

## WHAT IS NEW IN “NEW” RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA? AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Nmah, Patrick Enoch  
Department of Religion and Human Relations  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka-Nigeria  
E-mail: patricknmah@yahoo.com

### **Abstract**

*This paper considered, “What is new in the new religious movements in Africa? An analytical approach”. Since, however, this title is a bit too vast and ambitious for the limited scope and time of the discourse, the paper, therefore, appraised the salient issues involved in the “newness” in African Initiated Churches (AICs). The issues included Africans’ quest for spiritual power, cultural identity, ethnic identity, health, and for economic emancipation system for their own personal and practical purposes of healing or security. The purpose of the study is to examine what is “new” in the new religious movements. The findings showed that the religion is a religion of the oppressed in cultural, social, religious and political spheres. The methods of approach include historical and phenomenological methods.*

**Keywords:** new, newness, occultism, syncretism, pagan tendencies, and neo-primal movements

### **1. Introduction**

Missions were often guilty of a “failure to love.” They did not listen to Africans. Therefore they often failed to relate the Good News to African issues such as witchcraft, spirits, ancestors, land and community. They also failed to bring the holistic deliverance from evil which Africans longed for. The missionaries did not realize that the Bible they had brought would judge their culture just as it judged African culture... They competed with one another, and thus threatened African tribal life with conflict and instability (Bowen, 1996).

The “new religious movements” here refers to a new development arising in the course of the interaction of a tribal or primal society and its religion with one of the more powerful and sophisticated cultures and its major religion, involving some substantial departure from the classical religious traditions of both the cultures concerned, in order to find renewal by reworking the contributing traditions into a different religious system (Turner, 1978).

The above comment may not be limited to African continent as well as Nigeria per se but may likely be useful to other cultural-geographical areas of the world where substantially similar phenomena may be found. But political scientists will have to examine ‘protest’ or ‘proto-nationalist’ movements among the ‘oppressed’ people have the same connotation with the definition of new religious movements, even the social anthropologists may study their “acculturative,” “nativistic’, “revitalization”, transformative” among other movements if they used each of these terms in a strict sense. However, these two languages do not embrace exactly the same phenomena. Each vocabulary embraces all the phenomena of interest to its fellow disciplines.

They seek spiritual power in a new religious system for their own very personal and practical purposes of healing or security. These new religious movements may be regarded as “the religions of the oppressed.” Consequently, the statement of the problem shows the religious independency and the rise of nationalism, the desacralization of politics, the pneumatological emphasis and the demand for visible manifestations of the power of the spirits among others.

The research work deals with the “newness” in the new religious movements and the plurality of disciplines and classification systems. This includes neo-primal movements, syncretist movements, Hebraist movements among others.

It x-rays also “newness” in the socio-cultural aspect of the new religious movements; and the future problems and prospects.

The future problems and prospects in the ‘newness’ of the religious movements coupled with the conclusion end the study which establishes the “what is New in the new religious movements: An analytical approach within African Context.” The methods of approach include historical and phenomenological methods. In this course of this research work, Nigeria and Africa will be used interchangeably.

## **2. Conceptual Framework**

In customary parlance, the term “new religious movements” has four related meanings: (1) independence; (2) a territory not under the control of any other power; (3) in ecclesiastical usage, the principles that individual congregation or church is an autonomous and equalitarian society free from any external ecclesiastical control; and (4) the polity based on this principle (Barrett, 1970).

The definition which suggests new religious movements as an individual congregation or church as an autonomous and equalitarian society free from any external ecclesiastical control shall form my operational definition.

The term “new” or “newness” is used to describe these movements because, in historical terms of religious form and content, they are newer than either African traditional religions, Christianity or Islam with which they are in constant contact. And again, it is because of the relative “newness” of some of their doctrines and ideologies (Barrett, 1970, and Nmah, 2008).

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of Christian new religious movements in contemporary Africa. First are those which have, for various reasons, tergiversated from the historic missionary-founded churches. Often called “schismatic” or “separatist” movements, these category generally continues to reflect some of the ideologies of their mother churches, despite intensive internal changes, adaptations, inculturation, incarnation, and particular emphases. Second are those new religious movements that have been founded by charismatic African independent of any mother church. These are commonly referred to, often pejoratively, as “spiritual” or “spiritualist” (sometimes “spiritist”) movements or churches because of their emphasis on pneumatology and practice of glossolalia and spiritual healing (Mbon, 1999).

Causal factors for the emergence of African new religious movements include the quest for personal identity, religious identity, ethnic identity, cultural identity, and academic identity. Other factors include economic factor, political factor, social factor, false prophecy, doctrinal factor, ecclesiastical mal-administration among others (Nmah, 2008; Ndiokwere, 1995; and Barrett, 1970).

### **3. Research objectives**

The objectives of the study include:

- To investigate the causes of the new religious movements.
- To examine the bases of the “newness” in the new religious movements.
- To create the awareness to the mainstream (missionary) churches on some of the issues involved in the AICs.
- To investigate also the implications of the new religious movements to Africans especially the mission churches.
- To investigate the factors (features) that made the “newness” attractive to many Africans especially African Christians.

### **4. Significance of the study**

The significance of this study basically stems from the fact that it addresses the issues that threatened the existence of the mainstream (missionary) churches in Africa, and offers a valid and insightful resource material those future religious, sociological, and anthropological scholars especially church historiographers can consult to gain useful information on the “newness” in the new religious movements.

### **5. Literature review and hypotheses**

#### **5.1 The “newness” in the new religious movements**

It will be difficult to use general terms that have been used of African movements or for such phenomena across the whole world. Anthropologists speak of “adjustment movements” but H.W. Turner stated that it is unlike “new” (Turner, 1978, p.17).

As to “newness” in the other sense of religious form and content, Harold W. Turner referred to the fact that these movements cannot be seen merely as developments within either of the two contributing religious traditions involved. According to him, there are usually some radical differences at certain points from the traditional primal religion of the area. And again there are differences from the religion of the dominant society, be it Islam or Christianity.

The differences are such that these movements are usually disowned by those who adhere either to the continuing African systems, or to the invasive Islamic or

Christian systems. The vast majority of the said new movements have undoubtedly emerged from the Christian interaction.

Nigerian Pentecostalism, for example, does not usually share in certain features commonly found in the West; its policy may take any form and is not necessarily of the Congregationalist type, there is little real interest in millennial adventism, or in stress upon personal holiness. It does stress believers' baptism by immersion, the importance of prayer, and above all the presence and power of the Holy Spirit made evident in charismatic gifts and visible signs and results. (Turner, 1979, and 1967).

These spiritual gifts are often regarded as due to the "Second baptism of the spirit" and include faith healing, prophecy (dreams, visions, predictions), and ecstatic motor phenomena (trances, speaking in tongues and various forms of possession by the Spirit) (Turner, 1979 p.122).

This pneumatological emphasis and the demand for visible manifestations of the power of the spirit clearly identify its central features with those of Western Pentecostalism. There are also the role of music and dance, prophecy and divination (Ndiokwere, 1995). Citing Martin West, Ndiokwere described similar Zion Church of Soweto phenomenon as "Baptism of the Spirit" (p.85).

According to Turner (Turner, 1978), the first movement with these emphasis arose among the Ijaw people in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria late in 1915 through the activities of Garrick Braid, who was already known for his spiritual power in prayer and healing as a member of the Anglican and all-African Niger delta pastorate Church. But the actual beginning of the movement is obscure.

Braid's method of healing seems to have been through faith consequent upon his prayers and imposition of hands, and such was his reputation as a man of spiritual power that many sought healing through drinking or anointing themselves with the water in which he had washed. For Harold W. Turner, Garrick Braid's prophecies included reference to the British colonial power, the avoidance of imported European articles and government medical services, and to a better future for the Africans; these activities were regarded as seditious and

a variety of charges brought against him by the government which led to his imprisonment.

Other similar newness features emerged among the Ibibio and Efik areas where the United Free Church of Scotland, the Primitive Methodist Church from England and the Qua Iboe Mission, and undenominational group from Northern Ireland are also the sense of public confessing one's sins, making restitution, affecting reconciliations, abandoning native magical practices and tobacco and alcohol, and displaying many of the ecstatic phenomena associated with a pentecostal revival viz. tongues, shaking, removal of shoes, dancing, visions, and emotional displays of joy.

They are often referred to collectively as "Aladura" (that is, praying) churches. The "newness" feature involves also their rejection of "infant baptism" and baptism by sprinkling of water but baptism by immersion. They also reject Western medicine and its insistence on ecstatic forms of worship that lead to its separation.

The ecstatic state was thus regarded as a way of ascending to a higher form of living or at least a way which rendered possible the receiving of supernormal endowments. From a psychological point of view, ecstasy is described as:

A withdrawal of consciousness from circumference to centre; a state in which the absorption of the mind in one idea, in one desire, is so profound that everything else is blotted out, a state in which consciousness of self disappears. Such a condition, it is said, could be brought about by preparation and could as well be induced by the use of narcotics, alcohol, music and dancing. It could also come by contemplating and complete spiritual concentration as well as by prayer (Ndiokwere, 1995, p.163).

Ecstasy is classified as being of two kinds namely the will or fervid, and the more sober or contemplative types. The latter is described as a rapture of soul in a state of complete calmness, enabling a person to rise beyond the confines of consciousness. Moses Orimolade Tunolase and Christiana Abiodun Akinsowo in

1925 developed such group into the Cherubim and Seraphim Society which has since proliferated into more major and other minor sections. The largest production of the aladura movement is the Christ Apostolic Church. (Turner, 1967 and 1979).

Joseph Babalola, an Anglican public works employee, received a call in 1928 and as an itinerant preacher proclaimed judgment and repentance, destruction of idols, and healing through prayer. Late 1929, he joined Faith Tabernacle, baptized by immersion and in July 1930 he became the centre of mass healings. His type of Pentecostal revival stretched from Abeokuta almost to the Niger River and which later was identified with the Oshitelu's movement. Rejection of traditional medicines, magic and idols was widespread and the new spiritual healing was the central feature. The new churches met increasing opposition, and once again looked for help from a Western pentecostal church (Barker, 1982).

It is all the more remarkable that the spirit-empowered prophet-leader has in many cases led large numbers of nominal Christians and some others to make a sharp break from magical practices or reliance upon the ancestral and other spirits, in order to trust completely the one God of the scriptures and his Holy Spirit. The newness may also include the forbidding of certain food such as snails, mushrooms, pigs, taming of dogs coupled with non-purchasing of electronics.

We may further ask, "What is new" in this new religious movements? Additional features may be studied such as:

### **5.1.1 Pagan tendencies**

As we observed earlier, these religious movements have adopted adult baptism by immersion. The adult baptism is used as a rite of admission into a particular independent group, rather than as the sign and means of incorporation into the one people of God under the one Christ as head. Therefore those transfer from one independent group to another are being rebaptised in order to become members. Some of them seek spirit-revelations for the pagan purpose of divination, for information extracted from the spirit-world to serve our human purposes. Consultation of prophets has degenerated to the level of future-telling often semi-commercialized and quite divorced from a pastoral context within which it could be redeemed (Turner, 1979).

### **5.1.2 Occultism**

A hierarchy of named angels is approached for help through prayers and the use of candles, much as candles might be lit for the saints who are involved in some forms of Latin Christianity. At times the names of the angels and their associated signs are drawn from imported occult literature, such as the sixth and seventh Books of Moses, and an elaborate ritual from similar sources is employed. There are other pagan traits such as routine of prayers, fastings, taboos, rituals connected with thanksgiving after childbirth, recital of specific psalms for particular needs, water purification rites among others.

In the contemporary society, the great majority of them make no use of magico-pagan treatments. In place of these there is the innocuous use of holy water, oil or sand as a physical agent for the divine healing power, together with fasting as a spiritual discipline, and all set in a context of prayer. There is the tendency that there may be the danger that the holy water, sand, oil etc., can become a new magical power acting apart from God, and that the sacramental use of wine and bread in the Lord's supper and of water in Christian baptism will be replaced by a different sacramental use of water and these other elements in new rites of African divisive.

### **5.1.3 Patterns of ministry and structure within independent churches in post colonial Africa**

More often than not, some of the new religious movements are associated with tribe, national or international. But leadership is based on charismatic form. On leadership training and education, they sometimes used the facilities of the older churches for ministerial training and at times its leaders are only self-trained. Again, the new religious movements find it difficult to apply the four classic notes of the church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The issue of monogamy versus polygamy also poses questions to Western Christian ethics, but form part of African Christian ethics.

There are new holy cities, sacred mountains, local sanctuaries, and tombs of the saints; new langues des dieux-holy words, revealed languages, and even revealed scripts; new festivals with rituals and symbols drawn from colours or from water or other elements. The indigenous churches now have so much life and spiritual power that much of the continuing evangelism of the African continent Nigeria inclusive is in their hands. Professor Ali Mazrui says in Africa, "Christianity has to adapt-or perish" (Bowen, 1996). The indigenous churches

face also the challenged of adapting. They need to adapt to city life and to modern culture in order to survive. The newer African Pentecostal churches have been able to do this, but they still continue to pray for power over spirits, sickness, unemployment, corruption, failures, family breakdown, kidnapping, terrorism, religious extremism and the like.

“New religious movements” as used by Turner is a general term for the phenomena in Africa embraced by a bewildering variety, aladuras, separatist sects, post-Christian movements, millennialisms and messianisms, proto-nationalist and protest movements, independent, pentecostal or spiritual churches, as well as the great range of special terms or taxonomies coined by anthropologists since Linton’s “nativistic” religions of the 1940s (Turner, 1978, p.13).

In the next heading, we shall be considering the pluralistic structure of the “newness” in the new religious movements.

## **6. Plurality of disciplines and classification systems**

### **6.1 Neo-primal movements**

These new forms of movements are of traditional or primal African religions, distinct from further developments within the old system and often strongly opposed to it, yet at the same time attempting to revitalize or remodel traditional forms; this is done under the challenged of the Western-Christian encounter and with certain forms or ideas borrowed from this new influence in order to deal with the inadequacies of the old system. Movements of this type (typology) includes the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (1914), the Aruosa national religion of Benin (1945), and the National Church of Nigeria (1948). Others include Bullamatatare (1570s) in Congo, the Yakan water cult in Uganda (1880s), the Kenyan cult of Mumbo (1908) and the cult of Ancestors (1930s) and so on. The Aruosa and the National Church of Nigeria united to form the Godianism (the God of Africa) in 1964. These movements are usually anti-Christian (Fashole-Luke, 1978).

### **6.2 Syncretist movements**

These movements refer to the movements that are consciously and intentionally syncretist in the sense that they create a new system by borrowing both from the African primal and from the invasive traditions. The movements intend to be

neither traditional nor Christian. Such movements include the Bwiti cult among the Fang of Gabon (1890s), the Africanized form of the Watchtower movement in Central Africa (1907), the Deima Church of the Ivory Coast since 1922, the Hereto Church in Namibia (1955) and the Catholic-background Church of the Sacred Heart in Zambia (1956) (Turner, 1978).

### **6.3 Hebraist movements**

These movements strongly repudiated traditional practices especially the use of magic and rejected also the New Testament and the distinctive Christology of the Christian position, but adopted the biblical tradition in its Old Testament form.

They intend to identify with the ancient Israel and to regard themselves as African Jews, following Jewish ways of worship and styles of life. According to Turner (1978), the three main examples are Enoch Mgijima's Israelites in South Africa (1912), the Bayudaya (the Jews of Uganda (1923) and have developed contacts with modern world Jewry, and the God's Kingdom Society formed in Nigeria (1934) by a former member of a Western Hebraist type of movement, Jehovah's Witnesses.

### **6.4 African prophet movements**

Apart from movements towards political independence over the whole Africa, another continent-wide development is the prophet movements, separatist sects, or independent indigenous churches (Turner, 1979). These movements for cultural integrity and spiritual autonomy have for the most part preceded those aiming at political independence, and their influence may prove to be more profound and to continue long after the political movements have reached their consummation.

There are other countless ones in addition to those mentioned above. They presuppose a prior and established "classical" tradition against which certain movements may be described as "new". That is to say that it is, "A historically new religious phenomenon arising in the encounter of a primal society and its religion with one or more of the higher cultures and their major religions, and involving some substantial departure from the classical religious traditions of all the cultures concerned, in order to find renewal through a different religious system" (Turner, 1979, p.15).

## **7. The impact of new religious movements in the modernization of Africa**

Their patriotic and religious campaigns, well commented in the literature, resemble those of the ancient nabism in Israel. In the African context, the Ethiopian prophet-leaders and other messianic figures who assume the different functions of Moses are no doubt champions for liberty for the oppressed Africans. An example is the Ngunzists of the early phase of the Kimbanguist movement known for their Holy-War-mongering. (Ndiokwere,1995).

The national Church of Nigeria and other similar churches started the nationalism in the churches. They have their leaders mainly black and also propagate black philosophy of concept. The history of spirited reaction of Nigerians and African peoples in general against the invading white rulers reaches back to the Xhosa of South Africa, who at various times between 1815 and 1857 sought deliverance from the foreigners by a holy war under a divinely raised leader who was influenced by Christian ideas and sometimes promised his people a glorious future (Turner, 1979) and Barker, 1982). Other equivalent revolts against European rulers or colonial powers include that of Witbooi and Sturmman in South West Africa, Enoch Ngijima in South Africa after the First World War, Prophet Simon Kimbangu of Congo in 1921 among others. There are some that are less violent or more concealed forms of national feeling such as James Limba's Church of Christ (1910) in South Africa which stresses African deliverance from white domination.

Harold W. Turner observed that the divisive influence of tribalism within the new national political units has been painfully in evidence since the achievement of independence, and threatens the existence of Nigeria, the largest nation in Africa. Some of these movements are remarkable for their ethnic and linguistic variety, and their geographical spread beyond the limits of both tribe and nation, without losing their local basis.

Some of the religious groups notable for this purpose include the Church of the Lord (Aladura) which spreads from Nigeria through many of the peoples of Ghana, Liberia, Benin, Ivory Coast and thus cutting across many linguistic and political barriers. Others comprise Kivuli, Founder of the African Israel Church in Kenya that encouraged intermarriage between Luo and Ragolu, and also used their languages in services. At times these new religious movements could be regarded as a form of proto-nationalism (Hayward, 1963).

In most traditional societies of Africa the tribe itself and its rulers and institutions were set within a sacred cosmic order. Again, the patterns and the sanctions for political organization were often derived from a religious cosmology and the mythology that expressed and supported it, and the political leader or head was the channel through which ultimate or cosmic forces operated for the welfare of the society. Sacred kingship has been widespread, and sharp separation between religious and political institutions and activities has been rare. This is described as autocratic system of governance.

However, African new religious movements have not provided new national or state religions, but claimed that the new political parties and leaders themselves serve a pseudo-religious purpose, especially where authoritarian politics tends to pervade the whole of life and the founders of independence are given a messianic status. People like Nkrumah, Azikiwe, Banda, Kenyatta, Houphouët-Boigny, Lumumba, and also the older leader, Tubman in Liberia, have been given messianic and sometimes divine status.

The “new churches do provide a ready-made framework within which a leader can fulfill some of the particularistic relationships traditionally expected of people in authority, and in most cases with the aid of Christian ritual and symbols, increasingly eliciting more universalistic and functionally specific relationships in those areas where social, economic and political patterns have been most modified and broadened by European contact (Davids, 1976).

## **8. The future problems and prospects**

To Ndiokwere (1995),

prayer houses are a challenge to all of us. It is not good criticizing or condemning them. We must provide healthy alternative ones for our people. The old preoccupation with trying to “win over” and ‘keep people’ in our church by mere appeals to cold intellectual arguments on the true church vis-à-vis the false churches are not of much lasting value to a people for whom religion is primarily emotional and utilitarian (p.274).

Hitherto, the problems are whether these new religious movement will hold and consolidate such transcendence of tribalism as they have achieved, against its recrudescence as in Nigeria, remains to be seen. Again, as the sights are raised and the full benefits of the modern world come into view more clearly there may come a greater interest in politics, and a disillusionment with the situation after independence. This is coupled with the quality of education offered, the lack of qualitative medical care, the extent of corruption, and social diseases such as unemployment, prostitution, and increasing crimes (Turner, 1979).

On whether the disillusionment will produce reactions or revolts asking to those prompted by the miseries of colonialism, or a more extreme escapism into "spiritual" religion, M.M. Thomas posited; "The future of the struggle for a modern ethos in non Western lands lies ultimately with the indigenous movements which are seeking to transform traditional cultures from within. On the prospects of these new religious movements, there is the likelihood that they will last. This is for the fact that they offer to Nigerians and Africans even beyond the continent their needs in spiritual, political, cultural and economic perspectives.

In rural and urban areas, they created prayer houses to meet the demands of their clients for prosperity, health and success in their endeavours. They speak to Africans in the accent they will understand. According to Bolaji Idowu, while accepting Christianity, Nigerians do not need to throw away that which is good and valuable in their own culture. And so, for the gospel to have impact on the lives of Nigerians, it must take cognizance of the cultural background of the society and preach in clear accents rather than commending her Saviour to Nigeria in strange tongues. The Rationalists, especially the African church leaders, created African theology that has cultural nationalist dimension. That is to say that Africans who are Christians can now interpret the gospel within the context of their culture such as in music, art and dance. Idowu in consonance with this agrees that Christ will be real to Nigerians when the church in the country develops a distinctive theology in consequence of their own personal knowledge of God and a personal appropriation of the leadership of Christ (Idowu, 1965). The first African voices against the denationalizing methods of Christian missions in West Africa were those of James Johnson and Blyden (Ayandele, 1966).

In assessing some of the new religious movements such as Cherubim and Seraphim, Church of the Lord Aladura, Christ Apostolic Church, Deeper Life Bible Church of Nigeria, Grace of God Mission and so on, we have the following characteristics similar in these churches. To an extent, they are not very democratic in their governance. The founder is the sole authority that employs and fires at will without challenge. Most of these churches appeal to women more because they give greater attention to the barren and spinsters' problems that are regarded as some of the curses or reproaches in Africa. Second, since women in African societies are generally regarded as inferior and less important than men, their status in these churches is upgraded even in leadership. Hence, they feel at home in these churches. The new religious movements interpret the Bible literarily for they think of religion mostly in terms of feeling. This is to mention but few.

In situations where many Africans had been regarded or had regarded themselves as "nobodies" before joining a new religious movement, or where personal recognition and movement into the higher echelons of authority had been slow or even impossible elsewhere, say in the mainstream (missionary) churches, upon joining the new religious movements, these Africans now claim to have achieved personal social recognition for the first time in their lives. Their individual gifts and talents are now recognized and used for their personal benefits and the benefits of others. During the research work, these neophytes (converted members) testified that they now know who they are and "the Lord's will" for their lives. They now claim to "see" whereas before they were "blind". Thus many Africans sooner or later come to discover that in order for them to become "somebodies" it is first necessary for them to belong to these religious movements, because belonging, they say, makes it possible for them to define who they are in a world in which it is so easy to be lost in the callous crowd.

### **9. Ambivalent attitudes in these prophet-healing churches**

The prophet-healing type of independent body was also more African in its orientation, and therefore less congruent with education which usually meant westernization at the same time. It is dependent on the charismatic leader rather than the trained professional or organization man, and on divine power rather than human wisdom and skill (Turner, 1979). It was possible to help their members to adjust and also to abandon many of the old ways even while opposing western influences, while viewing schools as worldly institutions or as works of the devil. The Christ Apostolic Church, the largest independent church

in Nigeria, has its own education system with six grammar schools, and a teacher-training college. It also graduates its own staff. Similarly, the highly individualistic Holy Apostles' Community in its remote lagoon-bound city of Aiyetoro in Nigeria has its own school system, and has been willing to use the Methodist Church Nigeria to supply the teaching staff that will secure government recognition; at the same time it remains suspicious of higher education that will take its children away from the community, perhaps never to return.

## **10. Methodology**

This research employed the use of historical and phenomenological approaches to the study. It used also primary and secondary sources to obtain data. The primary source involved oral interviews while secondary source entails books, journals, and internet materials. These furnished the researcher with the basic information that was necessary for the comprehension, understanding, and analysis of the relevant issues discussed in this work.

## **11. Conclusion and recommendations**

In conclusion, I infer that the "newness" comprises pagan tendencies, occultism, neo-primal movements, syncretist movement, Hebraist movement, Pentecostal movement, Black folk religion, initiation rites, musical tradition, African theology and Black theology among others. The "newness" appears to be well nigh universal, rooted in the needs of every community and social groups as the French sociologist Emile Durkheim noted (Shupe, 1981). It is undoubtedly true that new discoveries cause people to change the way in which they understand human life and religious experience. The "newness" in the new religious movements engendered evangelistic awakening and spiritual revival among the pentecostal group members. Missionary commitment is also encouraged. It makes the mission churches to wake up from their spiritual slumber. Some of the features in the new religious movements previously condemned by the mission churches could now be seen in the mainline churches. Sadly, we now have populist preaching so distant from the word of God and the cross that it attracts the crowds as they search for wealth, healing and deliverance without any serious transformation in their lives.

Having said that, teachings on programmes of the mainstream churches to be intensified and their pastoral activities strengthened. There should be enough evident of practical Christianity seen in the lives of the ecclesiastical leaders and

their members. The mainline churches should demonstrate tolerance towards the new religious movements, and they should also be flexible enough to accommodate positive changes from time to time more especially in respect of their doctrines and liturgies, since the church is dynamic.

## **References**

- Ayandele, E. A. (1966). *The Missionary impact on modern Nigeria 1842-1914*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.
- Barker, E. (Ed.) (1982). *New religious movements: a perspective for understanding society*. New York: The Edwin Mellen.
- Barrett, D. B. (1970). *Schism & renewal in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Bowen, R. (1996)...*So I send you: A study guide to mission*. London: SPCK.
- Davids, J.O. (1976). *Christian, politics and violent revolution*. London: SCM.
- Fashole-Luke, E. et al (Eds.). (1978). *Christianity in independent Africa*. London: Rex Collings.
- Hayward, V.E. W. (1963). *African independent Church movements*. London: SCM.
- Idowu, B. (1965) *Towards an indigenous church Ibadan*: Oxford University Press.
- Ndiokwere, N. I. (1995). *Prophecy and revolution*. London: SPCK.
- Nmah, P. E. (2008). *Religion and society in Africa*. Enugu: Rabboni.
- Shupe, A.D. Jr. (1981). *Six perspectives on new religions: a case study approach*. New Jersey: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Turner, H.W. (1967). *The history of an African independent Church: the church of the Lord (Aladura)*, Volume I. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turner, H.W. (1967). *The history of an African independent Church: the church of the Lord (Aladura)*, Volume II. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turner, H.W. (1978). *"The approach to Africa's religious movement" in religious innovation in modern African society*. Holland: Afrita-Studiecentrum.

Turner, H.W.(Ed.). (1979). *Religious innovation in Africa: Collected essays on new religious movements*. Bosten: G.K. and Co.