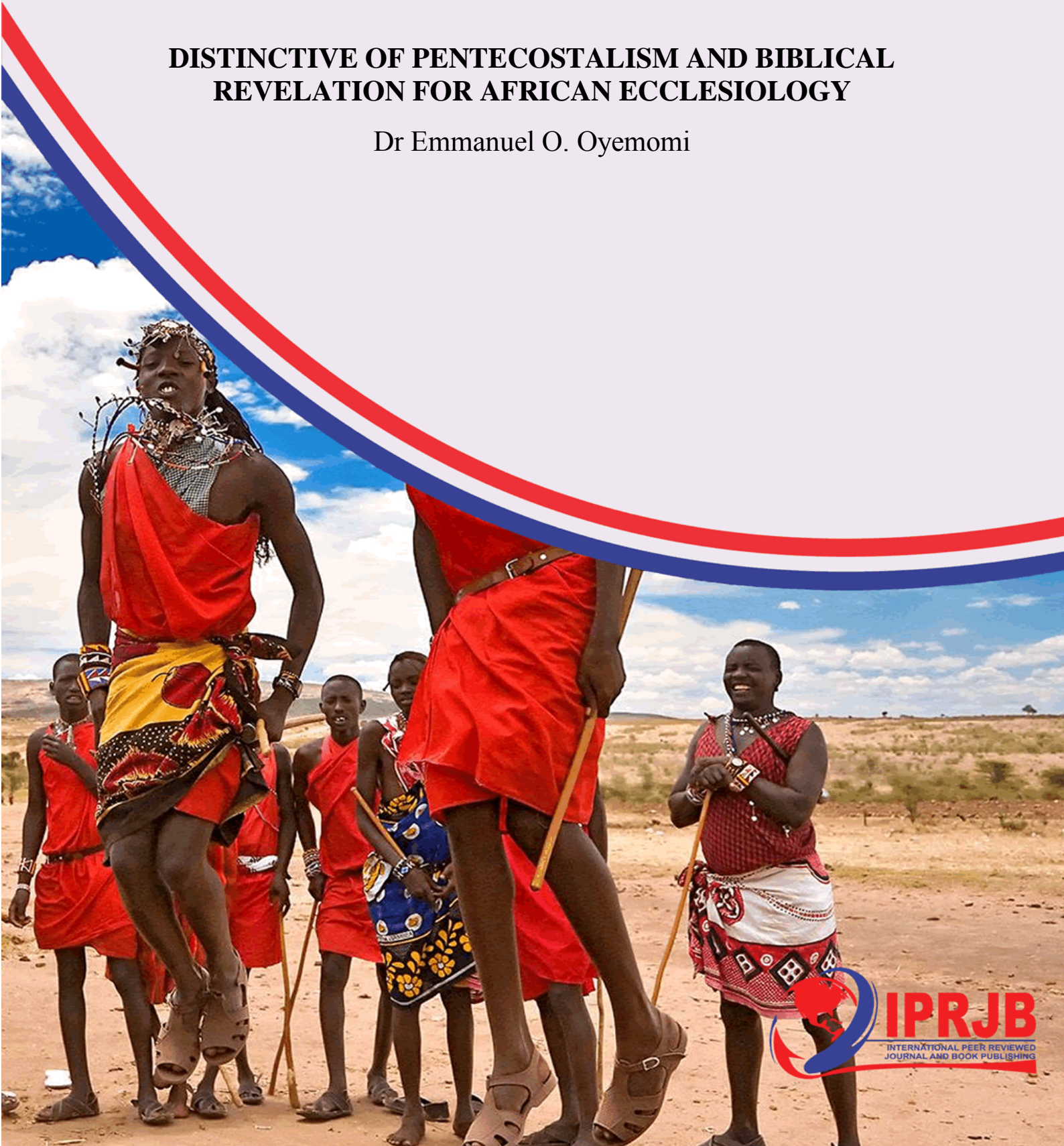


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DISTINCTIVE OF PENTECOSTALISM AND BIBLICAL REVELATION FOR AFRICAN ECCLESIOLOGY

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Abstract

Purpose: Distinctive of Pentecostalism and biblical revelation for African ecclesiology examined a brief historical background of Pentecostalism in America, Asia and Africa, with a view to point out a distinctive of Pentecostal namely: baptism in the Holy Spirit in the light of biblical revelation.

Methodology: The work uses historical, theological, descriptive, philosophical, and deductive approaches to elicit information.

Findings: Findings revealed that the real Pentecostals are those whose life, and character traits and practices adhered to the scriptures, and not necessarily adherence to waves and emotionalism. The work identified the true position of real Pentecostals as those who radiate the life of Christ in practice. The study also noted that it is clear that speaking in tongues is a gift of the scriptures, but it is not meant to be manipulated, taught, or faked just to sound spiritual. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. He distributes to individual as He wills. The distributive will belong to the Holy Spirit. It is foul when tongues are taught to people, manipulated, or put into use to sound spiritual so as to deceive the faithful.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study recommended that Speaking in tongues is a gift of God for the edification of believers as they go about the witness of Christ, yet it should not be used for personal aggrandizement to deceive the people of God or to sound spiritual. True Pentecostalism should be conformed to imaging the character of Christ so as to season the decay in our world today. Emotionalism goes with much of the wave that comes and goes, but genuine Pentecostals will stand the test of time, hence Pentecostal brethren will do well to show the character of Christ like in Acts 11:26. The study also recommends that Gift of the Holy Spirit is a great blessing for the church advancement. Any believer is expected to bless and grow the fellowship with the unique gift or gifts the Holy Spirit has graciously endowed. Speaking in tongues should not be legislated for believers; rather it should be left to the distributive prerogative of the Holy Spirit for genuine seekers of the gifts.

Key Words: *Distinctive, Pentecostal, Biblical, Ecclesiology, Gifts*

1.0 BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PENTECOSTALISM

Pentecostalism is a focus on the emotional, mystical and supernatural miracles, signs, especially the speaking in tongues, *glossolia*, faith healing, and the casting out of demons or exorcism (Dunn, 1988). The subjective experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit or possessed by Him is strictly adhered unto. The name Pentecostal is derived from the episode of the day of the Pentecost (Monye, 2013) described in chapter 1 – 2 of the book of Acts of the Apostles especially chapter 2: 1 – 4 “*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*”

The Pentecostals lay claim in the gifts of the Holy Spirit (charismatic from *charism*) listed in 1 Cor. 12 – 14 meaning supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. They believe that the experience of the Spirit baptism and the practice of the gifts as occurred were to be a norm for the church community and each believer especially (Hagin, 2007). Though, an intermittent manifestation is traceable in history among the sectarians like: the Mountanists, Anabaptists, Carmsards, Quakers, Irvingites, Mormons, Later Day Saints, and several other nineteenth century Holiness groups. Hence, the twentieth century Pentecostal and Charismatic movements then is a revival of the *Charismata* to the body of Christ, the Church. Therefore, it is the intention of this paper to analyze three major areas of Pentecostal distinctive namely: conversion, Sanctification and Baptism in the spirit. Glossolalia is the hallmark of baptism in the spirit; conversion is deemed to be the work of miracle through grace and sanctification is the concern for holiness (Synan, 2001). The analysis begins with brief historical background.

2.0 PENTECOSTALISM IN THE UNITED STATES AND AFRICA

Pentecostal developed among the separatist movement of late nineteenth century Holiness movement in the United States of America. It was a synthesis of extremist Wesleyan and Keswick views on pre-millennialism, dispensation-alism, faith healing, and the Baptism of the Spirit as an in-filling of miraculous power. Charles Fox Parham, former Methodist preacher and Holiness preacher is often regarded as the founder of the Pentecostal movement. Phenomenon of tongues speaking and other ecstatic practices broke out in Parham’s Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, in January 1901. For Parham, *glossolalia* is an evidence of the true Spirit Baptism (Smith, 2012). The teaching on Spirit Baptism and faith healing led to the establishment of Parham’s Apostolic Faith Movement of Pentecostal movement in the lower Midwest. William Joseph Seymour, a convert and a black Holiness Preacher, took the movement to Los Angeles in 1906. The mission eventually became the centre for great revival, which spread the movement across the nation and around the world.

However, the movement was condemned and ostracized by other Christian Churches. At first, it consisted of some Schismatic offspring of the Holiness Sects and some other independent congregation. The centre of the movement stretches from the lower Appalachia to the Ozarks in the urban centre of the North and West. Adherents were won from various religions, racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which eventually led to their disintegration. In the 1930s each of them had re-split on the grand of racial inequalities.

The triangular shape of Pentecostal belief has to do with conversion, Sanctification and Baptism in the Spirit (Grant McClung, 1999). In 1908, one of the proponents of Pentecostal, William H. Durham introduced his doctrine known as the “Finished Work of Calvary”. In it,

the work of Conversion and sanctification were equated as one single act of grace. This was popularly accepted among the American Pentecostals, especially those who have Baptist and Keswick backgrounds. This led to the establishment of a Finished Work denomination, and the Assemblies of God, 1914 (Ladd, 1999).

However, the second work of Grace Pentecostal movement rebuffed the finished work idea. They held on to the idea of the three acts of grace. They were mainly from the Wesleyan backgrounds from the south. They were predominant among the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God in Cleveland, Ohio, Tennessee and the Pentecostal Holiness Church. Later, the theory of the God-head, torn the finished work group into pieces, due to the differences on baptistic formula. Those who advocated for the oneness theory rejected traditional Trinitarianism on the ground that the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost are just different offices of one God, Jesus. Prominent among the oneness Church were Garfield T. Haywood's interracial Pentecostal Assemblies of the world. They were most prominent in the upper Midwest.

In no time, the Pentecostal revival went global. Visitors to the Azusa street revival took the movement around the World (Kydd, 1996). When Thomas Ball Barratt was converted in Oslo, former Kristiania, to Pentecostalism in 1906 in New York, He started Kristiania by-mission which became revival centre in 1907. From there, Pentecostalism spread throughout Scandinavia. It gained ground among the evangelical and Holiness believers of the poorer groups or classes (Petersen, 1996).

Alexander A. Boddy, an Anglican clergy in the United Kingdom attended Thomas Barratt's meetings in 1907; there and then he started All Saints Church in Sunderland, England as a Pentecostal centre from where the movement spread around British territory. Some of their leaders include W.J. and D.P. Williams, Stephen and George Jeffreys. Lady evangelist Luigi Francescon started Pentecostal revival in Germany in Kassel-Hesse in 1907. She was also from Barratt's Church. In collaboration with other Evangelist from Chicago,

Pentecostal started in Italy in 1908 in major cities. In 1910, the movement started in Brazil by Francescon, and Daniel Berg, Gunner Vingren. Willis C. Hooker, having been converted from Methodist pulpit to Pentecostal started Methodist Pentecostal Church. In 1919 and 1920, Ivan E. Voronaev brought Pentecostalism to Bulgaria, Romania, and Russia. Meanwhile, Pentecostal wave entered India in 1907, by the hand of European/American missionaries. In 1920s and the 1930s it entered Indonesia, the Island of Bali, Germany and Bundung in Java. In 1908 Pentecostal came to China. In 1913, the movement entered Japan, but rapid growth did not start until about the 1950s.

John G. Lake, Thomas Hezmelhalch, Pieker Louis leRoux and others all from zionic group of Churches in South Africa lost many of their Zionic adherents due to segregationist policies. John Lake had been converted to Pentecostalism. That led to several Schisms among the churches who used Zion as part of their official names. Several Pentecostal churches started in South Africa, Europe North America, and most of the sub-Saharan Africa by the year 1920 (Hocken, 2002).¹ Moreover, the effort of native preachers led to the proliferation of the movement, while the distribution of American Pentecostal literature in Nigeria led to the indigenous Aladura in the 1920s, and it spread in the whole of West Africa (477-481).

In the 1940s, a new wave arose which laid emphasis on the laying of hands for the reception of Holy Spirit Baptism, healing and other charismata. Faith healing evangelist arose to deliver faithful from formalism, sickness, and demon possession. These healers introduced

tent revivals, camps and retreats and attracted multitude of non Pentecostals. This deliverance, healing movement brought American institutionalization to include the middle class. There and then, William Branham, one of the foremost Oneness Pentecostal was overshadowed by Oral Roberts, also a holiness preacher Pentecostal from Oklahoma. William Braham became member of the Methodist Church. Many of the Pentecostal leaders turned against the faith healers who then formed their own organizations, radio and television ministries.

Most of the non Pentecostals came to the awareness of Pentecostalism through the medium of public revival, radio and television evangelism. Hence, in the 1960s a neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic movement emerged in nearly all the protestant denominations ranging from the Roman Catholic Church to all others in the Eastern Orthodox fellowships. Oral Roberts counselled Demos Shakarian, a wealthy Pentecostal dairyman from California to start the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) so as to provide lay support for the faith healers. They met in fashionable hotels in hundreds across the nation. Most, if not all Charismatic convert first came in contact with Pentecostalism through the FGBMFI, which was a link between the Deliverance revivals to the Charismatic revival.

Father Dennis Bennett, an Episcopal Pastor in Yan Nuys, California publicized his new experience of the baptism in the Spirit and speaking in Tongue in widespread media coverage. It led to a Charismatic revival in the protestant denominations actively promoted by the FGBMFI. The Charismatic proved not to be fanatical or Schismatical, neither did they challenge the established doctrines of the mainline churches, hence, fears of denominational leaders were greatly reduced. Also (there is one hence just above), in the late 1960s, Charismatic movement emerged among the Catholic students and faculty of Duquesne and Michigan State Universities. The movement grew rapidly with prayer groups, conferences and retreats. Many religious leaders and Bishops became adherents even cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens of Belgium were members.

The Spirit Baptism is regarded as a distinct act of grace by the protestant Charismatic like any Pentecostal, but protestant Roman Catholic Charismatic regarded it as a renewal of actualization of the baptism in the spirit, which all believers receive in water or during conversion (Anderson, 2004). In the 1970s, the healing fire was going down, but several middle class were embracing the Charismatic movement. There and then a new movement started under the leadership of Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland. It was the "Word of Faith" teaching that every believer could enjoy good health, happiness and prosperity if he wants by simply claiming it. It affected a large number of middle classes in the U.S., and some parts of Asia and Africa as well. It was at the time of global expansion of capitalism and consumerism which eventually became an integral part in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement.

The third wave came in the 1980s and 1990s. The third wave is the term referring to a new movement in the United States and among the indigenous in the so called third World. They rejected Pentecostal/Charismatic language and heritage, and they preserve the practice of the *Charismata*. Peter C. Wagner and John Wimber taught "Signs and Wonders" at Fuller Theological Seminary in which Spirit Baptism and glossolalia were underplayed, but signs and wonders were held as key to evangelism. In 1985, Wimber organized the Association of Vineyard Churches and a revival in the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church started in 1994

under the preaching of John Arnott. The revival later was condemned due to such manifestations like dancing, laughing, bellowing like animals.

The Shepherding-Discipleship movement began in the 1970s. It was led by Pentecostal Preachers in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It taught submission of every believer to the authority of a shepherd who should direct all aspects of his life ranging from choices of spouse, management of finances. The movement faded in 1986.

However, the Third Wave became explosive in Africa, Latin America and Asia since 1970. It took firm root among people whose background were animistic and so quite comparable with the Pentecostals and Charismatic, yet, they were not so much accepted by some traditional Pentecostals and Charismatic, due to doctrinal differences e.g. ancestor worship, and Polygamy (Mapaiyeda, 2013). Pentecostal explosion in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, since 1960s, coincided with worldwide evangelization of American leaders and prosperity preachers. Hence, several converts were misled, disoriented and socially disrupted through the breakdown of traditional religions, family relationships and community ties.

3.0 THE MIRACLE OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES: GLOSSOLALIA

One principal yardstick with which the Pentecostals judge that a believer has been baptized with the Holy Spirit is to speak in tongue, which is *glossolalia*. According to Felicitas D. Goodman, (Goodman,) “Glossolalia” (G_{lw},ssw_lal_{ia}) is a combination of two words namely *glossa* (g_{lw},ssa), “tongue” and (l_{alh}), “speak” *lalein* is an infinitive (lalein) meaning “to speak”. *Glossa* (G_{lw},sa) is used 50 times in the New Testament writings, literally meaning tongue as a bodily organ of speech, but particularly language, and figuratively, a people who speak in their own language. *Glossolalia* is used of heavenly and earthly languages, and the charismatic expression of one who practices (G_{lw},ssw_lal_{ia}) Glossolalia (Dautzenberg, 2005).

In 1 Cor. 14:9, Isa. 28:11, *glossa* is understood in analogy to the comparisons with flutes, zithers and trumpets. The argument is intended to support Paul’s argument in favour of intelligible prophecy. Paul uses the terms in a variety of phrases to describe the charisma: *lalein glossa*. *Glossolalia* (G_{lw},ssw_lal_{ia}) is a non ordinary speech behaviour institutionalized as a religious ritual in Western and non Western religious communities. It was alluded in the Hebrew Bible and a well known narration in the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Early ethnographic reports of *glossolalia* treated it with contempt, but Christian theologians tend to think of it as exclusively Christian phenomenon peculiar to apostolic times. The psychologist and researchers however, class it as schizophrenic, hysteria phenomenon only observed in mental patients, but the wave of Pentecostalism evolved a change of attitude as a part of religious rite.

Virginia H. Hines’s anthropological investigation of the Pentecostal Movement in the US, Mexico, Haiti, and Colombia, equated glossolalia to be a component in the process of commitment to a movement, with the result for both personal and social change. Pathological investigation carried out by L.M. Vivieran at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg revealed that *glossolalia* can not be equated with psychotic because, the latter cannot control himself. Goodman on the other hand reported that all features of the *glossolalia* like the segmental structure (sounds, syllables, and phrases) and suprasegmental structure (rhythm, account, and intonation) seemed cross-linguistically and cross-culturally identical. Goodman therefore, attributed the cross-cultural agreements in the

features of *glossolalia* to these neurophysiological changes, collectively and popularly called trance.

Glossolalia (*Glw,sswlalia*) is often described as a spontaneous outburst, a learned behaviour, knowingly or unknowingly. Every stable congregation with a stable membership seems to develop denominational characteristics of *glossolalia*. Dialect shows that learning has occurred and many traditional forms where *glossolalia* appears in and are sometimes obviously taught. However, trance is the basis on which vocalization is superimposed upon the individuals who now switches with the aid of stimuli like singing, dancing, clapping, and drumming. Current research reveals that this trance-like: frenzy rapture, ecstasy, or an alter state of consciousness involves a single, generalized neurophysiological process. Secrete religious trance language is said to be prevalent among women in Africa, especially in Cameroon where women use mermaid language in ritual context which is taught to adolescent girls in readiness for initiation. Readiness of a girl is indicated by fainting when experiencing a trance (Williams, 1994).

Tongues are one of the serious ironies of ecclesiology. A tragedy in Church history, but one great victory over satanic kingdom; in the sense that a blessed doctrine, of the Holy Spirit, so conducive to the health and unity of the church community, has become an occasion for division among the body of Christ. Errors tend to multiply speedily, and negligence in the body has led to excess, which eventually led to fear, denial and rejection. The implication have been squandering of spiritual energy, polarization, and the hardening of positions. The debate zeroes on the miraculous, the supernatural or the extraordinary gifts, but the most notorious is the speaking in tongues. Hence, the attention devoted to it has skewed the whole view of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit off biblical balance (Williams, 1994). In some school of thought, it is believed that miracles and tongues ceased by divine plan after the apostolic age. That is cessationism. There are two arguments to be considered, namely: Theological argument and Biblical argument. The focus of theological argument is ascertaining that the messages of the Prophets and the Apostles were actual speeches from God, and that Jesus indeed was the Messiah. It is stated that miracles were not even occurring indiscriminately in the biblical times, but were replete around crucial moments in Salvation History, when God stepped out of his hiddenness to deliver, judge or reveal Himself in particular ways, e.g the case of Exodus, the founding of the church and the likes.

Therefore, it is stated that once foundational revelation of God was completed and the canon closed, miracles are normal to have ceased until the next great event, the second coming of Christ. This argument may be validated on the premise of Peter's assertion in Acts 2:22, the resurrection, the Pentecostal tongues heard by foreigners in Acts 2:36. Jesus himself affirmed that the purpose of miracle is to attest and authenticate the revelation from God.

However, this argument is weak on the ground that it failed to establish that miracle is only for the authentication of the revelation, neither can anybody without disregarding a great deal of other miracles in the New Testament as well as in our everyday life, (Matt. 14:14, John 9:3; 20:30-31, 71:1). What then do we say about the miracle of conversion and new birth which occurs, perhaps every minute across the globe? Let us now consider the biblical argument.

The textual agreement is founded on an interpretation of 1 Cor. 13:8-10. This is a direct passage in favour of cessation of tongues. We now know and prophesy partly, but when the perfect comes, those gifts are no longer needed. Partial Knowledge means that the bible is not

completed, i.e. it is not yet all written. The Greek word *teleion* means complete. Do we say the New Testament canon is complete at the close of the canon? Then it follows that sensational gifts like, tongues, ceased with the close of the canon, then, the spiritual phenomenon today are spiritual frauds or counterfeits?

This argument as influential as it is, it cannot withstand the total witness of the scripture. It should be noted that if the closure of canon is a ceasure of gifts, then knowledge has to close also with the canon. That can hardly be, even though, there may be deeper level of knowing, yet the argument cannot stand. The contrast between imperfect knowledge and perfect knowledge in verse 11 is concluded in verse 12 by alluding to the fact that the perfect will come when we see Jesus face to face in the day of His return.

Therefore, a blanket rejection of *glossolalia* is unbiblical, yet not all *glossolalia* being spoken are genuine gifts of the church, neither edifying the body. While we cannot prove that tongues are ceased, yet, we cannot naively take tongues, because it is a subject of division among the body of Christ. Hence, we must not be hasty to over generalize acceptance or rejection of tongues, rather it should be evaluated in the light of the witness of the Scripture, and in the light of modern tongues movement.

Whatever estimate we give to tongues, tongues do not have the importance attached to them by classical Pentecostal Theologians. They are not signs of the baptism and fullness of Holy Spirit. The bible does not teach that. Paul's treatment also contradicts that teaching, (1 Cor. 12-14; 12:18; 12:30). Therefore, most teachings on tongues are unbiblical and un-Christ like. Most teachings in glossolalia are often a cause of division and destruction.

4.0 BIBLICAL REVELATION ON GLOSOLALIA

The tongues in Acts and the tongues in Corinth are two types of tongues that must be properly analyzed. The tongues in Acts were spoken by the Apostles who never knew the languages they were speaking, but coincidentally, they were speaking other 17 languages to a people who must hear the witness of God in Christ. This phenomenon was referred to as xenolalia (i.e speaking of actual foreign languages) by Max Turner (Max Turner, 1999). It was edifying and a powerful coincidence, whereas, the tongues in Corinth is confusion, unedifying and egocentric. Hence, Paul gave them rules to the usage of the gift. They were not to speak in public places of worship, but in private devotions. However, if it must be spoken in worship, then it must be interpreted.

It must be noted that tongues is not necessarily a supernatural phenomenon. It could be learned. It is a behaviour which can be learned by any individual with the right susceptibilities: believers or infidel! It has been reported that speaking in tongues is a regular phenomenon in the Hindu temples! Therefore, tongues speaking may be a situation when normal emotion and rational inhibitions are vocalized in an unrelated, but highly repetitive and uncoordinated syllable, which may not manifest any real language. Notwithstanding, tongues can be a genuine spiritual phenomenon. Tongues are not just demonic, neither of God. Tongues by itself may open up a man to either a demon or God, but has no spiritual significance, ordinarily.

However, the principles guiding the use of spiritual gifts especially "tongues" are declared in 1 Corinthians 14. In verse 39, it is stated "do not forbid tongues speaking." In verse 27, public speaking of tongues should be confined to two or three, at the most, should speak in turns, and they must be interpreted otherwise, the speaker must be quiet (v. 28). Above all,

things must be done to edify (verse 26). Tongues are allowed for self edification, (verse 4a), and to communicate with God, (verse 28b) (Williams, 1994).

The value of tongues stands. It edifies the believer, especially the individual in his private devotions. The corporate body is also edified when the tongues is interpreted in the context of worship. Believers must start to become obedient to the scriptures. In some people, probably “the release of emotional inhibitions which accompanies the experience may be used by the spirit to breakdown emotional barriers in their personalities which keep them from being able to feel what they struggle to believe”. If that is so, the conscious feeling of forgiven, accepted and loved by God would no doubt be a boost to the spiritual life of the speakers of tongues. However, it should be noted that spiritual gifts can be counterfeited by the enemy, effective teaching can be heretical and speaking in tongues could be more of emotional self-indulgence.

5.0 THE REAL PENTECOSTAL

According to Alban Douglas (Douglas, 1978) in his *One Hundred Bible Lessons*, baptism of the Holy Spirit has ever been a controversial subject from time immemorial among all classes of believers be it evangelicals, pentecostals or even theologians alike. Whatever position anybody chooses to take, the Bible is the measurement of standard. However, it all depends on individual interpretation. Yet the true explanation of the doctrine on speaking in tongues and baptism of the Holy Spirit is that when a man is filled and baptized by the Holy Spirit, the life of Christ is radiating through the individual. Through him you can see the person of Christ in practice not just in words of mouth or in mere speaking in tongues. Such a life is contradictory to the tenets of the Bible.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This paper traced the emergence of Pentecostal movement both in America, Asia and Africa with a focus on speaking in tongues as a distinguishing phenomenon of the Pentecostals. It traced the biblical position judging from the same Acts of the Apostle chapter 2:1ff which is a major claim and scriptural basis for the Pentecostals. However, the paper argues that the experience in Acts 2:1ff is xenolalia rather than been a norm, because it was never replicated. Yet, speaking in tongues is a scriptural gift.

From the foregoing, it is clear that speaking in tongues is a gift of the scriptures, but it is not meant to be manipulated, taught, or faked just to sound spiritual. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. He distributes to individual as He wills. The distributive will belong to the Holy Spirit. It is foul when tongues are taught to people, manipulated, or put into use to sound spiritual so as to deceive the faithful.

Recommendations:

The study recommended that Speaking in tongues is a gift of God for the edification of believers as they go about the witness of Christ, yet it should not be used for personal aggrandizement to deceive the people of God or to sound spiritual. True Pentecostalism should be conformed to imaging the character of Christ so as to season the decay in our world today. Emotionalism goes with much of the wave that comes and goes, but genuine Pentecostals will stand the test of time, hence Pentecostal brethren will do well to show the

character of Christ like in Acts 11:26. The study also recommends that Gift of the Holy Spirit is a great blessing for the church advancement. Any believer is expected to bless and grow the fellowship with the unique gift or gifts the Holy Spirit has graciously endowed. Speaking in tongues should not be legislated for believers; rather it should be left to the distributive prerogative of the Holy Spirit for genuine seekers of the gifts.

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