Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.4 No.3 September, 2021; p.g. 9 – 21; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

SYNCRETISM AMONG CHRISTIANS IN NIGERIA AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS

TOBIAS CHIBUIKE ONAH (PhD)
Department of Religion, University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Corresponding Email: chibuike.onah@unn.edu.ng

&

VIRGINUS UCHENNA EZE (PhD)
Department of Religion, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

FABIAN UZOCHUKWU NNADI (PhD)
Department of Religion, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

MICHAEL EKENE MOKWENYE (PhD)
Department of Religion, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

STELLA CHINWEUDO EKWEME (PhD)
Department of Religion, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

ABSTRACT

Human development is characterized mutualism informed by borrowing of cultural aspiration from one culture to another; this spreads across all aspects of human endeavour, the religious sphere not to be left out. It is with regard to such admissible borrowing that Christianity was preached amid aboriginal traditional practices of Nigerians. This made the already existing faith suffer temporal setback but surprisingly in recent times the interaction between Christianity became obvious and hence the blending of two religion. It is this blending of Christianity with other religious practice that is referred to as syncretism. This informs the reason why some Nigerians jumble Christianity with other inadmissible culture thereby polluting the Christian faith. This is done with the impression that Christianity could not adequately address the people's problem. It is against this background that this article tries to come to grips with the syncrestic practices piously played among Christian faithful in Nigeria. The study adopted a phenomelogical research approach and made use of descriptive research design which also involved the use of data from primary and secondary sources, in its method of data analysis. The study reveals different syncrestic religion that is prevalent in Nigeria namely chrislam and Ifeoluwa, it also reveals syncretism amid Christian faithful in Nigeria. The study also unveils some members of secret cults, who hide under the guise of Christianity while they hold tenaciously to

their cultic tenet and traditions. The implication of syncretism was also highlighted with a logical conclusion

Keywords: African Tradition, syncretism, Christians, implications, Nigeria.

Introduction

Tremendous progress all over the world's civilization interestingly came as a result of reciprocal lending and scrounging as no man is an island unto himself. Advancement made in all area of human endeavour has succeeded because people in the society learn from one another. This cuts across all facets of human existence and Religion is not to be left out in this context.

In the field of religion, there exist sturdy correlation linking it (religion) and custom. This has presented culture as an obstinate fact which refuses to die out- rightly. Christianity is a religion introduced to Africans as an alien culture. And prior to its emergence, Africans had the idea of their God in the context of their culture to which they clung tenaciously to. Consequently, it became difficult for the new religion to send the old one into extinction. This explains why it is difficult to entirely separate African (Nigerian) Christians from the influence of their traditional culture and religion and hence syncretism among practical Christians in Nigeria.

Since the advent of Christianity in Nigeria, a lot of achievements have been recorded. The message of the faith has been disseminated through modern ways, ostentatious edifices have been erected as churches, so many indigenous men and women have ordained to chaperon the activities of the faith. There has been geometric rise in the population of the faithful. Irrespective of all these developments which indicate the permeation of the Gospel into the country it is evident that there are many customs and traditions that are yet held tenaciously by Christians which are parallel to the tenets of Christianity. It is such adopted principles which Nigerian Christians uphold in association with professing their faith that is seen as syncretism and this is what this paper is out to grapple with. Some Nigerian Christians see no harm in adopting African tradition and other religious world view into Christianity. This act encourages the mingling of Christianity with other traditional religious ideas because to them, Christianity to them could not resolve fundamental human problems.

In the Nigeria context, poverty, illness and misfortune and other challenges which nature may pose, are thought to be caused by men of malicious or evil intentions. Accusation such as this is hinged on their belief in the activities of sorcery, witchcraft and black magic. This is why misfortune of any kind is fought with dynamism in order to get liberated from one form of crisis or the other. Misfortunes have often pushed people to an extreme corner of doing things that they would not have otherwise done on their own accord. This is why some Christians out of the fear of the mysterious happenings have taken to the use of charms, talisman and other fetish practices and fortune-telling have become an alternative means to solve personal problems. The fear of the strange occurrence have encouraged the frequent attendance to prayer house to seek for miracles and get prophetic messages this in turn have abridged prayers to a profit-making product traded in prayer houses which suggests that the more one pays the more effectual the prayers said in his or her favour will be. Consequently, some indigenous pastors have taken advantage of their members and abuse them. This is against

the admonition of Christ who said to his disciples in Mark 16:15 "Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to all creation". This admonition was to be adhered to without any financial gratification.

For a better comprehension of this paper, the content is organized into five different sections. The first introduces the subject matter while the second x-rays the general view and meaning of syncretism. Section three, deals with syncretism as a practiced by Nigerian Christians The fourth examines the implication of syncretism for Nigerian Christian while the fifth section makes an insightful conclusion on the topic.

Meaning and Origin of Religious Syncretism

The word syncretism as an English word originated in 1681 from modern Latin word 'syncretismus' which is a translation of the Greek syncretismos, which means a union of community. It is conventionally traced to Plutarch, with reference to Cretan readiness to sink differences to oppose an enemy. In the 17thi century, the term shifted its focus from unification against a common enemy to the concern about the incompatibility of different forces with attempt to reconcile Aristotelian and Platonist philosophers and Catholic and Reformed theologies. Later in the 19th century its meaning and usage shifted to denote the mixing of religious ideas and names of deities in the study of Greek and Roman religion http:haroxborg/iconIsyncretismJitm). It is in line with the above clarification that syncretism came to be understood as a mixing of religious ideas, with derogatory implication. Bamaiyi (2008:23), in his own view maintains that:

> Religious syncretism exhibits blending of two or more religious belief systems into a new system or the incorporation into a religious tradition. This can occur for many reasons and the later scenario happens quite commonly in areas where multiple religious traditions exist in proximity and functions actively in the culture or when a culture is conquered and the conquerors bring in their religious belief with them, but do not succeed in entirely eradicating the old belief.

Baniaiyi's position, is in agreement with the views of Mcgarry, (2001:62),who recalls that; "when Roman Catholics conquered South America, the people were baptized massively without their receiving the gospel and in addition names of their idols were replaced with that of saints through whom they could pray". This is the same in Nigeria because some Nigerian Christians have received Christianity but traditional thought pattern are still used side by side with Christianity. This could be because the missionaries did not succeed in eradicating the people's culture. Also in the words of Rudolph as quoted in Asiegbu (2000:38) syncretism is seen "as a mixture of religion". And as a follow up, Droogers (2006:16) associates himself with Rudolph, when he observes that "the concept of syncretism has been coined to describe the mixing of elements from different religious sources sometimes as a descriptive term, other times as a pejorative concept". Assuming syncretism to be purely a fusion of religion may throw overboard the idea of permissible amalgam and this will be a disregard to satisfactory reciprocated borrowings in the parlance of religion. Sometimes, syncretism may refer to an effort to unite together those rudiments which are not tolerable and to this end; Yamomari (1975:82) notes that "syncretism is a union of two opposite forces, belief system or tenets so that the united form is a new thing". Going by this point of view, one may

be convinced into believing that syncretism is highly a contentious concept in religion which denotes an amalgamation of objectionable borrowing into Christianity and as such has both denotative and connotative meaning which means that what is seen as syncretism in one religion, could be embraced wholly in another religion through some mode of acceptable fusion. This may inform the reason why Roman Catholic Church frown at the use of talisman but the Aladura church welcomes it entirely. Syncretism has both negative and positive meanings. In the words of Corbett (2005:25):

> Syncretism was applied to political alliance in ancient Greece, to the cities of Crete which came together to unite against external aggressors... Then it described the way the Old Testament assimilated elements from surrounding cultures.... In the age of reformation it pointed to the links between Christianity and humanism and the need for protestant and Catholic churches to come together.

Syncretism could mean different thing to different people depending on the context of usage. In line with this, Hayden (2002:17) rightly opines that, "negative syncretism occurs when critical and basic elements of the gospel are lost in the process of contextualization and are replaced with religious elements from the receiving culture". In this case, one is concerned with the jumbling of other religious or cultic element with Christian gospel which is termed unwanted fusion into Christianity by introducing non Christian thoughts idea and pattern which negates positive lending in the religion. The above explication is what Louis (1995:360) referred to as "theologically untenable amalgam". In effect, what this paper is concerned with is the unacceptable mixing of African traditional elements with Christian faith, which encourages mindless adoption of other religious ideas, principles and beliefs into Christianity, thereby polluting Christianity in Nigeria.

Syncretism amid Christian practice in Nigeria

Traditionally, some Nigerian Christians embraced Christianity from a given locale, shrouded by the African traditional world-view. Prior to the influx of Christian missionaries in Nigeria, the people had their already established religious beliefs and practice which are structured within the frame-work of the African traditional ideas and customs. Being a very religious people, their traditional religion has strong influence and shaping power on them. It is in relation to this fact, that Asogwa (2008:39) maintains that:

> The average Nigerian looks at religion as a panacea and final succour for nearly every problem in his or her life. He also appreciates forces in nature that work against the benevolence of the Supreme Being. Hopeless in the face of these forces, he seeks help in terms of intermediaries; his conceived conglomerate of gods.

Going by the above point of view, it is clear why some Nigerian Christians bring in such mind-set into Christianity; which its resultant effect becomes the unacceptable jumbling of fetish practices and Christian belief. These jumbling of religions and religious ideas can be discussion below.

Yoruba 'Chrislam'

This is a religion that is prevalent in western Nigeria "Chrislam" as the name implies, is an attempt to fuse Christianity with Islam. It had its origin in Nigeria in the 1980s, Chrislamic ideas have spread throughout the world. The essential concept of "Chrislam" is that Christianity and Islam are compatible, that one can be a Christian and a Muslim at the same time. In the words of Olivier, (2004:45) "Chrislam" is not an actual religion of its own, but a blurring of the differences and distinctions between Christianity and Islam". As a follow up, David (2003np) posits that, 'the most famous branches of Chrislam in recent years inspired by more agreeable elements of the Ansar movement of the notion of Islam are two different religious movements in Nigeria. One called Ifeoluwa and the other called Oke-Tude". According to Shankar (2006:19), "Ifeoluwa comprises of about 2000 adherents predominantly in Lagos. Its followers recognize both the Bible and Quran as holy texts. They also practice running deliverance". The founder of Oke-Tude, of the faith is a Muslim who calls himself, Dr. Samsindeen Saka. Although Oke Tude is only two decades old, the movement has much older antecedents. Saka was born into a Muslim family. His father was a renowned herbalist. Since he did not perform well at school, Saka was involved in traditional medicine, but claimed that he and his family were never involved in idol worshipping. He believes in Allah and this made him set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca four times. (http:/www.Sakayoutube.com/watch). According to Tunde Thomas (in press), he observes that:

> One technique in which Saka tries to impact his teaching was by telling his adherents that Christians and Muslims are one. He cited Quran 2:1:36 and Isaiah 19:23 to illustrate that the faith of Christians and Muslims are the same.

It is in relation to this fact that Obasola (2007:85), concludes that "Saka and Ifeoluwa movement can indeed be seen as a syncretic movement, if one defined syncretism as the combining, blending or mixing of other religious values with its own in a new synthesis." Adeboye (2000:13) aligns himself with these views when he avers that:

> All they can do is quoting from English and Yoruba translations of the Bible and Quran. These quotations serve to reconcile the Christian notion of the Holy Trinity-a doctrine that Muslims often find hard to accept since it reveals that Christians believe in three Gods, with the Muslim emphasis on the notion of *tawhid* (Oneness of God).

Unfortunately both religions (Christianity and Islam) are discrete and mismatched. Both Christianity and traditional Islam are disparate religion with a great area of conflict and may not unite in some belief and practice. Islam ignores the idea of trinity (three persons in one God) while Christians ardently held tenaciously such doctrine as contained in the biblical injunction of Genesis 1:1) the saying that Jesus Christ is the only way to God as contained in John 14:6, Acts 4:12, is declined in the doctrine of Islam this is because they show a high rejection of Jesus as the son of God but adopt Him as one of the prophets. These two religions logically can never be amalgamated into one agreeable religion because they are both inadmissible.

The jumbling of Christianity with Ogboni fraternity in Nigeria

The synthesis of religion is obvious in the southern Nigeria there is a case of Ogboni a "fraternal institution" indigenous to the Yoruba language- speaking of Southern Nigeria. For

many Christians in these areas Ogboni secret society is not only regarded as a "secret cult" but also treated as an abomination that must not be identified with. However, for many Christians in the Southern Nigeria, this is not the same because they combine the cult with Christianity. According to Bello (2007:19) "Egbe Ogboni Onigbagbo — (which means in English language — Ogboni fraternity of the Christians), was founded by T.A.J Ogunbiyi on the 18th December 1914 at Obun Eko in Lagos Nigeria." Oguntola (2006:17) in his own words asserts that, "most members of these Ogboni extractions belong to either Christianity or Islam, indicating that membership of Ogboni is just a way of socializing and ensuring that fraternal assistance is available". The mindless association of ogboni with Christianity or Islam is a sure indication of syncretism which indeed is against the principle tenets of neither Christianity nor Islam According to (the Olori Apena) Adekunle as quoted in Abubaka (2005:18), "Ogboni is anything clean, holy, transparent and honourable. It doesn't have anything to do with the use of fetish means and that has been the mode of events since the fraternity was founded in 1914". Falola (2003:42) corroborates this opinion when he opined that, "the Ogboni extraction (ROF) is not allowed to do anything devilish, they are taught to see themselves as brethren." For Tunde (in press 2014:12), an Ogboni pastor states thus,"being an Ogboni leader has made me a good disciple of Jesus Christ."Oladimeji as quoted by Tunde (2014:14), maintains that "he has been a shepherd in the Lord's vineyard as the founder of Cherubium and Seraphim church with branches all over Nigeria.

According to Oladimeji the founder of Cherubim anderaphim Church, "he is also a top member of the Oghoni fraternity and belongs to Saala Ogboni fellowship of Nigeria (SOFN). Within the fraternity - he occupies the positon of Oluwo and the third in command to the overall head of the fraternity in Nigeria". For Oladimeji, Sacrifice of animals were sacrosanct in ogboni and in order to give justification to why there should be sacrifices in Ogboni confraternity, Olelakan (2004:72), said that "in the Old Testament, sacrifices were carried out to atone for the sins of the Israelites. And from the New Testament perspective, the day of Jesus' presentation in the synagogue, Joseph the father of Jesus had to sacrifice pigeons"

Olelakan's justification is built upon the fact that, if the parents of Jesus, were involved in sacrifice, people should not abhor sacrifice but rather embrace sacrifice as a way of appeasing the God of Israel. He further adds that sacrifice is biblically ordained. Also Adeoyo (2014:15) (in press) maintains that, her late father was Oluwo Ogboni in Ekiti state. However, she started her missionary work later in life. According to her, she became an Ogboni member before she started her missionary work and she held the position of Olori Obinri (that is the women leader) in Ogboni. The 54 year old prophetess also holds that her Christian duties have never conflicted with her function in the Ogboni group and that she regularly attends meeting in the Ogboni confraternity. The prophetess, also infers that, she had in the past prepared some pastors with concoctions for them to be prosperous in the work of evangelism and that she will continue to assist people because as an Ogboni member their own motto is service to humanity. She also submits here that her greatest annoyance is that most pastors come down heavily on Ogboni not minding the good, the fraternity has rendered to them. Tunde (in press)(2014:23), in alignment with Adeoyo; stated that he joined Aborigine Ogboni fraternity of Nigeria 30 years ago. He said that by virtue of being born into a family of traditionalists, it became easy for him to be a member of Ogboni confraternity. The above illustration is what Ndiokwere (1990:72) came down heavily upon when he posits that, "the greatest dynamic for the emergency and proliferation of new religious movement and spiritual churches all over

Nigeria has remained the burning crave for security from evil forces that threaten the normal life of men". Syncretism among Christians in Nigeria has continued to increase in an alarming rate. Founders and leaders of some new generation churches have come up with their own sort of indoctrination and this seems not to conform to the tenets of Christianity. In relation to the world view of these churches, they do all it takes in order to get miracle happen. According Asogwa (2008), in their world view, solution to man's immediate problem must be sought otherwise the idea of supremacy of God, will be deficient and the Christian God will be considered ineffective. It is in respect to this assertion that Agunwa (2003:28) also observes that, "some independent churches who felt that Christianity could not adequately address particular human crisis or issues as much as the traditional religion did, felt, called to start churches where a mélange of both Christianity and indigenous religion occur". The above explication could be exemplified below.

The story of a ritual pastor who buried three able bodied men for the foundation of his church building, is a clear indication that some pastors and some men of God engage in some form of human sacrifice in combination with the worship of God. (a blending of inimical traditional religion and Christianity which is inhuman and typically unAfrican). According to Ogara (2016:13), "the corpses of three men were buried inside the foundation of a building suspected to be a church under construction and their bodies totally covered with concrete at Ugwuaji area of Enugu State". It was gathered by Ogara (in press) that the construction of the building whose owner could be described as a pastor commenced recently and was at the foundation level before the gory discovery. Below is a picture to buttress this fact.



Photo (1). Exhumed body from church foundation photo credit: Starlite Newspaper

In like manner, Police arrested a ritual pastor at Ajuona Obukpa for sexually molesting church members. According to Raphael Ede (in press) The pastor by name Sunday Egbo of Christ Mercy Ministry, Ajuona Obukpa, in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu, has confessed

to raping one of his church members , Ukwueze Ifebuche Blessing and attempted to use her for money ritual. Egbo was said to have invited his victim for prayer session when he had the carnal knowledge of her. Afterwards, Egbo seized her pants, brassiere and brought out a small bottle and wanted to insert it in her private part, but she struggled and ran out of the room naked. This attracted members of the public leading to the arrest of the said pastor. Items recovered from the ritual pastor includes: 10 female pants, 12 brassiere 1 small coffin, olive oil, an amulet and talisman. Below are the photos of Sunday Egbo and the items to attest to this fact.



Photo (2). Ritual pastor caught for sexually abusing church members. photo credit: the punch newspaper

It is thus excruciating to observe the activities of some leaders of the new generation churches in Nigeria who in spite of their education and training will have recourse to the world view of African traditional religion and adopt same into Christianity. To them, Christianity is seen as a wonder- assemblage or a problem solving dwelling and this is evidenced in their quest for instant miracle to happen in the face of adversity if not a more efficacious means will be employed.

Syncretic Practices among Nigeria Christians

A typical Nigerian Christian, when faced with sickness, mishap and family problems seeks for immediate solutions which includes drastic annihilation of the forces of malignant spirit or the suspected cause of the problem. For some Nigerian Christian the Christian God should have unrivaled capacity to do all and failure to do so an alternative should be sought. This makes the practice of Christianity in Nigeria to be a two sided coin of double living, wherein, Christianity is practiced outwardly and superficially on one side and religious postulation cum paganism is carried out in a secret and more precautious manner too on the other side. Some Nigerian Christians in their quest for quick fixes would feel obliged to employ the help of prophetic healers or medicine men to support what Christianity has to offer and hence syncrestic practices among Nigerian Christians as will be discussed below.

Nigerian Christians and the use of magic

Some Nigerian Christians are known to hold tenaciously to their use of magic while at the same time acknowledge Christianity as a religion. These binary standards religiously played by Nigerias are adjudged to be syncretism. This seem to be aggravated by the economic

instability and the reality of the time where the masses are faced with very many problems, for which solution must be required or other choices infused into Christianity (magic) becomes apposite. Awolalu and Dopamu (1979:242) states that, "magic, medicine and religion have common root, among other things, they arose in consequences of man's sense of need. They are the attempt by man to deal with the mysteries that surrounds his immediate physical environment". The assertion is indicative that man seeks to solve his own myriads problems by himself in the face of adversity. This is typical of Nigerian Christian who chooses to use magic side by side amid thriving Christianity. This situation is such that is prevalent in Nigeria and this goes down well with the views of Mbiti (1975:23) who opines that:

> It is believed that certain human beings have the knowledge and ability of how to tap, control and use the force of magic. Some have greater knowledge and skill than others; some possess the ability without knowing it, and find out later, that through word or ritual they can release these forces for particular ends.

A close observation of Mbiti's position above reveals to one why some Nigerian Christians find it difficult to differentiate the work of God and the magical powers of man. These Christians of Nigerian origin have the belief that God created and owns everything on earth, including magic which is within their disposal and that is why they resort to magical powers of man in times of harsh conditions. Awulalu and Dopamu (1979:243) succinctly observes that "in religious worship, it is sometimes difficult to tell where prayers end and where magic begins" in this sense God or gods must be placated to act instantly if not the imploration of other means becomes key. The Christian situation in Nigeria, is such that could be likened to the religion of the ancient Israel where God is seen as a national God and baal is taken as god of agriculture which according to them, works in consort with each other. From the above illumination, the impatience of the Nigeria Christian is clear the idea of God is not taken for granted but other means or agencies to drive their aspiration home is needed. This is why Christianity has not been able to change some Nigerians. Oguejiofor (1997:48) upholds this opinion when he owns that "worship in Africa is not primarily aimed at spiritual being, it is not for the ultimate aim of praising them that the votaries take their pain. It is to obtain their needs and be liberated from their numerous problems". At this point, it is clear why Pastors of some African independent churches, like the Aladuras give out protective charms, amulets, beads, spiritual cross and staff to their church members to serve their different purposes aside worshipping God as the deity in all religion. This accounts for why Nigerian Christians no longer see things happening around them as a punishment for their own sin but as a cause of the evil forces around them. This is not true, as Olupona (2000:180) explains that it is easy to understand why things go wrong in the society:

> A lazy person gets poor crops because he has not done sufficient work in preparing the soil. People get venereal diseases through breaking sexual taboos. Sometimes it is clear why spirits might be displeased and bring sickness and other troubles to the people it should normally care for and yet for some Nigerian Christians, the cause of these abnormalities is human and this brings about social tension and heavy suspicion in the society.

In relation to the above assertion, Buti (2003:52) maintains that "some pastors in their bid to solve human problem, consult the dead (Necromancy). Many Christians in Nigeria wonder whether the source of power in these Christians is of God, necromancy or juju and the like. In alignment with this opinion, Pastor Olademeji who is the founder of Cherubim and Seraphim confirmed to Tunde Thomas in a press interview, that "he has assisted over 1000 pastors with magical substance called *aworo* for spiritual growth."

Nigerian Christians and divination

The innumerable problematic situation of some Nigerian Christian have necessitated man's endeavour to try to comprehend himself and the world around him and this is why he make use of among other things the tool of divination to unveil happenings around him. For Peek (1982:1), "divination is a universal phenomenon and a standardized process of driving hidden or secret knowledge from a learned cultural tradition based on extensive body of knowledge". Nigerians are adjudged to be indivisible from their culture. They cling to their already existing culture of divination amid flourishing Christian faith. In consonance with this fact, Asogwa (2008:34): avers that the :

> Act of divination has been ridiculed among some Nigerian Christians in favour of prophetism. It is regrettable that even when orthodox scientific research is able to diagnose the cause of an illness or any other unprecedented natural mishap, the craze for miracles and the erroneous mentality that the particular ailment or illness is not natural makes the individual move from place to place to discover the why and who of the misfortune through the act of divination.

As a matter of fact in Nigerian context it is believed that some professed Christians are hoodwinked by the activities of the diviners for them to provide a template for them in their daily activities. The views of Asiegbu (2000:46) corroborate rather than contradict the above opinion when he states that:

> Many Christians do not believe that things take their natural cause, or even in-God's omnipotence in controlling events in nature, especially when confronted by misfortune or other crisis situations. It is in the height of this traditional world view and influences that Christians resort to divination.

The craze to unravel the causes of and the truth about existing phenomena has made some Nigerian Christians depend on divination for a living. Horton (1982:35) upholds this opinion when he opines that:

> In a society built round close personal relations, events are understood in personal terms and not in any way attached to natural occurrence. The Nigerian Christian finds it difficult to distinguish between material misfortune and the repercussion for the moral blemishes of the people.

Going by Horton's point of view it is clear why some Nigerian Christians pollute their faith and maintain the standard of double living. For Peek (1982:86) "Christians understanding of misfortune, contradicts rather than complements the material explanation of empiricism and

science which believes that misfortune arise due to causes and effects." The act of divination and its result has degenerated to social apprehension in the society to the extent that there are problems in many families and churches because of various assumed esoteric messages obtained from divination.

Implication of syncretism for the Nigerian Christian

The rate at which some Nigerian Christians become impatient at the face of harsh conditions encourages them to give way to accidental evil of invoking God not as a patient Christian but as one who needs the action of the god of magic and this is the problem of some Christians in Nigeria today. In Nigeria, some Christians have these obvious characteristics, they only go to God when things are not going on well with them and syncretism in turn becomes a magic potion to solving their day to day problem. For some Christians, religion solves every human problem. To this end, even when conventional and orthodox systematic investigation is able to diagnose the cause of an infirmity they tend to junket from one miracles house to another. This particular frame of mind makes some Nigerian to be neither committed Christians nor ardent traditional practitioners thus, wallowing in a bottomless ditch. Because of some esoteric messages obtained from fake prophecy in Nigeria, many Christians have got themselves entangled by fear of the unknown and must obtain such messages before they resort to any activity of the day.

Some so called men of God visit herbalists and medicine men to be given the powers to assist them in their duty to the detriment of some innocent Christians. This aberrant development is misleading and it calls for urgent attention. In other words, the Nigerian Christian unbearable quest for signs and wonders is such that leaves people to doubting the potency of God's power of supremacy. The struggle for power and worldly pleasures leads us to do things we would not have done ordinarily. Indoctrination remains the problem of majority of the Nigerian Christians. Consequent upon this, it becomes a case of superficial knowledge of what one believes in. The last is the lack of faith in God. Almost all the aspect of worship in Nigerian churches is keenly performed but the behaviour of some double faced Christian shows lack of faith in God and what He can do. In all African traditional religion is not a religion of miracle. Adherents of the religion also have recourse to God in time of dear need. They make supplications to God as a know all, they make sacrifices too. In all, running from one pastor to another depicts harlotry of faith and this encourages the jumbling of Christianity with other religion which reduces the faith to a baseless one.

Conclusion

The issue of paramount importance in this context is the extent to which Christianity has been able to shape the Nigerian Christian in line with accepting Christ and the tenets of Christianity. It is today apparent that some Nigerian Christians see no harm in adopting other religions ideas in worshipping Christ who is the focal point of Christianity a situation that is seen by many authors as syncretism. It is indeed glaring that some Nigerian Christians hold tenaciously to the traditional elements of African culture and religion which seem incompatible with Christian practices. It is this tendency to blend religions such as African traditional religion, Islam, Christianity and the like is what is adjudged to syncretism.

These trends are evidenced in the tendency of some Christians to explore and manipulate the spiritual realm and in other words foretell the events of the future of which its interpretation

leads to social tension and confused values. This trend is explicable in the proliferated Christian denomination in the country. A great number of churches have surfaced to take care of the needs of the people, this is more so as Christians show up their interest for miracle rather than spirituality. The quest for miracle and wonders in turn has left the indigenous pastors with the option to adopt African traditional ideas and practice into Christianity. Humans all over the world are in constant search for solutions to their immediate and subsequent problems. Some Christians today have lost their senses and have thrown overboard the basic tenets of Christianity. This quest however, makes some men of God to invent a ways to take care of their demands. Faith held on the apron string of signs and miracle, has no basis because miracle is the object that draws some Christians to the church. A situation if not met will be frustrating and may lead to the seeking for a more powerful and viable arena of miracle.

Some Nigerian pastors in an attempt to keep pace with the demands of their congregation seek for powers to perform such acts, and go as far as getting initiated into secret cult like ogboni or visiting native doctors to acquire spiritual gifts of healing and performing miracles. Miracles performed by these types of pastors pose a threat to recipient, because the devil gives but takes more than he has given. It is the constant demand for miracle by the people that encourages people to establish business organisation sticky tagged as churches at the expense of their victims.

A critical look at Christian practices in this present age reveals to one the same traditional religious thought and mindset. Many Christians do not believe that things take their natural course and this is why they take to divination. This seems mundane but it's a reality. They do not believe in the sovereignty of God in all that he created. This has been the predisposition for some Christians and this is rampart when they are faced with misfortune or other critical situations. It is in the light of this traditional religious influence that certain Christians delve to divination, not only to obtain the knowledge of the future but also to enquire ways of avoiding misfortunes, untimely death, sickness and revengeful ancestors.

References

Abubaka, A. (2005). The Encyclopedia of History of Ideas, Farmington Michigan: The Gale Group, Inc.

Adeboye, H .0. (2000). "A Pneumatological Theology of Inculturation of Nigerians" https:mospace.Unisystem.Edu/xmlui/bitstre. Retrieved 13-06-14.

Agunwa, J.C. (2003). Promoting a health Interaction of Christianity and Culture in Nigeria: Enugu SNAAP Press.

Asiegbu, A.U. (2000). A Crisis of faith and a Quest for Spirituality. Enugu: Pearl Functions press

Asogwa, O.T. (2008). Half Christian Half Pegan the Dilema of the Nigerian Christian. Enugu SNAAP Press.

Bamaiyi, P.1-I. (2008). The Effects of Syncretism on Christian Spirituality. http://www.teeadsu.org. retrieved on 19-04-14.

Bello, A. (2007). "Religion and Syncretism". Usip.org/religionsyncretism.org. retieved on 03-05-15

Buti, T. (2003). "Bringing the African Culture into the Church". http://www.afrikworld.net/afrel/tlhale.ht Retrieved on 23-09-14.

Corbett, G.G. (2005). The syntax - morphology interface: a study of syncretism,Cambridge: University press.

David. L. (2003) "Indigenouse Encounter with Christian Missionaries in China and West Africa, 1800-1920 A Comparative Study, "Journal of World History vol 3 pg 68-78 http ://worldhistoryconnected.press. illnois .edu.com. Retrieved on 06-06-16

Droogers, A. (2006). "Quotes on Syncretism," http://roxboragh.com/syncretism.htm Retrieved on 30-09-15.

Falola, T. (2003). Isalm and Christianity in West Africa. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press.

Hayden, R. (2002). Antagonistic tolerance: competitive sharing of religious sites in South America. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Horton, R. (1982). Tradition and Modernity Revisited. In Rationality and Relmtivism. Oxford: Blackwell.

Louis, I. (1995). Covering Opposition to Syncretism in a Syncretized World. London: Hurst publishers.

Mbiti, J.S. (1975). Introduction to African Religion: London: Heinernann.

Mcgarry, C. (2001). inculturating the church in Africa: Theological and practical perspectives Nairobi: Paulines publications Africa.

Ndiokwere, N.J. (1990). Search for Security. Benin City: Ambik Press.

Obasola. K.E. (2007). "Religious Syncretism in Oke Tunde South Western Nigeria." An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan.

Ogara, H. (2016, May 11) Ritual Pastor's Den Discovered in Enu.u Metropoly. The Starlite, 14(07,2800) pp.8-9.

Raphael .E. (2019, Nov 20) Police parade Enugu pastor for rape, money ritual. https://punchng.com

Oguejiofor, J.O. (1997). "Ecclesia in Africa and the Truth about Inculturation, Bigard Theological Studies. Enugu Bigard publications

Oguntola, L. D. (2006). Pentecostalism, Islam and Culture: New Religious Movement in West Africa. Oxford: James Currey.

Olelakan, A.S. (2004). Muslim Youth Prayer Movements: A Signpost to Islamic Pentecostalism in Nigeria? Paper presented at the African Association for the Study of Religions Regional Conference, from 20th, may to 23 may 2014 University of Legun Ghana

Olivier, R (2004). Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah. London: Hurst publishers.

Peek, M.P. (1982). African Divination System: Ways of Knowing. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Shankar, S. (2006). A fifty-year Muslim Conversion to Christianity: Religious Ambiguities and Colonial Boundaries in Northern Nigeria .Leiden: Brill.

Tunde, T. (2014).Use of Membership of Ogboni to Win More Souls for Christ in Nigeria.The Sunnews ,(l l,599),pp.l2-l4.

Yamarnori, 1. (1975). Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity? Pasadena: Win Carey Library Press