a myth that included a God for the whites and another for the blacks, and redefined the massive European migration into the southern hemisphere as a punishment for killing their God's son. He delineated their potential threat to his people and turned his half-digested Christianity into a resistant religion. Ntsikana tried to persuade people to ignore Nxele's militant notions, but to drive in the line of the skid by deploying an evolutionary process that would utilize the Christianity to cure the moral challenges in the primal religion and weave an organized, united community, so as to preserve the race in the face of the incursions of land-grabbing Europeans. Ntsikana's spirituality could be detected in the rich language of his hymns, many of which have been retained in Protestant circles. The political dimensions of religious revivals are clear as both responded to the threat of new white immigrants after 1812. In far-away south-eastern Igboland, Dede Ekeke Lolo retained the tradition at the turn of the century among the riverine Akwete community. But his was more revelatory than political, because soon after his prophetic utterances, Christian missionaries came to the community.

Type 2: A prophet would emerge from the ranks of the Christian tradition, emphasizing the ethical and pneumatic components of the canon to intensify the evangelization of the community or contiguous communities. Sometimes, the tendency was to pose like an Old Testament prophet sporting a luxurious beard, staff, flowing gown and the mixed imagery of the cross. Some would go further by inculturating aspects of traditional religious symbols or ingredients of the culture; yet the diatribe against the indigenous worldview and acceptance of Christian solution would predominate. The examples include Wade Harris, whose ministry started in 1910; Garrick Braide, who operated between 1914 and 1918; Joseph Babalola, who left his employment as a driver in 1928 in West Africa; and Simon Kimbangu, whose ministry lasted through one year, 1921, in the Congo. Each was arrested by the colonial government and

jailed: Harris remained under house arrest until his death; Braide died in prison in 1918; Kimbangu's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and exile at the intervention of two Baptist missionaries. He died at Elizabethville in 1951. Babalola was released through a plea by some Welsh Apostolic agents.

Type 3: A wave of African indigenous churches arose all over Africa at different times before the First World War, and especially during the influenza epidemic of 1918. Dubbed as *Aladura* in West Africa, *Zionists* in southern Africa and *Abaroho* in eastern Africa, some caused revivals, others did not; but they tended to emerge from mainline churches by recovering the pneumatic resources of the translated Bible. They equally deployed traditional symbols as in the category above. Soon differences appeared based on the dosage of traditional religion in the mix; indeed, some of the nativistic forms operated beyond the pales of Christianity. The sub-typology is as wide as the range and enduring contributions to African Christianity are immense. Equally, its character is complicated, as some are political while others are safe havens for brutalized Africans. It deserves a fuller treatment than is possible here.

Type 4: Sometimes a puritan and fundamentalist expression of Christianity would occur within the boundaries of mainline denominations challenging the regnant affirmations and seeking to enlarge the role of the Holy Spirit within their faith and practices. The hostile responses of the "rulers of the synagogue" would force an exit and foundation of new congregations; others would insist on reforming the denominations from the inside. Thus, some operate as churches or ministries while others remain as movements or sodalities within the main body. The degree of challenge may include doctrine, liturgy, polity and ethics or any permutations. Many attract enough mass support to become revival movements. In many ways, they resemble Type 2, but they reject the traditional cultural ingredients that some in this category utilize. Examples include the Ibibio Revival, which occurred within the Qua Iboe Church in eastern Nigeria in 1927; the Kaimosi revival, which occurred within the Friends Africa Mission/Quakers in western Kenya in 1927; the Balokole revival that swept through Anglican church from 1930 as mentioned earlier; and the Ngouedi revival, which occurred among the Swedish Orebro Mission in 1947 and resulted in the Evangelical Church of Congo (EEC).

Type 5: The contemporary face of Pentecostalism in Africa was catalyzed by charismatic movements, led by young people from mainline churches from the late 1960s in some parts of the continent, but more

especially in the 1970s. As Richard van Dijk puts the case of “Young Born Again Preachers in Post-Independence Malawi”:⁴³⁵

“During the early 1970s the populace of some of the townships of Malawi’s largest city, Blantyre, witnessed the emergence of a new religious phenomenon. Young boys and girls, referring to themselves as *aliki*, preachers, began to attract crowds by conducting large revival meetings. These young people, some of still in their teens, traveled from one place to another, and in fire and brimstone sermons strongly denounced the sinfulness and evils of everyday urban life.”

The phenomenon became even more pronounced in the 1980s, in all denominations and most countries. Marshall-Fratani and Corten have collated the interesting case studies of the insurgence in Ghana, the Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Congo Brazzaville. In each case, it challenged the predominance of either voodoo or Islam, or changed the face of Roman Catholicism. Later, the movements from the different countries linked through the activities of the students’ organization, FOCUS, and the migrations of students following foreign language programs. The reflection here would focus on the examples from the colonial period as the precursors of the larger theme of the origins of Pentecostalism in Africa.

In all the types, there is an intense religious experience, a vision, a dream that may issue in prophetic speaking and actions, healing and community building. Some operated as solo prophets whose charisma drew people to a new understanding of the power of the gospel; others formed new faith communities; still others operated as movements with inchoate leadership, but each affected the interior of Christianity just when colonial ideology colluded with missionary control and triumphalism. It is intriguing that most occurred during the period between 1914 and 1950 when missionary control reigned supreme, colonial power and white settlers consolidated, and labor problems and racial exploitation predominated. Did charismatic religiosity provide a survival technique for Africans in the midst of the disquiet of those years? Did the phenomena stamp African Christianity with an identity that gave it both an identifiable

⁴³⁵ In Paul GIFFORD (ed.), *New Dimensions in African Christianity* (Nairobi: AACC, 1992), 55; Andre CORTEN & Ruth MARSHALL-FRATANI (eds), *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

character and contested missionary control and its monopoly of Christian expression?

Matters are somewhat complex; precisely because the period was so alive with religious creativity, it is that many religious forms flourished. For instance, the mainline denominations engaged in strong institutional development with schools, hospitals and other charitable institutions; evangelized the hinterland areas, essayed to domesticate Christian values by confronting traditional cultures and in the Kikuyu case triggered off a rebellion that had enormous consequences. Education enabled many people to access newspapers and magazines and connected with Asia and Europe. A number of cultic and esoteric religious organizations advertised their wares in magazines and newspapers. It became the pastime of the literate few to search newspapers and magazines for advertisements and place mail orders for amulets, charms, rings and other cultic paraphernalia from these sources to ensure success in examinations, gain promotion and ensure security in the competitive and enlarged horizon of urbanity. Freemason and Rosicrucian lodges dotted the urban capitals of various countries just as the elite patronized the magazine, *Psychology*. As A.F Walls observes, Islam expanded more in the wake of improved transportation and commercial opportunities created by colonialism than many jihads would have accomplished.⁴³⁶ Since most of the population still lived in the rural areas, traditional religion predominated in many countries. Thus, the revivalism of the period must be examined with a balanced perspective. The point is that the cumulative effect of these revivals intensified the process of Christianization, catalyzed vertical growth and increasingly stamped a charismatic character on African Christianity.

III. CASE STUDIES OF SOME PROPHETIC AND CHARISMATIC REVIVALS,

1910-1919

This section focuses on some key revival and charismatic movements that occurred between 1910 and 1950. To start with, illustrations from West Africa: Wade Harris and Garrick Braide have received the most scholarly attention, but there were many others such as Peter Anim and Sampson Oppong in the Gold Coast. Certain characteristics distinguished a prophet beyond the beard and emblem, either a cross, staff or a bowl with holy water: a prophet was a charismatic figure; stringently opposed to traditional

⁴³⁶ Andrew F. WALLS, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 135-154.

religion and nominalism. They perceived that the pattern of Christianization merely replaced one culture for another and hardly attacked the core allegiances. It was as if Africans created a periphery where they dialogued with the missionary message, while preserving a core interior or epicenter where traditional allegiances predominated. The prophets focused their ministries on the interior of individual and communal allegiances. Prophets were sometimes precursors of Zionists, exhibiting the same features as praying and healing. But the prophet was imbued with a message, unwilling to found a church but anxious to save through word and miracles. Many were gifted with ability to compose choruses. Researchers have retrieved and translated 173 choruses by Garrick Braide, composed in his native Kalabari language.⁴³⁷ A simple one that his followers used at the beginning of an outreach simply declared, “*Jesus has come and Satan has run away.*” As it was repeated many times, the evangelists would pour holy water on shrines that would burst into flames to the consternation and conversion of votaries. Some were educated and others not; they attacked the symbols of traditional religion and nominal Christianity with the same hostility as missionaries, but demonstrated their engagement with signs and wonders. Their attitude to primal worldview declared a power-encounter scenario. Typically, people acclaimed that Braide was “Elijah II”.

Before Braide came on the scene around 1914, Wade Harris itinerated on foot from Liberia into Ivory Coast and Gold Coast in the years between 1910 and 1914, preaching, performing miracles, and creating an enormous growth for both Roman Catholics and Methodists. He, too, composed many choruses. Churches formed after their ministries. The colonial governments, both British and French hounded each of the prophets into prison, out of fear for an uncontrolled charisma. Braide was imprisoned on false charges in 1915 and died three years later. Strangely, his movement grew after his death. Similarly, Harris was confined to Cape Palmas where many came to visit and enlist his support. Churches grew in his name.

Wade Harris was particularly successful in Ivory Coast precisely because of the pattern of Christian presence in that region. The first mission arrived in the Ivory Coast in 1895. The area came under French authority in 1892. The French subsequently closed English-speaking congregations of the American Episcopal mission. Consequently, the area became predominantly Roman Catholic. The missions had little success despite being supported by the colonial government. The local populations were

⁴³⁷ G.O.M. TASIE, *Thoughts and Voices of An African Church: Christ Army Church, Nigeria* (Jos: Connack Nigeria Ltd, 1997).

united in their stand against European imperialism. As the First World War approached the French colonists feared any uprising, including that which might arise within a Christian context. Liberia was under the control of Afro-Americans who had done little to enhance the lives of indigenous peoples. Power in Liberia rested on the tripod of church, Masonic Lodge and True Whig Party. Consequently, missionary zeal remained weak and the indigenous people underdeveloped. Throughout West Africa there was "a mysterious ripeness for conversion."⁴³⁸ William Wade Harris appeared at this time. Economic factors may also have been a significant catalyst for the growth of prophetic movements as people tried to adjust to the new economic production system, changes in currency, the salary system and domestication of cash-nexus in exchange.

William Wade Harris (c.1865-1929) was a Grebo in Liberia. He became a Christian while he was a student at a Methodist school in Cape Palmas, Liberia. On leaving school he became a seaman before becoming a teacher for ten years in an American Protestant Episcopal Mission School. Harris married Rose Bodock Farr around 1885/1886. He received his call from God in 1910 while serving a prison sentence for participating in an anti-government demonstration. He had challenged Afro-American rule and led a revolt in the hope that British rule would be established. The revolt failed and Harris was imprisoned. During his incarceration, he experienced a vision of the Archangel Gabriel who identified him as a prophet to prepare the way for Christ, and instructed him to abandon his European ways. Following his release he began preaching to his fellow Grebo. He viewed himself in the role of an Old Testament prophet, in the mould of Elijah and John the Baptist, whose mission was to call people to repentance. He adopted a distinctive dress and carried a Bible, a cross, a gourd rattle and a bowl for baptism. In 1913, he moved to the Ivory Coast, and then to the Gold Coast to begin an extremely effective evangelical revival based on prophecy and healing. Christian communities were established and survived where no missionary had ever ventured. An important factor in Harris' success, in addition to his charismatic character, was the immediacy of the message he presented. Change was necessary now and it had to involve absolute commitment.

Throughout his mission among the Dida and Ebrie peoples, Harris challenged traditional religious practices and did not accommodate them to the Christian message. His message focused on the power of God and Christ to conquer traditional spirits and he insisted on the destruction of

⁴³⁸ A. HASTINGS, *The Church in Africa, 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 449.

fetishes. Harris focused on the imminent *parousia* which required a radical life change/conversion. He urged his hearers to follow the Ten Commandments, observe the Lord's Day, avoid adultery, reject idols and accept the authority of the Bible. The baptized were encouraged to join the missionary churches in their area. Harris' authority in baptism caused offence to the missionaries who were the beneficiaries of his prophetism and its results! His forte was the use of songs, especially choruses that he created. Significantly, he did not condemn polygamy and appears to have had several wives. He appreciated the white man's insistence on education and hygiene.

On his return from the Gold Coast he was arrested at Kraffy, Ivory Coast, in 1914, the result of suspicion regarding his power over the people who might revolt during a time of war. He was brutally treated before he was extradited in 1915 and returned to Liberia, where he continued his ministry under house arrest until his death in 1929. He made numerous attempts to return to the Ivory Coast but was always refused entry. Assistants continued the actual ministry. One such was John Swatson, a Methodist, who himself made many converts; another was Helen Valentine. Though he never intended to establish churches, Harrist churches did emerge in a context where there were no established communities. In these situations, Harris appointed twelve apostles to lead each community and pursue his vision. This is true among the Dida people, who had no existing churches they could join and, consequently, the church developed rapidly. In these independent congregations, the gospel was preached, hymns were written and chapels were built—all based on the principles and beliefs Harris had enunciated, but with their own distinctive customs. Some were even integrated into denominational structures at a later time. The Methodist and Roman Catholic churches were beneficiaries of Harris' work. But a Harrist church survived in the Ivory Coast and the Church of the Twelve Apostles was established in the Gold Coast. Subsequently, many prophets emerged who originated from within the Harrist tradition as it spread inland to places where Harris himself never ventured. Although they claim Harris' authority for their practices, they have evolved their own distinctive forms through the "minor prophets" who followed Harris. Their ultimate purpose is clear: "we are here to heal."⁴³⁹

Harris, the most successful missionary in West Africa, demonstrates a movement from traditional religion to a form of New Testament

⁴³⁹ C.G. BAETA, *Prophetism in Ghana* (London: SCM, 1962), 15.

Christianity, with himself as a personification of the prophet Elijah who is at the forefront of a messianic breakthrough in West African society. Yet, he remained fully African. Harris demonstrated clear leadership abilities; he lived a simple moderate lifestyle and observed the Lord's Day. Though he avoided forming a personality cult, he was the originator of a people's movement though not a church. His message did not deviate from that of the missionaries, yet he presented himself as an evangelist-catechist-prophet who "represented a new and populist level of African Christian initiative, quite removed from missionary control,"⁴⁴⁰ and "an authentic Christian universality, yet one in which diversity—and Africanity in particular—was to be honored."⁴⁴¹

Just as the vibrant ministry of Harris slowed down, Garrick Sokari Daketima Braide (c. 1885-1918) came on the scene in a different part of West Africa. He was born at Oponoma and grew up at Bakana in the north of the Niger Delta, south-eastern Nigeria. His mother was a Kalabari and his father an Igbo, possibly a slave. In early life he was a fisherman and a tradesman. He became a Christian and was baptized in 1910, becoming a member of St Andrews Church in the New Calabar district of West Africa in 1912; he was also an evangelist. Gradually, he began to experience dreams and visions, healing powers and prophetic utterances. People flocked to his home and the church. Rev M.A. Kemmer was quite excited at the increase in membership. Popular opinion pronounced him as the Second Elijah.

When an attempt to gain the due recognition of his ministry from the Niger Delta Pastorate Church (of the Anglican Communion) authorities failed, the majority of the congregation followed him out of the church in 1916. His strong ethical stance against immorality, liquor (especially the gin trade), and idolatry attracted many. He also acted as a judge in judicial cases.⁴⁴² So effective was his mission that a commentator observed that never was there "any instance where Garrick Braide consented to pray for any sick person in which prayers failed to be efficacious."⁴⁴³ A strong belief also came to be held that Braide had power to protect people from malign

⁴⁴⁰ HASTINGS, *The Church in Africa*, p. 489.

⁴⁴¹ D. SHANK, "The Prophet Harris: A Historiographical and Bibliographical Survey", in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 14,2 (1983), 147, n.1.

⁴⁴² This caused him to clash with the colonial authorities because his approach struck at the heart of the economy as the result of declining revenue from taxes on liquor and unemployment in the courts resulting from his judicial activities.

⁴⁴³ M.A. KEMMER, *Niger Delta Chronicle* (1909), cit. in L. LUGWUANA, "Medicine, Spiritual Healing and African Response", in *Africa Theological Journal*, 23,1 (2000), 27.

divinities. While some local chiefs supported him, others colluded with the colonial authorities in signing petitions that alleged that he constituted a health hazard by inviting sick people into the community.

His success was due in large part to the dearth of local preachers in the vernacular. The vernacular Scripture in this region was the Union Ibo, which was hardly understood. His popularity attracted the suspicion of the colonial authorities, especially during the time of war; he was arrested because his followers destroyed some traditional shrines. This was a ruse, though the enthusiasm of his assistants cannot be denied. This cadre included a number of young men: Johannes Danilobo Ngiangia (called “son of the prophet”), Moses Hart (called “servant of the prophet”) and Mark Ichie Uranta. Braide died in 1918. Ironically, his movement gained momentum after his death as it rolled into the contiguous Igboland. His followers formed the Christ Army Church that attracted some Ethiopianist leaders of African Native Church movement. J.G. Campbell from Lagos tried to take over the church and this created a split. Later, S.A. Coker was invited from Lagos to serve as the leader of the Christ Army, Garrick Braide Connexion. He brought together various strands that had originated in Braide’s movement. This organization still continues to this day.

Robin Horton argues that Braide’s movement is a natural development of traditional Kalabari religion and a response to political, cultural and social changes. E.A. Ayandele has suggested that the condemnation of the movement is an example of the collusion between the colonial government and the church; but it betrays the difference between the Ethiopian movement and the new charismatic spirituality that would shape the emergent African Christianity.⁴⁴⁴

IV. REVIVAL AND CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS

IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS

This factor could be further illustrated with a charismatic movement that arose within the missionary church and sought to transform its spirituality. Kevin Ward aptly dubs the ideal of the protagonists as “obedient rebels”. Perhaps the most widespread with long-lasting effect was the *Balokole* revival. It started in a Rwandan mission of the Anglicans that was under the supervision of the Anglican mission in Uganda. The background is the socio-political development that occurred after 1893.

⁴⁴⁴ See Frieder LUDWIG, “Radicalisation and Consolidation of the Garrick Braide Movement, 1915-1918”, in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 22, 4 (1993), 298, 315.

Uganda entered a new political dispensation as a result of the secular imperial takeover by the British. This gave the ecclesiastical pre-eminence to the Anglicans over the Roman Catholics and Muslims. The church entered into an alliance with the tribal leaders. The Ganda regime identified with new Christian groups and developed into a Christian ruling class that controlled political developments in collaboration with the British administration. By the 1920s, the older chiefs were losing power and authority to the younger generation of emerging leaders, who were well educated and competent in English. It was also a time of a resurgence of traditional religion contesting the early successes of the missionary movement. Many chiefs had abandoned their early commitment and returned to polygamy. Modernity brought with it undesirable trends manifested in a substantial body of nominal Christians. In the Protestant churches, some urged a restoration of the faithfulness of the early church. Indeed, some revivals had occurred in Uganda and Nyasaland (Malawi) in the 1890s, notably under Pilkington who came from the background of the Keswick Conventions, which attacked worldliness and rationalism within the Anglican Church.

The *Balokole* (saved ones, spirit filled) movement originated in Rwanda in 1929 as a result of the mutual confession of the Muganda landowner Simeoni Nsibambi and Dr Joe Church, a missionary doctor of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Ruanda Mission. Nsibambi's brother, Blasio Kigozi, who was a teacher, brought revival to Mbarara with the intention of introducing it through the Synod of the Anglican Church in Uganda. What began as a single-minded personal yearning for holiness developed into "one of the most significant Christian movements in eastern Africa".⁴⁴⁵ They felt that the church was suffering from the stagnation arising out of arid Anglican Church tradition, the patronage of traditional African values by some believers, and the liberal views of modernists among some white teachers. Nsibambi and Church were responsible for drawing a large group of Baganda Christians to Gahini in Ruanda where a major manifestation of the Holy Spirit occurred in 1935. This had a positive effect both in Uganda and Buganda. Meanwhile, Kigozi who was at the time a deacon, died in 1936 on the way to the Synod; he was adopted as a patron of the movement having left a written call for repentance and renewal which so moved the synod that it unleashed a movement for revival that spread as far a field as Kenya, Sudan and Tanganyika in the

⁴⁴⁵ Kevin WARD, "Obedient Rebels' – The Relationship Between the Early "balokole" and the Church of Uganda: The Mukono Crisis of 1941", in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 19, 3, (1989), 194.

1940s. The movement reached its zenith in the 1950s particularly in Kenya and Tanganyika and became integral to the life of the church. Kigozi was succeeded as leader of the *Balokole* by William Nagenda who although he underwent training for the priesthood became instead a lay evangelist.

It resembled the traditional Protestant revivals in character, probably due to the influence of the Keswick Conventions and the "Oxford Group". But in an African context it displayed the characteristics of public confession and restitution, singing, dreams, visions, public witnessing, the close bonding of its community life, all night prayer vigils and a strong missionary impetus which marked it out as a singularly African phenomenon. Its ethos was encapsulated in its hymn *Tutukendereza Yesu, We praise you, Jesus, Jesus the Lamb. Your blood has cleansed me. I am grateful, Savior*. The blood of Christ was a key symbol of the *Balokole*. This movement was the source of growth in the Church Missionary Society. Its lay power contested the primacy of the clerical office; its fervency challenged the lukewarm faith of the members; it provided a corps of new enthusiastic leaders. Its gender ideology allowed women a significant role in itinerant evangelism. It represented a certain "piety which rejected social and economic action as irrelevant apart from conversion."⁴⁴⁶

While it was both a challenge to the symbiotic relationship between church and world, the *Balokole* revival was also a source of spiritual renewal, commitment, uncompromising truthfulness and moral integrity. Some of the church leadership perceived it as an elitist movement that indulged in self-righteousness and self-satisfaction and manifested exclusivist tendencies. They alleged that the young ardent men would hop and dance but despise those who had not been revived. They rejected certain cultural ingredients such as eating coffee-beans, groundnuts, using ornaments or spears. They soon started to have their own services and despised their former friends saying: "you have not yet been saved." In that way they refused to obey those missionaries and pastors who rejected the operation of the spirit; they listened only to their own elected leadership.⁴⁴⁷ They organized massive revival conferences, with attendances ranging between 3,000 and 30,000. Largely unstructured in organization, informal and spontaneous in practice, there was the possibility of schism which was largely kept in check by its leader William Nagenda, Nsibambi's brother in

⁴⁴⁶ F.B. WELBOURN, *East African Rebels: A Study of Some Independent Churches* (London: SCM, 1961), 133.

⁴⁴⁷ Comment of old Kajero in Buhaya quoted in A. HASTINGS, *A History of African Christianity: 1950-1975* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 53.

law, and the extremely tolerant Anglican bishop C.E. Stuart, as well as by the innate sense of authority of the Baganda. A threatened secession was averted in 1941 when twenty six *Balokole* ministerial students were expelled from Bishop Tucker Memorial College at Mukono, which was renowned for its “modernist” and “ritualistic” leanings. The *Balokole* were labeled as “rebels” as a result of their fervent early morning prayer and preaching meetings. On their own part, they would retort that “the real issue is whether or not people will face the full preaching of the Cross and all it means in the life of full surrender.”⁴⁴⁸ The matter focused on whether or not the *Balokole* could find a place within the institution of the church, or whether they needed the freedom to operate beyond its confines. Most chose to work within the structures of the church though they did not proceed to ordination. Only eight out of twenty three “rebels” were ordained.

However, division did ensue; Ishmael Noo formed a small church in 1948 based on the principle of free love. In 1958, a schism occurred in the Kenyan church, leading to the establishment of the Church of Christ in Africa by Mathew Ajuoga, consisting of *Johera* (people of love). This was the result of the imposition of a stricter discipline than that favored by the missionaries, which marginalized those believers who could not identify with their experience, and the rejection of traditional African values. A further split occurred soon afterwards to form the Holy Trinity Church in Africa. Sometimes an internal strife occurred amongst the *Balokole*, some healed while others split it. For instance, in the 1960s a growing spirit of conformity to the world was becoming evident, which also led to dissension and the emergence of a reawakening of the revival among the *Bazukufu* that, in turn, led to a split with the *Balokole* in 1971. Yet, through all of these, there remained an indomitable spirit of loyalty to the Church of Uganda, except in 1984 when some “trumpeters” initiated an attempt to form a new church, The Chosen Evangelical Revival.

Under the rule of Idi Amin, the maintenance of an ethic of absolute truthfulness became nigh impossible and the movement went underground. The political situation put pressure on an individualistic ethic in a context that cried out for social engagement. By the time the situation normalized in the 1980s under President Museveni, other churches of a more Pentecostal disposition, as well as other traditions, had emerged which took over much of the impetus of the revival. It is interesting to note that new missionary groups must show a commitment to development as well as

⁴⁴⁸ Dr Church in WARD, “Obedient Rebels”, p. 209.

evangelism if they are to be allowed to work in Uganda. But the front of the movement had moved into Kenya where it continued to expand into rural communities.

The Balokole movement encouraged the principles of the three-selves movement (to become self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing) along with a strong sense of freedom and self-expression. Its lay emphasis facilitated the crossing of barriers—racial, tribal, gender and denominational—and evidenced an anti-hierarchical tendency. For the most part, it remained within the established churches although it displayed separatist tendencies. It was largely apolitical. It provided leadership within the Anglican Church for subsequent generations, including Archbishop Janani Luwum and Bishop Festo Kivengere.

The revival profoundly challenged the assumptions of European superiority in the Church and opened the way for a recovery of African responsibility and leadership. The miraculous element in this revolt against paternalism is the spirit of love and loyalty with which it was permeated and the fact that the issue on which the movement had taken a confessional stand, even to the point of martyrdom, has been the refusal to break fellowship with their white brethren.⁴⁴⁹ Unlike the other case studies where “the prophetic witness loomed large in the midst of a people whose world was falling apart,”⁴⁵⁰ or where the significant trend was not so much the trek of the prophets to the royal kraal as the pilgrimage of the chiefs to the prophet’s temple,⁴⁵¹ this case study had less political import. Generally, prophets and prophetic movements emerged in a context of social, cultural economic and political upheaval. They often filled a vacuum and in periods of existential crisis formed the religious initiative of Africans in periods of transition and provided a vital role in the transitional phase. A significant part of their appeal was the immediacy of the prophets’ message in such times promising relief and providing hope.

The prophets that emerged in times of social convulsion were marked by several features. For the most part they were marginalized characters, outsiders who experienced a call to challenge people and to adopt a new lifestyle. Nxele came from farm laboring stock; Ntsikana was marginalized through his exposure to mission influence; Shembe came from the borders

⁴⁴⁹ J.V. TAYLOR, “Process of growth in an African Church”, IMC Research Pamphlets 6, SCM, 1958, 15ff., in WELBOURN, *East African Rebels*, p. 9.

⁴⁵⁰ L. SWITZER, *Power and Resistance in an African Society: the Ciskei Xhosa and the Making of South Africa* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 67.

⁴⁵¹ B.G.M. SUNDKLER, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1961), 312.

of Zululand. All experienced prophetic visions prior to identifying their call to prophecy or their recognition prophetic ministry. Their careers were often of short duration though they often achieved a great deal by engaging in itinerant ministries, going to where the people are. Each prophet operated independently of white missionary control and achieved a greater response than the mission churches. Yet, it is true to say that in West Africa, at least, mass conversion depended on the prior existence of Christian communities. In each case there was a determined attempt to integrate Christian teaching in a traditional religious context to form a truly indigenous expression of Christianity, "an integration of African experience and biblical spirituality."⁴⁵² In this process they had the courage to challenge both African tradition and mission Christianity. The theology was down-to-earth in response to people's needs.

In varying degrees each manifested a form of messianic status, sometimes assumed by the prophet and sometimes attributed to him by others, and each displayed features of "iconic leadership" sometimes by the adoption of the role of tribal chief or a role similar to it. To a lesser extent this was also true of Nxele and Ntsikana and others. Their popularity confirmed the sense of inner calling. In each case, the prophet demonstrated a charisma and authority that could not be contained by missionary Christianity and was perceived as schismatic or anti-missionary. The concept of resurrection was taken over by prophets. It was believed that Shembe rose from the dead and Nxele predicted his rising again. Apart from Shembe, none formed a church possibly because they saw the dangers of formal organization that led to institutionalization. Shembe himself had functioned as a charismatic prophet before the routinization process. However, for the most part, the prophets rather encouraged their adherents, as did Harris and Braide, to identify with existing churches. Yet, churches and para-church movements did emerge perhaps resulting from the need to perpetuate the tradition established by the prophet. Where there was a degree of institutionalization, leadership had a tendency to be hereditary; always prone to schism.

Significant aspects of these movements included the development of holy places, new music, dance and distinctive forms of dress and the bearing of symbolic artifacts, such as staffs and gourds, as with Harris and Nxele. Worship focused on these and healing, visions and revelations were integral components of prophetic lifestyle. In all cases the Bible occupied an important role to a greater or lesser extent, implying that prophetic

⁴⁵² A. HASTINGS, *A History of African Christianity*, p. 539.

Christianity was “at least implicitly literate.”⁴⁵³ Holy places were important as venues for pilgrimage, healing and corporate worship, especially those focusing on healing. They are literally the centers of the movement and often the burial place of its founder. The prophetic and revival movements encouraged the development of lay leadership giving women equal status with men.

The prophetic and revival movements were catalysts of change in society and they altered the image of African response. Rather than produce black clones of white missionaries, they developed a distinctive and enthusiastic form of African Christianity. The effect of this was to completely reshape the religious scene. Often the beneficiaries were the established mission churches—the Roman Catholics and Methodists in West Africa and the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) in East Africa. Yet, the mission churches wanted to control the speed and nature of growth in an attempt to ensure the “purity” of the converts in terms of intellectual understanding of the faith, commitment and discipline. Consequently, they resisted the rapid expansion that the prophetic movements instigated.

The prophetic and revival movements in the African continent were a necessary and vital indigenous response to the incursion of white colonization and missionary enterprise. They made an impact on the social, political and economic contexts in which they functioned both in terms of the growing nationalism and ecumenism of the periods in which they emerged. They were responding to the Enlightenment missionary paradigm by introducing elements of their own particular world-views in a way that demonstrated a resonance and continuity with their traditional religious faith.

V. OTHER CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS

In a different stroke, many charismatic-type Christian groups in Africa linked with international evangelical or Pentecostal denominations because they needed the white support to survive in a hostile colonial terrain where the mission-churches deployed civil powers to persecute indigenous initiative. For instance, in West Africa, some indigenous Christians had contacted the Faith Tabernacle and used their literature, *Sword of the Spirit*, but since the latter did mission only through the Post Office, the Faith people turned to the Bradford Apostolic Church. After a reconnaissance trip in 1931 to the Gold Coast and Nigeria by a delegation comprising of Daniel Powell Williams, his brother, William Jones Williams and Andrew

⁴⁵³ HASTINGS, *The Church in Africa*, p. 533.

Turnbull, the church sent Pastor George Perfect and Idris Vaughan in 1932 to Nigeria and James McKeown to the Gold Coast in 1937. Later on a split occurred, because the Africans held firmly against using medicine while the white missionaries were driven by malaria to compromise. The Africans carved out Christ Apostolic Church while the whites moved into new areas and continued to spread the Apostolic brand. The Faith Tabernacle and Apostolic Church contacts flowed into early Pentecostalism by the late 1930s.

Christ Apostolic Church grew tremendously, because in 1928 a payload driver, Joseph Babalola, had a clear vision that he should preach and heal. He abandoned his employment in the Public Works Department in Nigeria and soon became a revivalist preacher. He set the western regions by the ears. Meanwhile, in eastern Nigeria, some Faith Tabernacle people spoke in tongues, were kicked out, founded Church of Jesus Christ in 1934, and invited the Assemblies of God, who quickly sent Rev W.L. Shirer and his wife to take them over in 1939. The AOG had started a rural ministry in Sierra Leone in 1914, Burkina Faso in 1920, and entered the northern region of Dahomey (now the Republic of Benin) in 1947. It should be added that before denominational brands of Pentecostalism, a number of Pentecostal individual missionaries tried between 1906 and 1912 to establish in various parts of Africa especially western Kenya, Liberia and South Africa. Thus, Classical Pentecostals as well as indigenous ones emerged early in the religious landscape. A similar pattern occurred in many parts of the continent.⁴⁵⁴ The intriguing aspect is that their presence did not cause a revival but supplied a tradition of charismatic spirituality in the African religious landscape.

Equally intriguing is a different cycle of charismatic revivals that occurred within mission churches that were open for the move of the spirit, between 1925 and 1947: in 1927, for instance, the Qua Iboe Mission among the Ibibio people of south-eastern Nigeria enjoyed an outbreak of spiritual outpouring during a weekend retreat of church workers. Samuel Bill started the QIM in the nineteenth century from Wales. His parents were adepts of the Welsh Revival. His ministry, therefore, continued a strong public, tent evangelism and church planting. By 1928, the mission felt that it was losing control and virtually instigated the District Officer to

⁴⁵⁴ Ogbu U. KALU, "Doing mission through the Post Office: the Naked Faith People of Igboland, 1920-1960", in *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionwissenschaft*, 54,4 (2000), 263-280. See, John PEEL, *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

intervene and suppress the spiritual overflow among the indigenous believers.

Similarly, a revival occurred among the Quakers in Kaimosi in western Kenya in the same year, sporting public confessions, fasting, vigils and spiritual emotionalism. Western Province of Kenya was called North Karirondo in the nineteenth century when the British government staked its presence. It was an important link between the Kenyan coast and the new protectorate of Uganda. Missionaries surged into the area aided by the completion of the railroad between the coast and Kisumu in 1901. They delimited areas of operation. By 1920 at least six groups had consolidated: Mill Hill Mission (MHM), Church Missionary Society (CMS), South African Compounds and Interior Mission (SACIM), Church of God Mission (CGM), Apostolic Faith Mission of Iowa (AFM), and the Friends Africa Mission (FAM, Quakers). But during the inter war years, the Africans seethed with resentment and under pressure from taxation, forced labor and administrative restructuring that imposed chiefs on communities compelled to supply the labor for white plantations. Many former white soldiers were rewarded with large acreages of farm land. African discomfort could be gauged in the formation of North Karirondo Taxpayers' Association among the CMS in 1924, and in the North Karirondo Central Association organized among the Quakers in 1932. Yet missions thrived as the Africans wanted education.

Within this assortment of missions, two were outstanding in their charismatic religiosity: the AFM, which allied with Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), and the FAM (Quakers). The FAM had been deeply imbued by the wave of nineteenth century evangelical revivals and the Pentecostalism of the new century. However, they avoided ecstatic dimensions of charismatic spirituality. FAM was established in Kaimosi in 1902 and led by Willis Hotchkiss, Edgar T. Hole and Arthur Chilson. The choice of location was determined by availability of land, good climate and luxuriant forest for the sawmills. They engaged in industrial, medical, educational and evangelistic ministries. Progress was slow; so, they turned increasingly to indigenous personnel for assistance and thereby bred a cadre of capable evangelists who imbibed the puritan version of Quaker spirituality. Moreover, the Bible had been translated into the vernacular, *Oluluyia*, in 1925. FAM occasionally organized leadership training retreats for workers and this became the context for the 1927 Revival.

Arthur Chilson and his wife Edna came to Malava, another FAM station, in 1918. He was appreciated by the people as a very practical man who initiated road and bridge projects. He was also an electrifying preacher. In 1926, the couple moved to Kaimosi station to deputize for

Ford, who was on furlough in America. The Chilsons usually prayed with the Otto Kellers, who took over the Pentecostal Nyag'ori mission station of the AFM from Clyde Miller. Chilson involved some indigenous people in praying and preparing for the 1927 annual conference. For that leadership conference, four other missionaries and some African teachers from adjacent centers converged on Kaimosi. Chilson shared from Acts 2:1-4 and Romans 10:9-13 and as he prayed, the Holy Spirit fell on the audience. Some cried, shook, fell down and spoke in tongues while others confessed their sins publicly. Participants spread the new spirituality with great effect throughout the surrounding regions.

In January 1928, Ford returned to find a new dispensation as the young people insisted upon tongues, public confession, prophecy, exorcism, night vigils with loud wailing prayers as mandatory components of the liturgy. They were nicknamed, *abandu wa rohi/abarohi* (people of the spirit) or simply as *abakambuli* (people who publicly confessed their sins). When the elders could not restrain them, they were forced out in 1932 and formed The African Church of the Holy Spirit, which has blossomed and successfully challenged the AFM in western Kenyan villages. In due course, they developed new ritual and liturgical practices. With their vigorous evangelism, they attracted the repressive attention of the colonial government until they registered as an independent body in 1957.⁴⁵⁵ Coincidentally, it was the same period, 1930s, that witnessed the explosion of the *Balokole* and it resembled the Jamaa movement among the Catholics of the Congo. Noticeable is that a movement that started under the white missionaries was appropriated by African youth and reinvented into an enduring and new pattern. This became even more glaring in the Buana Kibongi's career and contribution to the *ngunza* movement in Brazzaville.

The Congo region was suffused with prophetic or *ngunza* movements. After Simon Kimbangu was deported to Elizabethville in 1921, where he died in 1952, other prophets claimed to be imbued by his spirit in very vibrant political rebellion against the colonial authorities. For instance,

⁴⁵⁵ This account has been based on the following: i) E. Musembe KASIERA, "The Foundation and Development of Nyang'ori Mission, 1909-1924", (Seminar paper, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Nairobi, 20 Feb 1980); see also his PhD diss., E.M. KASIERA, "Development of Pentecostal Christianity in Western Kenya" (Aberdeen, 1981); ii) Z.W. SAMITA, "The African Church of the Holy Spirit: Origins and Advent in Kibra Division, Kamenga District", in *TransAfrican Journal of History*, 25 (1996), 123-145; iii) J.M. LONSDALE, "European Attitudes and African Pressures: Missions and Government in Kenya between the Wars", in B.A. OGOT (ed), *Hadith 2* (Nairobi: East Africa Publ. House, 1975), 229-242; iv) A.J. TEMU, *British Protestant Missions* (London: Longman, 1972).

Andre Matswa formed the Association of Congolese in Paris and returned as a religious messiah before his arrest and deportation. But the revival that endured through the years in Congo Brazzaville was led by Raymond Buana Kibongi from 1947. It started among the Swedish Mission Covenant Church during a leadership retreat. The Swedish mission had two major centers at Kimpese in Belgian Congo and the Pastoral Seminary and Evangelical School at Ngouedi, situated 300 kilometers west of Brazzaville and just south of Loutete. In 1946, the Swedes engaged in soul searching because though the missionary work was progressing, there was a strong feeling that the horizontal impact on the moral lives of their people was low in the two Congolese states. As usual, the missionaries prayed for a revival. Then, on 19th January, 1947, during the celebration of the Bible Society day, something broke loose among the students of the school. Efraim Anderson, who witnessed the event, reports that John Magnusson, the Secretary of the mission, preached on John 3:16. After the sermon, there was an invitation for prayers and Raymond Buana Kibongi started to pray. Kibongi was a student and was the most affected when the spirit fell on the group. According to Carl Sundberg:⁴⁵⁶

“He prayed for the missionaries and for the seminary at Ngouedi, which is ‘rotting in sin’. During the prayer, he became more and more excited and started shaking, as in ecstasy crying from his heart, ‘Jesus, make me your servant, Jesus, Jesus, calm me down, calm me down’, whereupon he sank on the bench exhausted.”

The course of the revival took different forms: people confessed their “kintantu”, envy or hatred and poor relationships across racial lines and changed dramatically. Others realized their Christian dullness and the level of church attendance and poor prayer lives in the school and warmed up. Still for others, a certain fire came on them. It was known as “the ecstasy of the cross”. It gripped people as if they touched by the suffering of Christ. Some felt pains in their hands as if pierced by nails; others like Kibongi, would stretch out stiff on the ground. The movement spread as other ngunza adepts thronged to the site. Students spread it all over Belgian Congo and as it spread into the hinterlands east of Brazzaville, villages became reconciled under the power of God. As Buana would say, “just as hard iron can only melt in fire, so the black man’s stone heart can only be melted in the all consuming fire of the ecstasy.”⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁶ SUNDBERG, “Conversion”, p. 129.

⁴⁵⁷ SUNDBERG, “Conversion”, p. 131.

He grew to leadership heights and turned the church into the Evangelical Church of the Congo. He succeeded because his vision was the unity of whites and blacks, an ecumenical vision for all churches in Brazzaville and because the Swedish were already open to pietistic tradition. He was such a peacemaker and proponent of reconciliation in a violent society that he took the initiative in 1970 that led to the formation of the Congo Conseil Oecumenic des Eglises Chretiennes au Congo. He was the first leader. His longevity till 1998 ensured that he provided long years of leadership and theological articulation. Unlike many others, Kibongi spoke in impeccable French and was rooted in the Scriptures, even though his church sports some ingredients like holy writing—when the spirit would move people’s hands to write messages. He was a musical person. His influence remained so strong that contemporary Pentecostal churches in Brazzaville do not refer to themselves by that name but are called revival movements.

VI. YOUTHFUL CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS IN THE 1970S

In the post-independence period, another cycle of revival swept through the continent, bringing with it a religious tradition whose face has changed drastically in every decade and whose full import is still in the making. This is illustrated with a brief sketch of the rise of charismatic movements in Nigeria between 1967 and 1975. It is argued that this form of pneumatic response to the gospel was a “setting to work” of missionary preaching, a recovery of the old Evangelical spirit which had catalyzed mission, a seepage to the surface of the type of Christianity which Africans wanted and their perception of the opportunities unleashed by decolonization. A Spiritual Revival swept through Nigeria from 1970 and created a phenomenon that is now known as the Pentecostal Movement. It has acquired various hues and become complex, but its origin was a wave of charismatic movements among the youth of various denominations that occurred in different parts of the country and eddied into churches, challenging the parent groups for power failure. The charismatic goals were both to re-evangelize the mainline churches as well as to win new souls for the kingdom. Evangelism and passion for the kingdom remained central to whatever followed.

To put matters in perspective, Nigeria witnessed a number of charismatic stirrings between 1914 and 1975: first, the scattered flares of 1914-1939, which were not part of the Aladura movement ending with the Christ Apostolic Church; second, the specifically Aladura movements; and third, the 1970 phenomenon. It is possible to weave connections between

the three. In this book, an effort has been made to show the differences. Another key issue is the force of externality: to what extent were these indigenous? The cumulative effects of these movements changed the face of Christianity in Nigeria. More cogent is that they typify a phenomenon that occurred in most parts of Africa in the same time frame. This phenomenon became significant after political independence and during the long process of decolonizing African churches; yet it had little to do with the nationalist ideology that suffused the politics of independence. They derailed the path of decolonization of the churches by reshaping the religious landscape along charismatic lines and away from the indigenization strategies of the mission churches.

There were six components to this phenomenon: the Hour of Redemption ministry, which operated in Lagos before the Civil War broke out; the Benson Idahosa ministry, which was just gathering momentum in Benin when the Civil War started; the radicalization of the Scripture Union in eastern Nigeria, 1967-1975; the Hour of Freedom ministry, which started in the midst of the Civil War in 1969 and held sway in the East in the immediate aftermath; the charismatism of the Christian Union in the Universities of the south-western Nigeria; the phenomenon of “Corpers as Preachers” as the Christian University students invaded northern Nigeria while serving in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); and the special case of charismatism in the Roman Catholic Church. All these soon webbed together before divisions emerged—when many shifted from operating as fellowships to establish churches. Perhaps we can use the Scripture Union as the mascot or signifier to reconstruct the spiritual temper of the times and to demonstrate how the various groups co-operated in the heat of charismatism.

SU, as it is called, was introduced into Protestant Secondary Schools from Britain in the 1950s. It was one of those interdenominational groups that focused on Bible study, prayers, choruses and hospital visits and served as the character formation component of mission education. Occasionally, the senior friend, a missionary teacher would invite the young students for tea and biscuits. While he tried to make conversation, the students would be more concerned with drinking the tea “properly”. It was an innocuous body until the Civil War broke out in 1967. Schools closed. A new Traveling Secretary, Bill Roberts, had just arrived from Britain. Instead of heading home, he decided to hold systematic Bible classes for the students around SU House in Umuahia. It soon turned into a prayer group, engaging in deep conversion, deliverance, evangelism and relief work. It spread like wild fire as young people formed prayer and evangelistic bands in their villages. By 1969, the character of the SU had

changed tremendously as people gave their lives to Christ in large numbers, and healing occurred during many hospital visits. To illustrate the temper, Bill tells the story about young men in a village outside Umuahia who refused to participate in a communal oath-taking. Threats from parents, elders, traditional priests and even some church members failed. Instead they retreated to pray against the deity. On the day of the oath, a quarrel broke out among the elders and the ceremony could not be held. The gauntlet to the compromising ethics of the mission church was obvious as the village was enveloped by a new spirituality. A number of university students also participated in the charismatic activities.

The religious landscape during the civil war situation is an important backdrop. It took many forms: there was a cultural renaissance and with scarcity of money and native doctors, the old ways of resolving problems resurfaced. Occult groups also flourished because dire times needed quick solutions. The Aladura, which had not been very successful in certain parts of the country because of the strength of mission churches, now proliferated as prayer houses in the hinterland at the heels of fleeing refugees. The mission churches had quite a competition because their organized structures could not be maintained. Priests and nuns ran for safety having lost their congregations. British support for Nigeria surprised and angered many who thought that “Christian” England would know that the Easterners were the most Christianized in Nigeria. Many turned to the prayer houses to deal with the inner and physical needs of the war condition. So, the cutting edge of Christianity shifted to the prayer houses and young radicalized SU boys and girls, ranging in age from 17 to 25 years.

Just before Bill left Biafra, he came into contact with three lads who had been members of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement and later joined a more potent prayer house at Ufuma. They had risen to high offices variously as “visioner”, “cross bearer” and “clairaudient”—who had ability to hear from the unseen world. They were groomed in the Book of Mars, Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses, Springfield Books and other mystic books. Through Bill Roberts, they became converted, renounced their dealings in candles and occult and went back to preach Christ to other votaries of prayer houses. Of course, the prophetess at Ufuma chased them out of town. Penniless, Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor and Arthur Orizu formed The Hour of Freedom Evangelistic Association (coined from the core message). The civil war ended in 1970. Based in Onitsha, they itinerated all over the East with a vibrant evangelical fervor. They built a support network of prayer groups as many young people flocked to the outreach programs. Some SU students joined them, others opposed them

for preaching against prayer houses, because many SU young people patronized prayer houses for power and thought that they could combine both. During 1970-1971, it was as if a revival hit Igboland, the Freedom Hour became famous as healings and mass conversions occurred in town after town. Other groups formed in towns such as Enugu, Owerri, Aba and more. Many of these 17-18 year old boys and girls boldly took their mission to their own villages. Their ministry caused splits in many AICs over the use of means. For instance, the Christ Ascension Church splintered. Mike Okonkwo led a wing into a charismatic body, the True Redeemed Evangelical Mission. As schools re-opened, these young people returned to their Secondary Schools to form vibrant Scripture Union branches. Those who went to universities built evangelical Christian Union camps as formidable interdenominational evangelistic groups.

Just at this time, Benson Idahosa, who was converted in the early 1960s by an Assemblies of God leader in Benin, built up a vibrant ministry with the aid of his former pastor and a Welsh missionary, Pa G. Elton, who had come to Nigeria in 1954 under the Apostolic Church. He retired but stayed back to minister in the country. Elton put Idahosa in touch with Gordon and Freda Lindsay, who sponsored him to attend Christ For The Nations Bible Institute, Dallas. That was after the Gordons saw how the new ministry had grown and the intense energy of the young man who had “fire in his bones” for soul-winning. He later formed the Church of God Mission. By 1970 his theology was developing some of the themes from T.L. Osborn as he waxed strong with prosperity motifs which sounded like music in the ears of those who had just come out from the war and witnessed the growth of his huge Miracle Centre, Television ministry, All Nations for Christ Bible School and the effective musical group called “Redemption Voices”. The leaders of Hour of Deliverance (Oye, Muyiwa, J.M.J. Emesin) from Lagos, Pa G. Elton of the Apostolic Church, Emma Harris, a Baptist missionary and a few other older charismatic leaders provided advice and encouragement as a youth-led religious revival enveloped Nigeria. These soon networked, with a different insurgence that occurred in western Nigeria among the students of the Universities of Ibadan and Ife—when members of the Christian Union started to speak in tongues during their Tuesday Prayer meetings and later organized National Conventions to arouse other Universities. The “CU” as they are known, broke away in 1962 from the Student Christian Movement (SCM) for being spiritually and ethically tepid. As this was happening, Pa Elton who lived at Ilesha turned his attention to foster charismatic spirituality in the universities and to cure the disunity among the SU boys who hurried to found their individual ministries. He urged them to lay down their

signboards and partake in retreats. At one such retreat, they jointly formed the Grace of God Mission, saying that it was by the grace of God that they could detect the sinfulness of their rivalry.

These young people graduated just when the National Youth Service Corps was made compulsory. As they dispersed through the nation, they formed charismatic groups; those who traveled abroad for foreign language courses in neighboring French-speaking countries took their spirituality with them. Those who attended the Fellowship of Christian Union of Students (FOCUS) took the message to Kenya. In northern Nigeria they not only formed branches in Ahmadu Bello University and Kaduna Polytechnic, but took over the Traveling Secretary posts in such organizations as Fellowship of Christian Students, New Life for All, and Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students. A central body, Christian Youth Corpers was constituted in 1973 to mobilize the dizzy evangelical enterprises. Some of the Southern youths, who had not gone through Universities but drank their charismatic spirituality in secondary schools, surged through the North founding ministries just at the time when many southerners were returning to the North after the Civil War. About ten ministries blossomed in Jos, Kaduna, Kano and Zaria between 1973 and 1976. Northern indigenes have since joined the affray.

Raphael Okafor meticulously kept a diary of their activities and this section relies mainly on the entries. One entry is intriguing:

“28th March 1971: Enu Onitsha campaign continues. Emmanuel Church authorities refused their church compound again. We moved to the Anglican Girls School, Inland town, Onitsha and began around 5.00pm. People still attended despite the disruptions. Michaelson gave his testimony. Brother Stephen preached while brother Arthur interpreted. Emmanuel Ekpunobi who said the opening prayers also prayed for the converts and later gave them additional instructions ... TO GOD BE THE GLORY.”

Diary entries are often cryptic; so, certain aspects need comment: the impact on mission churches and their responses, the gender factor, the impact on the entire religious landscape including occult groups, the relationship of literacy, Bible and revival and the further radicalization of the SU as they worked in agreement with the Hour of Freedom. There are other ironies: mission schools that were created as means of evangelization now fulfilled the goal to the chagrin of proprietors; school children, on the fringes of mission power structures, created a challenge which was more

radical than anything the missionaries anticipated. The youth, both in secondary and tertiary institutions, created a new situation where the leadership would be educated unlike in the earlier pneumatic challenges by the Zionists and Aladura.

First, the opposition of some mission churches: the responses of the missions varied. The Roman Catholic Church was initially hostile, defrocking two priests who succored the charismatic spirituality in the hurry to rebuild after the war. The gale of the wind proved irresistible and as they were already concerned about the impact of the prayer houses, which intensified during the war, Dr Arinze, the Archbishop of Onitsha appointed Fr. Ikeobi to start a charismatic service in Onitsha using Catholic liturgy which included healing and exorcism. Later on, Fr. Edeh returned from the USA to begin a Healing Centre at Elele near Port-Harcourt. Something else happened: in 1974, the Dominicans at Ibadan sponsored the visit of a charismatic team from USA led by Fr. Francis F. MacNutt to tour Nigeria. MacNutt claimed much success. Though Archbishop Arinze allowed them to operate in his domain and it was rumored that his mother was healed, the priests treated the team with much suspicion because of imbibed pattern of ministerial formation, but the lay people lapped up the opportunity and the import of the challenge was not lost on the rulers of the synagogue who had to ensure that their flock would not drift away. These are aspects of the origin of Catholic charismatic movement. The Anglicans were friendly while some churches were downright hostile. For instance, at Enugu, the Presbyterians rejected the application of the Scripture Union youth to use St. Andrew's Church hall. In Ohafia, a Presbyterian session drove the SU members away; they formed Evangel Church, which now competes successfully with the Presbyterian Church. By 1975, a new realism took over as mission churches embraced charismatic spirituality such as prayer vigils, fasting, tithing, the use of choruses, evangelistic tours and land deliverance. These have now become regular features of mission churches.

The second factor is the gender issue raised by the patronage of the School Principal, Madam Erinne. Many girls flocked to the SU and Hour of Freedom, and parents felt better that their girls were engaged in safe activities. Conflict occurred in cases where the parents' churches opposed the new spirituality. Older women patronized the youthful, healing ministries and served as "Mothers In Israel". Another diary entry by Okafor spells this out:

"17th May 1971 Three of us, Arthur, Stephen and I, as well as Mrs. D. Erinne, met bishop L.M. Uzodike and we had a very good

discussion for about one hour and later he prayed for us, Lawjua and others on ‘Wisdom, Love and Power’.”

This Anglican bishop remained a patron for many decades. The girl, Lawjua, was eighteen years old and in Secondary School. Her maternal grandfather brought Anglicanism to Obosi; she and her siblings were fully involved in radicalizing the church that their grandfather brought with the mother’s support and resources. She is typical of the activism of girls who led in the music ministry and preaching. The enlarged role became increasingly significant. This cryptic account does little justice to what happened, but highlights how the youth posed a subversion to the mission churches within the era of decolonization. Around North-West Igboland alone, over fifty charismatic groups were formed between 1974 and 1989. These young people evangelized Africa with a home-grown spirituality which was beyond mere adaptation.

The impact was to challenge the mission churches to either allow the young people more roles in the churches, permit charismatic activities or risk the exodus of young people and women to Pentecostal fellowships. Initially these young evangelists stayed in their churches and met to share fellowship, but later, some founded churches specializing in evangelism or deliverance or intercession while a few remained as ecumenical fellowships. Most secondary schools and all universities have charismatic fellowships comprising of young people in various denominations.⁴⁵⁸

Finally, this is another example of the cycles of charismatic revivals that became a part of African Christianity, right from the days of Vita Kimpa. Each cycle moved the church forward in a new direction and was stamped with a new character, betraying a certain sense of continuity with the traditional past, embedding African Christianity into the deep structure of all African traditional religions in spite of varieties of names and symbols. Charismatism has been the strongest instrument of church growth in Africa since the 1970s. Outside the case study area, youths were most prominent in creating this form of challenge in Zambia, Malawi, Ghana,

⁴⁵⁸ Okafor lives in Enugu and serves as a priest of the Anglican Church. Some of the entries in his diary can be found in a good account of those heady days by a participant, Frances BOLTON, *And We Beheld His Glory: A Personal Account of the Revival in Eastern Nigeria in 1970-71* (London: Christ the King Publishers, 1992). This section relies much on: i.) O.U. KALU, “Passive Revolution and Its Saboteurs: African Christian Initiative in the Era of Decolonization”, (Currents in World Christianity, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, Position Paper no. 134, 2000); ii) O.U. KALU, *Embattled Gods: Christianization of Igboland, 1841-1991* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003).

Tanzania, Liberia, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Uganda and more. This cameo also provides us with a glimpse into the birth of born-again people who are holding the cutting edge and have been catalysts in transforming the face of Christianity in Africa.

In conclusion, the core argument in this chapter is that the prophetic movement, revivals and other forms of charismatic religiosity were appropriated by Africans to establish a charismatic spirituality that would define African response to the gospel: at once conservative, evangelical, with emphasis on the centrality of the Bible, interpreted without Western intellectual gymnastics, but with simplicity and immediacy. It is a Christianity with a vibrant liturgy with songs, music and dance, and orality; under indigenous leadership; eschewing philosophical aridity; addressing problems raised within the interior of the primal worldview; negative about indigenous religions yet emphasizing miracles, vision, dreams and healing.

9. Principal Locations of African Instituted Churches

