



CURRICULUM VITAE



1. **NAME:** OBI, CHRISTOPHER AFULEKE
2. **POST DESIRED** Professor
3. **DATE OF BIRTH:** 14th December, 1953
4. **STATE OF ORIGIN:** Anambra
5. **PRESENT APPOINTMENT:** Reader, CONUASS 06/5
6. **CONTACT ADDRESS:** Department of Religious Management & Cultural Studies, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State.
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obichris@aauekpoma.edu.ng
7. **MARITAL STATUS:** Married
8. **ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND**
 - Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos 2004-2010
 - Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium 1987-1990
 - Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium 1979-1983
 - Bigard Memorial, Enugu 1971-1977
9. **ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**
 - Ph.D LASU, Ojo-Lagos 2011
 - M.M.R.Sc. Leuven, 1989
 - M.A. (Social and Cultural Anthropology) Leuven, 1983
 - M.A. (Religious Studies) Leuven, 1980
 - B.A. (Philosophy) Leuven, 1981
 - B.D. (Theology) Rome, 1978
10. **FIELD OF SPECIALIZATION:** Biblical Studies- New Testament
11. **SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIP**
 - Catholic University of Leuven, Faculty of Theology
Scholarship for Ph.D in Religious Studies, 1987-1989.
 - Catholic University of Leuven, Faculty of Theology Partial Scholarship
for M.A. Religious Studies, Feb- Sept. 1980.
12. **HONOURS AND MEMBERSHIP OF LEARNED SOCIETY**

Co-Ordinator: NABIS Bendel Zone 2008-
P.R.O: Nigerian Association for Biblical Scholars (NABIS), July 2003-2007.
P.R.O: Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions (NASR),
Sept. 1984-Sept 1987.
Member: Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN).
Member: Catholic Biblical Association on Nigeria (CABAN).

13. **DETAILS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

- (a) University of Ilorin, Ilorin, March 1983- May 31st, 1984.
Lectures: CRS 103, 105, 201, 203, 207.
- (b) Bendel State University, Ekpoma, June, 1st 1984 – 1991.
Lectures: RES 204, 213, 301, 313, 404, 499.
- (c) Edo State University/Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, 1991 till date
Undergraduate Lectures: RES 206, 301, 405, 115, 313, 412, 499,
RMC 206, 301, 405, 112, 214, 217, 499.
- (d) **Post Graduate Lectures:** RES 708, 709, 720, 721,730, 731, 732,736, 802, 813.

14. **MAJOR CONFERENCES/WORKSHOP ATTENDED WITH PAPERS READ:**

- (i) The 9th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions (NASR) at UNN, September, 1984.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “Religion and Morality”.
- (ii) Interdisciplinary National Conference on Moral Development, UNIBEN, December 1994.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “Morality in a Theological Age”
- (iii) The Coloquium Lovanienses, Leuven Belgium, August, 1985.
- (iv) The 11th Annual Conference of NASR at BENSU, Ekpoma, September 1986.
- (v) The 5th National Theological Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) at Ikot-Ekpene, April 1990.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “Diversity and Consistency of Biblical Perspectives on Christology in the Nigerian Context”.
- (vi) 7th Theological Conference of the Catholic Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) at Ibadan, April, 1992.
- (vii) 8th Theological Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria at Abuja, April 1993.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “*Charismata* and Authority: A Pauline Viewpoint”.
- (viii) Bible in Africa Workshop at CIWA Port-Harcourt, July 1992.
- (ix) 9th Theological Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) at Makurdi, April 1994.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “John Witnessing: A Paradigm for All Disciples Today”.

- (x) 9th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) at Ogbomosho, June 1994.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “All Israel Will Be Saved (Romans 11:26): Paul and the Salvation of Israel”.
- (xi) 10th Theological Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) at Nekede, April 1996.
- (xii) 13th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) at Jos, 2000.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “He Who is Righteous by Faith Shall Live: Pauline Hermeneutics in Service of Pentecostal Theology”.
- (xiii) 14th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) at UMTC, Ilorin, July 2001.
- (xiv) 16th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) at Ilishan Remo, July 2003.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “Healing Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles: A Springboard for Pentecostal Propaganda”.
- (xv) 17th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) at Lagos, July 2004.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “Decolonizing the Interpretation of Paul’s Teaching on the Position of Women in the Church: 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 Revisited”.
- (xvi) 20th Theological Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) at Onitsha, March 2005
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “‘Christian Levites’. Appreciating the Role of Lay Catechists in Ministry”.
- (xvii) The International Conference on: **The Church and State in Development: The African Experience** at Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele-Ekpoma, 25th – 29th October, 2005.
- (xviii) 2005 Faculty of Arts International Conference on: **The Arts, Man and Globalization**, at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, 15th – 18th November, 2005.
- (xix) The 21st Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN), at Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele-Ekpoma, 18th - 21st April, 2006.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “The Exaltation of the Holy Spirit in Early Christianity: Lessons from Pentecostalism”.

- (xx) 19th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) at Ekpoma, July, 2006.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “The Election of the Seven in Acts 6:1-6: Its Relevance in the War Against Corruption”.
- (xxi) 20th Annual Conference of the Nigeria Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) at Jos, July 2007
Paper Read: C.A. Obi: “The Pastorals and the Qualifications of Church Leaders: A Challenging Paradigm”.
- (xxii) 1st Annual Conference of Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS, South-South), Delta State University, Abraka, June 17th – 19th, 2009.
- (xxiii) 2nd Faculty of Arts International Conference on: **“The Humanities and the Dynamics of African Culture in the 21st Century** at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, March 11th – 15th, 2014.
Paper Read: “Continuity and Discontinuity in ‘Missionary’ Christianity and African Traditional Religion”.
- (xxiv) 37th Annual Conference of Nigeria Association for the Study of Religion NASR on: Religion, Marriage and Family Values in Africa at Unversity of Benin, Benin City September 19th to 22nd 2016.
- (xxv) The 9th Annual Convention 2016 of the Catholic Biblical Association of Nigeria CABAN on: **Mercy and Justice in the Bible**, at the Bishop Kelvin Pastoral Centre, Benin City, 25-28 October 2016.
- (xxvi) The 12th International Conference on Advanced in Science, Humanities and Education on: Africa’s Development Challenges in the Millenium: Reaffirming Our Commitments as Intellectuals at Songhai Centre, Port-Novo, Reppublic of Benin, September 11-14, 2017.
Paper Read: C.A. Obi and E.I. Ukpebor, “Spiritualization of Corruption: An Insight into Seed-Sowing in Contemporary Christian Practices”.
- (xxvii) 2nd International Conference, 2020 on: **“Formation of the Human Person in the 21st Century”** at Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele-Ekpoma, Edo State, 18th -20th March, 2020.
Paper Read: **C.A. Obi**, “The Relevance of the Study of African Traditional Religion in the Theological Formation of Seminarians Today”.

15. COMPLETED RESEARCH:

C.A. Obi, “1 Corinthians 12-14: An Exegetical and Socio-Historical Study of Early Christian Prophecy in Relation to Contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism” (Ph.D Thesis defended successfully at LASU, February 10, 2011).

16. PUBLICATIONS

A: CHAPTER CONTRIBUTION IN DIFFERENT LOCAL BOOKS

- i. C.A. Obi, "Diversity and Consistency of Biblical Perspectives on Christology in the Nigerian Context". In J. Aniagwu *et al* (eds.) *Christology in the Nigerian Context: Proceedings of the National Theological Conference*, Ikot Ekpene, 1990 30-57. Republished in *Epha: Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies and Philosophy Vol. 1 (December, 1992)*: 84-106.
- ii. C.A. Obi, "Charismata and Authority: A Pauline View Point". In K. Owan (ed.), *Authority and Charism in the Nigeria Church. Proceedings of the 8th National Theological Conference*, Abuja, 1993, 110-124.
- iii. C.A. Obi, "Paul and the Ordination of Women Today: A Study of 1 Cor. 14:33b-36". In D.F. Asaju and C.O. Isiramem (eds.), *Issues in Ethics and Religion: Contemporary Trends*. Ado Ekiti: De-Garbson Publishers, 1998, 44-57.
- iv. C.A. Obi: "The Sign Character of Speaking in Tongues in Pentecostal Spirituality: A Critique". In W.O. Wotogbe-Weneka (ed), *Religion and Spirituality*. Port-Harcourt: Emhai Printing and Publishing Co., 2002, 135-155.
- v. C.A. Obi: "Healing Miracles in the Acts of the Apostles: A Springboard for Pentecostal Propaganda". In S.A Abogunrin *et al* (eds.), *Biblical Healing in African Context*. Biblical Studies Series 3, Ibadan: Philarem Corporate Printers, 2004, 214-235.
- vi. C.A. Obi, "Decolonizing the Interpretation of Paul's Teaching on the Position of Women in the Church: 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 Revisited". In S. Abogunrin *et al* (eds.), *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*. Biblical Studies, Series 4, Ibadan: A Publication of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies, 2005, 360-382.
- vii. C.A. Obi and R.O Omotoye, "Calling". In W.O. Wotogbe-Weneka (ed.), *Themes in Comparative Religion*. Ado Ekiti: Hamaz Global Publishing Co., 2005, 21-29.
- viii. C.A. Obi, 'Christian Levites'. Appreciating the Role of Lay Catechists in Ministry". In M.C Obinwa (ed), *Collaborative Ministry in the Context of Inculturation. Proceeding of the 20th Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria*. Onitsha: Africana First Publishers Ltd., 276-298.
- ix. C.A. Obi, "The Spirit and Pentecostalism: Lessons from the Early Church". In A.G. Nnamani (ed.), *The New Religious Movements: Pentecostalism in*

Perspective. Proceedings of the 21st Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria. Benin City: Ava Publishers, 2007, 120-127.

- x. C.A. Obi, "The Election of the Seven in Acts 6:1-6: Its Relevance in the War Against Corruption in Nigeria". In S Abogunrin *et al* (eds.), *Biblical Studies and Corruption in Africa*. Biblical Studies Series 6. Ibadan Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies, 2007, 456-471.
- xi. C.A. Obi, "The Challenges of Economic Development in Nigeria: A Biblico-Theological Approach". In J.A. Onimhawo (ed), *Human and Religious Development in Nigeria Theoretical and Methodological Issues*. Ibadan; Safmos Publishers, 2011, 148-182.

B: CHAPTER CONTRIBUTION IN DIFFERENT FOREIGN BOOKS

- i. C.A. Obi, "The Farewell Discourse of Jesus (John 13-17) in the Light of Death-Bed Words in African Milieu". In G.U Ukagba (ed), *The Kpim of Death: Essays in Memory of Pantaleon Osondu Iroegbu ((Fada Kpim)*. Studies in African Philosophy and Culture. Victrori, BC, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2007, 146-156.
- ii. C.A Obi, "A Feminist Re-Reading of Women's Leadership in the Pre-Pauline and Pauline Churches: An African Perspective". In G.U. Ukagba, O. Des-Obi and I.J. Nwankwor (eds). *The Kpim of Feminism: Issues and Women in a Changing World*. Studies in African Philosophy, Culture and Development Empowerment . Victrori, BC, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2010, 420-437.
- iii. C.A. Obi, "Religion as the Basis of Social Order". In G.U. Ukagba, D.O. Obi and I.J. Nwafor (eds). *The Kpim of Social Order: A Season of Social Uprising*. Studies in Philosophy, Culture of Uprising and Social Order. U.S.A: Xlibris Corporation, 2013, 425-450.
- iv. C.A. Obi, "Continuity and Discontinuity in 'Missionary' Christianity and African Traditional Religion". In J. Ayotunde, I. Bewaji, K.W. Harrow, E.E. Omonzogie and C.U Ukhun (Eds), *The Humanities and the Dynamics of African Culture in the 21st Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishers, 2017, 150-167.
- v. C.A. Obi and E.I. Ukpebor, "Spiritualization of Corruption: An Insight into Seed-Sowing in Contemporary Christian Practice". In Friday Menkan Nekan (ed), *Proceeding of International Conference on Development*, Vol 12, no 4. B u e a , C a m e r o u n : P a n A f r i c a n B o o k Company, 2017, 87-94.

C: ARTICLES IN DIFFERENT LOCAL JOURNALS

- i. C.A. Obi, "Diversity and Consistency of Biblical Perspectives on Christology in the Nigerian Context". *Epha: Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies and Philosophy* Vol. 1 (December, 1992): 84-106.
- ii. C.A. Obi, "All Israel Will Be Saved (Rom. 11:26): Paul and the Salvation of Israel". *Epha: Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies and Philosophy*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (1998): 1-23.
- iii. C.A. Obi, "Paul's Damascus Experience: A Conversion or a Call?" *Iroro: Journal of Arts* Vol. 2 Nos 1 and 2 (June 2000): 178-197.
- iv. C.A. Obi, "Circumcision, Conversion and the Apostolic Decree (Acts 15)". *Epha: Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol 3, Nos 1 & 2 (June 2000): 1978- 197.
- v. C.A.Obi, "He Who is Righteous by Faith Shall Live: Pauline Hermeneutics in Service of Pentecostal Theology". *Iroro: Journal of Arts* Vol. 8, Nos 1 & 2 (2001): 126-138.
- vi. C.A. Obi, "John's Witnessing: A Paradigm for All Disciples Today". *Epha: Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies* 4, Nos 1&2 (June 2002): 57-73.
- vii. C.A. Obi, "Biblical Perspective on Suffering in African Context". *African Journal of Biblical Studies*. Vol xxii, No 1 (April 2006): 91-122.
- viii. C.A. Obi, "The Changing Status and Role of Religious Specialists in Early Christianity and African Traditional Religion: A Comparative Analysis". *Iroro: A Journal of Arts* Vol. 12 Nos 1 & 2 (June 2007) 8-22.
- ix. C.A. Obi, "The Pastorals and the Qualification of Church Leaders: A Challenging Paradigm Today" *Epha: Ekpoma Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. 9 Nos 1 & 2 (2012): 38-64.
- x. C.A. Obi, and O. Chidiebere, "The Challenges of Traditional African Concept of Mediation to Modern African Christianity". *Iroro: Journal of Arts* 15, No. 1 & 2 (September, 2012): 362-378.
- xi. C.A. Obi, "A Historical Overview of the Gift and Practice of Prophecy in the Post-Apostolic Church". *Nigerian Journal of Christian Studies* Vol. 9 (2013): 183-206.

- xii. C.A. Obi and E.O. Odekhe, “The Gift of Manna to Israel in Exodus 16:11-20 in Relation to Equitable Resource Distribution in Nigeria”. *Nigerian Journal of Christians Studies* Vol. 10 (2014): 21-41
- xiii. C.A Obi, ” Prophecy in Early (Rabbinic) Judaism: A Socio- Historical Evaluation”. *Academic Horizon* 2,no1(September 2016): 41-55.
- xiv. C.A. Obi and J.A. Ezele, “The Challenges of Pentecostalism to Mainline Churches in Nigeria: A Critique”. *Nigerian Journal of Counselling and Human Development* Vol. 1 no 1 (September 2016): 42 – 57.
- xv. C. A. Obi, “Paul and the Albatross of Civil Disobedience in Romans 13: 1-7” *ITAN: Journal of Historical Studies* Vol. 5 no 1 (2018): 124-139.
- xvi. C.A. Obi and E.I.Ukpebor, “Spiritualization of Corruption: An Insight into Seed-Sowing in Contemporary Christian Practice”. *Journal of Religion and Culture* Vol 19, no 1(2019):40 – 48.

17. PAPERS ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION

- i. C.A Obi, “Assessing the Historical Reliability of Luke in the Acts of the Apostles”. Festschrift to Professor Alfred Chukwuma Unomah. Forthcoming.
- ii. C.A.Obi, “Paul’s Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem in Relation to Adamo’s Contribution to African Biblical Studies. Festschrift to Professor Tuesday Adamo. Forthcoming.
- iii. C. A. Obi, “*Ori-Oke* and Christian (Catholic) Spirituality: A Comparative Analysis”.

18. PATENTS, EXHIBITIONS, DESIGNS:

C.A. Obi, “Ngozi Chineke”, The Voice of Restoration Singers. Musical Cassette Album, Benin City, 1997.

19. SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

During my study leave abroad, 1987-89 I attracted the donation of the sum of DM 5,000.00 (Five Thousand Deutsche Mark) from a German based organization (MISSIO) for the Development of our Departmental Library at BENSU Ekpoma (1989). See the Memo Ref: BENSU/Bur/p.1.01/111 of January 24, 1991.

20. ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Member: Adhoc NUC Accreditation Panel to evaluate undergraduate degree programmes at the University of Port-Harcourt, Abia State University, Uturu and Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Ikpadan, 27TH November – 5 December 2016.

Member: Adhoc NUC Resource Verification Team on Ph.D programme in Religious Studies of Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU), IKEJI-AREKEJI, Osun State, 13th – 15th August, 2018.

Member: Faculty Journal Editorial Board (2018 till date).

Acting Head of Department: Religious Management and Cultural Studies: November. 2014 till August 31, 2016.

Member: Faculty Journal Committee and Seminar Committee
Nov. 2004-2008.

Secretary: Departmental Board of Studies (2002- February, 2008).

Coordinator: Departmental Postgraduates Seminar (2004- July-2011).

Coordinator: Departmental Postgraduate Studies (July 2011 till date).

Member: School of Postgraduate Studies Board (2012 till date).

Internal Auditor: ASUU –AAU (September 2003-2005).

Faculty Representative: Faculty Board, Agriculture (2006- 2008).

Faculty Representative: Faculty Board, Engineering (2008-2012).

Faculty Representative: School of Postgraduate Studies (2016 till date)

Internal Examiner:

- (i) AAU/SPS/FA/RMCS/PhD/13/04512
ADAMU, Cyril Osilama (PhD 2017).
- (ii) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/15/09821
OMOAGHE, Isima Obed (MA 2019).
- (iii) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/13/04492
AWARITOMA, Bill Okiemute (MA 2018).
- (iv) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/13/04535
AGHAYEDO, Dorcas (MA 2017).
- (v) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/13/04156
EDOSA, Felicia (MA 2017).
- (vi) AAU/SPS/FA/11/MA/7323
AMIOSHOR, Anthony Inegbenoise
(MA 2017).

- (vii) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/11/MA/03762
IMANFIDON, Grace Ojemhede (MA 2016).
- (viii) AAU/SPS/FA/12/MA/05746
AJELE, Joseph Kokumoh (MA 2015).
- (ix) AAU/SPS/FA/12/MA/04082
BELLO, Gladys Oluwafunmike (MA 2015).
- (x) AAU/SPS/FA/07/MA/1934
ELUE, Callistus Isioma (MA 2015).
- (xi) AAU/SPS/FA/MA/10/15366
OKWAGBE, Obokohwire Matthew (MA 2014).
- (xii) AAU/SPS/FA/10/Ph.D/2477
OKORO, Andrew Obioma (Ph.D 2014).
- (xiii) AAU/SPS/FA/10/MA/0339
OGHARANJEBI, Oritsebemigho Emmanuel
(MA. 2014).
- (xiv) AAU/SPS/FA/10/MA/03368
AKHIGBE, Patience Aituajie (MA 2015).
- (xv) AAU/SPS/FA/Ph.D/07/226
AITUFE, Veronica Okpohowunwa,
(Ph.D 2014).
- (xvi) AAU/SPS/FA/MA/10/03337
KPANVU, Reuben Baka MA 2014.
- (xvii) AAU/SPS/FA/MA/10/03338
OBOH, Blessing Imaluko (MA 2014).
- (xviii) AAU/SPS/FA/MA/09/2972
ENABUDOSO Ebehiremen Anthony
(MA 2012).
- (xix) AAU/SPS/2007/FA/Ph.D 2581
ODOGBORO, Simon Peter
Omamuyovwi Jones (Ph.D 2011).

- (xx) AAU/SPS/2008/MA/97130
OYEDOLA, Ambrose Oyeniyi (MA. 2011).
- (xxi) AAU/SPS/FA/2008/MA/2477
OKORO, Andrew Obioma (MA 2011).
- (xxii) GS/2000/MA/11447,
ALLI, Peter Olufemi (MA 2006).
- (xxiii) KAUCHE, Bante (MA 2005).
- (xiv) ABOLAGBA, Paul Ohikhene (Ph.D 2000).

School of Postgraduate Studies Representative

AAU/SPS`/FL/LLM/09/40072
ORIE, Samuel Nnamdi(LLM Public Law) 2012

AAU/SPS/CSDS/10/MSc/48406
ORIRI, Lydia (2013)

Supervision of Postgraduate Students

Supervisor: Ph.D

- (i) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/13/Ph.D 04714
EZELE, John (Completed 2018)

Co-Supervisor: Ph.D

- (i) AAU/SPS/FA/09/Ph.D/05456 (Completed)
OTTUH, Arierhi John (Ph.D 2012).
- (ii) AAU/SPS/FA/09/Ph.D /16927 (Completed)
IFIONAYI, Dennis Osayomore
- (iii) AAU/SPS/FA/07/Ph.D/1772
OGEDEGBE, Bosede Gladys (Completed 2018)
- (iv) AAU/SPS/FA/09/Ph.D/298
EKEOBA, Stella Oge (Completed 2020).
- (v) AAU/SPS/FAT/RCS/PhD/15/09544
OBOH, Blessing Imaluko

Masters

- (i) AAU/SPS/FA/MA/10/03332
EZELE, John A. (Completed)
MA 2014 (Christian Theology)
- (ii) AAU/SPS/RCS/MA/11/03691 (Completed)
ODEKHE, Eshifueme Onagbotna
M.A.2015(Old Testament)
- (iii) AAU/SPS/FA/MA/11/03779
MENIMOR, Benson (Completed)
M.A 2016 (Old Testament)
- (iv) AAU/SPS/RCS/MA/13/04459
IGHAKA, Emmanuel
(Christian Theology)
- (v) AAU/SPS/FAT/RCS/15/MANTS/09503
OLATUNDE, Timothy Idowu
(New Testament)
- (vi) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/17/07158
ODERATOR, ThankGod Edewor
- (vii) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/17/10651
AZETA, Ofumumen Ofure
- (viii) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/17/10806
EBIDIGHI, Ebikedoumini
- (ix) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/18/11147
EKPENISI, Godfrey Ifeanyi
- (x) AAU/SPS/FA/RCS/MA/11182 AIBANGBE, Festus

22. **HOBBY:** Music and Lawn Tennis

23. **REFEREES:**

1. **Prof. Amen Uhunmwangho**

Dean,
Faculty of Arts,
Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma.
Tel: 08034051082

2. **Prof. F.I. Emordi**

Department of Modern European Languages,
Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma.
Tel: 08055114923.

3. **Prof. (Mrs.) C.O. Isiramen**
Department of Religious Management and Cultural Studies,
Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma.
Tel: 08034079733.

Signature

Date

RESUMÉ OF CURRICULUM VITAE OF DR C.A. OBI

Dr Christopher Afuleke Obi is a Reader in the Department of Religious Management and Cultural Studies, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. He is a pioneer staff of the Department. He holds a PhD in Christian Studies from Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos; three (3) M.A. degrees in Religious Studies, Social and Cultural Anthropology, and Moral and Religious Sciences respectively, a Bachelor of Divinity from Rome. He has Thirty-three (34) years of teaching experience at University level (Ilorin and Ekpoma).

His field of specialisation and research is New Testament Studies where he has contributed five (5) articles in International Books, eleven (11) chapters in Local Books and thirteen (13) Articles in reputable Journals. He has attended both Local and International Conferences. He has co-supervised PhD students, supervised Masters as well as many undergraduate students. He is the Co-ordinator of the Departmental Postgraduate Programme and a member of the School of Postgraduate Board of Studies. Finally, he served as the Acting Head of Department November, 2014 to August, 2016.

ABSTRACT OF SOME OF HIS PUBLICATIONS

SPIRITUALIZATION OF CORRUPTION: AN INSIGHT INTO SEED-SOWING IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN PRACTICES

C. A. Obi and Emmanuel I. Ukpebor

ABSTRACT

Prosperity gospeling is one feature of modern Christianity that is generating a lot of issues in Nigerian society. It is a teaching that strongly anchors on the need for Christians to be prosperous in life with emphasis on material and wealth acquisitions. One means of achieving that is the emphasis on seed-faith which according to the teaching is the fastest means to get financial turnaround in life. This paper takes a critical look at this phenomenon of seed sowing which some religious leaders allegedly advocate in seeking personal liberation from the grip of poverty to affluence. The work employs the rational choice theory of maximizing benefits to explain individual and institutional religious behavior towards religious goods and services. Adopting the exegetical, descriptive, analytical methodologies the paper finds out that the contemporary practice of seed sowing is going beyond the teaching of Christ on cross bearing and that the contemporary practice is spiritualization of corruption. The work recommends a re-reading of the actual teachings of Christ which focus not only on material wellbeing but also spiritual wellbeing and eternal life. It is the submission of the paper that the over emphasis on material and wealth

acquisitions breed corruption. Emphasis on it through prosperity teaching of seed sowing without corresponding spirituality is spiritualized corruption.

CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN 'MISSIONARY' CHRISTIANITY AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

CHRIS A. OBI

Abstract

The introduction of Christianity has greatly impacted and contributed to vast changes in African cultural, religious, political, and economic lives. Three responses of Africans to missionary Christianity are discernible. Scholars, likewise, have given two different assessment of the Christian missionary encounter with African culture and religion. This chapter discusses the dynamics of religion in Africa through the eye of continuity and discontinuity in missionary Christianity and African traditional religion against the background of the claim that missionary Christianity and Westernization have indeed dealt a deathblow to traditional religion such that the latter has no future of survival. The method adopted is descriptive, and partly historical, analytical, and anthropological. The findings show that in spite of the disruptions created by missionary Christianity on African (Igbo) traditional religion, there are traces of major lines of continuity and persistence of the traditional worldview, even in the practices of absorbed Orthodox and Pentecostal churches today. The chapter concludes that African traditional religion will survive, albeit in a modified form, through a principle of continuity and discontinuity evidenced in the history of religions.

Key words: Continuity, Discontinuity, Missionary Christianity, African traditional religion, African worldview.

THE CHALLENGES OF TADITIONAL AFRICAN CONCEPT OF MEDIATION TO MODERN AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

Chris A. Obi and Obiodu Chidiebere

Abstract

In most religions, the Supreme Being (God) occupies a preeminent position. He is seen as the creator and sustainer of the universe. In African Traditional Religion (ATR), God is the Great Monarch. He is so revered that ordinary citizens do not approach directly nor have direct dealings

with him. They deal with him only indirectly. Therefore, the practitioners of ATR, approach God through mediators who act as the intermediaries between them and the Supreme Being. One significant element of the African tradition is the spiritual vision of life and the world, according to which all beings of the visible nature are connected with the invisible spiritual world. In other words, the sacred is inseparable from the secular. Consequently, the concept of mediation is same for both ATR and African culture. Since the advent of Christianity to Africa, the African culture has been put into jeopardy. While Africans accepted Christianity, they were faced with the challenge of balancing their culture with the new faith. The modern African Christian is faced even with a greater challenge due to the present socioeconomic and political climate of the African continent. This paper focuses on the African traditional concept of mediation and exposes how it poses a challenge to the modern African Christian, particularly from the perspective of a Roman Catholic Christian.

**THE GIFT OF MANNA TO ISREAL IN EXODUS 16:11-20 IN RELATION TO
EQUITABLE RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION IN NIGERIA**

**ODEKHE, ESHIFUEME ONAGBOTINA
&
OBI, CHRISTOPHER A.**

Abstract

This paper examined the biblical event of the gift of manna to the Israelites in Exodus 16:11-20, and the derivable lessons from it for equitable resource distribution in Nigeria. The historical, exegetical, expository, theological and analytical methodologies were utilized. This necessitated the use of materials from secondary sources. These were from books, Encyclopedias, Biblical Commentaries, Lexicons, Bible Dictionaries, Journals, Magazines, Newspapers and the Internet. These revealed that the event occurred shortly after the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, during the reign of Pharaoh Rameses II. This was about 1280 BC, after they had spent over four hundred years in Egypt. The exodus was a definitive and memorable event in Israelite history. It led to the institution of the yearly Passover festival of the Jews. The God who delivered them from slavery was the same who miraculously provided manna for them. This act of providence showed that God was not just a Deliverer; he was also the Great Provider. The equitable sharing of the manna exposed the serious weaknesses in the motivation for national development plans in Nigeria as UNGODLINESS, CORRUPTION, INSECURITY and LACK OF COMMITMENT amongst others. These readily flop policy strategies and objectives. This research therefore seeks to identify Biblical principles from our text that could mitigate some of these challenges. For an antidote, the text taught us about God's covenant love, faithfulness and giving Moses as a leader taught us

prayer, humility, service and sacrifice. Manna taught us contentment and faith in God. The Israelites who were the recipients taught us diligence in labor and obedience to constituted authorities. The *omer* taught us equality and unity, while the desert floor taught us potentiality and fruitfulness. These Biblical principles gleaned from the text would surmount the systemic weaknesses and make possible equitable distribution of economic resources in Nigeria, contrary to the present pattern of entrenched inequalities. This would bring about grassroots' motivation and direct involvement in the task of nation building. Biblical principles drawn from the text are therefore both suitable and adequate if applied to the Nigerian situation and would fast track the nation's development. They would guarantee high standard of living for all Nigerians.

'HE WHO IS RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH SHALL LIVE':

PAULINE HERMENEUTICS IN SERVICE OF

PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

CHRIS A. OBI

Abstract

The clause "he who is righteous by faith shall live" (RSV), or "the just shall live by faith" (KJV) adapted from Habbakuk 2:4 is cited but interpreted differently by various authors within and outside early Christianity, namely, Paul, Hebrews, Qumran and Rabbinic literature. Paul cites this quotation twice along with Genesis 15:6 but uses it differently in Galatians 3:11 and Romans 1:17. In opposition to Judaizers, Paul interprets the concept of "faith" not in a Jewish sense but in terms of his exclusive Christocentric theology. In particular, by using the hermeneutical principles of reduction, concentration and universalization and by what Paul one-sidedly says about Abraham ("which faith is reckoned to him as righteousness") the Pauline image of Abraham in Galatians 3 and Romans 4 becomes thoroughly untraditional and to certain extent unjewish. Paul, as it were, Christianizes Abraham. In line with one stream of Pauline thought and Luther's stress on *sola fide*, the same clause (and the terms, "faith" and "righteousness") is a very prominent theme among Pentecostal/Evangelical preachers today. The gospel message in Nigeria since the 1970s upward had witnessed an unprecedented emphasis on Faith Message, Prosperity and Word Teaching. Characteristic of this trend is a fundamentalist literal interpretation along with a stress on the principle of the inerrancy of scripture. This in part is due to an influence from American Pentecostal/Evangelical preachers represented by colossal figures as late Benson Idahosa, W. F. Kumuyi, David Oyedepo, and Mike Okonkwo, to mention but a few, these ministers/writers are instrumental in establishing the church in Nigeria on the Biblical principles of active faith,

prosperity, faith-healing, the power of the Word and the necessity of a continual positive confession. The extremes, however, are also criticized.

**A FEMINIST RE-READING OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP
IN THE PRE-PAULINE AND PAULINE CHURCHES WITH
AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

CHRIS A. OBI

Abstract

The paper draws out the meaning of feminism, its history and its African version, "womanism". It delves into some areas of denial of women's rights which include wife battering, sexual violence, rights of inheritance, political and religious leadership. Concentrating on the issue of religious leadership, it argues that from the titles Apostle Paul used for his co-workers and the significant place of house-churches in early Christianity, the ministerial leadership of women can be reconstructed, particularly that of Phoebe and Prisca. Working through some African ethnographic materials on women's participation in traditional religious life where women acted as priestesses, queens, diviners, medicine persons and spirit mediums, it concludes that feminists and womanists have a cogent case in their quest for a more poignant and forceful role for women in Christian ministry today.

Religion as Basis of Social Order

Chris A. Obi

Abstract

The issue of social order, of how and why it is that societies cohere, is historically one of the central concerns of Sociology. Social theorists since Thomas Hobbes have offered divergent explanations of the social order. The paper draws out the meaning of social order, the various explanations offered by social theorists - functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism and ethno methodology. Since religion is an important social structure of the society, one is wont to ask what is peculiar to religion that sets it apart from others. The main aim of the paper is to explicate religion as the basis of social order. The method adopted is sociological, analytical, phenomenological and evaluative. Our findings show that across civilizations, Roman, Greek, Western, Asian, and African, religion has always formed the basis of social order, that the

integrative role has to be balanced with its dysfunctional role especially in a pluralistic society; and that the writings of Durkheim, Marx and Weber on religion as well as functional symbolic anthropology is highly irrelevant to the third world experience. The African lives in a religious universe where all actions and thoughts have religious meaning and are influenced or inspired by a religious point of view. Two key factors in African worldviews that have greatly influenced social order and morality are the hierarchy of beings (God, deities, spirits, and ancestors) and the concept of the unity and interaction of beings. In conclusion, the paper recognizes the resultant confusion in conflict of values consequent upon the introduction of two prophetic, universal religions, Islam and Christianity in pre-colonial Nigeria, thereby weakening belief in the maintenance of traditional social order and rendering it less effective. Thus, while religion serves as the basis of social order, it can also give rise to and generate a lot of religious crises or conflicts in a pluralistic society such as Nigeria.

The Challenges of Economic Development in Nigeria: A Biblico- Theological Approach

Chris A. Obi

Abstract

The concept of economic development is multidimensional and hard to operationalize. At independence in 1960 the founding fathers of the nation adopted a prevailing concept of development modeled after the western world. Accordingly, successive governments in power adopted a particular development plan. However, most of these development and rolling plans failed to achieve the desired effect so much so that by 2010 people felt there was nothing to celebrate at Nigeria's 2010 golden jubilee. This paper exposes the concept of economic development, reviews some of the major, basic and at times conflicting economic policies (aimed at economic growth) by the past government and renders the verdict that the failure of these past economic policies however well-intentioned is due to lack of the discipline required for their success. It outlines the challenges facing Nigeria's economy and calls for a focused leadership that has a vision, knowledge, wisdom and discipline which the Christian Scripture recommends for any growth of a people/nation. Nigeria needs to invest heavily on human capacity development if the country hopes to achieve reasonable economic growth and development. Moral education is an integral part essential to any economic development. Finally, it proffers reasons to cheer on prospects for a bright economy.

PROPHECY IN EARLY (RABBINIC) JUDAISM: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL EVALUATION

CHRIS. A. OBI

ABSTRACT

For us Nigerians/Africans prophecy is something we are very much at home with thanks to the rise of Independent Churches and Pentecostalism. For orthodox Christians of Mainline churches who were brought up by the early Western missionaries the experience of prophecy was not part of that received tradition. The popular teaching then was that revelation stopped with the death of the last apostle so that there is no more revelation. However, among biblical scholars of both the Old and New Testaments, the ‘cessation of prophecy’ has always been a burning issue. For the Old Testament the dominant position seems to be that Israelite prophecy came to an end in the early post exilic period, that is, prophecy ceased after the death of the last three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Some biblical and other texts are curled to support this view and that prophecy will resurface at the eschatological time. For the New Testament some dispensationalists have also argued that tongues and prophecy have ceased after the formation of the canon. The aim of this paper is to expose and evaluate those proof texts on the position of the Rabbis on true prophecy; ascertain whether prophecy did actually cease in the Hellenistic Roman period and to appear in the new age. We argue that prophecy continued after its supposed demise and that Rabbinic teaching on this subject does not reflect a general consensus. The method adopted is exegetical, socio-historical and analytical. Our findings show that, early Judaism exhibited a great variety, there were several reasons why some circle of Rabbis held the cessationist view, namely, institutional self –interest of the Sages to enhance their status as the inheritors of the prophetic and the fear of severe threat to the existing social order; that the expectation of a new era of prophecy constituted only a periphery element in the hopes of Judaism but there was a strong belief in the eschatological return of Elijah. We concluded that the reasons given for the ‘end of prophecy’ are contradicted by experience as there were many incidents of the prophetic at the time. We therefore recommend a re-appraisal of the texts, biblical and others so far used to the contrary.

Key words: Prophecy, Early Judaism, End of Prophecy, Rabbis, Rabbinic Literature.

THE CHALLENGES OF PENTECOSTALISM TO MAINLINE CHURCHES IN NIGERIA: A CRITIQUE

CHRIS. A. OBI
And
JOHN AREGHAN EZELE

ABSTRACT

Pentecostalism is a major stream in the new religious movement of Nigeria today. It is a phenomenon that is increasingly assuming a prominent position in the religious, social-economic and psychological lives of the people. At every nook and cranny, one is greeted with the wave of this new globalizing trend. The movement which has been growing in various forms is threatening to overtake the Mainline Churches in population, strength and significance. Currently, it is making great impact on the Mainstream Churches in Nigeria. The strength of Pentecostalism seems to lie in its theology and orthopraxis. Pentecostalism is no longer a Pentecostals' affair only, but the mainstream Christians' experience as well. This study did a critique on the challenges posed by Pentecostalism on the Mainline Churches in Nigeria. The emergence of Pentecostalism on the religious landscape of Nigeria has influenced the Mainline Churches in so many ways. The Mainline Churches are challenged to self examination: to ascertain that which is lacking in their doctrines and style of worship and also to learn what is good from the Pentecostals. The method adopted in this study is multidimensional: historical, phenomenological, analytical, and theological approaches. This paper discovered that Mainline Churches have lost members to these Pentecostal churches while the remaining members of Mainline Churches do not hesitate to run to these churches in search of remedies to personal problems. The paper concluded that Pentecostalism, even though it introduced some challenges to Mainline Churches, has helped in reawakening Christians' enthusiasm in spiritual matters. It recommended that for maximum understanding and benefits of Pentecostalism, critics of Pentecostalism should as a matter of priority study the essence, efficacy and workability of Pentecostalism.

Key words: Pentecostalism, Mainline Churches, Challenges, Pentecostal Theology.

DIVERSITY AND CONSISTENCY OF BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHRISTOLOGY IN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

CHRIS .A. OBI

Abstract

The diverse presentation of Jesus seen among the evangelists raises the issue of methodology with regard to how best to understand/interpret the biblical data. Different Christologies and development arose out of the different cultural background into which Christianity moved. What advances there were, were occasioned by the cultural needs of the church. In this sense Christology began by being merely functional, with confessions affirming what Christ has done, is

doing or will do. Later development goes beyond statements of activity to statements of being (e.g. Phil. 2:6; Jn. 1:1, 14). The goal of this paper is to highlight by means of historical-critical methodology especially literary approach, the diversity as well as consistency in the understanding and interpretation of the person of Jesus in the New Testament. A detection of such multiphase Christology in the primary sources of our faith is meant to lay foundation of openness to plural Christology in the Nigerian context. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part is concerned with how different sources of the gospel tradition understand Jesus -- their emphasis even when they use the same Christological titles. The second part concentrates on the Pauline usage of *kyrios* ('Lord') title in order to resolve some issues raised by scholars on the origin of the title – the aspect of biblical consistency. The third part briefly outlines Christology in the Nigerian context. Our findings show that in Mark, the prominent titles are *Christos* 'Messiah', 'Son of God', 'Son of Man'. For Matthew, Jesus' Messiahship is interpreted in terms of 'Son of the living God'. Central to the Lucan Christology is the fact that Jesus is 'Teacher – Prophet' in addition to *Christos*, *kyrios* or its absolute *ho kyrios*. The gospel of John has a tendency to coalesce the titles and its Christology is influenced by the various stages in its composition: Jesus is variously presented as the "Word" in the prologue, the 'Lamb of God'; the 'Prophet-like Moses', the 'Only begotten Son', 'Son of Joseph', in addition to the traditional titles of '*Christos*,' 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man'. Paul uses the *kyrios* title frequently. He was deeply influenced by the early Christian *homologia* (confession): 'Jesus is Lord'. The early church utilized the *homologia* 'Jesus is Lord' in several ways in the daily life of the Church: in worship, in baptism, in preaching and in times of persecution. The paper concludes that a parallel phenomenon of the influence of social political environment can be detected on Christology in the Nigerian context with emphasis on 'Jesus is a healer', 'giver of children', 'ancestor' and particularly 'Jesus is power' Christology of 1983 which was meant to dilute and counter the political air that NPN (National Party of Nigeria) is power or superpower. In view of the diversity and consistency of New Testament Christologies, and the influence of social environment on the development of Christology even in the New Testament, Nigerian Catholic Theologians and the church should be prepared for an open-ended expression of the same faith in multiple Christology.

CHARISMATA AND AUTHORITY: A PAULINE VIEWPOINT

CHRIS .A. OBI

Abstract

The issue of authority in the church has been traditionally linked with the debate on apostolic authority or with that of recognized ministers and office-bearers in the church. Since R. Sohn in 1892 first raised the question of how the charismatic and institutional were related within the early church, the question has been a subject of continuous and heated debate. In the history of interpretation it has been in these terms, namely, on the relation between Spirit and office, charisma and office, the charismatic and institutional that the debate has continued. In contemporary times, Siegfried Schartzmann has given several factors why this is very much alive today. It is the fourth factor, the Pauline concept of charismata, the increasing importance of Pentecostalism within Christianity today and within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal which has brought the issue of charisma and authority to the forefront of the Nigerian Catholic theological discourse today. The paper examines the Pauline concept of charismata, relates it to his apostolic authority as a background to discussion today and ascertains what the tradition of ministry (*diakonia*) makes possible or impossible for the Christian today. Three main issues are discussed, namely, Paul's concept of charismata, charisma and order/authority, and authority and exercise of charisma today. The approach is historical-critical, exegetical and phenomenological. Our findings show that Paul used the term *charismata* in place of the Corinthian term *pneumatika* to serve as a corrective; that it has a wide range of meanings in Paul; that the five listings of the charismata (1 Cor. 12:7-11; 12:28-30; 12:8-10; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11) are adhoc; and there is no ranking and not all have the same gift. On charisma and authority, we note that Paul often speaks to his converts with distinct tones of authority, sometimes giving order, sometimes commanding, sometimes admonishing and sometimes threatening. His tone becomes more authoritative when either his gospel is threatened or when the unity of his congregation is threatened. He sees in the community an authority to regulate the charismata. He laid emphasis on charisma and order. He emphasized the importance of edification to be achieved if the exercise of the gifts is done in a balanced way, directed to the growth of the community's understanding, within an intelligible context evoking a discerning assessment and within the framework of love. Today Catholic theology has rehabilitated the charisms in her official Vatican II document. The paper concludes

by discussing five main areas in which the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is and may be a *kairos* to the Nigerian Catholic Church.

PAUL AND THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TODAY: A STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS

14:33B-36

C. A. OBI

Abstract

The ordination of women as priests is a topical issue in contemporary Christian churches. The issue of women as priests or full ministers is one that is full of ecumenical significance. One of the major set of arguments proposed against such ordination of women is clearly scriptural argument, especially 1Corinthians 14:33b-36 and 1Timothy 2:11-12. The paper examines the text of 1 Corinthians 14: 33b – 36 in its context and history of exegesis to see whether it can be really used to justify and sustain the restriction on women’s ministry today. Using historical – critical and exegetical method the problems associated with the text are presented. Our findings show that there are three basic claims about the passage (namely, the text is authentically Pauline; Paul said it but addressed it to a special limited case; and that Paul did not say it); that upon analysis of verses 34-35, the traditional interpretation has to contend with four major difficulties (namely, the usual meaning of *lalein*(to speak) in the context of 1 Corinthian 14 and other linguistic peculiarities; the conflict with 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; the questionable appeal to the law to found a practice; and the conflict with Paul’s pastoral practice of considering women as co-workers in ministry). Our major conclusion is that from Pauline practice, the three cases of Prisca, Junia and Phoebe all of whom are Paul’s coworkers show that the universality of the rule and prohibition to speak in the churches for women in the early church is a farce. The traditional interpretation can no longer be sustained and used to debar women from ministry today.

THE SIGN CHARACTER OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES IN PENTECOSTAL SPIRITUALITY: A CRITIQUE

C .A. OBI

Abstract

In the past few years, there has been increasing experience of speaking in tongues within the Orthodox or traditional churches in Nigeria. Today among Pentecostals it is claimed that

speaking in tongues is the normal if not the exclusive sign of reception of the Holy Spirit and that there is something lacking in any Christian who has not had the experience of tongues-speaking. The paper exposes and critiques the two positions on the Pentecostal theory of tongues as the initial sign of Holy Spirit reception against the background of biblical data. The method adopted is historical–critical, exegetical and phenomenological. Our findings show that all the evidence for distinctive Pentecostal doctrine is based on Acts of the Apostles where tongues are mentioned along with Spirit reception but ignores Luke’s salvation–history perspective. For in all the instances where Spirit and tongues are bestowed together, these involved different groups’ (not individuals’) acceptance into the church: Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles and Baptist sect. The role of speaking in tongues varies in each instance. There is no case where an individual’s reception of the Holy Spirit (e.g., Paul, Barnabas, Stephen , Lydia) was evidenced by tongues; that the Pentecostal position overlooks the more historically sound view of tongues exposed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14 according to which there are diversities of gifts thereby toning down the over valuation of tongues by the Corinthians. The paper concludes that the Pentecostal search for visible sign is not new in the history of schools of Christian spirituality that spelt out various stages of spiritual growth and various experiences that people will pass through as espoused by St Teresa of Avila, St John of the Cross, Symeon the New Theologian and John Wesley.

HEALING MIRACLES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: A SPRING BOARD FOR PENTECOSTAL PROPAGANDA

CHRIS A. OBI

Abstract

The subject of divine healing is a very popular one in many a Pentecostal assembly. Various testimonies of healings and exorcisms occupy a prominent place in telecast preachers, healing evangelists and TV pastors to attesting the truth that God still heals today. Even the Mainline churches are not left out as many of them can boast of God-given faith healers and exorcists. The paper analyzes critically healing miracles as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, ascertains Luke’s interest and perspective on these miracles and discusses their implication /influence on the Nigerian contemporary situation. Using historical – critical method the first part of the paper reviews and analyzes the healing accounts in Acts; the second part dwells on Luke’s attitude to miracles in contrast to Paul and other New Testament writers while the third part traces the

influence of North American Pentecostalism on and some aspects of healing ministry among Nigerian Pentecostals and cautions against the craze for healing anointing today. Our findings show that the big emphasis on divine healing today is traceable to Luke's accounts of healing. These healings can be classified into five groups; that Luke's presentation of Peter and Paul's ministry in parallel as men of mighty miracles overlooks Paul's own stress on his apostolate, not in terms of a man mighty in miracles but mighty in sufferings for Christ. Luke's interest lay more on the propaganda value of miracles which elsewhere in the New Testament is disparaged since miracles do not awaken true faith in Jesus. Luke does not address the problem of weaning faith from the diet of the miraculous. The paper concludes that Luke's propagandist view of miracles must be balanced with Paul's own view of the signs of an apostle, namely, an apostle must plunge himself into the depth of suffering and there experience the help of Christ. The Christian strength lies in the cross which is the yardstick in Christianity.

DECOLONIZING THE INTERPRETATION OF PAUL'S TEACHING ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

C.A. OBI

Abstract

The African woman, and perhaps as women anywhere, faces what may be the greatest challenge in the church. It is the problem of finding herself at a loss what the place of woman is in the church. The church teaches equality of all men including women before God based on Galatians 3:28 and that God shows no partiality or has no favourites (Acts 10:10). Even Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* hammers on the church as the people of God. Yet a woman often finds herself a second, if not a third class citizen in the church. The paper examines the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 in the light of African socio-cultural contexts and experiences, vis-à-vis the role of women in African Traditional Religion (ATR). It argues that in the light of the cultic role of women in ATR we can no longer sustain the absolute use of this passage, as enshrined in the traditional interpretation, to restrain women from ordained ministry. The method adopted is historical-critical, exegetical and African cultural hermeneutics advocated by Tuesday Adamo. Our findings include the seven exegetical difficulties besetting the passage; the three main lines of interpretation of the passage (namely, it is authentically Pauline; it is addressed to a particular case or is the position of the Corinthians which Paul denies; and that it is an interpolation). A detailed

analysis of verses 34-35 and evaluation of the traditional view faces six major huddles/difficulties. The paper concludes that in lieu of the role of women in African Traditional Religion where women played role as religious specialists, priestesses of divinities, traditional doctors, healers and herbalists, diviners, mediums but above all a musical and ethical role in the reformation of the society, women should be allowed to enter ordained ministry if called to do so.

CALLING

DR C. A. OBI AND DR R. O. OMOTOYE

Abstract

The association of religion with persons who are believed to be called by the Divine to establish a religion is characteristic of numerous religious traditions. This is not only true of those whose history points to a particular founder but also of African religion. Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Siddhatha Gautama the Buddha, Confucius and LaoTzu are associated with founding a religious tradition after receiving a Divine call. Religious experience therefore is a phenomenon that is found in any living religion. In Nigeria, for instance, there are three major religions, which are African Religion, Christianity and Islam. This paper examines the importance of the spiritual calling in all the religious traditions in Nigeria. In order to avoid generalization the study is limited to Yoruba land of South-Western Nigeria. The approach is historical and comparative. Our findings reveal that “calling” in African Religion is experienced by some religious personnel set apart to function as intermediaries between the Supreme Being and man. These intermediaries are referred to as priests and priestesses, *Aworo* in Yoruba land. The succession to Yoruba priesthood can be by right of primogeniture, by a divine possession of a divinity or through the declaration of the oracle. Muhammad, the supposedly founder of Islam had his divine call about AD 610 in Arabia. Islam was introduced to Yoruba land before Christianity. There are many Islamic movements and groups led by old and young educated Muslims called *Malams* and *Alfas*. The leaders claim to have been called by *Allah* to propagate Islam. Calling in Judeo-Christian Religion are instanced by Abraham, Moses, major and minor Prophets and in the New Testament Jesus heard the voice of God in the Jordan river. Saul equally heard the voice of God calling him. The concept of religious calling became more pronounced and highly emphasized with the founders of

African Independent churches in Yoruba land known as *Aladura* as well as thousands of Pentecostal churches who lay claim to a divine call. Our conclusion is that the three religions emphasize the aspect of calling into the leadership of the religion in spite of the pitfalls experienced in their execution of their call - many fake Alfas, Pastors and *Aworo* who are exploiting the common man in the society, all claiming to be “called”.

‘CHRISTIAN LEVITES’: APPRECIATING THE ROLE OF LAY CATECHISTS IN MINISTRY

CHRIS .A. OBI

Abstract

The Catechist is still an indispensable figure even in modern African church in spite of the increase in vocations to the Catholic priesthood. However, the main obstacles to proper appreciation of the Catechist’s ministry include low status, the priest’s lack of sympathy and lack of job satisfaction traceable to low educational background and low income remuneration. The paper argues for a better appreciation of the role of lay catechists in a collaborative ministry, offers some African traditional models of collaborative ministry and suggests ways to enhance the effectiveness of catechists’ ministry. Emphasis is placed on appreciating the catechists’ role in collaborative ministry through enhanced maintenance and working conditions. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part identifies the catechist and his role, the second dwells on biblical and African traditional models on collaborative ministry. The third dwells on some recommendations to enhance the catechist’s effectiveness in collaborative ministry. Our reflection is based on pastoral practice in Esan parishes of Edo State. The approach is descriptive and phenomenological. Our findings show that there are seven facts about the catechist’s profession; that the ministry of helpers which the catechist is involved in has taken various forms in Judeo-Christian tradition (e.g. Priests and Levites in the Old Testament; the choice of the Seven; Paul and his co-workers in the New Testament) and even in traditional cultic setting. The last model for appreciating the catechist’s role in collaborative ministry can be gleaned from the diverse role of cultic functionaries or religious specialists in African Religion which include the kings, the priests, the medicine-men/women, the diviners and spirit mediums. In view of the perceived six major obstacles militating against effective catechists’ ministry, four recommendations are offered to enhance the effectiveness of their ministry which include good communication between the

priest, the people and the catechists; participative decision-making; commitment and ongoing spiritual renewal on the part of the catechists; and above all decent remuneration that will enable the catechist maintain himself and family. This precisely was why many of the Levites refused to return to temple service after the Babylonian exile because of poor remuneration attached to their subordinate status.

THE SPIRIT AND PENTECOSTALISM: LESSONS FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

C. A. OBI

Abstract

Within some groups in Pentecostalism/ Charismatic Renewal problem areas have been identified: fundamentalism, overcontrol, pietism which fosters pure interiority without social awareness and the pursuit of the unusual. But the discrepancy between ‘good fruit’ and weaknesses is not the exclusive preserve of Pentecostalism/ the Renewal. It is shared by all who hear the word of God and have communion in the mysteries of Christ. The paper delves into the exaltation of the Holy Spirit in the early church by some Christians and in Pentecostalism and its implications today. This exaltation is found/ has led to diverse views of the Holy Spirit in early Christianity and beyond from its inception. This different understanding of the Holy Spirit has been one of the major issues in Christian history. The paper is divided into four parts: the first part exposes the four diverse views of the Holy Spirit in relation to the church in the New Testament, that is, the different views of how the Spirit works in the Christian community in the church. The second part summarizes the main essentials of Pentecostal thought and practices. The third part briefly sketches the close affinity between Pentecostalism and aspects of African Traditional Religion. The last part draws out the lessons for the church. Our approach is multidimensional. Our findings show that there are four diverse views of the Holy Spirit (namely, the charismatic Spirit seen in 1 Corinthians - the Spirit as the principle of diversity; the Pastorals where Spirit and office are tied together as a check against false teachers; the spontaneous Spirit that comes at request, occasionally on-rushing Spirit or the great moving Spirit that facilitates the spread of the church in the Acts of the Apostles; and fourthly in the Gospel of John we find a personal *Paraklete* who had a legal function of defending Jesus and the disciples. The *Paraklete* is a teacher of the individual Christian. He is not confined to the charismatics but is the possession of every Christian. There are two categories of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, namely, those that are indigenous and those that

came to Nigeria from outside. The distinctive Pentecostal thought holds a two stage of conversion experience attested by submitting to water baptism followed by reception of the Holy Spirit evidenced by tongues-speaking with support mainly from Acts of the Apostles. Pentecostalism and African Traditional Religion share a common this worldly view, eschatology and pneumatology (spirit possession). Our conclusion highlighted some lessons for the church in response to the pastoral challenges posed by Pentecostals. The reception of the Holy Spirit in early Christianity involved an experiential dimension which must be taken into account in our enculturation process of Christianity not neglecting the sacramental view of the Spirit given at Baptism which Pentecostal have drawn attention to.

THE ELECTION OF THE SEVEN IN ACTS 6:1-6: ITS RELEVANCE IN THE WAR AGAINST CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

CHRIS .A. OBI.

Abstract

Since Olusegun Obasanjo's return to power as the elected president on May 29, 1999, one major programme of his administration has been the war against corruption. The first bill he sent to the National Assembly is that of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) of 2000 which was further buttressed with the birth of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). On her part, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) went ahead to compose a prayer against 'Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria' recited communally on Sunday worship. The paper examines the selection of the Seven in Acts 6:1-6, and shows how the Bible-based-principles can assist in tackling the problem of corruption in Nigeria in the light of leadership qualifications stated in the text. The approach adopted is exegetical, literary and phenomenological. Our findings show that five important lessons and biblical principles that can be gleaned from the incident and their relevance to the church and society. The causes, manifestations and effects of corruption were highlighted. The Acts 6 scene is a model of how to stem the tide of corruption and can serve as a model for choice of religious and political leadership in Nigeria. It emphasizes merit model, preponderance of the will of the people and total dependence on God as supreme. The paper concludes that a comparison of the thirteen qualities needed for effective good leadership in a nation with the scene in Acts 6:1-6 and what obtains in the Nigerian life shows a wide disparity; namely, the biblical principle of choosing leaders

contrasts sharply with the rigged and manipulated elections that obtain in our political life, choosing people in their areas of competence contrasts with nepotism and being well connected and asking for divine direction sharply *contrasts with* “*I can do it alone whether you like it or not*”. Consequently, the paper calls for a return to merit parameter as basis for electing our political leaders in place of relying on primordial instinct of geographical, tribal or religious heritage, to run our socio-economic and political system. In this way tribalism, corruption can receive a death blow and the country will move forward in development.

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE OF JESUS (JOHN 13-17) IN THE LIGHT OF DEATH-BED WORDS IN AFRICAN MILIEU

CHRIS. A. OBI

Abstract

This paper reflects on the phenomenon of death in African milieu, particularly on the significance of the life and death of Father Pantaleon Iroegbu (Fada Kpim) through the use of some key Igbo concepts as *dimgba*, *agbara* and *ajo muo*. It exposes the contextual meaning of these concepts and the extent they are applicable to Father Kpim. It examines the Johannine Farewell speech of Jesus in John 13-17 and the death-bed utterances/wishes in African milieu. The method adopted is exegetical and African cultural hermeneutics. Our findings point out the nine characteristics of this farewell discourse genre; that there are similarities and differences of this known biblical genre and some peculiarities in the Johannine use of the genre; that a comparative analysis shows there are similarities between the Jewish and African perception of dying/death-bed utterances as well as some differences. The most common feature characteristic of Jewish farewell speech, the Johannine inclusive, and African death-bed utterances or words is that which centers on the endurance of the name. Applying the key words used to esteem the worth of an individual among the Igbos who are status-seekers and achievement-oriented such as *dimgba*, *ajo muo* and *agbara* we conclude that Fada Pantaleon is a *dimgba academicus*, an *ajo muo* and *agbara madu* because he is an intellectual academic colossus and intellectual guru.

ALL ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED (ROM. 11:26): PAUL AND THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL

CHRIS .A. OBI

Abstract

The main goal of the church is to proclaim the gospel of salvation. However, the meaning of salvation is subject to relativity of historical experiences so that biblical writers inclusive have expressed the one salvation in a multiplicity of symbols, related to particular times and places and various human needs and concerns. The goal of the paper is to expose Paul's notion of salvation of Israel within the context of Romans 9-11 especially in the summary conclusion of Romans 11:25-32. In order to bring this Pauline perspective into sharper focus, the paper compares Paul and other New Testament witnesses' attitude on the destiny of Israel, examines Paul's attitude to Israel in some of his earlier letters, namely, 1 Thessalonians and Galatians before taking up a detailed exposition of Romans 9-11 especially 11:25-32 regarding Israel's salvation. The last part of the paper relates our discussion and findings to African context today. We discovered by a comparison of Mathew, Luke, and John with Paul that Paul's attitude to Israel was unique in the New Testament; that in the context of Jewish opposition to the gospel, Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 combined traditional Christian criticism of the Jews with typical Gentile polemic against the Jews as displeasing to God and enemies of the human race but nevertheless remained open to their future destiny. In Galatians, he demanded that the people belonging to Abraham be defined in a new way; he tackles who constitutes the people of God without identifying it with the "new Israel". Our detailed study of Romans 9-11, especially 11:25-32 shows Paul emphasizes the priority of Israel because of God's faithfulness to his promise and the Jewish root of the Christian faith. He emphasizes the universality of the gospel/salvation. However, Israel remains God's special people even after Christ. Israel is not simply absorbed into the church. He envisages the eschatological event, the ingathering of the people of Israel which is also tied with the salvation of the Gentiles. The paper concludes that since salvation has a universal character, African Christians will be partakers of it.

PAUL'S DAMASCUS EXPERIENCE: A CONVERSION OR A CALL?

DR. C. A. OBI

Abstract

Evangelicals and Pentecostals face the problem of integrating their disparate experience into a cohesive religious community of shared beliefs and practices. One of the ways by which such cohesiveness is achieved is by the use of and sharing testimonies at evangelistic gatherings. Although testimonies can be and are given regarding virtually every phase of the Christian life-style - finance, healing, deliverance, job placement, educational attainment, family life - the most popular and elaborate centers around events which led to and immediately followed conversion, popularly known as 'salvation-testimony'. The aim of this paper is to examine by means of literary analysis, the threefold account of Paul's Damascus experience in Acts 9:1-19; 22:1-16 and 26:12-23 to explain why Luke relates this event three times. Our purpose is to seek answers to questions as: was the threefold account meant to serve as a 'salvation-testimony' rampant among Pentecostals today? Was it a conversion? Or is conversion the terminology which most accurately interprets both the Lucan accounts of the experience and Paul's own allusion to it? We employed the methods of form criticism and comparative analysis to argue that what Paul experienced should be interpreted as a prophetic call like the prophets of old rather than a conversion because the analysis of the texts in Acts showed that it conformed to the formal features reminiscent of the Old Testament call-traditions (namely, divine confrontation, introductory word, commission, objection, reassurance which appears in sequence more or less clearly in all the 'call reports'). Our conclusion is that although a long tradition within Christianity attested by liturgical practice and academic publications, interprets Paul's Damascus experience as a conversion, some biblical and linguistic data belie this conversion interpretation. The prophetic call interpretation matches with Paul's own view in Galatians¹. Luke retold this experience with variations for literary reasons to show above all that the Pauline mission to the Gentiles was divinely directed and cannot be stopped. A comparison of Paul's experience with the 'salvation testimony' given by many religious celebrities today, convert-turned evangelist preachers, in evangelical circles show a wide disparity of background.

CIRCUMCISSION, CONVERSION AND THE APOSTOLIC DECREE (ACTS 15)

CHRIS A.OBI

Abstract

The paper examines the problem of circumcision as a precondition for acceptance of new converts into the Christian fold. The central discussion focuses on how the early church resolved a conflict that could have split her in Acts 15. The purpose is to highlight how the early church was able to recognize and distinguish between the cultural from the religious in order not to impede conversion to the new faith. Such reinterpretation of earlier religious tradition by the early Christians is very instructive and necessary in the midst of today's use and abuse of the Bible in some Christian circles. The paper does not delve into Paul's position on circumcision in his major letters, nor does it attempt to reconcile the Lucan account in Acts 15 with Paul's version as told in Galatians 2. Our attention focuses on some data on circumcision in the Old Testament, the problems of circumcision Acts 15, the occasion of the Apostolic Council, the Apostolic decree and its interpretation, Lucan redaction and the significance Luke attached to Acts 15. Finally, the last part contextualizes our discussion with what obtains among Orthodox, Evangelicals and Pentecostals today. The method adopted is historical-critical, exegetical and phenomenological. Our findings show that the immediate occasion of the Council was the success of Paul's missionary journey; that the problem does not have to do with the admission of the Gentiles as such but with the conditions of their entrance; that the resultant Apostolic decree has been given two interpretations (the cultic version with four stipulations and the moral with three stipulations); that Lucan redaction is evident in three areas, particularly the citation of Amos 9 from the Septuagint rather than Masoretic. Acts 15 marks a turning point in that hitherto all roads lead to Jerusalem but thereafter Peter and Apostles disappear and Paul becomes the dominant figure. The focus shifts from Jerusalem to Paul and the European Gentile church. Our conclusion is that faced with a possibility of a split, the early church noted that circumcision as a mark of the covenant was a cultural, tribal and national identity which need not apply to all people and for all times. She went ahead to spell out the terms of social intercourse so as not to offend the Jews. Consequently the church of today needs to follow the lead of the earlier Christian church by engaging in a

dialogue with contemporary culture. She needs to reinterpret the past religious tradition in the light of the signs of the time, especially with the implanting of western type of Christianity into African soil.

JOHN'S WITNESSING: A PARADIGM FOR ALL DISCIPLES TODAY

CHRIS A OBI

Abstract

Witnessing is defined as “the communication of the Gospel to the unbeliever on a personal basis, that is, personal evangelism”. The agencies of witnessing are first Israel and when Israel failed God set the nation aside temporarily in favour to a new agency – the church, not the local church but the individual believer. This paper examines the role of John the Baptist as a witness in John 1:19-51 and the challenges of witnessing more effectively to Christ in Nigeria today within the Catholic tradition. The pericope is chosen because the evangelist presents John the Baptist as the first Christian witness. Witnessing is an indispensable function to faith. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part examines the fourth evangelist’s interest in the theme of witness, the second part treats the structure and main points of the passage, the third dwells on a review and critique of the traditional means of witnessing among Mainline churches in the past and offers some alternative ways of making Catholic witnessing more effective today. The method adopted is exegetical, analytic, structural and phenomenological. Our findings show that with the Baptist (John 1:6,8) the evangelist introduces the major theme of witness (*maturia*) which is important throughout Johannine literature. This evaluation of John the Baptist is due in part to the fact that the evangelist wished to deprive contemporary Baptist order of their master at least as a competitor of Jesus. Although the gospel commences with the witness of John the Baptist, he is really the sixth in a series of seven witnesses to Christ at this level. The effectiveness of John’s witnessing is seen in that his disciples became immediate witnesses to others. Hitherto, the traditional means of evangelism utilized by the Catholic Church such as evangelization through schools, hospitals and the Catechism had its pitfalls. Therefore the paper demands that personal evangelism should be emphasized in Catholic socialization. Preference was given to aspects of evangelical methods the Catholic Church could incorporate from Evangelicals/Pentecostals especially literature/tract evangelism and the use of testimonies.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SUFFERING IN AFRICAN CONTEXT

CHRIS .A. OBI

Abstract

The problem of suffering, the problem of evil is one that has always caught the attention of philosophers, religionists and moral theologians, doctors, educationists and politicians. Across the ages, different religions have tried to provide an understanding to the problem of evil. These explanations have varied according to the various historical and cultural circumstances that gave rise to the issues. Consequently, world religions have given varied answers as to why suffering and Basic religions such as African Traditional Religion is no exception. For Judeo-Christian Religion the problem is more vexing in view of the central tenet of faith in a good God who intervenes in history. The problem comes to the front burner in Nigeria today because of the teaching in some Pentecostals circles that Christians need not suffer – they are immune from suffering because they have been redeemed from the curse of the law. The paper reviews the main lines of the biblical approach to suffering in an African context as a response to the theology of Christian immunity to suffering. Various religious understanding of suffering and evil are reviewed so that the clergy and educators may better assist those who struggle with the meaning of pain. The paper is divided into four parts. The first briefly reviews phenomenologically the various understanding of suffering in world religions, the second reviews the seven Old Testament approaches to suffering, the third treats suffering in the New Testament while the fourth dwells on suffering in African Religion mainly illustrated from Esan and Igbo thought. Our findings show that the Bible does not present a unified view of suffering. The Old Testament offers at last seven different interpretation to the problem of suffering (viz., suffering as punishment for sin; suffering is absurd, and mystery; suffering as education - discipline, test, trial; exemplary suffering; vicarious or substitute suffering; growth and renewal through suffering; and suffering as eschatological). In the New Testament, these models are adopted and modified in the light of Jesus passion and cross. Jesus suffering is presented as a divine necessity; it is vicarious suffering and is a model for Christians. Suffering is presented as a *sine qua non* for Christians because it bespeaks of identification with Christ. In African Religion suffering in seen more as a punishment from

God, the divinities, ancestors, spirits good and bad; casual agents of suffering are witches, evil magicians and *ojuu*. Peculiar to the African approach to suffering is the concept of spiritual double - *Ehi* and *Chi* as determinant of people's fate in life. Our conclusion is that this later approach is peculiar to African perspective on suffering in relation to Judeo-Christian approaches.

THE CHANGING STATUS AND ROLE OF RELIGIOUS SPECIALISTS IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

CHRIS A. OBI.

Abstract

This paper centers on another aspect of sacred persons, not as religious founders but as religious specialists/ functionaries, commissioned representatives of the founder or of sacred reality. By religious specialist we mean "one who has a culturally defined status and role and devotes himself to this role in a religious system". The main thrust of the paper is to sketch the development, status and role of ministries in the New Testament, compare same with the status and role of priests, diviners, medicine men and women in African Traditional Religion and show how these were affected by the impact of the expansion of Christianity on the one hand and the impact of modernization and other factors of social change in the case of traditional religion. The apostle, the prophet convey the image of sacred reality, hence we use the term "holy" to qualify them while the bishop, priest, deacon share the same quality by the attached title 'Reverend'. The traditional priest, the diviner, and the medicine-man and woman evince the same sacredness and are called cultic functionaries. All these come under the broad category 'sacred people'. By sacred peoples we mean those men and women who play conspicuous and leading roles during worship. Their functions are sacred because worship led by them is directed towards the sacred or the holy. Their functions require expert knowledge and technical knowledge but does the New Testament present a unified view of ministry or did it vary according to different places and times? What is the function of each of these ministries? What term does the New Testament prefer for ministry? What was the impact of changing historical situations in the development of Christian ministry in the early church and in African Traditional Religion? These are the controlling questions that

guided our discussion. The method adopted is historical, literary and comparative. Our findings show seven points of comparison among which are: two exotic factors, one secular and the other religious, played a vital role in the development of the status and role of religious specialist in early Christianity and Igbo traditional religion respectively. Persecution and Gnostic heresies influenced the solidification or formalization of ministry in the early church while British rule and missionary enterprise influenced the changing status of priests, diviners and medicine-men/women. Three main dominant religious specialists in early Christianity are apostles, prophets and teachers (1Cor 12:28) just as in Igbo traditional religion priests, diviners and medicine men/women make up the triad. There is a significant change in status and role on each side of the triad. The most significant change in status and role is the fate of prophets and teachers on the one hand and the *Eze- Ala* and *Eze Nri* priesthood on the other hand. In the face of Gnostic heresies and persecution the phenomena of Christian prophets hitherto widespread was gradually removed. The presbyter-*episcopos* and presbyter now appropriated to themselves the authority of the former prophets and teachers. In the case of Igbo traditional religion, it was the priesthood especially the *Eze-Ala* and *Eze Nri* priesthood that came to be depreciated. Thus one can speak of similarity of change of status on both sides of the religious traditions.

THE PASTORALS AND THE QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH LEADERS: A CHALLENGING PARADIGM TODAY

CHRIS .A. OBI

Abstract

Since the middle of the 18th century, the two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus have commonly been known as the pastorals. This terminology was first used in 1753 as a descriptive title for all the three letters of Paul by Paul Anton. They are grouped together because of similarities in content and form - the purpose of the three letters is to instruct Timothy and Titus on the direction of local Christian communities. The aim of this paper is to critically analyze the pastorals' qualification for church leaders, expose some influences on the author and the implications for leadership in the Nigerian church today. What are the various requirements? What external social setting influenced them? Are the requirements eternally valid? What are the

strengths and weaknesses, dangers of enforcing such requirements today? What African models can be suggested in their place today? These are some of the controlling questions that guided our discussion. The supposition of this paper is that the pastorals are wholly Deutero-Pauline and were composed by a writer subsequent to Paul's day and wished to claim Paul's authority for his materials. The method adopted is exegetical, social-historical and African cultural hermeneutics. Our findings show that the pastorals were influenced by the crisis of false teachers in the community. The answer given by the author was in terms of church structure. The pastorals listed qualities necessary for someone who would have to get along with the community for a long time. It sacrificed charismatic qualities for mere pedestal qualities that will facilitate harmony in the Christian community. Since sometimes these requirements have to do with public respectability, they can and do change with time. Our conclusion is that it is left to the church of each age to discern the appropriate requirements for each age in order to make the gospel evangelization more effective.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE GIFT AND PRACTICE OF PROPHECY IN THE POST APOSTOLIC CHURCH

CHRIS .A. OBI

Abstract

A glance at the major interpretations of 1 Corinthians 13:10b ("when the perfect (*teleion*) comes, the imperfect will pass away") shows that scholars have interpreted the Greek word *teleion* ("perfect") differently. One group of interpreters takes it to mean the church age. Consequently it is argued that prophecies and tongues have ceased. Others take it to refer to the completion of the canon of scripture. When this is done it would do away with the partial forms of charismatic revelation. This view is defended in various ways by contemporary Dispensationalist theologians and non-charismatic writers. In Nigeria today, the Dispensationalist position, the notion of cessation of revelatory gifts is championed by God's Kingdom Society (GKS). For the third group of interpreters, *teleion* ("perfection") refers to the maturity of the church or individual believers. The majority view, however, is that *teleion* "perfection" is related to Second coming of Christ. In literature today on the gifts, the greatest proponents of the

cessation of revelatory gifts are best represented by John MacArthur and F.D. Farnell. The aim of this paper is to address the challenges posed by the use of history by this Dispensationalist interpretation of Paul's saying through having a historical overview of the manifestations of the gifts especially in the post Apostolic church and across church age. The purpose is to show that for a person who values history, there are contrary arguments from church history to belie the claims of Dispensationalist interpreters. The method adopted is historical, expository and evaluative. Our findings show that a brief historical survey on the resilience and persistence of the revelatory gift of prophecy in the Fathers and across centuries buttress the correctness of our interpretation of the Pauline dictum in 1 Corinthians 13:10b ("When the perfect comes, prophecy, tongues and knowledge will cease"). The perfect (*teleion*) does not refer to maturity, nor the completion of the canon of scripture as opined by some scholars but rather it refers to the Second coming of Christ at the *parousia*; that subsequent history of the church has shown that when prophets are not given their say within the church, they rise up to condemn it from outside. Montanism and the Reformation are good historical examples to ponder here. Vatican II therefore acted wisely in exposing the church to the harsh winds of prophetic criticism from within and outside its own rank by its acceptance of the Charismatic nature of the church. In conclusion, the charismata, the gift of prophecy cannot be correctly held to have been withdrawn or ceased but are still operative today. The arguments from history advanced by Allen, MacArthur, Farnell and God's Kingdom Society cannot be sustained but are to be rejected as history points in another direction.