

PENTECOSTALISM AND ITS IMPACTS ON CATHOLIC FAITH IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

The Christian religion may not have kept to her original unity, even in worship as was founded by Christ. The dents dated back to the earliest days of the apostles. Even the apostle Paul lamented on the divisions among believers in the early Church, with groups claiming and saying: “I belong to Paul”, or “I belong to Apollos”, or “I belong to Cephas” or “I belong to Christ”, of which Paul asked the question: “Has Christ been divided” (I Cor. 1: 12-13). In the course of her history, the Church has witnessed more divisions in the expression of the Christian faith. Apart from the earliest heresies that rocked the early Church like Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism, Arianism etc,² the Church witnessed her major internal crisis and crack through the criticism and revolt of a priest who was equally a monk called Martin Luther. On the Eve of All Saints’ Day, 31 October 1517, he nailed his Ninety-five Theses against the Catholic Church on the door of the All-Saints’ Church in Wittenberg, Germany. He criticized the sale of indulgences, the authority and infallibility of the Pope, the belief in purgatory, last judgment and later raised issues against mandatory celibacy, monasticism and Marian devotion in the Catholic Church. He was later excommunicated by the Church authority but the fire he ignited had kept burning since

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² Harry R. Boer, *A Short History of the Early Church* (Ibadan: Daystar Press 1976), 55ff.

then in the history of Christian faith. A few years later, the writings of John Calvin will fuel this internal ecclesiastical disunity in many Western countries like Switzerland, Scotland, Hungary and Germany. It will also spur the political separation between the Church and the state under King Henry VIII that led to the birth of Anglicanism. Sequel to these separations and divisions, subsequent divisions will persist for centuries in the Church. This essay will explore the effects of this division in the emergence of Pentecostalism, which has its roots in the Protestant Reformation. It will explore its nature, development and forms and how they have impacted on the mainstream Churches like the Catholic Church.

Origin and Spread of Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is an offshoot of Protestantism. The Protestant Reformation started by Martin Luther was the first major break away of a sect from the Church and her leader, the Pope.³ Ever since this faith eruption which became a watershed in the Church's history, there have been subsequent and continuous proliferation of churches in the history of Christianity. This has led to mutilation or modification of articles of belief as well as ways of worship in the Christian faith. Thus, raising questions on how Christians have maintained the prayer of Christ that they may be one (Jn 17: 21). By late 19th century, a sect in the Protestant movement will transmogrify into a new scion from the Protestant stock, forming the new Christian faith fellowship called Pentecostalism.⁴ It is a more recent Protestant Charismatic form of the Christian faith which places emphasis on the direct personal experience of God through baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal movement traces its Biblical roots to the coming and infusion of the Holy Spirit on the apostles

³ F.K. Buah, *West Africa and Europe: A New History for Schools and Colleges Book Two* (London: Macmillan Education Limited, 1979), 30.

⁴ Cf. Wolfgang Vondey, "*Part 1: Full Gospel Story-Healed: Manifesting Signs and Wonders*," *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel*, T&T Clark Systematic Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology 1st ed. (London: T & T, 2017), 107–130.

in Jerusalem on the feast of Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2: 1-31).

The Pentecostal movement which began in the Nineteenth century, started among the American and English evangelical charismatic sects according to Cecil M. Robeck, Jr and Edith Blumhofer.⁵ They had strong penchant on the Wesleyan spirituality which hinged on restorationism and faith healing, through the working of the Holy Spirit. They believed that the second coming of Christ was imminent and Christians were to expect the end-time, thus, calling for revival of apostolic power, spiritual gifts and miraculous manifestations as forms of preparation for this great spiritual expectation. This evangelical revivalism was expressed by various sects splitting out of the Protestant groups and testifying to the experience of charismatic phenomena like healing, speaking in tongues, etc.⁶ However, it was the famous retreat preaching and revival at Azusa that many subscribe to be the formal inauguration of the Pentecostal movement in the Christian Church.⁷ This spiritual new birth was built around a one-eyed black preacher named William J. Seymour who traveled to Los Angeles and staged the three-day *Azusa Street Revival* in 1906.⁸ Seymour was a disciple of a famous evangelist and revivalist, Charles Fox Parham, whose evangelical words and work inspired many who imbibed the Pentecostal spirit. The Azusa revival commenced on Monday April 9 at 214 Bonnie Brae Street

⁵ Cf. Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.2006), 119-122.

⁶ Cf. Edith L. Blumhofer, *Pentecost in My Soul: Explorations in the Meaning of Pentecostal Experience in the Early Assemblies of God* (Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 92.

⁷ Cf. Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of America Pentecostalism, Volume 1—To 1941*, (Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 97-112.

⁸ Cf. Vinson Synan, *The Holiness—Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 92-98.

and later moved to 32 Azusa Street on Friday, April 14, 1906.⁹ It was an inter-racial, open preaching, kind of worship, in which people driven by the spirit preached, prayed, spoke in tongues etc. It attracted many who flocked to the event and after which they carried the spirit and fire of the events to their various homes.¹⁰ Sequel to this event, the Pentecostal movement began spreading from USA to other parts of the world. The earliest known denominations of the movement then in America were the Church of God in Christ, the Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

The Essential Tenets of Faith of Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is an evangelical movement. Evangelicalism (from the word *euangelion* - the good news) is a non-denominational Protestant faith movement that affirms the centrality of being “born again” through personal conversion, sole belief in the Bible and spreading of the Christian message.¹¹ It dates back to the 1738 with faith practices of some Christian groups like the Quakers, Presbyterians, Pietists etc., prior to the emergence of the Pentecostals in the 20th century. What this implies is that though Pentecostals are Evangelicals, not all Evangelicals are Pentecostals. There is a distinction between core Pentecostals and Evangelicals. Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere in this regard writes that: “The Pentecostals form a large group and differ from the Evangelicals in that the former stress the holiness of life ethic, the mandate to mission as well as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, while the latter lay stress on preaching and conversion. The Pentecostal movement drew inspiration from many overseas groups, notably the American Pentecostalism. Within the mainline churches - Catholic and

⁹ Cf. Eddie Hyatt, *the Azusa Street Revival: The Holy Spirit in America 100 Years* ed. Kilpatrick Joel (Florida: Chrisma House, 2006), 20-22.

¹⁰ Cf. Synan, *the Holiness–Pentecostal Tradition*, 98-100.

¹¹ Thomas S. Kidd, *Who Is an Evangelical? The History of a Movement in Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 4.

Protestant - they are called Charismatics.”¹² Pentecostal faith is therefore built on Baptism of the Holy Spirit, evangelization, *sola scriptura*, inerrancy of the Bible, spiritual gifts like healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues and imminent second coming of Christ eschatology. They have ordinances through which they celebrate these essential elements of their belief.

Pentecostals emphasize the importance of the full Gospel teaching on the faith. This can be seen in the faith content of one of the mainstream Pentecostals called the Foursquare Gospel church. They based their faith on four cardinal points of the Biblical evangelism which include that: Jesus saves (John 3:16), Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 4), Bodily healing (James 5: 15) and the imminent second coming of Christ to receive the saved (1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17). They also identify with three forms of Baptism in the New Testament. There is the Baptism into the Body of Christ, which refers to the acceptance of Christ’s message and to become a member of his body through Baptism.¹³ The next is the Baptism by water, which is symbolic of dying to the World and living in Christ. The water used in this Baptism is a symbolic expression of the work of the Holy Spirit that initiates one into the Body of Christ.¹⁴ The third is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, where the emphasis is made of Christ as the agent, while the Holy Spirit is medium.¹⁵ Christ and his redemptive work is at the centre of the Pentecostal theology, and he also provides the fullness of the Holy Spirit which empowers and sustains the members of the Church. They believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to every Christian and that one needs

¹² Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere, *The Third Millennium Church, The Church That Will Survive* (Kearney: Morris Publishing, 1998), 112.

¹³ Cf. Guy P. Duffield, Van Cleave and Nathaniel M. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: Foursquare Media, 1983), 281-282.

¹⁴ Cf. Duffield et al, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 82.

¹⁵ Cf. Duffield et al *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 281-282.

to accompany this with repentance in order to be born again in Christ.¹⁶

Pentecostals also believe in the holistic healing of the person as a sign of Divine grace and holiness. This implies that bodily healing and prosperity in the things that sustain the earthly life are signs of Divine blessing. As one Pentecostal scholar Vernon L. Purdy remarked: "Because sin leads to human suffering, it was only natural for the Early Church to understand the ministry of Christ as the alleviation of human suffering, since he was God's answer to sin ... The restoration of fellowship with God is the most important thing, but this restoration not only results in spiritual healing but many times in physical healing as well."¹⁷ Wilfred Graves Jr. in his book *In Pursuit of Wholeness: Experiencing God's Salvation for the Total Person*, equally explained that for the Pentecostals, the healing of the body is a physical expression of salvation.¹⁸ For the Pentecostals, spiritual and physical healing are essential in acknowledging the healing power of Christ.

The Pentecostals believe in the manifestation of signs like illumination such as word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discernment or the power of communication or the vocal gifts like prophecy, speaking in tongues and its interpretation as signs of holiness. They believe that these gifts are signs of Holy Spirit as depicted in 1 Corinthians 14, and that they manifest divine presence in the world. The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge according to them are supernatural revelations of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy Spirit in the world. They are special revelations of God's wisdom to mankind, which one can apply in

¹⁶ Cf. Duffield et al *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 317.

¹⁷ Vernon L. Purdy "Divine Healing," in *Systematic Theology (revised ed.)*, ed. Stanley M. Horton (Missouri: Logion Press/Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 494.

¹⁸ Wilfred Graves Jr. *In Pursuit of Wholeness: Experiencing God's Salvation for the Total Person* (Pennsylvania: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc. 2011), 52.

specific situations one might find oneself. They hold too that the Bible is the sufficient measure of faith and practice. Any truth that is not rooted in the Bible should not be used as yardstick of faith. This is what is technically called *Sola Scriptura* (solely the Scripture) theology, whereby the written Bible is the supreme authority of faith and not the teaching authority (*magisterium*) as seen in the Catholic Church. The Bible for Pentecostals has the fullness of truth, fixed and finished, and does not need to be altered and modified by interpretation of experts or Church authority.¹⁹ This scriptural authority is accompanied by prophecy. As Duffield and Van Cleave explained: “Normally, in the operation of the gift of prophecy, the Spirit heavily anoints the believer to speak forth to the body not premeditated words, but words the Spirit supplies spontaneously in order to uplift and encourage, incite to the faithful obedience and service, and to bring comfort and consolation.”²⁰

They also pray in tongues (*glossolalia*), whereby a spirit-filled person can speak in vocalized and unintelligible utterances which communicate a message from God. This might sometimes require the gift of interpretation, which they believe can be given to someone in the community of faith for the promotion of the work of God. Furthermore, the Pentecostal eschatology is based on the belief that Jesus is coming soon, given that every moment is eschatological for his return.²¹ The idea of second coming of Christ for members is imminent and personal, which is why they are asked to be ready at all time, making preparations through personal holiness, prayer meetings, worship, services of faith, and evangelism.²² On the nature of the Godhead, there are two main doctrinal groups of Pentecostalism. There is the Trinitarian believers and the Oneness

¹⁹ Cf. Cecil M. Robeck Jr. "Written Prophecies: A Question of Authority," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, 2 (1) (1980): 26.

²⁰ Duffield et al, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 340.

²¹ Cf. Duffield et al, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 523.

²² Cf. Duffield et al, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 530.

believers.²³ The Trinitarian believers hold that God is One united substance of three Persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The non-Trinitarian or Oneness believers hold that the Godhead is not three Persons united in one substance. They rather believe that God is only One but that he reveals himself in three modes. He relates and reveals himself as Father within his creation. He manifests himself in the human form as the son via the incarnation as Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:16), and God is also the Holy Spirit (John 4:24) which manifests his powers in the lives of the believers at every age.

In the celebration of their faith, Pentecostals have what they call the ordinances. It is akin to what other Christian groups like Catholics call the sacraments. The ordinances are the rituals or ceremonies instituted through the command of Christ for imparting grace on the recipients. Pentecostals do not believe that these ordinances confer graces as in the sacraments in the Catholic Church. They rather hold that grace is received directly from God by the congregant with the officiant serving only to facilitate rather than act as a conduit or means of grace. Pentecostal ordinances include Baptism, Holy communion, Foot washing (as ordinance of humility) in John 13: 14-17, and head-covering for certain groups in obedience to 1 Corinthians 11: 4-13.²⁴ Even though many Pentecostals do not view baptism as essential for salvation, they believe that baptism is an outward symbol for inner conversion. Most Pentecostals do baptism by immersion and some use the traditional Trinitarian formula for baptism, especially the Trinitarian group. On the contrary, the Oneness group do not use the Trinitarian baptismal formula.

²³ Cf. Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 47

²⁴ Cf. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Women and Twentieth-century Protestantism* (Brereton: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 29.

Pentecostalism in Africa and Its Versions

By the 1906 and 1908, Western missionaries established the Pentecostal faith in Liberia and South Africa respectively. It was brought into Liberia in August 1906 by Lucy Farrow and Julia Hutchins, being the first of its entrance into the African continent. Then in 1908, it was introduced into South Africa, and from then, Pentecostalism continued to spread to other parts of Africa. It reached West African region by 1914 through the Liberian pastor and prosperity Gospel preacher, William Wade Harris who flourished in Ivory Coast and Ghana. By 1918, Pentecostalism has entered Nigeria, due to resistance by the indigenous people against Western controlled mainstream Churches and other socio-political factors. Many Nigerians initiated and embraced the African Initiated/Independent Churches (AICs) through Pentecostalism.

On entering the African soil, the Pentecostal movement has modified in so many ways and has also developed many rootlets. However, Nimi Wariboko in his article "*Pentecostalism in Africa*" made attempt to compartmentalize them into three main segments.²⁵ He posited that African Pentecostalism can be used to cover the churches and denominations that are pneumatic in orientation in Africa, with divergent origins. According to him, there are some that originated from Western Pentecostal denominations like the Assemblies of God, the Four-Square Gospel Church and the Apostolic Church. There is also another group that arose independently, without roots in the classical Pentecostal churches. They are known as the African-initiated/independent Churches (AIC). The third segment are the neo-Pentecostal or charismatic Churches in Africa. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu commenting on this last group writes that: "the typology constituting the third category, that is, the neo-Pentecostals, has three main groups in it:

²⁵ Cf. Nimi Wariboko, "Pentecostalism in Africa", Accessed 26 October, 2017, <https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/>

the new urban-centred Charismatic prosperity-oriented churches; trans-denominational fellowships, like the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International; and renewal movements within historic mission denominations."²⁶

It is important to remark that the success of Pentecostalism, like other Christian missions in Africa owes much to the labour of the indigenous Africans, contrary to what is often attributed to the Western or foreign missionaries. As Elizabeth Isichei noted. "Often . . . decades of missionary endeavour produced only a small number of converts. It is a paradox that the most famous missionary names belong to the nineteenth century—Livingstone, the Moffats, the Hinderers, Mary Slessor—whereas the expansion of Christianity took place in the twentieth century, and then largely through the work of African evangelists."²⁷ Thus, one can say that African evangelists helped to shape, not only the work of European missionaries but also the wider Christian mission in Africa. Such names as Garrick Braide (Nigeria), William Wadé Harris (Liberia), Simon Kimbangu (Belgian Congo), Sampson Oppong (Ghana), Joseph Babalola (Nigeria), Walter Matita (Lesoto) and Agnes Okoh (Nigeria) were salient in the spread of Pentecostalism in the 20th century in Africa. They did this via widespread preaching, indigenisation of the Gospel message to Africa problems or issues, enculturation of worship and translation of the Bible and other faith literatures into the local languages. Their efforts are the reasons for the massive movement of Pentecostalism in Africa today. Today,

²⁶ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "'From Every Nation under Heaven': Africa in World Pentecostalism," in *Global Renewal Christianity*, eds. Vinson Synan, Amos Yong, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, vol. 3, *Spirit Empowered Movements: Past, Present, and Future* (Lake Mary: Charisma House, 2016), xxxi.

²⁷ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa from Antiquity to the Present* (London: SPCK, 1995), 98–99.

Nigeria has the largest population of Pentecostals in Africa and, in a study from 2006, three out of ten Nigerians identify as Pentecostals.

Pentecostalism generally in Africa took some of the vestiges of the older religions in Africa like African Traditional Religion, Ethiopianism, and mainstream Christian groups: Catholics and Protestants. In this manner, it has been able to adapt to the cultural sensibilities and faith concerns of the Africans. Pentecostals in Africa read, interpret, understand and apply the scriptures in their own cultural contexts, thereby creating their domestic or indigenous Christian theologies. As Lamin Sanneh describe it: “This indigenous domestication is comparable in scope and consequences to the Hellenization of theology in the early church, but this time without the state apparatus.”²⁸ Pentecostalism has been able to tap on the African psyche, culture, space and worldview to form a new brand of Christian spirituality whose phenomenon, though appears like a pious *melange*, yet will shape the future of Christianity in Africa and the world. Their elated and emotional way of worship touch on the African sensations and sensibilities and their sophic expressions arouse some kind of explosive piety that seems to connect a typical African to the invisible realm. The spontaneity of Pentecostal prayers articulates the deepest spiritual emotions of the Africa and embodies his fears, ideals, ideas, habits, thoughts and traditions of the sacred. His entire life and expectations: longevity, fertility, prosperity, healing and all sorts of spiritual powers are wrapped in moments of melodramatic worship seen in the Pentecostals.

Sometimes, Pentecostal spirituality dangle on the dualistic Manichean logic in which the human person is inevitably caught in the cosmic struggle between good and evil, God and Devil. Spirituality of African Pentecostals draws deeply from the deepest

²⁸ Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 11.

tensions of the Africans like poverty, demons or satanic attack, death, life-after-life etc. This is why their over emphasis on demonization of many African cultures have undermined the social structures in Africa too. Their prosperity Gospel preaching for hope against poverty has also fuelled greed and spurred moral corruption in the land. Nimi Wariboko argues strongly that the prosperity gospel in the hands of some pastors has created a wasteland of greed and avarice on the continent.²⁹ But these excesses notwithstanding, the adherents still stick to the movements because of its pragmatic spirituality. Pentecostalism has benefitted so much from the socio-economic decay in Africa by providing responses to the daily problems of the people through prayers, prophecies, healing, deliverance, multimedia evangelism, counselling, education, healthcare etc. There is no gainsaying too, that Pentecostalism with its brand of spirituality has equally affected the rites and faith of other Christian churches in Nigeria, especially the Catholics.

Pentecostalism and Its Impacts on Catholic Orthodoxy in Nigeria

There are various ways the Pentecostal faith has affected the mainstream Churches. On the positive impacts, though the Pentecostals adhere to *sola scriptura* faith, the fact remains that they are very much devoted to the Bible, its contents and its spread. This has strongly challenged the Catholics, especially when they need to find the Biblical basis of their beliefs. Related to this is the Pentecostals' indefatigable commitment to public evangelisation in market places, offices, social squares etc. They embark in bus-preaching, street evangelism and door-to-door home evangelization, without minding public criticism, cynicism and even humiliations

²⁹ Cf. Nimi Wariboko, "Pentecostal Paradigms of National Economic Prosperity in Africa," in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement*, eds. Katherine Attanasi and Amos Yong (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 35–59.

and insult. This boldness in evangelization has emboldened Catholics to be more audacious and courageous too in witnessing to their faith. Many Catholics today, boldly say the Angelus, the rosary and other prayers in market places, buses etc. without being shy of professing their beliefs. This has equally extended to digital evangelization. Pentecostals are among the first Christian groups to apply hyper media evangelization. They exploit all the electronic or digital mass-media like skype, whatsapp, facebook, etc, to preach the Christian faith, and this has positively spurred Catholics who had in the past limited their faith expression within the Church physical contacts to explore the same modern or online means of manifesting their faith.

The use and growth of popular praise songs among the Pentecostals has influenced the sacred music in worship among the mainstream Churches like the Catholics. Though the emotionalism associated with this may affect adherence to solemn liturgical music, often identifiable with Catholic worship and orthodoxy, the fact remains that it is very much appreciated by many Catholics, as spiritually uplifting and edifying. It responds and corresponds without being sinful, to the spiritual character and piety of a typical African. And since these are praiseworthy songs, they also enrich the spiritual content of the African Catholic piety. In some cases, some of them are inserted and accepted into the conventional Catholic liturgical worship. These praise songs have helped to nurture great talents, thereby discovering special charisma in the Church. In fact, Pentecostal music style appeals to the African emotionalism in prayers and those who exploit it have been seen to be with special charisma in the worshipping community, even in the Catholic Church. In the same way, charismatic gifts of various modes like praying in tongues, vibrant ejaculatory prayers, etc which are celebrated with joy among Pentecostals are having their gradual influence in Catholic prayer formula today.

Building a community of love is part of the Christian religious obligation and Pentecostals have been in the frontline on this. They organize social events and bazaar to help the needy among them. They develop social spheres of love to assist members looking for job, marriage partners, promotions in work places, patronage in business etc. This socialized faith is having strong influence among the Catholics as positive notes too. And this care or salvation of the body, which the Pentecostals practice a lot, makes them existential even in their interpretation of cosmic realities affecting people's spirituality. Though these activities may attend to the people's real needs, they are also the motivations that have led to some negative impacts of Pentecostalism on the mainstream Churches, and the Catholic Church in particular.

One of the negative impacts of Pentecostalism is that its existentialist bend tends to pursue what looks like an earthly paradise. This is part of why they thrive in prosperity Gospel preaching and regard progressivism as a sign of Divine blessing. The theology of the cross, in which suffering is accepted as a sign of holiness and blessing, is not very much in practice among the Pentecostals. And their efforts to ward off suffering has often led them into interpreting earthly suffering as effects of curses and demonic forces. Demonization and superstition are rife in Pentecostalism because they identify bodily suffering or the cross with evil and as such, provide spiritualistic interpretations and rituals to avoid them. They sometimes engage in syncretism of faith which sometimes may involve unchristian practices like the use of charms and voodoo practices to achieve their aims or prayers. This has negatively affected some Catholics today, who are very uncomfortable in a suffering religiosity as Christ did. Some Catholics today have become more superstitious, prosperity driven, syncretistic and materialistic in their faith practices. Authentic Catholic piety and orthodoxy are sacrificed for prosperity and

power-maniac piety in many Catholic groups. In the end, holiness of life is neglected and ignored. This is why we have robust religiosity with empty spirituality and hollow morality in Nigeria. Some Catholics in Nigeria today are after earthly happiness and not holiness.

The *sola scriptura* faith of Pentecostalism, in which expertise interpretation of the Bible is relegated to low interest has also promoted unenlightened piety in faith. To some extent, it is breeding religious obscurantism, fundamentalism and even gullibility in Catholic Church today. Even the inflexible disobedience of some Catholics, including priests today, is somehow linked to the implicit rejection of hierarchical authority, in favour of sole obedience to the letters of the Bible. The role of the sacred tradition and *magisterium* in the guidance of faith in the Catholic Church is under pressure today because of the liberal Pentecostal influence and “obedience-only-to-the-Bible” mindset. Similar to this, is the lack of commitment of some Catholics today to their sacramental obligations as well as obedience to the teaching of the Pope on some pertinent issues of faith and morals. Some Catholic doctrines and practices today, are witnessing internal attacks and rejection due to the Pentecostal liberalism of faith, which has led some members to eclectic religiosity, non-denominational mentality, syncretism and general attitude of relativism in religion.

Conclusion

Pentecostalism is part of the Christian faith today and its spread and impact has gone global. It has become one of the rich contents of the Christian faith in world history today. To some extent, it has been well accepted in the African continent and remains one of the fastest growing denominations in the continent too. It has also impacted on the mainstream Churches like the Catholic Church. In some cases, it has enriched the practices and lifestyles of these groups especially in being more modern, existential and pragmatic. In other areas, it

has negatively affected their identity, authenticity and orthodoxy. It has limited some of the essential tenets for which the Catholic Church, for instance, is known. The future of the relationship between these churches might not easily be predictable. But it is important to keep a positive disposition, so as to take the positive influences of this faith movement, and resist its negative impacts too. In religion, proper identity and authenticity are important, and in Christian spirituality, authenticity must also bear fruits of holiness and good life, rooted in truth and love. This must be the guiding line as Catholics share the sacred space anywhere with the Pentecostals, especially in Nigeria. Ecumenism must not be confused with syncretism and eclectic addition of contradictory faith practices. Being orthodox is a duty and not an option as a catholic faithful.