

DECOLONIZATION OF AFRICAN CHURCHES: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE, 1955-1975

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I. Introduction

The concept of decolonization may have appeared in the 1930s, coined by the German scholar, M.J. Bonn who later migrated to London School of Economics, but it acquired prominence in the 1950's during MacMillan's 'wind of change' response to colonial agitation and preparedness to let the colonies go as Egypt did of old (Hargreaves, 1979:3). But scholars have debated whether decolonization was planned or a series of dishevelled exits forced by circumstances which could no longer be controlled. Even so, what was bequeathed?; was it a transformation or a transposition? Matters are complicated when we turn to the churches in Africa. Decolonization was not merely the departure of colonial officials precisely because missions did not pack up and leave as the new flags were unfurled and did not hand over all the church posts to black people merely because the colonial administrators had left. Decolonization in the churches took a much longer time as deliberate measures designed to maintain influence even when indigenous people were at the helms of administration. Missionaries always perceived their mission as different from the colonial governments', assumed that they were more successful than the latter and that the weight of moral rectitude planted them deeper in the interior of the colonized's psyche. This is the core of the fascinating conversation between the colonial officer Monsieur Vidal and the white missionary in Mongo Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba*. Moreover, various regions of Africa experienced the process of decolonization differently based on the number and types of missions, degree of power of the church in the colonial state, character of nationalism and the nature of decolonization. For instance, 'in Portuguese colonies, the church served as a tool of oppression and the resultant response from freedom fighters was acutely hostile 'in Angola and Mozambique. Armed struggle for independence shaped the character of nationalism. It was not merely a matter of Marxist leaning because Mobutu in Zaire took similar hostile steps to dismantle the church perceived as a competing power node. Indeed, there is no firm basis for assuming that churches in Marxist-leaning states fared much worse than

those in non-Marxist, Western-oriented nations except in a few cases as Guinea. (McKenna, 1997) Even here, the state anvil fell on the church after the attempted coup just as the attack on the church escalated under Moi in Kenya after the attempted coup of 1982. One of the reasons was that there were no purist Marxist states in Africa. Many Marxist groups from Cuba, Eastern and Western Europe China and Russia competed for influence and Africans responded imaginatively with various genres of ideology which could not be fitted within a mold. In spite of the Blue Book, Madagascar did not ban Christianity and in fact Renamo used Christian backing to fight Frelimo and the Mozambican peace process was brokered by a Catholic lay organisation in Italy. Neo-Marxist rhetoric did not diminish Mugabe's reliance on the churches especially the compliant Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. We, therefore, need to understand afresh why the path of decolonization cut in different directions and produced such varieties.

The paper will use Nigeria as a case or contextualized study to pursue various goals, namely, examine the nature of the Christian missionary presence in colonial Nigeria and how this shaped the pattern of decolonization in the period, 1955-75. On the matter of periodization, it is argued that the churches anticipated the end of the Empire, talked about it but did scant little to prepare for it until the mid 1950's. Some scholars would argue to the contrary (Weber, 1998) and this has raised the debate on missionary awareness of the prospects of decolonization and the delay in devolving powers to indigenous leadership, or indeed, why they failed to train or groom successors. But missionary lack of preparation may have influenced the ambivalent attitude to the nationalists. To what extent did missionaries support nationalism especially as the vanguard was occupied by missionary proteges?. Another crucial factor was that, contrary to all the predictions of political pundits, the post-colonial regime in Nigeria collapsed like a deck of cards within its first half decade. Between 1967-71 and after a number of coups, Nigeria fought a Civil war and emerged from it with a new political framework. A new and potent factor entered the equation, namely, beyond the rhetoric of nationalists, the implosion of praetorian regimes had immense implications for the face of Christianity. The war and its aftermath aborted many of the missionary decolonization strategies. The Moratorium Debate in 1975 was, therefore, a watershed for a number of reasons: it signified African impatience with the pace of

indigenization and was a harbinger of the mood in a new political scene characterised by statism, militarization of the society , intense competition by Islam and the rise of youthful and alternative spirituality which forced the pace and changed the direction of decolonization of the churches in the country. The period thereafter could safely be regarded as the end of an era for the old missionary enterprise.

2. Christian Presence in Colonial Nigeria

By 1960 when Nigeria became independent, the country was divided into three regions which signified ethnic and religious undertones. The religious ecology marked a predominantly Islamised North and Christianized South. But within the South, the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria came into an earlier and sustained contact with Christianity but hardly conceived their identity in religious terms. As David Laitin has argued, land and ethnicity are the key cultural signifiers and so, the Yoruba patronise the three religions, Islam, Traditonal Religion and Christianity with identical ardour (1983). This contrasts with what Ayandele described as 'the collapse of pagandom in Igboland' which occurred when missionary 'insurgence got underway from the late 1850's (Ekechi,1971; Ayandele, 1972). Some explain this development in the Sout-East with the psychological concepts of 'receptivity to change' and motivation An aggregated, stateless society of highly motivated and culturally receptive people, opened their hearts and cultural innards to Christian influence with great ease in their pursuit of the new power in education and modernization. Meanwhile, the process of Islamization in the North which started in the 10th Century AD was transformed by the Usman Dan Fodio-led jihad by creating the Sokoto Caliphate. The congerie of ethnic groups 'in the North could now conceive their identity with an Islamic religious marker especially in relationship with others. Admittedly, the jihad stopped in North-Eastern Yorubaland, did not consume all the ethnic groups in the North and induced the Da'wah call or missionary activities to expand Islam. This has continued till recent using political and commercial devices rather than the purely religious. The ecology of religion compelled much of the character of Christian missionary presence in colonial Nigeria.

To return to the seed-bed of Christianity in Nigeria: before colonialism etched its imprint, Iberian Catholicism followed at the heels of Portuguese traders who came for pepper in the ancient Empires of Benin and Warri. Both court-alliance strategy and predominantly

instrumentalist responses ensured that when the commercial and diplomatic relationships collapsed, missionary endeavour which lacked much strength collapsed with the superstructure. Plentiful supply of pepper from India and poor accessibility deterred the interest of the Portuguese after the romantic tradition of a great 'Regnum Benin', as could be found in Groetius' map of 1656, varnished in the heat of reality. Only a few broken monuments in the Warri kingdom remind votaries about the Christian quests of yore, as surely it was since the driving interest included the illusory quest for the Empire of Prester John.

It was the explosion or resurgence of Missionary enterprise 'in the 19th Century which shaped the character of colonial Christianity: the enlargement of scale in numbers of agents and agencies, individuals, missionary bodies, communities contacted in the expansion into the hinterland, policies and strategies deployed and the costs 'in human and material resources. But colonialism was the engine that moved the enormous enterprise as the conjuncture of timing was not fortuitous; this relationship between the 'intimate enemies' will reverberate in the period of decolonization as their fates will continue to be willy-nilly linked. In the South, missionary enterprise started with caution and with a sense of vulnerability. Invitations, court-alliance and the use of native agents were compelled by a harsh terrain riddled with mosquitoes, inaccessibility due to limited infrastructure and communication system. Missionary policy proposed the three-selves formula capped with the euthnesia of the missionary input and the use of black Americans, West Indians and Creoles from Sierra Leone. A shift occurred in the 1880's: the new ethos entrenched a control model and the abandonment of the ideology of euthnesia. It involved the dismantling of indigenous Christian structures, supplanting of indigenous Christian leadership which paralleled the development in colonial administration (Walls, 1982:159-166). Under the euphemism, *'fine spiritual imperialism'*, borrowed from A.B.Simpson, the *'moral equivalent for imperialism'* was fuelled by certain tendencies in the metropolises. In the American case, argued W.R.Hutchinson (1982:176-178), an innate character of activism and cultural enthusiasm bred an ideology of *'define and conquer'*. This tangoed with liberal theology to promote the definitions of the non-Western world. The relationship between missionary enterprise and the

civilizing and colonial project, of God and maxim guns (Johnston,1988) which inspite of ambiguities bred collusion, must be understood so as to perceive the roots of the stigma of foreignness which dogged the heels of the post-Independent Churches and like a wild dog, drove them from the public square and bred a a culture of collusion and culture theologizing while nationalists rampaged and predated upon the people in the 'politics of the belly'. The perspective here is that the chief concerns in the era of decolonization were hatched in the high noon of imperialism.

Certain other factors characterised the scariscape: the Protestant missionary organisations were the first to enter the terrain and most were from Britain and operating in a British colony. They, therefore, felt as partners in the civilizing mission. Only the Southern Baptists came from the United States. Two Roman Catholic missionary organisations came into the scene: the Society of African Mission came into the South-West 'in 1864 while the Holy Ghost Fathers from France came into the South-East in 1885 but soon, the Irish Spiritans were requested to take over from the French to remove any potential tensions from a French group in an English colony. The Germanic Frisians among them were sent home during the World Wars for security reasons. For a wide range of reasons including the energetic character of Bishop Shanahan,

the Roman Catholics soon outstripped the Protestants in vertical growth and control of schools. This success story will become very important 'in the politics of decolonization and created virulent rivalry, which catalysed the vertical growth of Christianity. In the South-West, rivalry was just as intense among Protestants as with Catholics in the South West. In the South East, the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 stimulated massive efforts at comity and co-operation. The Protestants delimited areas of influence among them. Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Qua Iboe Mission, each had its own area of mission. This tallied with the encouragement from the home bases to cut down the intra-mural hostility. By 1934, they formed The Christian Council of Nigeria and could face the Catholic challenge which surged into every part of the country (Kalu,1978). In the North, Missionary enterprise was hindered by the colonial government just at the time when missionary efforts shifted from assiduous evangelization to school apostolate. The political implication in the effort to develop a decolonized, united country on the march to modernity will soon become obvious. It took much pressures

in Britain to force a relaxation of the impasse; then many faith missions (Sudan Interior Mission, Sudan United Mission, Dutch Reformed Christian Mission with little investment in infrastructure, a strong evangelical tone and cellular approach swamped the zone from Britain, United States and Canada. While other missions entered too, the character of missionary presence was determined by this fact.

3. Decolonization Blues

i. Missionary Agenda in the Colonial Modernization Enterprise

The task from this point is to explain certain key issues: firstly, the connection between the nature of missionary presence in the colonial setting and the predicament of the so-called 'younger churches' of post- Independent period; secondly, the character, process and consequences of decolonization. Was it planned or compelled and pursued hastily? Was it a passive revolution or a transformation? Thirdly, the complex responses of missionaries to the new dispensation must be stressed for a balanced canvass. This includes the patterns of rear-guard actions comprising of internal restructuring and waltzing with nationalists before the rebuff by authoritarian states which imploded, shredding the constitutions of the departing rulers and betraying the weakness of the bequest. It should be stressed that inspite of the doctrine, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus est*, a lively pursuit of salvation went on outside the mission-founded churches with a vigour which defied white constraints.

T. A Beetham served as the Secretary of Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. In 1967, he reflected on the anxiety of member churches over the recent trends in African nationalism and possible impact on Christianity. Three concerns were uppermost, namely, the resilience of primal religion, force of nationalism and the impact of years of missionary control which bequeathed weak churches. Excessive control, he argued, bred dependency on missionary funds, disunity, inadequate manpower development and ambiguous cultural policies. He could have added a patriarchal gender ideology and lack of environmental concerns even as the earth groaned for its redemption. The net effect was that the character of missionary presence and the ambiguous attitude towards

decolonization now constituted problems for their progenies. The fathers ate sour grapes and the children's teeth were duly set on edge. Lurking beneath was the enduring anxiety whether these were legitimate children and true converts or would they, in the face of nationalist persecution, dash back into the warm embrace of native doctors? Quite telling, however, was the admission on the character of colonial missionary presence and its direct impact on post- Independent churches in Africa. Commentators have picked it up. Philip Turner focussed on traditionalism in the Anglican Church in Nigeria, the habit of tenaciously imitating the traditions bequeathed by the missionaries and which could have made Trollope comfortable in the twentieth century (1971:45-68).

The collusion of the church in the colonial enterprise has been debated mostly to point out a certain complexity in the relationship and areas of disagreement without denying that missionaries were a part of the colonial power structure and welcomed the imposition of European control as helpful to the enterprise. Indeed, argued Andrew Walls (1998:7), the collusion changed both missionary life and message: they ceased to live directly on terms set by Africans. The high degree of involvement in education became the most noticeable aspect of mission and may have diluted the energy for preaching the gospel and emasculated spirituality. The assessors of the Holy Ghost Fathers in 1939 took Shanahan's education apostolate to task on this touchstone (Forristal,1990). With dependence on government's grants-in aid, it may have reduced the public role of mission, turning them into 'zones of liberty' specializing in binding wounds, fostering ecumenism (sense of belonging beyond ethnic boundaries) and providing apprenticeship and training in leadership and responsibility. Unintended fruits bloomed in ideas of progress and quest for modernity. The two were the same because at the root of the colonial enterprise were mercantalism and the Idea of Progress which flowered into the modernization project. Africans responded with reflexivity, invention and ingenuity as some formed 'Progressive Unions' in self-mobilization towards the reality that colonialism thrust modernity on Africa.

The problem is to insert missions into this framework. Was missionary enterprise the enchanted Christian guise of the colonization of African consciousness by Western modernity? A partial response is to explore the nature of the colonial state and show how the mission wagon disengaged from the colonial government's train.

The image of the colonial state has become fluid and indeterminate. The Comaroffs, through many publications, suggest that we can know the beast by its effects: regulation of material processes, establishment and maintenance of social order, an ensemble of institutions created to protect Europeans projects of expansion, operator of violence, terror and coercion framed as guarantee of physical security for the colonizer against the colonized. Colonialism is thus imaged at once as a process, institutional mechanism, form of governance, cultural construct and an existential state of being in the world. Through capillary modes of regulation stretching into mundane practices of citizens, it sought to recast the African, fabricate ethnic and racialist subjects through existent grooves and reformat his epistemic world. Intones Bruce Berman, *'modern cultural African ethnicity is a social construct of the colonial period through the reactions of pre-colonial societies to the social, economic and political forces of colonialism'* (1998:321-250). The perspective is that colonial rule, while it manifestly produced significant changes both intended and unintended was in many respects deeply suspicious and hostile towards anything other than highly instrumental and very tightly-controlled modernization. Its centralized, authoritarian administration and great concern for order were all designed to achieve this singular goal. Were missionaries bedfellows?

Noll has argued that evangelical roots were nurtured in embeddedness in scienticism, commerce, the psychology, the Enlightenment, the education, the democratizing forces-all the signifiers of the modernization project- and coated with a dynamic Reformation consciousness of the 18th Century West. (1999:4; see, Stanley, 1990:24). But he also traced how significant shifts from these roots occurred. On the African

scene, the sips of the shift were rather blatant. There, missionaries took some part of the Enlightenment ideals and rejected others as bad for Africans. Far from embracing modernity, they felt called upon to resist it and pursued this course with a great sense of responsibility and divine inspiration. Admittedly, the concept of modernity is fragmented but one can use a short hand version by Giddens (1990:16) who pointed to three criteria including the disjuncture of time and space to enable a break- free from local habits and customs; rationalised social organisation and the connecting of the local and the global 'in a routine way and free scientific enquiry.

Scholars, as J. F. Ade Ajayi, give the impression that these were the achievements of mission education and the instrument for creating an elite (1965). In South Western Nigeria, missions established Secondary Schools quite early and sought to mold a certain leadership which would serve as the agency of the civilizing project. But as Hastings pointed out in comparison with the education work in Lovedale and Livingstonia, the goal was often vitiated by caution (1994:593). Omenka has shown that schools were used prominently 'as a means of evangelization' (1989). Mission control of education enabled them to meet the modernity project halfway, opposing the full agenda to the chagrin of both the Africans and the colonial government who often threatened to cut off their grants-in-aid. As Beidelman observed, the CMS missionaries at Kaguru bitterly regretted the changes which secular education brought, "replacing the bad old things with the bad new things" (1982:169). Missionaries were more concerned with creating a contented, Christian peasantry with a measure of literacy than generating a new elite (Strayer, 1976:95; Beidelman, 1982). Thus, while nationalists were proteges of missions, the vanguard of the indigenous opposition were educated overseas and this was a part of mass adulation. Our people used to sing: "*Zik nwa g'ala oyibo-o!*" (*Zik, the youngman who went to the whiteman's land-o!*). He could dare to shave the lion's beard!

Missionaries shared with colonialists a virulent disdain for these 'black Englishmen' caricatured in the character, Faseyi, who spent two weeks to "wangle to be presented" to the

Ambassador at a tea party in Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters* and more luridly in Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*, the Nigerian buffoon who was always dressed in a white pair of suit and sought the enchanted circle of his colonizers whom he mimicked. It has been argued that Lugard and his minions cordoned off Northern Nigeria from missionaries less for the love of Islam than against the unintended consequences of missionary education and the pretences of educated blacks (Bames,1995:412-441). Some educated blacks plumbed the irony by arguing that Islam was more suitable for Africans than Christianity. The growth of Islam in Lagos 'in the period, 1920-1940 astonished colonial officers. This touched on the anxiety of missionaries about the impact of insurgent Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, a concern which fuelled the Sudan parties which set off at various points in time to the confluence of the Niger and Benue and sometimes to the upper North. Similarly, they worried over the hypnotic allure of idolatry which made it difficult for the African neophyte to become truly converted. The unsavoury remarks of the Bishop Shanahan of the Holy Ghost Order has been quoted ad nauseam. Dark fears of African rebellion was woven into a low perception of both the enfolding culture and human capacity. From 1925-30 that fear was exacerbated by the protest over taxation and the connection between that protest and charisma. The arrest of Babalola indicates the connection in the official mind. By 1944 matters became worse as political parties were formed first by Macaulay and Zik and soon by Awolowo just after the 'coal miners' riot!

Missionary attitude in spite of philanthropy and dedication constituted the core problem. It was informed by the rural idiom of the church hymns. Thus, the missionary feared that the sheep would become de-tribalized, Westernized or ruined by urban culture. Modernization should go as far as supplanting slave trade with legitimate trade through agro-industrial projects. Within this perspective, missionary cultural policy loses much of its ambiguity: they adored the communal spirit, filial obligation, resonance with Old Testament worldview and those aspects of the culture which bonded. With as much vigour, they denigrated the inhuman elements and those which fostered either

individualistic norms or anti-social, secrecy and cult (Kalu,1977:75-90) To keep the African without vaunt, missionaries paid low salaries, did not invest in science and technical education and ignored the social sciences in their curricula.

Missionaries designed an ideology, understood as an order of values supportive of a given set of social arrangements, different from the colonial agenda. They set out to instal this with a passion which was consuming, coherent and garnished with eschatological idiom. As Peter Williams observed about the CMS, it became *'mini-empire and in truth no more disposed to grant real independence to its satellites than the Colonial Office'* (1990:262). With this hardware, encapsulation problems suffused the contest with the government. Minute Books of Mission Councils moaned about the desertion of their proteges to industrial and colonial sectors. Social control models were duly installed. Andrew Barnes recognized this disjuncture 'in the enterprises of the intimate enemies. In Northern Nigeria, he said, *'colonial administrators determined not only where and how missionaries could proselytize but they even sought to determine the substance of that proselytization. More importantly, they had their own agenda as to how indigenous groups could best be brought into cultural contact'* (1998:413). The image is of two competing visions. Colonial officers accused missionaries for *failing to introduce Africans to the collective self discipline necessary for civilized society'* or modernity. Africans were resistant and critical of both: against the colonial enterprise for racism and for shutting the door to the decision-making echelon of white power. Similarly, they were reluctant to accept a fully mission demand for cultural transformation and demonstrated a desire for free access to a wider range of modern, cultural, educated and economic opportunities. Africans were sensitive to missionary unwillingness to afford them with higher training, to ordain priests, devolve power or overtly support nationalism.

Reluctance to devolve power varied among denominations and regions. An index is ministerial formation since successors

must be groomed. Among the Roman Catholics, the low level arose from theological, ecclesiastical and racist roots. They were uncertain that their proteges will be able to endure the long disciplined training. The current debate on celibacy is an indicator. For long, Irish seminaries refused to admit African candidates (Ozigboh, 1985). Stories abound about the humiliations and ordeals in seminary formation in the years, 1930-1960: isolation after over-cautious selection, paucity of blacks, demand for unquestionable obedience, instant dismissal on the least pretext, foreignness of curriculum, painful manual, labour inadequate teaching, abuse of rights to privacy and the deep ambivalence with which the expatriate viewed indigenous people (Ekwunife,1997). A high institutional perception of the church, its ministry and sacraments installed more protective barriers. Beyond racism, devolution was seen as morally and theologically untenable and these arguments will come out more clearly during the moratorium debate of the future; suffice it to say that the ideals of providence and responsibility compelled a project of white domination and control of the church, mistaken for an European institution.

West Africa had its peculiarities to illustrate the regional factor. There was no settler community because of the inhospitable climate and disease; enormous enlargement of scale and church growth occurred and government grants to education combined with these to compel an extensive use of "native agents", a wider range of indigenous participation than evangelists, catechists and teachers. Still, the Europeans held tightly to power using the subterfuge themes of crusade against idolatry, the perishing heathen and the challenge of Islam. Installing themselves as *monoepiskopoi*, they supervised larger numbers of indigenous agents assured that they only could maintain the sacred institution. Few local people got University education. For instance, the Presbyterians came to Nigeria in 1846 and the first African graduate minister was Inya Ude who graduated from the University of Toronto 'in 1963(Kalu.1996b). Beetham computed that in 1965, the statistics for graduate indigenous priests from those Protestant missions he served were as follows: (1967:39)

Country	No of priests	No of Graduates
Ghana	559	40
Nigeria	1,500	49
Cameroun	700	17
Kenya	377	1
Uganda	480	2

Meanwhile virulent rivalry suffused the context as each denomination sought to imprint its version of the shared agenda and thereby engendered immense social and political divide which would hinder the mobilization of the community in the modernity project. Excessive control was the real intimate enemy of the missionary project determining its fate at decolonization.

Many warning signals continued to flash. The Jerusalem Conference in 1928 raised the matters of Christian attitude to other faiths and the need for an indigenous church. Soon, anti-foreign movements arose in the Orient. On the home front, attacks appeared from fundamentalists and even in academic circles, the toll of the rapid expansion on manpower and financial resources which became 'increasingly scarce with the effects of geopolitical events and Depression, all added to suggest a restructuring of the enterprise by the end of the Second World War. A few young West Africans, G. Baeta and A.B. Akinyele, at Tambaram in 1938 raised their voices on the culture- gospel interface in the region but to no avail. Many missionaries were heedless. They talked about it, wrote memos on salient political ethics but cautiously did little. Then, the nationalist challenge picked up steam inspired by experiences in World War 11 and the events in India and Ceylon. Like a calabash, it broke on their heads.

ii. Dishevelled Decolonization and Passive Revolution

The missions were rudely awakened by the speed of decolonization. As Basil Davidson concluded, *'It could accordingly be said that the colonial powers stumbled out of Africa as best they could, keeping their own interest always in view and at no time applying initiatives that were not, in one*

way or another, imposed or provoked by African pressures for anti-colonial change' (In Gifford & Louis, 1988:509). The joke is that the British stumbled out of the colonies, the French and Belgians abandoned theirs while the Portuguese had it snatched violently from them. A debate has ensued about the nature, process, limits and consequences of decolonization. One certain fact is that between 1952 and 1956, most of the Maghrib became Independent. Between 1957 and 1960 West Africa followed. Events were more protracted in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa because of white settler factors.

What caused it? Four positions have been contested: nationalist protest, economic determinants, European geopolitics and British world system or Commonwealth dream. Nationalism and protest have been typologised into primary and secondary so as to distinguish between opposition to colonial insertion and those protest which arose out of nationalist quest for political independence. Admittedly some would query the concept of nation and nationalism in the face of the quilt work which passed for African nations (Hastings, 1997). Terence Ranger has shown how both collaborators and resisters ricocheted into nationalist protests of latter days as cultural nationalism turned into mass, political nationalism (1968; 1986:1-69; Collins, 1984:351-60; Mazrui & Rotberg, 1970). There is a measure of consensus that the nationalist elite who chafed at their exclusion from power catalysed the collapse. They were not opposed to the modernisation enterprise but wanted their share of the cake. The geopolitical and other economic factors created the enabling environment which constrained policy options for the colonizers. The impacts of the two World wars and American education were crucial by providing democratic measuring line which found the colonial system to be wanting (Rathbone,1978). Some have plumbed the role of charismatic religiosity, the villagization of the modern space and the psychological boost which certain religions play in politics (Ranger, 1986:1-69).

Robert Pearce (1984:77-93) turned the nationalist argument on its head discounting these protests as capable of forcing the transfer of power. Rather, the Colonial Office

planned the scheme given the weak post-war economic position; the idea was to direct nationalist energies into constructive, developmental channels of nation building. Much is made of Reports by Cohen-Caine and Creech Jones which in 1946 recommended enlightened national interest to be attained by increased African representation, Africanisation of the Civil Service and Constitutional Reform. Many demur that there was a conscious initiative to liquidate the empire. Administrators saw it building up, discussed it but did not plan for it. Ajayi and Ekoko have argued that the example of Nigeria shows no expectation that Independence should be an early eventuality; rather, the plan was to fend off in Africa the kind of nationalistic eruption which occurred in India. In Lybia, the effort was to maintain American and British influence in the Middle East and Mediterranean. Much to the contrary, the fate of Burns and Richardson Constitutions 'in the Gold Coast and Nigeria indicate that the Cohen-Caine Report had no practical effect (Flint,1983:381-411; Ajayi & Ekoko In Gifford & Loius, 1988: 245-270; Mazrui & Tidy, 1984; Twaddle, 1984). Dark fears of rebellion (an enduring theme in colonial relationships) and nationalist pressure, they conclude, rose in crescendo as sequel to Suez crisis, Mau Mau rebellion, Dien Bien Phu, threat of communism in China, rumblings of cold war, stirring in India and Ceylon. Meanwhile the rising power of the United States required controlled decolonization as her best interest. In the politics of containment, decolonization was an opportunistic response 'in crisis management. The colonial government re-arranged the old order to jettison their intimate enemy and pursue their own agenda with a new set of idiom: *'it is no longer Christianity, Civilization and Commerce but social engineering, technical assistance and capital investment which are expected to harmonize the interests of Africa and Europe'* (Hargreaves, 1979:xii) They designed a Commonwealth structure which will be an instrument of continued influence.

But here was the crunch: Fanon may suppose that decolonization should imply a radical change of the social structure through the mobilization of the *'damnes de la terre'* towards a creative future. The gap in ideal is explained by

Gramsci as passive revolution, describing the way that a dominant socio-political group may have to change its way of wielding power if it wants to survive (See, Haynes, 1996:105). The goal of decolonization was to return to informal empire where former rulers would retain sufficient economic and technological resources to exercise powerful influence upon future development, a limited transfer of power which bequeathed ossified state apparatus, 'institutions and extensions of colonial policies which burdened the nations with artificial boundaries, incomprehensible constitutions and parasitic elite who, like little rats, learnt imperial habits from their colonial big rats. In Nigeria, the British handed back the flag seized from the Sokoto Caliphate, a symbol which has haunted the political stability of the nation. Wole Soyinka's 'Redesigning of a Nation' pursues the powerful gesture (1998:<http://www.yahoo.com>). Passive revolution has fuelled the modernization and dependency theories in political analysis of contemporary African pathology. It is the root of the divinity of the market and the co-operation of a predatory elite with multi-national companies. As Fela, Afro-jazz artist sang, the logo of the giant telecommunication company, ITT, may mean *International Thief-Thief*

The perspective here is that in spite of their intra-mural warfare, missions shared a similar tactical response as the colonial government, however, at a great cost, resilience and change of tack. They abandoned the opposition to modernity, embraced it and sought to channel it towards the hallmarks of liberal theology, reflecting the shift in European culture in the economic boom years 1960-1970 and under the shivers of the Cold War. However, the responses of the missionaries to nationalist insurgence at the twilight of colonialism, 1945-59, differed in quality from the re-tooling strategy in the immediate aftermath, 1960-75. Vast changes in the decade, 1966-75, tremendously changed the Nigerian scariscape.

iii. A Dozen Decolonization Measures

The story goes back to the late 1940's when African nationalist activities rose in crescendo as political parties sprouted. One explanation is that a younger breed with sharper ideological focus came to the fore sidelining both traditional rulers and

moderates to bask in the sun of mass adulation. In Nigeria this was not always so as the colonial government deliberately webbed traditional rulers into the new constitutional arrangements. In the North, for instance, a pattern was set for the elders to delegate younger scions to the Federal public scene while pulling the strings. Thus, Tafawa Balewa, an eloquent school teacher from Bauchi, was put forward as the first Prime Minister of the country. After that, the Sokoto Caliphate sponsored a number of prizes to Oxford University in anticipation of the new politics of Independence. Barewa College became the key centre for rearing such young eyes and mouths of the chiefs.

Missionary responses to nationalism during the first decade, 1945-1954 varied according to individual attitudes, institutional, official policy and regional contexts. For instance, colonial officials in the North had always felt protective of Hausa-Fulani' interest just as Roman Catholics were the most apprehensive of the the new dispensation because of their control of primary education in the country. All felt powerless to halt the process. Feeling betrayed on all sides by the colonial government and mission proteges, missionaries resorted to their own version of passive revolution. Initially, those in the field tried to use their facilities to stem the tide by posturing a dichotomy between Christianity and politics. In African Club, Calabar, for instance, drama, public debates and lectures were pressed into the efforts of the 1950's to warn Christians to eschew politics and seek the kingdom of God; that colonialism, if duly reined, was for the good of Africans. The officials of Home Boards espoused ideal positions with salient Christian moral ideologies but were extremely cautious. Acting like an antimasque, a group called Moral Re-armament networked the whole of West Africa inculcating Christian, moral qualities for nation-building. Some missionaries were indiscreetly hostile while others were sympathetic to the African cause. Hard statements can hardly be made in this fluid context. Generally, institutional attitude was dominated by apprehension and anger at the ingratitude of African elite. Fear of Marxism was not much of an issue in Nigeria but there was a resolve to contain the damage. Lurking

below was the fear that nationalism was irreligious and might resurrect paganism. The nationalists were portrayed as immature to lead nations to a democratic vision. N.M. Bowman, writing in a missionary journal in 1947, put it succinctly. Entitled, "Democracy Without Religion", he argued that *"a nation does not learn overnight to think of power as servant and not the master of justice. People do not acquire in a single generation that sense of responsibility, that sense of stewardship, that integrity without which corruption and greed will speedily threaten all attempts to run their own affairs"* (Life&Works, Oct.:111). The period of tutelage had been too short to produce the right moral environment for independence.

Protestant ecumenical political ethics shared much of this. At the Oxford Conference in 1937, the theme was a balanced view of the state as a historical reality serving the common good. The caveat was a recognition that God is the true source of all law. In Amsterdam in 1948, the theme, *Responsible Society*, recognised the role of the people but cautioned that change must come through legitimate, peaceful, reformist means. They alluded to supporting Biblical passages, perhaps, to counteract the stirring in the colonies. It was only at Willingen in 1952 when churchy concerns gave way to the imperative of witness to human conditions.

By 1952-4, many Christian Churches saw the handwriting more clearly and made efforts to meet the challenge. In Nigeria, the Roman Catholics sponsored a number of indigenous priests in Rome to understudy their cultural roots to enable adaptation into Christian ethics. (Cardinal) Francis Arinze examined Igbo sacrifice while (Archbishop) S.N.Ezeanya probed the religious meanings of Igbo names. It sounded like collecting data for governance but nonetheless opened a trend for the future. Another strategy was to drive in the line of the skid as the churches forayed into the public space; such support ensured that the contest in the early elections into Regional and Federal Houses of Parliament were fought along a Christian divide, the fruit of years of virulent rivalry and in the North along sufi-order divide as the Quadriyya and Tijaniyya clashed, each forming a political party. Waltzing with nationalists appeared a sensible

way to preserve Christian traditions especially as the church's role in social development-schools and hospitals- may make them indispensable. It was also hoped that the new leaders will be mindful of the hands which fed them. Scholars have insisted that the church's crucial role in nationalist struggle is the impact of education. Indeed, when the collapse occurred, the new leaders initially spiced their speeches and policies with Biblical references even though enthusiastic Zikist Vanguard young men endeavoured to bawdrize Christian songs in their advocacy for cultural revival as Zik tangoed with God's Kingdom Society. Echoes of this admixture of nationalism and Christianity can still be heard in Godianism and Orunmilla religious groups.

Generally, the nature of the exit ensured that nationalists were not hostile to the churches. Some, as Professor Eyo Ita, appeared rather apologetic to show missionaries that politics was a worthy Christian endeavour. He was willing to publicly embrace his former political enemy, Azikiwe. The impact of decolonization on church groups equally varied based on certain indices: the size and ecclesiastical organization, the vertical spread and social quality of adherents, the inherited pattern of colonial relationship, the theological emphasis and international relations (Hastings, 1976). It also depended upon the manner of disengagement, the weave of neo-colonial fabric and the dosage of Marxism in the political mix. Any of these could aid weal or woe depending on the context. Much more depended on the measures or rear-guard actions to re-tool so as to maintain influence using indigenous personnel and resources. This is passive revolution in Christian garb. These 'included at least a dozen measures: manpower development, internal restructuring through church unity and ecumenism, balancing aid and selfhood in funding to cure dependency and nurture stewardship, revisiting cultural policy so as identify elements which could be adapted, re-aligning church-state relationship by involving more Christians in politics, encouraging theological reflection, installing a new model of relationship by borrowing the idiom of *partnership* to camouflage paternalism, catalysing indigenisation 'in liturgy and art and essaying to maintain social activism along the old lines. These, cumulatively, would remedy the after-effects of excessive

control and meet the challenges created by the new African states.

These measures were aided by a new wind in the European metropolises. Among the Protestants, the Geneva pre-Assembly Conference of the World Council of Churches 'in 1966 and the full Assembly in Upsalla, 1968 radically changed the socio-political ethics of member churches and raised urgently the questions of attitude to science and modernity, church unity, a new understanding of mission and dialogue with other faiths. The new ethics affirmed human liberation and support for freedom fighters, who may be leftist. This stirred a virulent intra-mural debate which only subsided at the Assembly in Nairobi, 1975. Similarly, among the Roman Catholics, Vatican 11, which had only 61 Africans out of 2,500 bishops, was a watershed 'in re-designing the church's policy in mission and social concerns. It released African energy in the church as a number of Papal pronouncements appeared to speak to Africans in a new voice. Paul VI issued *Africae Terrarum* in November 1967, urging respect for the heritage in African worldview and imaging mission as the "the construction of the new society in Christ" and recognizing the maturity of the host church during the visit to Uganda in 1969. He proclaimed a release from a relationship which suffocated in favour of one which recognised the pluralistic context of mission and declared to Africans, "*you must have an African Christianity. Indeed you possess human values and characteristic forms of culture which can rise up to perfection so as to find in Christianity, and for Christianity, a true superior fulness and prove to be capable of a richness of expression all its own, and genuinely African*" (*Gaba Pastoral Paper*, 7:50-51). Pope John Paul II's call for inculturation and enrichment in the fields of sacred arts and liturgy opened the door to much creativity in both. However, such freedom was kept within Curial control and the liturgy within Roman rites thereby arousing much debate among the faithful (Mullen, 1965; Uzuoku, 1982; Lumbala,1998).

Moreover,1966-8 were significant years in the story of new politics of Independence in Africa unleashing trends which challenged the face of Christianity, signalling the birth of more

states as well as the rise of praetorian regimes, consolidation of one-party structures and the articulation of African Socialism. The implosion of "theological states" propelled political instability, abuse of human rights, environmental degradation and economic collapse until the second liberation of Africa started in the period, 1985-90. They imaged themselves in Christian garb-*national redemption, economic salvation, political justification, national regeneration, sanctity of the state, supreme law of the state, political kingdom*. These matters occupied the scholarship of the last three decades and bear little repetition in details. It will suffice to evaluate the degree of success of these salvage activities in sustaining Western control of African churches because they constitute the backdrop to the emergence of new forces in the African religious landscape. T.A. Beetham, who articulated the anxieties of these Western churches, critically queried the motives of the salvage operations, *"are the thinking and experiment and action ... merely a fumbling attempt to retain influence, to gain some new position of authority to compensate for privileges now being rapidly lost? Or has it a significant future?"* (1967:151)

There is little doubt that every mission group intensified efforts at ministerial formation. The Roman Catholics in West Africa were especially successful. Take a diocese as Owerri in Eastern Nigeria, the figures for 1952-1982 are as follows: (Kalu, 1996:208)

Year	No. of Ordained Priests
1952-59	2
1960-69	24
1970-79	46
1980-82	29

More were ordained in the three years, 1980-82 than in the twenty years, 1952-71. Missionaries did not disappear as soon as decolonization occurred; the numbers remained high and influential but indigenous manpower grew rapidly (Kendall, 1978:78-79). The German Catholic agency, Missio, and the Protestant Theological Education Fund, under Desmond Tutu made frantic efforts to assist Departments of Religion and Theological Colleges, Seminaries and Lay Centres with books, library and research funding. The World Council of Churches,

through its Programme for Theological Education organised such theological institutions under regional bodies as theological reflection organs and for development of relevant curricula. In 1980, the regional bodies were mobilized into non-denominational Conference of African Theological Institutions. This provided the platform for contact with Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians. It was on this platform that gender issues became the crucial concern which the Circle of African Women Theologians encrusted.

These efforts touch on a keen concern to engage in social ecumenism in the midst of the hopes of the new nation state. It was a theme of some importance both in Vatican II and Upsalla 68. Protestants initiated a number of discussions on church union. The arguments ranged from the theological that disunity is 'skandalon', to the ecclesiastical that unity will bring renewal and save duplication of resources. It will be a process of putting the past and the present into a melting pot of a more faithful future. More to the point was the effort to cure the rivalry of missionary past and mobilize the inheritance to face an uncertain future. It was applied in India and Ceylon and recommended for Africa. Leaders from Church of South India and Church of Lanka were deputed to tour and encourage Nigeria. When the Unit on Faith and Order of the WCC met in Accra in August 1974, there were more Unity talks going in Africa than elsewhere. They were imaged as an aspect of the indigenisation process. Unfortunately, they failed in most places except Zambia. The failure was from a combination of theological and non-theological factors-matters as personality clashes, denominational jealousies encrusted through the years, struggle for juicy posts and the fact that many did not understand the project because union, unity and ecumenism do not mean the same thing. It was difficult to see them as genuinely transforming religious change. The impulse came from above: whites wanted them to unite but the people felt comfortable with inherited prejudices. It did not matter that the churches had received their bill of Independence for missionary metropolises. The collapse of the project in Nigeria between Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians, in 1965, after the buntings were in place and some guests had arrived exhibited all the weaknesses of this brand of passive revolution. It betrayed the tensile strength of traditionalism and vestiges of inherited doctrines and politics. Churches in Northern Nigeria, founded by the faith missions, alleged that the Holy Spirit was

not given due prominence in the Constitutions. Contradictions in the rear-guard activities manifested because Protestants were mobilizing to combat the obvious dominance of Catholics who had arrived much latter in Nigeria but soon outstripped them in numerical growth and resources. Meanwhile, Methodists and Anglicans in the South West could not end their years of virulent competition. The impulse for unity came from the South East where delimitation had resolved competition. (Kalu, 1978,1978b: 164-178, 1980:340-363). The matter was tied up in litigation before Civil War intervened in 1966. Ecumenism worked in the heat of Civil War crisis as missions engaged in relief work. Even then, the churches in Nigeria were prepared to disengage with brethren in Biafra. A Nigerian delegate was very vociferous at Upsalla 68 in opposing Christian aid to Biafrans, to the utter embarrassment of many Europeans. A stronger impetus for co-operation has been induced by resurgent Islam in the politics of Independence. As the moslems formed the Jamatu Nasr Islam, Victory for Islam and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Christians of all hues were forced to come together under the umbrella of Christian Association of Nigeria (Enwerem,1995). That unity did not come too soon before militant Islamic groups became more violent and torched many churches in the North.

In spite of efforts to retain power, decolonization caused much soul-searching about the meaning and goal of mission. Attention turned from worrying about the abilities of Africans to remain Christians to worrying about the way mission was accomplished *in the last era or, what Lars Thunberg called, "redemption for the wrongs of history" (196 9:209225). Just as the Popes were re-defining the Church into a world-wide communion, Protestants dusted up the old Venn-Anderson ideals because everyone saw mission as imperative but sending churches should see themselves as "bridge-churches" mandated to be ecumenical and evangelical while receiving churches will become "Mission points" where movements were at work which promised liberation for mankind. The missionary goes to participate (Newbigin, 1969:256). In the late 1970's, Lutherans experimented with "reverse flow" 'in which African ministers were posted to serve in German congregations where everyone treated them with patronizing civility! J. V. Taylor, who was the General Secretary of the CMS in the heady mid - 1960's, gave a very ungarnished evaluation of indigenisation process and other components

of the passive revolution. He observed that it has become fashionable for whites of his generation to join "in *the chorus of disparagement against the Gothic churches and pietistic hymn tunes that have everywhere stamped the church as a foreign import*", the rear-guard tactics have been facile; the indigenous people believe that "we are playing at it" while holding to orthodoxy, fearing the dangers of syncretism, acting with "mixed motives" and unduly moralistic ethics. "*Instead of waiting humbly to discover what kind of leadership the Lord is raising up for his church in Africa or Asia, missionaries have been busily engaged in grooming successors to themselves ... reproducing their stereotyped kind of leadership*" (1969:171-2).

There were various aspects to the leadership problem at this time: the need for theologically-trained manpower was acute to meet increasing demand and to raise the quality of theological reflection. There was the problem of costs; walled seminaries were expensive, overseas-training was even worse and many young people were flocking into the ministry as one avenue for gaining free higher education among other possible reasons since there was a strong move of the Holy Spirit in Africa from 1970. Relevance of the curricula so as to obviate the "foreignness" albatross raised the problem of where such training could be had and how. The Programme for Theological Education of the WCC under Aaron Saspezian and Ross Kinster intensified Theological Education by Extension (TEE) method so as to increase the numbers at less costs and with relevant content since the people will be trained 'in their natural habitats. Lutherans at Obot Idim, near Uyo, utilized this resource very effectively because their radio station had the facility for producing the materials for TEE. Foreign education created "foreign" priests; so, the Roman Catholic Church started more regional Institutes for Higher Education (Port-Harcourt and Nairobi). CATI made an effort to start the *doctorat troisieme* programme for Francophone Africa in Younde and Kinshasha.

The substantial achievement was in the area of worship, as D.E. Ogudo has shown in his study of the *Catholic Missionaries and the Liturgical Movement in Nigeria (1988)*: the liturgical changes allowed Africans to celebrate Jesus in local languages and music. A number of parish associations emerged around new liturgical practices and the block rosary became radicalized . The opportunities to acquire education and to struggle with the challenges of leadership and

evangelization gradually impelled these experiments as could be illustrated with the translation of the psalms for Mass in Igbo achieved by Fr. Bede Onuoha at Bigard Seminary, Enugu. Retreat centres and Vigils sprung up to the consternation of missionaries who were scared with the pace of change and were soon proved right when the discussions started on making the churches more African. Like a pull on a creeping plant, the celebrations in liturgy led Africans to jettison the salvage devices to create their own responses to the power of the gospel. Among Catholics, adaptation was seen as inadequate as people sought incarnation and soon inculturation. Celibacy was debated as other aspects of missionary ethics came under the anvil leaving doctrine and polity intact.

In Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroun and Zimbabwe, workshops and centres sprouted to train Africans in Christian art, transforming traditional modes into the new meaning using woodwork, metal and pottery. Father Kevin Carroll, Fr John Groeber, Fr Ethelbert Mveng pioneered these efforts which addressed the import of the iconoclasm 'in biblical theology and sought to make African Christian art less derivative. Soon, the Black Christ and Mother and Child motifs proliferated. Protestants were less daring as they hugged the anconic passages in the Bible. Admittedly, the old guards opposed Father Carroll's use of traditional Yoruba carving motif for church doors (Carroll,1967; Hackett,1996). Liturgical experimentations caused much disquiet in certain places while for most others "they stir up new moments to understand better the core Christian mystery" (Lumbala,1998:108).

Meanwhile, the growth rate increased at a pace exceeding the pre-Independent rate. Explanation includes many local factors, individual careers of leaders and the take-over of schools and hospitals by Governments in the early 1970's which freed the churches to turn into their true calling and ministry. Colour and conversion became important as the indigenizing of personnel brought an enormous sense of pride and interest and excitement about the churches. Witness the expensive gifts such as cars which communities give to priests at ordination. The dark flip side would emerge in the politics to secure indigenees as the bishops of new parishes. Meanwhile, introspection bred much questioning of church ethics which tangoed with two other trends: increased laicization and the rise of the youths. The youth factor was related to the pressure

from charismatic forces on mission-founded churches. But the elite factor arose from two sources, cultural nationalism and politics of independence. The elite, as in the era of "Ethiopianism" attempted to indigenise the religious space and to "play chiefs" in decision-making and funding in their denominations. An aspect of the salvage operation bound the elite to their denominations and encouraged them to foray into political hustings and use their social clout to protect the church. Successful ones are now knighted. Churches essayed to become pressure groups and religious spaces where partisan votes could be mustered and constituencies harnessed for political ends and social status (Amucheazi, 1986;Nwosu,1990). Moreover, to finance growth, churches depended on the elite for funding, playing on their sense of local pride as communities contributed enormous amounts to build 'befitting' church buildings and manses. The force of these trends changed the character of the churches and may have protected them from the full force of the power adventurism of the new states. There was much ferment in the churches in the 1970's which threatened the "master's plan" for a passive revolution.

All these chickens came to roost in the Moratorium debate, 1971-5. Moratorium was a more strident form of the indigenisation project. It reflected African impatience with the pace and results of indigenisation. They suspected a hidden agenda to retain real power in white hands while embroiling Africans in cosmetics. John Gatu, the General Secretary of Presbyterian Church, Kenya, initiated the call during a visit to USA in 1971. He embarrassed his hosts by declaring that he had not come to beg for money or personnel but to ask that missionaries should go home for at least five years so that Africans can build a church without Western aid in personnel and money. The short man should learn to hang his knapsack within reach. Earlier, his church had produced a document on what they believe which was tantamount to shifting the indigenisation project towards matters of doctrine. Burgess Carr, the Secretary General of AACC, Nairobi, was equally enamoured to the idea and summoned African churchmen symbolically to Alexandria to draft an African Confession Of Faith. Soon, E.B. Idowu, the new leader of the Methodist Church in Nigeria and who in a series of radio broadcasts in 1964 harped on the predicament of an unindigenised Church in Africa (Idowu, 1965), shifted the attack to the boundaries of polity and changed the polity of the Methodists from the

congregational to the patriarchal as in the early Church in North Africa. Were these romantic moves or a sabotage?

Western Christians saw red and responded 'in a number of telling ways: a debate started in seminars, conferences and pages of journals. It was argued that *theologically*, moratorium was unacceptable because of the Pauline imagery of "soma". A stunning declaration was made that "we are one body". One part of the body cannot tell the other not to perform a mandatory task. Mission was the *raison d'etre* of the church, a command from the Lord. *Ecclesiastically*, it was dangerous to become a national church and threatened the concept of catholicity. The indigenous and pilgrim principles must be held in tension. *Logistically*, it was impossible to dismantle the mission structures which have been built up for over a century. Then, there was the *gut* reaction, namely, the proponents were ungrateful after the sacrifices of missionaries on their behalf. To prove to them that the West still wielded control, the chief protagonists fell foul of their constituencies. Carr lost his job, Idowu became embroiled in a major challenge and split in the Methodist Church and the AACC languished until everyone forgot the spelling of moratorium. Realizing the cardinal sin of monocausality, it is suggested that the moratorium call was a key aspect to the disasters. Innovative changes tend to cause splits just as Melagbe (Snake)theology split the Evangelical Presbyterian Church among the Ewe of Ghana. On the moratorium issue, church leaders split as some were less prepared for rebellion and more keen on getting aid from overseas for church development (that charismatic word of an era). Just as Eastern and Western powers offered enticing aid to buy influence, so did the Western churches use a similar tactic in spite of the Ibadan Conference in 1973 on selfhood and aid. Selfhood was not supposed to be a sabotage of continued Western influence. Dissent was punished with denial and a low intensity operation to forment local rebellion(Kendall,1978:106). The extravenous factor was central to the master plan and encouraged. The younger churches were to be tied to the apron-strings of the mother churches. As Aylward Shorter wrote in 1975, *The Church in Africa is being prevented from carrying out a conscious dialogue with African religious traditions because it is shackled by alien structures ... sustained in strict bondage- organizational, cultural and financial-to the white world* in a state of

“eternal juniority” (1975:21-22) Therefore, moratorium call was perceived as sabotage. It was a religious version of Unilateral Declaration of Independence. The contention here is that externality in the contemporary church has a history which should be studied before large conclusions are drawn (Kalu, 1975a: 143-147,1975b: 15-29, 1980:365-374).

Some Protestant missionary bodies took the moratorium call as the excuse to cut down their missionary personnel and create new networks for partnership. They declared the mid-seventies as the end of an era. But this was not the whole story: changes were forced by constraints in the home bases as well as in the fields. In Nigeria, the Civil War, 1967-1970, affected missionary activities as many had to leave during the conflict. Missionaries who stayed ran the risk of being mistaken for mercenaries. After the conflict, the military government accused many missionaries for assisting Biafra and refused to allow them back into the country. For instance, Dr. E.H. Johnson, the Secretary of the Board of World Mission, Presbyterian Church in Canada, was one of the founders of the Canair Relief Programme. After the war, both himself and Canadian missionaries were made to pay for the sin inspite of pleas from Dr. Akanu Ibiam, former Governor of Eastern Nigeria and Dr. Okoi Arikpo who was Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs during the war (Kalu,1996b:chapt.4). Professor Andrew Walls had to petition the President, General Yakubu Gowon, whose father was an Anglican lay reader, to overrule the denial of a visa. Later, the Islamic factor became important in immigration rules for Christian missionaries.

4. Youthful Charismatism and the Decolonised Face of Christianity

If moratorium encapsulated sabotage from the centre, plenty more operated from the fringes and gradually infected those in the centre more than they could have dreamt. Change usually occurs from the fringes of any system. The last part of the paper, therefore, examines the patterns of Christian life and ministry which emerged at the fringes of mission churches as Africans further responded to the power of the gospel. The weight of the historiography of recent years testify that African religious genius has struggled for long to burst from the boundaries set by the initial gospel bearers. They wanted a certain type of religion which was biblical, tapping the full pneumatic resources provided in the canon, responding to an environment with a predominantly religious

cosmology, through integration of life breaking the wall of the sacred and profane and thereby bringing the resources of the Spirit world to bear on existential problems and social experience and applying Scriptural ethics to family and communal relationships. They wanted music, celebration and dance. At the same time, they wanted their own share of the richness of modernity. The story of African initiative in Christianity appears as variations on these themes through the years with certain elements becoming more urgent "in certain places at certain times. It may be that they wanted the gospel to do better for them what their own religion had always done. As Andrew Walls would say, *"the effectiveness of Christian faith or of any particular manifestation of it, is accordingly open to the test whether it gives access to power or prosperity, for protection against natural or spiritual enemies, purposes to which much traditional practice was directed, and satisfactorily enforces familial and social unity"* (1996:5) Thus, Ethiopianism of Mojola Agbebi and Holy James Johnson 'in the 19th Century was beyond cultural nationalism. It demanded that missions should recognize the continuity of Christianity in primal religion. Many missionaries groups came by invitation to inherit existent gatherings: the Assemblies of God, Faith Tabernacle, Apostolic Church and others. The rise of early charismatic leaders betrayed the character of the Christianity which Africans wanted. When Garrick Braide started healing, his pastor H.A. Kemmer rejoiced that so many people flocked to his church just as the Qua Iboe Church praised God when the Ibibio Revival broke among teachers attending a weekend meeting in 1927. Just about that time, Samson Oppong unleashed a similar response in the Brong-Ahafo region of the Gold Coast. Many other such revivals occurred in various parts of West Africa during the colonial era, pointing to the type of Christianity the Africans wanted. But between the mission churches and the colonial governments, charges were trumped up to douse the flares before the full-blown challenge from the African Independent Churches which have received much scholarly attention. Some border on the romantic because they ignore a typology which H.W Turner recognised as an aid for analysis (1967:132). W.J.Hollenweger has summarised the subversive nature of the Aladura to the agenda of the mission churches: instead of missionary racism, emphasis on literacy, abstract concepts, reliance on the anonymity of bureaucratic organisation, medical technology and

Western psycho-analytical techniques, the Aladura emphasized orality, narrativity, family and personal relationship, wholistic understanding of health and sickness and family therapy (1986:3-12). The challenge of the Aladura was to point to the neglect of the pneumatic dimension to Christianity in missionary practice and its resonance in African worldview. Cultural contestation followed apace. In the era of decolonization, there was an attempt to enfold the Aladura in a routinizing canopy, the WCC. Some were admitted based on clean bill of health issued by Christian scholars (black and white).

The quest for powerful religiosity went beyond the Christian bounds in the colonial period as West Africans imbibed Oriental religions, ordered for amulets, charms, potions and decors for Mami wata shrines from India. Along the Atlantic coast, membership in Freemasonry Lodges and AMORC became important for social mobility and contact with the colonial rulers. As an example of invention of culture, a powerful indigenous cult, Ogboni, was "reformed" for the modern public space by an Archdeacon of the Anglican Church. Religious creativity continually sourced from the local to transform the extraneous both in cult and Christianity. Perhaps, this is why, having proclaimed African Christianity, the Roman Curia sought to restrain the direction of change. T.A. Beetham's anxieties become clearer: the Mission churches created a new religious space between 1966-8 and, because of a hidden agenda, hedged it with old rules. Africans saw decolonization as the opportunity to instal that deep religious structure which undergird all the varieties of African traditional religion, a religion with power. They took it that the time has arrived for Ethiopia to stretch forth its hands but found their hands being restrained. Thus, the proponents of moratorium showed their frustration from the centre of the institutions just when the young people opened a battle front by weaving a new mode of sabotage from the fringes.

This will be 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 'setting to work' of missionary preaching, a recovery of the old Evangelical spirit which had catalysed 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 which is now known as Pentecostal movement. It has acquired various hues and become complex but its origin was a wave of charismatic movements among the youths of various denominations which 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 1914-75: the scattered flares of 1914-39 which were not part of the Aladura movement ending with the Christ Apostolic Church, the specifically Aladura movements which later flowered into various types and the 1970 phenomenon. It is possible to weave connections between the three. It is equally useful to show the differences, especially between the others and the Aladura whose impact predominated for much longer. 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 and derailed the path of decolonization of the churches. But this paper shall concentrate on the new phenomenon which became more serious after political Independence and during the process of decolonization. These include six flares: 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 War in 1969 and held sway in the East in the immediate aftermath, the charismatism of the Christain Union in the Universities of the South West, Corpers as Preachers as the University students invaded Northern Nigeria while serving in the National Youth Service and the special case of charismatism 'in the Roman Catholic Church. They were all soon webbed together before divisions emerged when many shifted from being fellowships to churches. Perhaps we can use the Scripture Union as the mascot or signifier to demonstrate how the groups co-operated in the heat of charismatism.

SU, as it is called, was introduced into Protestant Secondary Schools from Britain in the 1950's. It was one of those interdenominational groups which focussed on Bible study, prayers, choruses and hospital visits; 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 will 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 Travelling 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 (Roberts,1970). 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 hold. 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 dimension to the war situation is an important backdrop. It took many directions: there was cultural renaissance and with scarcity of money, native doctors and the old ways of resolving problems resurfaced. Occult groups also flourished because dire times needed quick solutions. The Aladura, who had not been very successful in Igboland because of the strength of mission churches, now proliferated as prayer houses which had been mainly urban sprouted in the interior with fleeing refugees. The mainline churches were still patronized but 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 17-25 years.

Just before Bill left Biafra, he came into contact with three lads who had been members of Cherubim and Seraphim 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 prayer houses. Ofcourse, the lady prophetess at Ufuma chased them out of town. Penniless, Stephen Okafor, Raphael Okafor and Arthur Oruizu 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 fervour. They built a support prayer groups as many young people flocked to the outreach programmes. 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. Within 1970-1971, it was 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 as Enugu, Owerri, Aba and more. Many of these 17-18 years 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, Christ Ascension Church splintered. Mike Okonkwo led a wing into a charismatic body, True Redeemed Mission. As schools re-opened, these young people moved the new spirituality into their Secondary Schools and Universities where the Christian Union built formidable interdenominational evangelistic groups.

Just at this time, Benson Idahosa who was converted 'in the early 1960's by an Igbo evangelistic ministry in Benin, built up a vibrant ministry with the aid his former pastor and Pa G. Elton. Elton put him in touch with Gordon and Freda Lindsay who sponsored him to Christ For The Nations Bible Institute, Dallas. That was after the Gordons saw how the new church had grown and the intense energy of the youngman who had 'a fire 'in his bones' for soul-winning (Garlock,1981). He 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 motif 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 Redemption Voices. The leaders of Hour of Deliverance (Oye, Muyiwa, JMJE mesin) from Lagos, Pa G. Elton of the Apostolic Church, Emma Harris, a Baptist missionary and a few other older charismatics provided advice and encouragement as a youth-led religious revival enveloped Nigeria. These soon networked with a different insurgence which occurred in Western Nigeria among the students of Universities of Ibadan and Ife when members of the Christian Union started to speak in tongues during their Tuesday Prayer meetings and later organised National conventions to arouse other Universities. The 'CU' as they are known, broke away in 1962 from the Student Christian Movement for being spiritually and ethically tepid. As this was happening, Pa Elton who lived at Ilesha turned his attention to fostering charismatism in the universities and to cure the disunity among the SU boys who were rushing to form their own organisations. 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 youngmen graduated just when the National Youth Corp Service was made compulsory. As they dispersed through the nation, they formed charismatic groups; those who travelled abroad to neighbouring French-speaking countries took their spirituality with them. Those who attended the Fellowship of Christian Union of Students took the message to Kenya. In Northern Nigeria, they not only formed branches 'in Ahmadu Bello University and Polytechnics but took over the Travelling Secretary jobs in organisations 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 enterprise. Some of the Southern youths who had not gone through Universities but drank their charismatism in secondary schools surged through the North founding ministries just at the time when many southerners were returning to the north after the war. About ten ministries blossomed in Jos, Kaduna, Kano and Zaria between 1973-6. Northern indigenes have joined the affray.

Raphael Okafor meticulously kept a diary of their activities. 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

Certain aspects need comments: the impact on mission churches and their responses, the gender factor, the impact on the entire scariscape including occultic groups, the relationship of literacy, bible and revival and the role of the SU as they worked in agreement with the Hour of Freedom. There are other ironies: as schools were created as a means of evangelization, they now fulfilled the goal to the chagrin of proprietors; schools 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 other pneumatic challenges. The key point is that Pentecostalism started as a charismatic movement within the mission churches- the old evangelicalism writ large.

First, the opposition of some mission churches: the responses of the missions varied. The Roman Catholic Church was initially hostile, defrocking two priests who succoured the youth and ensuring that their schools were protected. They tried to discountenance the charismatic spirituality in the hurry to rebuild after the war. The gale of the wind was irresistible and they were already concerned the impact of the prayer houses which intensified during the war; so, 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 Nigen'a. MacNutt claims much success (1975:10). Though Bishop Arinze allowed them to operate in his domain, the priests treated the team with much suspicion because of the

nature of their 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. But some churches were downright hostile. For instance, at Enugu, the Presbyterian minister denied the SU further use of St Andrew's Church hall. In Ohafia, the Central Presbyterian Church drove the SU young men from membership; they formed Evangel Church which is now larger than the Presbyterian Church which came to Ohafia 'in 1910. By 1975, a new realism took over and the Presbyterian Youth Association of Nigeria was formed to accommodate the new spirituality. Prayer Vigils, Fasting, Tithing, Choruses, Evangelistic Tours 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 except in cases where the parents's churches opposed the new spirituality. Older women patronized the youthful, healing ministries and, as Erinne, served as Mothers In Israel. Another entry spells this out: *17th May 19 71 Three of us, Arthur, Stephen and I, as well as Mrs D.Erinne, met Bishop L.MUzodike 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 decades. The girl, Lawjua, was eighteen years old and in Secondary School. Her maternal grand father brought Anglicanism to Obosi ; she and her siblings were fully involved in radicalising the church which their grandfather brought and with the mother's support and resources. She is is typical of the fact that girls led in the music ministry and also preached. The enlarged role became increasingly significant (Bolton,1992). The third highlight is Michaelson, a professional who rose to high degrees in AMORC before his conversion; he burnt his regalia and books as these youth witnessed Christ to him, became their patron and had the boldness to testify in public. Finally, Emmanuel Ekpunobi's presence: he was a student at Dennis Memorial Grammar School (Anglican) and one of the SU leaders who had opposed the Hour of Freedom because he had entangled himself with prayer houses during the civil war. A number of Pentecostal leaders tasted Aladura spirituality along the way in their

spiritual quests. The SU and the Freedom Hour were now reconciled and soon worked with the University students, too. As the revival gathered momentum, the young people bonded more and were able to face persecution. Many of them moved into either full-time ministry after Secondary school or like Ekpunobi went to University, got a doctorate and continued till today as active evangelists. Many Pentecostal ministries in Africa are founded by former University teachers and professionals. The matter of the potent combination of bible and literacy is not just about bible translation.

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 1974-1989 (Kalu,1996: 278). Africans were now evangelizing Africa whether they received foreign help or not.

The impact was to challenge the mission churches either to allow the young people more roles in the churches, permit charismatic activities or risk the exodus of young people and women to Pentecostals 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. Finally, it is intriguing that in response to the passive revolution in the era of decolonization, Africans changed the face of the churches; they became charismatic fitting the deep structure undergirding all African traditional religions inspite of varieties of names and symbols. Charismatism has been the strongest instrument of church growth in Africa since the 1970's.

Outside the case study area, youths were most prominent in creating this form of challenge in Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, Kenya, Ivory Coast 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. Indeed, statistics from Ghana indicate that the AICs may be in decline because the mission churches are now operating from the interior of African maps of the universe and serving the same needs. (Ojo,1996; Gifford,1992,1998; Gyadu,1998; van Djik,1992; Larbi,1995).

In summary, the passive revolution designed as a response in the era of decolonization was sabotaged from a combined force of the implosion of the theological state, the creative ferment from the centre and the pneumatic challenge from the mouths of babes on the fringes of the power structure.