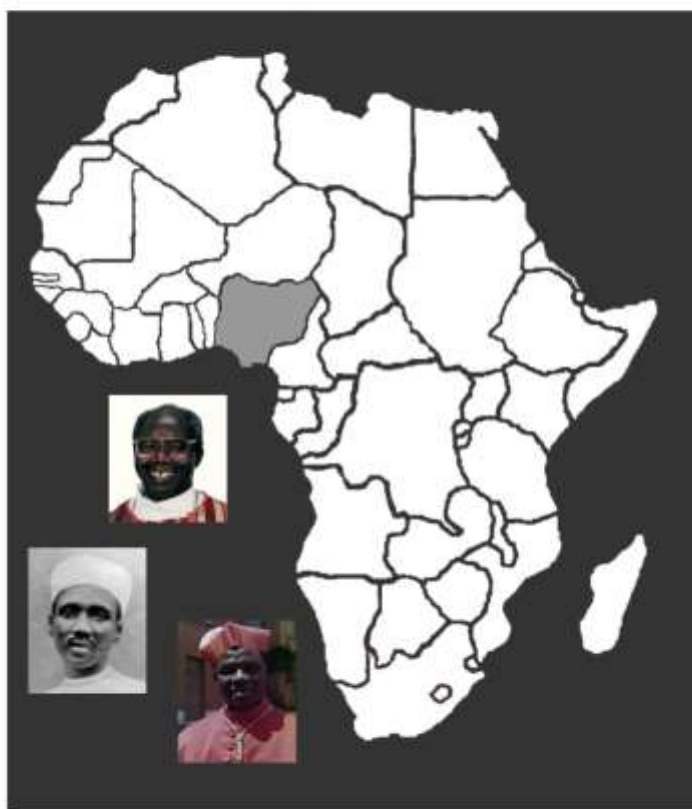


DOMINIC IGNATIUS EKANDEM,  
DAVID WINDIBIZIRI AND  
ABIODUN BABATUNDE LAWRENCE:  
NIGERIAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS



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Dominic Ignatius Ekandem,  
David Windibiziri and  
Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence:

Nigerian Christian Leaders

Original Biographies from the *Dictionary of African  
Christian Biography* with commentary by  
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**Dominic Ignatius Ekandem, David Windibiziri and  
Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence:  
Nigerian Christian Leaders**

Bolaji Idowu, the former prelate and patriarch of the Methodist Church Nigeria, in his *magnum opus*, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*,<sup>1</sup> described Africans as, in essence, “incurably religious.” In that work, Professor Idowu called attention to the fact that, for Africans, religion is synonymous with life itself, because they believe that virtually every event within their environment has religious or spiritual overtones. John Mbiti, another outstanding doyen in the study of religions in Africa, began his introduction to the classic *African Religions and Philosophy* with the words: “Africans are notoriously religious.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, while the western world increasingly regards its context as secular and scientific, the people of Africa have always considered their environment to be otherworldly and spiritual.

This conviction is illustrated in the growth of religions such as Christianity throughout Africa. Expressions of African religiosity have spread throughout Europe and the Americas. African-led churches are becoming increasingly conspicuous and are growing at a tremendous rate while European mainstream churches are in decline. For these reasons, scholars of world Christianity maintain that now, more than ever before, Christianity, which was formerly considered the religion of the Global North—of Europe and North America—has become the religion of the Global South—that of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

### **Africa in Early Church History**

The history of the Early Church bears witness to the fact that Christianity is not foreign to the African continent. Indeed, Christianity arrived in North Africa in the early centuries. By the middle of the third century, the Roman provinces of North Africa had become a flourishing mission territory with a relatively high concentration of dioceses and bishops. Undoubtedly, it was a dynamic, vigorous, and productive church.<sup>3</sup> The later decline and ultimate disappearance of North African Christianity can be traced to its relative

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<sup>1</sup> E. Idowu Bolaji, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, revised and enlarged edition (Lagos: Longman, 2005), 5.

<sup>2</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 1.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Francis Anekwe Oborji, *Trends in African Theology since Vatican II: A Missiological Orientation*, thesis (Roma: Pontificia universitas urbaniana, 1998), 49.

failure in the area of inculturation.<sup>4</sup> Incidentally, there are no indications that the influence of the celebrated North African Church extended to West Africa.

### **Christianity's Contact with West Africa**

It was not until the fifteenth century that Roman Catholic missionaries from Portugal made attempts to plant Christianity in Africa. At that time they introduced Christianity in four major areas in West Africa—São Tome and Principe, Elmina (present-day Ghana), Benin, and Warri (the latter two in Nigeria). In so doing, they had to confront the challenges of converting the numerous adherents of African indigenous religion and Islam.

By and large, the efforts of the Portuguese Catholic mission enterprise in the middle ages failed. During this second phase of Africa's contact with the Christian faith, the commercial interests of the Portuguese in gold, ivory, and slaves as well as the daunting health problems prevented any but the shallowest of roots to be struck. Besides, as the Portuguese did not take into consideration the African spiritual vision or questions of indigenization, the churches they established were very European in structure, worship, and practice.

It was only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that West Africa witnessed the emergence of an enduring and successful missionary enterprise. This time the Protestant churches of Europe and North America dominated the initiative followed by the Roman Catholics who resumed their missionary efforts almost half a century later. The untiring efforts of these missions laid the foundation for the permanent establishment of the Christian faith in West Africa after the initial failure of the Portuguese. During this age vibrant churches sprang up, missionary institutes were founded, schools were built, and hospitals and other social services flourished in sub-Saharan Africa. The missionaries were successful because they helped create an African clergy and an elite. It must be emphasized, however, that European mission efforts only succeeded to the extent that the local peoples were assimilated during the transmission of the gospel in their own languages. Many indigenous agents, most of them anonymous, worked to translate the Bible into African languages while others served as interpreters and vanguards who carried the Gospel into the hinterlands. Andrew Walls corroborated this fact when he observed that "Modern African Christianity is not only the result of movements among Africans, but has been principally sustained by Africans and is, to a surprising extent, the result of

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<sup>4</sup> Oborji, 50.

African initiatives.”<sup>5</sup>

## **Nigerian Christianity**

We will use the West African country of Nigeria as a case study to illustrate the above statements. Christianity was successfully planted in Nigeria from the 1840s on, albeit in a fragmented form, thanks to the efforts of various denominations and missionary societies who evangelized the sub region. The numerical strength and geographical distribution of the missions speak to the success of these efforts. The Wesleyan Methodist Mission led the foremost positive attempt by sending Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and his aides to Badagry, in southwest Nigeria, on September 23, 1842. Immediately after the Methodists, the Church Missionary Society founded the Anglican Communion in December 1842. Other missionary outfits followed in quick succession: the United Presbyterian Church (1846), the Southern Baptist Mission (1850), the Roman Catholics (1860), SIM/ECWA (1893-1901), Sudan United Mission (1904), the Seventh Day Adventists (1914), and the Salvation Army (1920). The Classical Pentecostals, who are foreign as far as their origins are concerned, came in subsequent years. In due time, reactions to foreign missionary Christianity produced other expressions of the faith which are still visible in the country today. While nationalistic feelings led to the emergence of Ethiopian churches like the Native Baptist Church (1888), the United Native African Church (1891), the African Church (1901), Christ Army Church, and the United African Methodist Church (*Eleja*-1917), the desire to have Christianity incarnated in African culture gave birth to the *Aladura* churches. These indigenous churches strive to indigenize Christianity by encouraging the use of local dialects in their services in Bible reading, preaching, and singing. The most recent groups are the home grown Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. These denominations have worked cohesively and made significant contributions to Christianity in the country. Today, Nigeria has become a stronghold of the Christian faith.

As a religious faith, Christianity has made its home in Nigeria. In less than two centuries, it has become a phenomenon that can only be ignored at one's peril. Apart from its ongoing large scale contributions to the social and economic development of the nation, today it has become a force to be reckoned with even within the political domain. It is impossible to ignore the influence of Nigerian Christian ministers within world

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<sup>5</sup> A. F Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History, Studies in Transmission of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 86.

Christianity. Ministers from across the denominational spectrum have at one time or another occupied prominent positions within the international Christian community. Nigerian Catholics can boast of a number of cardinals—a fact that heightens speculation that a Nigerian pope may emerge within the Catholic Church in the near future. Likewise, not only does the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) represent the largest national body of Anglicans in the global communion, it is also a powerful force within worldwide Anglicanism. The Methodist Church Nigeria (MCN) is a major branch in the World Methodist Church (WMC). Prelate Sunday Mbang, a former head of the MCN, was elected chair of the World Methodist Council in 2001.

Similarly, Nigerian Indigenous and Pentecostal Churches are making waves across the world. Virtually all the notable African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria are today firmly established in such places as Britain, France, and the U.S.A. Many scholars of African Christianity now agree with Ruth Marshall's view that, "Nigeria has been the site of Pentecostalism's greatest explosion on the African continent, and the movement's extraordinary growth shows no signs of slowing."<sup>6</sup>

## **The Stories**

This double issue of the *Journal of African Christian Biography* (August-September 2016) tells the stories of eminent leaders from denominations within the customarily defined geographical areas across the country. The story of Dominic Ignatius Ekandem, one of the few Nigerian Catholic priests to attain the high office of cardinal, comes from the eastern part of the country where the Catholic Church dominates. Secondly, we have a biography of David Windibiziri, the first archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. His story comes from the northern part of the country, which is the stronghold of SIM/ECWA and Lutheran churches. In the final story we read about Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence who was the founder of the Holy Flock of Christ Worldwide, one of the *Aladura* churches predominantly found among the Yoruba in the southwestern part of the country.

## **About the Author: Chief Olusegun Obasanjo**

These three biographies, carefully chosen to represent prevailing strains of Nigerian Christianity, were all written by an elder statesman, Chief

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<sup>6</sup> Ruth Marshall, "Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria: An Overview" in *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, ed. by P. Gifford (Ibadan: Sefer: 1993), 16.



Olusegun Obasanjo. He is the former military head of state of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (February 1976 to October 1979) and a two-term civilian president from 1999 to 2007 in the new democratic dispensation. In his capacity as a statesman, the United Nations appointed him special envoy for Africa in 2008. Since then, he has overseen democratic elections across the continent. Currently, he is the special envoy of ECOWAS to Guinea Bissau.

Chief Obasanjo wrote these stories as a Ph.D student of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). It is exceptionally prudent that he chose to write the biographies of one Catholic, one Protestant, and one Indigenous church leader from the east (Ekandem), the west (Babatunde), and the north (Windibiziri ) of the country.

In writing these stories, Chief Obasanjo expressed his support for the *DACB* and its' endeavor to document the history of African Christian leaders in the growth of Christianity across the continent:

My research and written work for the *DACB* have widened my horizon and made me appreciate better what must not be taken for granted – the work and leadership of Africans in propagating and spreading the Gospel in Africa. Their complementary efforts to those of foreign missionaries are vitally and crucially significant for where Christianity is in Nigeria today and where it will go in the future. The work and objective of the *DACB* will preserve the past, capture the present, and inspire the future.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the legacy of these African pioneers sheds a crucial light on the current state of Nigerian Christianity and its significance in the future. These three biographies only tell part of the bigger story.

**Michael Ogunewu**, *DACB* Liaison Coordinator

**Deji Ayegboyin**, *DACB* Advisor and *JACB* Contributing Editor

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Chief Obasanjo, quoted in *DACB News Link*, issue 11, November 2015.

**David Lonkibiri Windibiziri**  
**1934 to 2014**  
**Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN)**

David Longibiri Windibiziri grew up in the Lutheran Church of Christ (LCCN) in Nigeria. He was baptized in the church, became a minister, and rose through the ranks to become archbishop.

**Introduction**

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria was started by the Sudan United Mission. The idea for the ministry emerged in a monthly periodical entitled *Sudan and the Regions Beyond* that was published in 1889-1890. Dr. H. Grattan Guinness published the journal to stir up interest in the Sudan which was closed to missionary efforts at the time. His daughter, Lucy, was married to the German-born Briton, Dr. H. Karl W. Kumm who had been a member of North Africa Mission. In North Africa Kumm had learned Arabic and Hausa. Kumm and Lucy worked very hard to make the ideas of Dr. Guinness become reality.

On November 13, 1902, Kumm and a few other individuals in Sheffield, England established a mission organization named Sudan Pioneer Mission (SPM) Evangelical Churches. After Kumm consulted some of his contacts in Europe, the United States, South Africa, and Australia, the name of the mission was changed from SPM to Sudan United Mission (SUM) on June 15, 1904. Branches were then established in Europe. Pastor Pedersen of Denmark who had heard Kumm speak at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in June 1910 established a Danish Branch on November 22, 1911. After discussion with the British Branch of the SUM, Pedersen became convinced that Yola (Nigeria) in the Sudan would be the sphere of influence and missionary activity of the Danish branch.

The journey of the church in Nigeria began with founder Dr. Niels Bronnum and his wife, and accompanying missionaries Margaret C. Young and Ms. Dogner Rose. The couple arrived in Nigeria and started their trip up the Niger River by boat on February 18, 1913. While in the British Missionary Station in Rumasha, near Lokoja, Margaret died of malaria shortly after giving birth to their first son, Holger, in June 1913. Margaret was buried in Rumasha while Dogner Rose took their son to Margaret's family in Scotland. This allowed Bronnum and Rose to continue their missionary journey to Numan, Bachamaland. They arrived on October 5, 1913. Bronnum obtained the necessary approval from the British Resident in Yola to begin his missionary work. He built stations where unpaid

Nigerian evangelists settled to farm. They taught Christian principles in villages and hamlets under Bronnum's supervision.

The first five indigenous pastors, namely Habila Alyedeilo, Ezra Gejere, Shall Holma, Theodore Pwanahomo and Ahnuhu Jebbe, were ordained in 1948 after intensive theological training. In 1955, the name of the church was changed from Sudan United Mission to Lutheran Church of Christ in Sudan. Almost a year later, the church became independent of Danish supervision and control and was renamed the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. Before the Second World War, mission stations had been opened in Numan, Lamurde, Guyuk, Shelleng, Dumne, Pella, Dilli and Njoboliyo. More stations followed after the war. Numan became the headquarters of the church and the seat of power for its pastors, teachers, doctors, nurses, artisans, farmers and administrators.

This was the situation when Bishop Akila Todi, the first African leader of the LCCN and a Bachama by tribe, fell ill. Windibiziri was elected to take over in 1987 as bishop of the LCCN. When Bishop Akila Todi retired after leading the church from 1960 to 1986, the LCCN was a one-diocese church based heavily in Numan, the capital of Bachamaland.

## **Birth and Early Life**

David Lonkibiri Windibiziri was born around 1934 in Purokayo village, Guyuk Local Government in Adamawa State. His cognomen, Lonkibiri, is a Kanakuru name which means "born at night." His father, Saghar, was Sarkin Dawakai (chief or owner of many horses) in Guyuk. By local standards Saghar was wealthy as he owned many horses and cattle. He was a Longuda by tribe and belonged to the kingmakers' clan. He was often approached for advice and guidance by district officials and local authorities concerning chieftaincy matters. David's mother was Deremiya, another Kanakuru name which means "surrounded by people." She belonged to the rainmakers' clan. Thus David was born and bred in a traditional home environment along with his siblings - one half-brother, Umaru Zalmadai, and one sister, Sintiki. His mother had had seven children but only two of them survived—the other one being a half-brother with a different father. She believed that her children had been killed by witches except for David whom they could not kill because he was a wizard. When David grew up, he told his mother repeatedly that it was malaria that had killed his siblings but that always caused his mother to laugh and ask how a mosquito bite could kill a human being.

Young David followed his father and learned to imitate what he was doing. As a child, he enjoyed swimming and riding on a corn stalk,

pretending that it was a horse. With the other boys, he went to the bush to hunt birds, rats, and bush fowls. During the rainy season, they herded goats and sheep and enjoyed their milk. During the dry season, they could let the goats and sheep roam free because the harvest time had passed. This gave them free time to go hunting. Following local custom, they wore armlets to prevent them from being bitten by snakes or being harmed by evil spirits in the bush.

In 1947, a friend named Lonkiboni encouraged David Lonkibiri to join the baptismal class held by the evangelist in Purokayo village. It took some time for David's father to agree to this because he thought it was a diversion that would make his son lazy if he was pulled away from farming. Later David said that he was grateful to his father and to God for this opportunity which led to his baptism in November of 1949. This important event made him a member of the world's largest tribe, the tribe of Jesus Christ.

## **Education**

By being baptized David had been diverted from the religion, trade and occupation of his father. In 1951 and 1952, he attended Numan Training School which later became Numan Teacher's College. Upon finishing his primary education, he worked for a short while in the mission bookshop. He would have preferred to go to the evangelists' school but for some reason, he pushed himself to attend Kofare Agricultural School in Yola for one year instead. He continued in the School of Agriculture (Samaru, Zaria) for another year and the School of Accountancy (also in Zaria). Afterwards he joined the Numan Native Authority as an agricultural assistant. Why was he drawn into agriculture rather than mission? David himself could not answer the question except to say, "It was what God wanted and not necessarily what my father or I wanted."

## **Marital Life**

At the age of 21, David married Margaret, née Zufa Hassan. They had six children who are all deeply rooted in Longuda traditions and culture and in ministry within the LCCN. David and Zufa had a fulfilling marriage in which they found happiness and joy and mutual love for each other. They were described as a shining example of what a Christian marriage should be.[1]

## **Christian Life and Ministry**

For David Windibiziri, his service with the Numan Native Authority was both a challenge and an opportunity to show his Christian character in real life situations where his faith, beliefs and ethics were tested. It was an opportunity to show what Christianity was all about to co-workers and peers, both traditionalists and Muslims. It meant evangelizing at home and at work. David believed that he could not live a dualistic life, separating the sacred and the secular, that new Christians have to live their Christian witness everywhere. It was not easy nor was it adequately appreciated among the people with whom they lived and worked. But for David, there was no other way. Christianity was a total way of life at home, at play and at work, in the church and in the office.

In 1958, David left the Agriculture Department and went to work in the Accounts Department. After two years, he was sent to the Institute of Administration, Zaria, to study secretarial work and accountancy for eighteen months. Upon completion of his course, he was posted to Bauchi as an accountant. Here, he began to feel a stronger attraction to the work of mission and evangelism. In Bauchi, he told one of the pastors that he would like to go to the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). This desire took some time to materialize because he did not easily find sponsors. He had no hesitation about committing to this ministry even though he knew that government work held better prospects and opportunities.

He prayed constantly for someone to sponsor his theological training. God miraculously provided a solution when the friend of a missionary who was a retired teacher in Denmark agreed to pay his tuition and living expenses. David realized that this was a direct answer to prayer but also a call to Christian ministry. In 1967 David left government work and entered TCCN where he completed his theological studies in 1970. He was appointed pastor of Majamia Almasihu Jos in January 1971 and ordained in 1972. He worked in Jos for six years. He faced many challenges but was able to surmount all of them. As a district pastor, he found his earlier experience in local and regional services very helpful.

When Guyuk Local Government was created in 1977, his people, the Longuda, invited him to serve as councilor in the new local government. The public announcement was made before he was contacted. It was difficult for him to say no. He said, "I saw this as a temptation to leave my work as a pastor." He accepted but for only one term and he later returned to his job as a pastor. But as portfolio councilor for Education and Social Welfare from 1977 to 1979, he left an indelible mark on the lives of his people. When he returned to church work he was asked to serve as secretary to the Rt. Rev. Akila Todi. He also doubled as administrative

secretary of the church for almost eighteen months, before leaving to pursue further studies in the U.S.A. in 1983.

In the U.S.A., he completed an M.A. in New Testament Theology at Luther North Western Seminary. In the second year of his studies, his wife, Margaret, and their youngest son, Hanim, joined him. The objective was to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree at Luther Seminary. He and his family had a favorable impact on his colleagues in the program and on the entire seminary family.

When David Windibiziri arrived at the Minneapolis airport, David Olson of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1987-2001) was there to welcome him. He subsequently became his lifelong friend. He attested to Windibirizi's humility and confidence, his concern for the country, its agriculture, and industry as well as international relations and inter-religious dialogue and his vision to plant a million trees to counter the advance of the desert.[2]

Upon returning to Nigeria in September 1985, David Windibiziri was appointed pastor in the new Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. His assignment was to establish an LCCN congregation and church there to cater for the many LCCN members who had moved to Abuja. He also discovered a great number of unreached peoples' groups in the area which led him to develop an outreach ministry in Abuja and Kontagora. David's assignment in Abuja was a key period in his development as a church leader. He was on this assignment when he was elected to succeed Bishop Akila Todi.

In addition to his studies in the U.S.A., he attended a three-month course in Christian Mass Communication in Evangelism at Radio Voice of the Gospel in Addis Ababa in 1976 and a church administration course for four years in Madras (now Chennai), India, in 1981. He travelled internally and internationally to attend conferences, seminars and workshops, lecturing and presenting papers.

### **Leadership of LCCN**

Windibiziri was consecrated bishop on February 22, 1987, thus becoming the second bishop of the LCCN, the successor to Akila Todi (bishop from 1973 to 1986) who could not continue due to poor health. It must be underlined that Todi was neither tribalistic nor myopic about his successor. If he had been, it would not have been easy for Windibiziri to succeed him.

Windibiziri was an evangelist, a servant leader, a visionary and an innovator. As soon as he became bishop, he took steps to outline necessary changes for modernizing the church. Under his leadership, the LCCN

expanded beyond the borders of Numan and Adamawa State to become a national church with global contacts and partnerships. He successfully launched training programs for pastors. In 1994 for the first time, seventy-seven pastors were ordained in one ceremony by Windibiziri. He expanded the Bible College (Bronnum Lutheran Seminary) to a degree awarding institution, affiliated to both Ahmadu Bello University and the University of Jos.

Windibiziri's episcopate suffered from the disruptive church politics between the Bachama and the Longuda members of the LCCN. Windibiziri was of the Longuda tribe. The Longuda are the second major tribal group after the Bachama who were first attracted to the Gospel when the Danish Sudan United Mission came to the area in 1913. In the late 1960s, the Longuda people left the LCCN en masse and joined the Baptist Church in protest over certain issues connected to the relationship of the two tribes within the LCCN. Afterward only a few Longuda remained in the Lutheran Church. As a result, the church came to be identified as a Bachama church. It was no little surprise to most people when Windibiziri, a Longuda, became bishop of the LCCN after Todi.[3]

Windibiziri detested the idea of "African time," that is, the practice of not being punctual. He believed that time is a commodity that must not be wasted. He worked to reform this attitude and to make everybody conscious of time.

Windibiziri encouraged women to go into the ministry. Although women have played critical roles for many years in the LCCN, they have not been accorded the attention and positions they deserve. The theological orientation of the first missionaries was an obstacle to the growth of the leadership of women and youth in the church. According to Dr. Musa Gaiya, Windibiri's predecessor Akila Todi "was very conservative in his theology. For example, he opposed the ordination of women and dancing worship. According to him, dancing in God's house was a sin." [4]

Rev. Naomi Martin was the first LCCN female pastor ordained by Windibiziri in what was considered a major reform that ensured the inclusion of women in church leadership and administration. He had a strong vision for women's leadership in the LCCN, insisting that 40% of the leadership be made up of women according to his friend Bishop David Olson. As of February 2015, there were thirty female pastors in the LCCN. Naomi Martin has this to say about her experience:

The time I was ordained in 1996 was a hard time for the bishop and the church as there was division in the LCCN. The bishop and others like him stood by me. They loved and cared for me. They ensured that whatever the church was doing, I was included. They also made

sure they included women. The late bishop had the mind to empower women. He sponsored me on workshops and programs abroad.[5]

I remember when we were at the Lutheran World Federation Forum in Geneva in October 1995; he stood very firmly and declared that if there is any woman that is educated and wants to be ordained, he would be the first to support her. There was opposition among the other bishops, including the bishop of Ethiopia who vowed that no woman would be ordained under his watch. Windibiziri's position was, however, well received and respected among many of the Western bishops.[6]

Windibiziri was also a pioneer in providing leadership opportunities for the youth and inviting their participation in the life of the church.

During the 1980s and 1990s Muslims and Christians in the Northern Nigeria were locked in a serious religious conflict. They disagreed about membership in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). Nigeria had been an observer for many years and some northern states wanted to legislate Islamic Sharia Law. The youth expressed increasingly radical views about Christian militancy and they wanted revenge –“to retaliate, to kill and burn as they saw the Muslims doing.” [7]

The LCCN caught the vision of an Interfaith Dialogue Center where Christians and Muslims could meet to dialogue on matters of mutual interest and to resolve conflicts before they snowballed into violence. From November 2 to 6, 1993, an initial conference was organized at Miango, Plateau State. Papers were presented on the following topics: “Dialogue Between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria: How Feasible?”; “The Theology of God’s Word from the Biblical and Qur’anic Perspective”; and “The Influence of Politics on Religious Dialogue.” Participants included Christian and Muslim leaders, some of which were women and youth leaders. Windibiziri felt that it was a positive experience, with frank and open discussions, and sometimes confrontations. Time was spent identifying the historical, political, and economic causes of the conflicts. The religious aspect of the conflicts was not neglected, especially since general ignorance of each group’s beliefs played a role in creating tension and bitterness when it bled into the media and public preaching. One of the recommendations of the conference was to encourage the development of more education programs for both Muslims and Christians so they could learn about their own beliefs and that of their counterparts. This would help avoid inflammatory statements and actions. [7]

The first five conferences between 1995 and 2005 were sponsored by the LCCN through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).



However, in accordance with the principle of mutuality, the sixth conference was sponsored by the Muslim Community through the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). Initially, issues of mutual concern in the area of religion and ethics were discussed at the conferences such as “Secularism and Religious Pluralism” and “the Importance of Moral Conscience in Improving Co-existence.” Later more political issues were addressed such as “The Role of Religion in Sensitizing Politics,” “The Role of Religion in Poverty Alleviation,” and “The Position and Rights of Women in Society.” This effort, spearheaded by the LCCN under Windibiziri’s leadership, was the forerunner of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) established nationally at the beginning of the 21st century. The sultan of Sokoto, a Sarki Muslim, and the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria are co-chairs of NIREC. The position of secretary is filled alternately by a Christian or a Muslim. Windibiziri had this to say about the effort:

We soon found that although we have been living together as neighbors for many years, there is considerable ignorance about one another and our faiths. It has, therefore, been very much a learning period. We have been able to analyze our situation and background and already at the first conference we remarked that most of the causes for crises and confrontations were not basically religious, but based on historical, political, social and economic issues.”[8]

The lessons that came out of this exercise and the interaction fostered confidence, trust, and mutuality and built a relationship between the two communities, particularly in Adamawa State. The achievement came amidst heavy criticisms of Windibiziri who, nevertheless, continued to believe in the rightness of what he was doing and forged ahead. The Youth Fellowship once criticized him with an ominous prediction that while he was busy trying to foster good relationships with the Muslims, he would one day wake up and find out that his church had been burnt to ashes and all his members had deserted him.

Windibiziri encouraged Christians to participate in politics. The early missionaries, in accordance with their pietistic traditions and culture, were very conservative. They did not allow their converts to participate in politics or to be involved in profit-making ventures. But Windibiziri, because of his experience and background, put an end to that. He fiercely encouraged LCCN members to participate actively in politics and to undertake profitable and profit-making commercial ventures. However, he insisted on clean politics and doing business with integrity and honesty as good Christians who must be salt and light in the world.

Windibiziri also fostered the formation of international church

partnerships. In 1988, the ELCA reoriented its mission approach and emphasis along the lines of the paradigm of “accompaniment.” This meant that the ELCA would actively seek to partner with other congregations. Missionaries would be sent out to churches under a new plan which encompassed accompaniment in mission. But this is how it all happened:

It so happened that the newly installed bishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, David Windibiziri, was a graduate of Luther Seminary, and his advisor, David Olson, was elected to be the bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA in 1989. In the following year, church leaders from Minneapolis visited Nigeria and formalized their companion synod relations with the hopes of finding congregations that would be willing to participate in the companion congregation program.”[9]

From that small beginning, church relationships have grown, and at the moment, the Minneapolis Area Synod has partnered with fourteen congregations in the LCCN.[10] This can be attributed to Windibiziri’s wise leadership and influence because he saw the need to pursue such an agenda. His church partnership and outreach programs were both national and international.

Another area where Windibiziri brought his non-theological training and experience to bear on his mission work as a church leader was in the area of agriculture. His previous training in agriculture led him to focus his attention on tree planting. As a result, he established the Agro-Forestry Department of the LCCN, an effort that coincided with the overall plan of the Lutheran World Federation at the time. Windibiziri was able to get support from the Lutheran World body for his tree planting campaign, but unfortunately, it did not meet with understanding from the grassroots.

### **Personal Qualities**

When it came to character, Windibiziri was a servant of God with tremendous patience and humility. But at the same time, he was a determined and committed leader and administrator. While Dr. Musa Gaiya (who wrote the biography of his successor Akila Todi) may have mistaken his patience and humility for weakness, he nevertheless acknowledged his success in the area of church growth because it was so phenomenal. Even his adversaries respected him for his achievement in creating five dioceses which helped the growth and outreach of the church. This writer came into contact with Windibiziri’s disarming patience and enchanting humility when Rev. Boniface Shenmi, one of the chaplain visitors to the prison in Yola, invited him to mediate and reconcile the different groups in the LCCN.

The growth of the church under Windibiziri was described as spectacular. Rev. Lautai acknowledged that Windibiziri was the only one who talked about church growth and expansion in the early days. In an interview with him, Lautai said that Windibiziri's most important achievement was, "church growth and church growth." He was both a great church leader and a great missionary. He was also described as "a charmer and a disarmer." His personality and appearance did not evoke anger or dislike, no matter how you felt about him. He was a perfectionist to the core. His catch-word was "Whatever you have to do, do it well." He was a family man and a great father to his children. At their golden marriage anniversary in 2005, David and his wife recognized how blessed they were with their seven children, their foster daughter Kuwi, and their nine grandchildren. [11]

The membership of the LCCN, which stood at about 1.7 million in 1987 when Windibiziri took over as bishop, increased to almost 2.7 million by the time he retired as the archbishop fifteen years later in 2002.

David Lonkibiri Windibiziri died on October 16, 2014 at the age of 80.

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## Notes:

1. From *Transition to Glory Funeral Programme for David L. Windibiziri* (LCCN:2014). The tribute of David's wife Margaret says it all:

Since the day we got married 59 years ago, we were joined together under the promise that what God has joined, no man should put asunder. But now death has separated us. It pains me a lot that I was unable to take care of you when you were hospitalized. This was not my making, but due to my ill-health. I am grateful to many people that took care of you in different ways. May God bless them all. I am grateful for many things that you have taught me. You taught me not to hold grudges against anybody, but rather love everyone and be hospitable to any person that comes my way. I am thankful for your words to me while I was in serious pain at the hospital, when you said: "God is aware of all your pain and suffering, and He will bring healing at his own time. And we are all in the hands of the Lord." These words have really comforted me knowing that your hope and trust is in that Lord on your sick bed. *Baba*, you are now at peace with all the problems and suffering of this world. I love you, but God loves you most. Till I come to meet you at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, Rest in Peace.

2. Here is the original tribute by David Olson from a conflation of *Transition to Glory Funeral Programme* for David L. Windibiziri (LCCN: 2014) and Nicholas Pweddou, *A History of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria*, published by the LCCN, Numan, Nigeria:

He arrived at the Minneapolis airport the summer of 1983, a weary traveler amidst a sea of humanity in Nigerian robes, to pursue his Doctor of Ministry degree at Luther Seminary. There I was “uncle” to the twelve international churchmen enrolled; he soon became their natural leader. Thus, these two Davids began a quarter-century kinship. In 1986, I visited him in Nigeria two days after his election as bishop, and one year before I was elected to the same office. God! He has a sense of humor. We shared more and more. Nancy and Margaret became dear friends on our next visit, and they returned the favor by staying in our Minneapolis home for a 3-month study visit. It was personal, not formal. We shared faith in Jesus, concerns for our people, our churches, our countries, God’s world. At his consecration, echoing Bishop Akila Todi, my friend, said, “The hunter’s son has become the second bishop.” But his model was the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. He was pastor to the pastor-shepherds among LCCN’s many shepherds. As I read over some of his many speeches over his fifteen years, published in “Reflections and Presentations,” I recalled how grateful he was for all those who had served before. We all stand on the shoulders of people before us. This was David’s combined humility and confidence as your second bishop. Every speech includes concern for your nation, for agriculture and commerce, for neighboring countries and other religions. Talk of agro-forestry: he had a vision to plant one million trees, to replenish and stop the desert’s erosion for long after we’re gone.

I rejoice that LCCN continues to grow. In our much-divided and violent world, I give thanks for David’s leadership in Muslim-Christian dialogue through the Interfaith Dialogue Center. After meeting him at a Seminary, I was pleased to attend the dedication of Bronnum Seminary, a church institution that will outlive us all. He was also visionary in insisting that 40% of church leaders be women. As with the Lutherans in America, there were times of tension, division, and parties at odds. Your archbishop was always pastoral and respectful, not argumentative or confrontational. Divisions come and go; some area healed. David was a healer. A bishop who raised his own chickens might not know about money. Just the opposite: he led many launchings successfully, raising millions of

naira to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. I commend your church for accepting the archbishop's decision to create five dioceses and grow God's gifts of leadership. We are grateful for the smooth transition to the leading of Archbishop Nemuel, not always easy in Africa or America. It is now thirteen years since I completed my terms as bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod. Bishops Craig Johnson and Ann Svennungsen share your grief and our faith that the archbishop is among the great cloud of heaven witnessing our tributes and continuing our ministries. In my own heart, I have loved David as a brother. We spoke by phone days before his death. Our families have been intertwined since Ar and Hanim studied in America, and I was able to serve as their "uncle" here. Serving on a hospital board here, we provided needed medical care for Margaret once and again. Today, we rejoice that she is recovered at home in Guyuk, the Mama to your dear departed Baba. Thanks be to God for Archbishop David Windibiziri.

3. Details of the dispute: Under Todi's episcopate, a Constitution Committee was established to review and update the constitution of the LCCN. The committee recommended, among other things, re-organizing the single diocese into six dioceses. However, some individuals felt that the leadership of the church was going to end up in the "wrong Longuda hands" and saw the division into multiple dioceses as another means of weakening the Bachama hold on the church. They orchestrated a dispute and division within the church. David pulled through the reorganization with the majority of the church members with him. A small splinter group which the LCCN called an "anti-diocese" moved out of the main body and called itself a "non-diocese." At that point, five bishops were appointed for the five new dioceses and Windibiziri's title was changed to archbishop in 1995. Efforts to reconcile the two groups did not succeed. While this writer was in prison in Yola in 1996-1997, with the permission of prison authorities, he made an attempt to reconcile the two when the issue was brought to him by one of the leaders but to no avail. When he became president, Bola Ige and Jerry Gana also attempted to resolve the issue without success. The two groups have since existed separately. It should be seen as the way of expanding the Christian mission and work in the areas concerned.

4. Dr. Gaiya's full biography of Bishop Akila Todi can be accessed here: [www.dacb.org/stories/nigeria/todi\\_akila.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/nigeria/todi_akila.html).

5. Conflation of Interview with Rev. (Mrs.) Naomi Martin, First Female LCCN Ordained Pastor by David Windibiziri and Asriel S. T. Myatafadi and Others: *A Century of God's Faithfulness, 1913-2013 Reflections on the LCCN*, 2014.

6. Conflation of Interview with Rev. (Mrs.) Naomi Martin, First Female LCCN

Ordained Pastor by David Windibiziri (Feb 2015 ) and Asriel S. T. Myatafadi et al.: *A Century of God's Faithfulness, 1913-2013 Reflections on the LCCN*, 2014.

7. David L. Windibiziri: "The Story of the Association of Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations in Nigeria," an unpublished lecture presented at the first conference on dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria: "How Feasible?" Miango, Plateau State, November 3, 1993

8. Peter Bartimawus: "Biography: David Windibiziri-Servant of Christ: A Leader of the Church" in *Word and World: A Publication of Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota*. Vol. 28, No. 4, 2008.

9. [http://www.mpls-synod.org/companion\\_synods/nigeria.html](http://www.mpls-synod.org/companion_synods/nigeria.html) (accessed 5.1.2008 )

10. [http://www.mpls-synod.org/companion\\_synods/nigeria.html](http://www.mpls-synod.org/companion_synods/nigeria.html) (accessed 5.1.2008 )

11. Dr. David and Mrs. Margaret Windibiziri: Booklet on the Golden Wedding Anniversary 1955-2005.

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**Interviews** (All the interviews were pre-arranged and conducted February 3-4, 2015):

Archbishop Nemuel Babbar, current head of the LCCN.

Eri Windibiziri, eldest surviving child of David Windibiziri.

Elizabeth Holtegaard, Associate and Volunteer Secretary of David Windibiziri from 1970 on.

Rt. Rev. William Lautai, First Bishop of Yola Diocese.

Rt. Rev. Benjamin Futuda, Bishop of Abuja Diocese.

Mrs. Michal Bongji, Secretary of LCCN Board of Trustees.

Andrew Kalang, former Administrative Secretary under David Windibiziri.

Rev. (Mrs.) Naomi Martin, First Female LCCN Ordained Pastor by David Windibiziri.

**Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence**  
**1898 to 1943**  
**Holy Flock of Christ Worldwide**

Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence joined the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) *Aladura* Movement in 1926 and soon became one of the prominent leaders. This movement had started in Lagos in 1925 as one of the Yoruba *Aladura* or “Owners of Prayer” movements. It began through the ministry of Moses Orimolade Tunolase with the assistance of a young and energetic woman, Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon. During the first four years the movement gained prominence and attracted elites within the Lagos community. However, from 1929 schisms threatened the unity of the movement as the principal leaders parted ways in succession. Lawrence, later nicknamed “Major” Lawrence by Orimolade, was one of the leaders who broke away and established his own version of the C&S movement, named the Holy Flock of Christ (HFC) in 1932.

**Birth and Early Life**

Lawrence’s father originally came from Ikole Ekiti, but was raised by Brazilians in the Brazilian quarter in Lagos, Nigeria. His mother, who originally came from Ijebu, was a popular yam seller. Lawrence was born in Lagos on December 25, 1898. His names *Abiodun* and *Babatunde* are cognomens, what the Yoruba usually call *oruko amutorunwa* (distinguishing epithets that a child brings with him or her into the world). *Abiodun* is a combination of two words *Abi* (to be born) and *Odun* (festival). Usually, a name such as *Abiodun* is given to a child who is born during festive periods. The combination of the names *Abiodun* and *Babatunde* was unique. The traditional name *Abiodun* suggests that he was not only born during a festive period, but also on the actual day of a festival—Christmas Day 1898. The second one, *Babatunde*, also has a traditional connotation. *Baba* in Yoruba means father, while *tunde* literally means “he has come again,” thus *Babatunde* means “father has come again.” Such a name is usually given to a male child who is born immediately after the death of his paternal grandfather. The belief is that the deceased grandfather has returned to the family, a practice in keeping with the Yoruba belief in re-incarnation.

It is believed that Lawrence’s parents received a revelation or prediction while he was an infant that he would grow up to be a leader followed by many people. As he grew up, he developed the habit of looking at issues from a spiritual point of view. His peers reported that they felt that



the spirit of God was upon the young boy.

He attended St. Peter's Primary School, Faji, Lagos, where he excelled and out-performed many of his peers and classmates. Very early in his life, people identified him as a man who loved to be a peacemaker, a mediator, a reconciler, and one who was eager to render help and assistance in whatever way possible to members of his family, neighbors, peers and colleagues. He was also known for being philanthropic.

### **Christian Involvement**

Lawrence became a committed Christian while he was a member at St. Peter's Cathedral, a church within the Anglican Communion in Ita Faji, Lagos. Those who knew him described him as "worshipping the Lord with all his heart, mind and soul." He was also known as a bold, serious, and enthusiastic member of the congregation. He served as a "sideman" or usher, an executive member of the Young Men's Christian League, an executive member of the Young Men's Christian Union, and a Sunday School teacher. He was involved in prison visitation and ministration to inmates, particularly by helping prepare prisoners to re-integrate society after their release and discharge.

Lawrence studied printing at the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Printing Press and worked at the Railway Printing Press, Ebute Metta, until February 1934 when he resigned to become a full-time pastor. His colleagues at the CMS Bookshop and Printing Press, Ogunmefu and E. J. Fasoro, who were also his neighbors, observed a special call of God in young Lawrence's life, and his potential to be a steward in "the vineyard of God." Although young and enthusiastic, many observed that his humility and God's anointing enabled him to know how to work closely in the company of elders.

### **Joining the C&S Movement**

By what some believe was divine intervention, Elder W. A. Akinyemi, the father of Dr. W. A. M. Akinyemi, persuaded him to join the C&S movement in Lagos in 1926. The C&S movement grew out of the ministry of Moses Orimolade Tunolase in collaboration with Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon, a young, beautiful and charismatic lady (later Mrs. Emmanuel).[1] Orimolade and Christianah Abiodun ministered together as a father and daughter team. Christianah Abiodun offered visions and predictions while Orimolade conducted healing sessions and performed miracles. It was unbelievable for Lawrence's colleagues, friends, and mates to see him join what they

thought was such a pedestrian movement meant only for peasants. Lawrence was highly intelligent and a respected young man in society.

Soon Orimolade appointed eminent leaders to help attend to those who needed prayers and healing because alone he could no longer handle everything. He called them “the Praying Band.”[2] Lawrence’s qualities showed up immediately in the C&S, and Orimolade picked him to be one of “the Praying Band.” Members of the movement believed the Band was divinely chosen because it was the group in charge of spiritual matters. The group was handpicked by Orimolade after a session of fasting and praying. He picked seven, replicating the example of the disciples who appointed seven men of good report for material distribution in the first church.[3] However, Band members held spiritual positions, assisting Orimolade in all matters of special fasting, prayers, and spiritual warfare. Led by E. A. Davies, they became the inner core of the original *Aladura* or C&S Movement. Along with Orimolade, these seven leaders became responsible for the spiritual well-being and progress of the C&S.[4]

Soon Lawrence enjoyed a close relationship with Orimolade who made Lawrence the head of the “visioners” and “seers.” It was Orimolade himself who added the title “Major” to Lawrence’s name, just as he had added the title “Captain” to Christianah Abiodun’s name. Therefore, members of the movement always referred to Lawrence as “Major Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence” even though he had never been in the military. Lawrence was acknowledged as a leader among his peers. Followers believed the Lord was with him and used him mightily to support his leaders. He was an unparalleled visionary within the movement. Under Orimolade and Davies, Lawrence, as Spiritual Leader, carried out the following: Spiritual preparation, guidance and leadership of the movement, revival and convention preparations, oversight of the visioners, administration, interpretation of visions and dreams, prayer warfare in healing ministrations, and words of exhortations to members. Delivered, weekly, monthly, and annually, members believed his words were divine messages. Therefore, even though Lawrence may not be described as a co-founder with Orimolade of the C&S Movement as was Christianah Abiodun, he was certainly Orimolade’s right-hand man.

## **Separation from the C&S Movement**

In spite of Lawrence’s position within the hierarchy of the C&S Movement, over time visions and signs appeared to point Lawrence to a more prominent calling. In October 1926, Lawrence had a prophetic revelation. But he kept it to himself and did not reveal it until it was actualized in 1932

after the establishment of the Holy Flock of Christ Organization. Second, in 1928, many people reported seeing a star over the residence of Lawrence on 49 Kakawa Street, Lagos. The star was seen as such a mighty sign and indication among C&S members that Orimolade himself had to go to see it. Third, many people claimed that they observed either the same star, or a similar star, in the same place at 10:30 pm on December 12, 1933, shortly after the establishment of the HFC. Lawrence's supporters agreed that the stars were signs and an indication of divine attestation, testimony, and approval of the work that Lawrence was doing within the C&S movement under Orimolade and would continue to do in future.

In 1928, shortly after the anniversary of the Convention/Revival of the C&S, which had gone well, disagreement suddenly arose over matters arising within the movement. It is not very clear what the genuine root of the discord was, but it was severe enough to cause the first schism. Regrettably the misunderstanding and the rancor between the two founders of the C&S Society, Orimolade and Christianah Abiodun, grew worse and became more acrimonious. Efforts by some elders in the church to settle the misunderstanding met with failure. In early 1929, Orimolade, with supporters on each side fuelling the conflict, wrote a letter to Christianah Abiodun, advising her to form her own separate society. It was probably not her desire to break away but the actions of her followers, which she did nothing to control, suggested otherwise. Whatever the cause, the split was complete and, at least for that time, irreversible.

That year, Christianah Abiodun established her own society, another variation of the C&S *Aladura* movement, which she named The Cherubim and Seraphim Society. Orimolade's party in which Lawrence remained for the time being, opted for the name The Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Society.

Three days after Christianah Abiodun established her branch of the church, Orimolade sent the seven leaders of the Praying Band to Okun Ibeju to pray on matters that had led to the disagreements that split the Movement. The seven moved out as requested by Orimolade to Okun Ibeju, a beach on the Atlantic Ocean, about ten miles from Lagos toward Epe. It was a quiet location where there were no distractions—an ideal solitary location for prayer. One of the prayer points requested by Orimolade was prayer for Lawrence's safety, potentially a ruse to win Lawrence to Orimolade's side over the matters in contention.

C&S members believed that God sent the following messages through Lawrence in a vision at that prayer retreat:

Do not believe in sweet talk. Do not desist from praying night and day against dangers that threaten the body. Do not look for help

from people; only look up to God who only can empower. Carry the cross now and be ready to tell Moses Orimolade and all the members the truth because you can only dwell with the Lord by being always truthful.

The divine messages were communicated to Orimolade, but he chose not to heed them. Therefore, another rift developed within the *Aladura* Movement. The seven members of the Praying Band, the spiritual leadership group of the original C&S Movement departed from Orimolade and formed the Holy Cherubim and Seraphim Aladura Movement (HC&SAM) under the leadership and chairmanship of Davies with Lawrence as the Spiritual Leader. However, this breakaway body could not cohere for long. Another split occurred which finally separated Lawrence from the stump of Orimolade's group led by Davies.[5]

Lawrence eventually became discouraged and disenchanted because the messages he uttered were ignored and rejected by some members. He said that people preferred to turn to fads or fashion. In Lawrence's view, the leaders of the movement had abandoned holiness and adopted rather shameful and unchristian practices. He contended that the love of the flesh had taken the place of the spiritual and the holy.

### **Founding of the Holy Flock of Christ Organization**

Because of these deviations, Lawrence decided to call on God for direction. On February 20, 1932, he went on his annual prayer tour to Olorunkole Hill, near Ibadan, Oyo State. He considered two main prayer points: that all nations should be born again spiritually and that spiritual worship should not become a thing of the past in the world. As soon as he returned from the tour, he went straight to Ibeju beach in Lagos and went on a Lenten fast for forty days during the Lent of 1932.

On his return from Ibeju beach, he went to the HC&SAM to deliver his message after the Wednesday service on April 13, 1932. His message was that the Lord wanted him to disassociate himself from the HC&SAM. He was direct, absolute, and determined. Many people became despondent and sad when they heard his message. As might be expected, some people condemned him, as a "selfish and self-centered man" who was not satisfied with his position. Others declared that they would go with him wherever he went. Three leaders from the HC&SAM decided to follow him: C. B. Olumuyiwa, D. K. Idowu and J. O. Adefope. Many of the prominent members of the HC&SAM decided to follow Lawrence because they saw the Spirit of God on him. They saw him as an instrument in the "vineyard of God." This was the beginning of the Holy Flock of Christ (HFC) with its

emphasis on mystery and the leading of the Spirit. Lawrence described the founding of the HFC in his first report:

We prayed for 36 days. On the dawn of May 15, 1932, after the Morning Prayer, 321 names were voluntarily added to the register of this Holy Flock of Christ. In the evening prayer meeting, the Almighty God surrounded us with His rainbow. Two women went into labor in the morning and three christening/naming ceremonies were performed. In the morning service of May 15, 1932, the name of this organization was given from above as HOLY FLOCK OF CHRIST. The glory sign appeared on children, adult males and females. The children's and females' glory sign was so much. Forty days after the Pentecost day, the liturgy, rules and regulations to be used in this organization were given to us from above, which we are using now presently in the Flock.

The Lagos Branch of the HFC met in the houses of the four former leaders of the HC&SAM who joined Lawrence's group. It was necessary to ensure that the first branch was solidly founded and healthy before venturing out to form others. Saturday night vigil was particularly popular. When members of the HC&SAM saw the glory of God being manifested in the HFC, they sought to join. On August 13, 1941, their request was formally brought to Lawrence. He responded that for their request to be considered, they had to agree to some corrections in doctrines in some areas, such as vision, prayers and praying, dreams and dreamers, and the roles of spiritual workers within the HC&SAM. The HC&SAM did not formally reply to the corrected points, so Lawrence did not give them a formal reply. He insisted that the message of God was that the HFC should remain separate and distinct from any *Aladura* movement. Mixing with or combining with other churches was out of the question.

With the HFC formally established, from April 13 to May 14, 1932, daily prayer was held in Lawrence's house at 49 Kakawa Street focusing on three prayer points: all souls should become spiritually born-again, true spiritual worship should not become a thing of the past in the four corners of the world, and Jesus Christ should breathe on worshippers afresh according to His promises in the Gospel. Spiritually-minded people made it a point of duty to attend the daily morning prayers and reported visible blessings of the Holy Spirit in their daily businesses and affairs. The prayers culminated in the name "Holy Flock of Christ" being revealed and affirmed for the new organization at the morning service that was held in Campus Square. After the service, everybody present retired to Lawrence's house to register their names in the new HFC Organization. The spiritual message to all members that evening was that the HFC would be made a covenant to

the world if all members were spiritually and heavenly minded.

## **Growth of the HFC**

On August 29, 1932, Lawrence, in his capacity as Spiritual Head of the HFC organization, took the group on their first evangelical tour. The tour started with Mr. J. O. Osinbowale, and their first port of call was Epe. From there, they moved through Atijere to Ibadan, Fiditi, and southward to Odogbolu and Okitipupa, all in the Yoruba-speaking southwest region of Nigeria. Later he was joined on the tour by some lady members: Emily Ogunlana, Elizabeth Adefope, E. O. Olumuyiwa, Joanna Talabi and Dorcas Talabi. Witnesses attested to great works of healing, ministration and exhortation. The report of the first evangelical tour was prepared when the team returned to Lagos on October 17, 1932. It was read by Mr. Osinbowale to the joy and satisfaction of all members.

It was during the first evangelical tour that Senior Spiritual Elder C. B. Olumuyiwa started the process of purchasing a permanent site to house the HFC. Everyone searched earnestly and eventually the group felt that the Lord was leading them to 45 Okepopo Street in the city of Lagos. Meanwhile, on May 21, 1933, Lawrence, in his capacity as the Spiritual Leader of the organization, appointed officers and trustees.[6] Then on September 29, 1933, all the officers and members of the HFC moved to the new location of their “House of Prayer,” which remains the headquarters of the organization.

With a permanent “House of Prayer” and a fairly extensive work of leading and administering the growing work of the HFC, on February 13, 1934, Lawrence decided to move into the HFC’s permanent accommodation where he became a full-time minister, evangelist, and church planter. For almost ten years he lived there under various conditions. In total, he planted fourteen churches in the Lagos, Ijebu, and Oyo areas. His followers described him as being steadfast in prayer and fasting, courageous, loving, generous, and hospitable. They say he exemplified what Christian leadership should be—self-abandoning, righteous, empathetic and self-sacrificing. Through his actions, he became a father for the fatherless, hope for the hopeless, help for the helpless, and a provider of jobs for the jobless. Lawrence was always calm, cool, serene, calculating, unimpulsive, gentle, humble, forgiving, and patient. He was described as a giver who never counted the cost of giving. Above all, the members of the HFC remember him as a prayer warrior and a shepherd who administrated the church well.

## The HFC after Lawrence

Lawrence moved back to his own house at 18 Oke Suna Street, Lagos, on October 11, 1943 when his illness became terminal. He died on October 19, 1943. Lawrence was survived by two children, a son and a daughter, both now deceased. His son was called Babatunde or “Tunde” and his daughter Oluyinka or “Yinka.” Both took an active interest in the affairs of the HFC and married in the church. Tunde rose up in the hierarchy to become Senior Spiritual Elder. His children survived him. Only two of these children played notable roles in the affairs of the HFC. Tunde’s late son was in the HFC’s musical band and a member of the choir. Yinka’s children are very involved in HFC affairs. Femi is an Elder and he pastors the HFC’s branch in Maryland, USA. He is well known among pastors and evangelists in the United States. Yinka’s daughter, Feyi, is a visioner and a worker among women in one of the branches in Lagos State.

Between 1943 and 2015, the leadership of the HFC rested on the shoulders of seven different men in succession. After Lawrence, Prophet Emmanuel Adeseye was the *Alakoso* or “Coordinator” from 1943 to 1946. He was followed by Spiritual Elder D. K. Idowu, Coordinator (1946-1955); Spiritual Leader Most Ven. Joseph Olukoya Adefope (1955-1977); Ven. S. I. Ogunfowora, Coordinator, (1979-1980); Most. Ven. Moses O. Osisanya (1981-1983); Spiritual Leader Most Ven. Joseph Oluremi Osinbowale (1984-2012); and Most. Ven. Josiah Adetola Adefope (2013-2015).

The two Adefopes who have led the church are brothers of the same parentage. The older Adefope, Joseph O., who left Orimolade with Lawrence, was much older in age than his brother Josiah. The older Adefope was a powerful preacher and visioner. With good administrative skills and a sense of humor, he was able to pilot the affairs of the HFC for decades. The present Spiritual Leader, Josiah Adetola Adefope, is a “chip off the old block.” A seasoned civil servant like his brother, he has a good hold on the HFC. To his credit, he delegates his duties to able assistants but oversees quite effectively the general administration of the church. Venerable J. O. Babalola is the General-Secretary.

At the time of the writing of this biography in January 2015, the HFC, founded by Lawrence, remains a strong and spiritually dynamic but low-key praying and worshipping band organization, headquartered at 45 Okepopo Street, Lagos. There are about seventy-five branches worldwide, mainly in Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Kogi and Edo States of Nigeria. There are also branches in Philadelphia and Maryland in the United States of America and in Israel. The HFC is a blend between modern day Anglican /Methodist /Baptist liturgy and style and modern Pentecostal churches. The main thing

the HFC has in common with other *Aladura* congregations is the wearing of white garments in most, not all, of their services. Members do not put on the white garments in their various homes and wear them all day. Instead they put them on during services and prayer meetings. It is a church that believes in prophecy and members see visions, dreams and hear voices which they relay to the other members of the church.

The HFC is over 80 years old today. Within the *Aladura* movement, it is a distinguished member of the Organization of African Independent Churches (AICs).

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## Notes

1. Brief biography of Orimolade. Orimolade was born about 1879 in Ikare, Akoko in present day Ondo State. He was a prince but also born crippled in one leg, because of the circumstances surrounding his birth. It is believed that before he started his ministry, he received a vision that instructed him to bathe in the water of a nearby flowing stream. He obeyed and partially recovered from his disability, but he limped throughout the rest of his life.

Although Christianity was new in the area during Orimolade's formative years, he was one of the early converts and adopted the name "Moses" on his baptism into the Methodist Church. As he grew up, he became more prayerful, spending much time in the study of the Bible. In 1916 he set out from his native town of Ikare preaching the gospel in and around Yorubaland, the Middle Belt, and the Northern part of Nigeria. Between 1916 and 1924, the record indicates that Orimolade visited Kaba, Ilorin, Kaduna, Jos, Zaria and Kano.

Orimolade returned to Lagos in 1924 and decided to settle in Lagos where he stayed with the sexton of Holy Trinity Church, Ebute-Ero. He was soon known for his powerful prayers and healing sessions, for which he was nicknamed *Baba Aladura*, "the Praying Father." As he went around preaching, he did not initially attempt to establish a church but he directed converts to the church of their choice nearest to them. That notwithstanding, people filed up to his home for prayers.

Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon, later nicknamed "Captain" Christianah Abiodun Emmanuel, joined Orimolade's team in 1925 after she had been in trance for some days, and was restored after Orimolade prayed for her. Soon afterwards, they developed a strong father and daughter relationship in their work. Orimolade was forty-six years old and Christianah Abiodun was eighteen. It was a powerful combination. Scores of people came for prayers and divine guidance through visions and predictions given



by Abiodun while Orimolade conducted healing sessions and performed miracles. The group increased by leaps and bounds and, after several revelations, adopted the name Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Society. The name of the church was registered in November 1925 with seventy disciples, as they were called, forty-five men and twenty-five women. It was symbolic of the seventy disciples that Jesus sent out in twos in the Bible.

2. In order to satisfy the yearnings for both work and recognition, Orimolade constituted another group of elders and called them "Patriarchs." While the Praying Band was in charge of spiritual matters the Patriarchs took charge of administration. Other groups followed. But one that was very significant was "the Army of Salvation" composed of loyal and energetic young men who performed security and safety functions as guards and ushers on important occasions and processions.

3. Acts 6.

4. The seven members of the Praying Band were: Lawrence, E. A. Davies (father of lawyer H. Q. Davies), H. A. Phillips, C. B. Olumuyiwa, D. K. Idowu, J. A. Phillips, and J. O. Adefope who joined Lawrence when he founded the Holy Flock of Christ (HFC).

5. Orimolade was heartbroken and shattered by the factionalization and break-up of the C&S Movement. He withdrew from Lagos and moved initially to Osholake Street in Ebute-Metta, and later to Ojokoro near Agege where he died on October 19, 1933.

6. Lawrence appointed the following officials within the HFC: Mr. C. B. Olumuyiwa, Senior Spiritual Elder (SSE); D. K. Idowu, J. O. Adefope, L. I. Gabriel, J. Ayo-Coker, and M. A. Thomas, Spiritual Elders (SE); T. A. Oyesanya, E. O. Ayodele, S. I. Ogunfowora, J. O. Fakeye, M. I. Oje, F. A. Okutade, M. O. Osisanya, J. O. Onagoruwa, G. A. Martins, and J. O. Richards, Superintendents; E. A. Macaulay, J. A. Abodunrin, James. O. Taiwo, Theophilus Akin, P. A. Odutade, S. M. Odusanya, and S. S. Aiyelabola, Assistant Superintendents; Samuel S. Cdumbu, Deacon; Ms. Sarian Fiyakola Taiwo, Deaconess.

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**Dominic Ignatius Ekandem**  
**1917 to 1995**  
**Catholic Church**

Dominic Ignatius Ekandem was born into the Royal family of Chief (*Okuku*) and hailed Ekandem from the patrilineal group of Nnung Adia Nkpo. He was born on June 23, 1917, in Obio Ibiono village in the present Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, a year before the First World War ended and the year of the beginning of the Russian Revolution. Obio Ibiono was small, remote and rural, and so far from the center of activities in Nigeria at that time, that not even *Obong* (Chief) Ekandem, Dominic Ekandem's father, knew that there was a World War going on, or what the Russian Revolution was about, if he had even heard of it. On June 23, 1917, what was important to him was that he had a second baby son, born to him by his second wife. Ekandem's mother was Nnwa Ibong Umana Essien. She was the second daughter of Ibong Umana Essien of Ibiono Ibom clan, the same clan as her husband *Obong* Ekandem. In the clan, each family had its own deity apart from the supreme deity, Abasi. The deity of Nnung Adia Nkpo was *Ekandem*, and this was the origin of Ekandem's name. In addition to the village deity, the common deity to all Ibibios is *Idiong*.

*Obong* Ekandem, Dominic's father, was not only a village head, he was also the custodian of the royal shrine and the Chief Priest of the village as well as acting as the judge and arbitrator in quarrels and disputes within the village. He was also one of the eminent kingmakers of the Ibiono Ibom clan and the only chief entitled to bestow the royal crown on the king. No paramount ruler of Ibiono can be recognized except by being crowned by the *Okuku* of Obio Ibiono, who at that time was Chief Ekandem. As Chief Priest, Chief Ekandem would pray to the deities and offer sacrifices for himself, his family, and the village, especially during the new yam festivals. Young Dominic participated in these rituals and began to be initiated into the services of the supernatural deities. Recalling the experience, Dominic said:

Early in my life my father associated me with pagan worship. I often carried the victims (fowl, or goat, water and mashed yam) to be offered in sacrifice to the gods, invoked to bless and protect us and help us to grow as virtuous children and useful citizens. I often shared the remains of the food of the gods with my other brothers and felt very hopeful of future good results.[1]

There is a common saying among the Ibibios that it is only the child whom the father loves who is initiated into the worship of *Idiong*. Dominic Ekandem was born into royalty and consequently to induction into the

eneration of *Idiong*. By the time he was born, his father Etuk Ubo Ekandem was the *Obong* of Obio Ibiono, a rank that came with power, respect and dignity. As the chief priest, he worshipped and made animal sacrifices to the gods, which the members of his family were expected to partake in eating. As a royal chief, *Obong* Ekandem had thirty-two wives in accordance with the traditional practice of his time. Failure to have such a great number of wives was construed as a sign either of weakness, illness or abject poverty. Strength, virility and relative wealth were among the qualities necessary for selection as an *Okuku* of Obio Ibiono.

When the young Ekandem was born, his father nicknamed him Tom (derived from TomTom) because of his attractive appearance. Tom developed a very close tie with his mother, always playing around his mother's hut. Early in his life and development Tom, or Dominic as he came to be known, enjoyed the care of both father and mother, both of whom were descended from royalty. However, he did not have his mother's care for long, as she died when he was only eleven years old. Dominic's mother was a leader in her own right. She was a hardworking farmer and a petty trader with a proven reputation for honesty and fairness: qualities that helped her as a female leader of the village.

Dominic's father, Chief Ekandem, was friendly not only with the white colonial masters, but also with slave traders. He was an authority in decision-making between his people and the colonialists and an intermediary between his people and the Colonial District Officer (CDO). As a result of his steadfastness and commitment to duty, he was appointed a warrant chief. This added to his status and caused the CDO to entrust him with the care and administration of prisoners in the Ibiono Ibom area. Dominic said that his father's authority and position as a chief, as well as the number of his wives and children (about thirty), and his work as a court clerk, messenger and interpreter, conferred special status upon him. He earned enormous respect, admiration and prestige. He evidently had some understanding of English, since he acted as an interpreter, despite his lack of a formal western education. As a chief, he had a big compound to accommodate his wives and children and several large farms where they and his servants worked to produce crops to feed the entire household.

Chief Ekandem wanted his son to have a good education and training, and so he sent him to live with teachers who had a good reputation for learning and discipline. In the early 1920s, he lived with teachers in various villages including Odu Abak, Midim, and Ikot Ofun, before returning to his home village to formally start school in 1924. Chief Ekandem was a disciplinarian and he wanted to bring his children up with strict discipline as well as love and protection. Dominic's first guardian was

the one who made the biggest impression: Mr Akpan Philip Inwang, Chief Ekandem placed Dominic in his custody, and he took Dominic to school in the nearby town of Itu. Being mentored by different guardians in various places meant that Dominic did not mix very closely with people at home, but it stood him in good stead for “CKC (Christ the King College) Onitsha, where he was educated among almost complete strangers.”[2]

An important point to note here is that the present Assumptions Catholic Church in Obio Ibiono owes a lot to Philip Inwang, who could arguably be called the patriarch of Obio Ibiono Catholic Church. Prior to the arrival of Catholicism in 1921 with Fr. Biechy, who offered the first Holy Mass, Obio Ibiono was dominated by the Qua Iboe Church. Qua Iboe was the name adopted by the mix of the Presbyterian Missionary Society and the indigenous African Church, which appealed very much to the people of the area. As the village chief, Chief Ekandem had introduced the Qua Iboe Church into the village. Although he was not a convert, he allowed his children to attend the church programs, although they did not attend as members since they were not baptized. However, a quarrel broke out between Chief Ekandem and the Qua Iboe Church when they learned that he planned to have himself and his sons initiated into the pagan cult of Ubio Ekong. This was meant for warriors who proved their mettle by presenting the skull of an opponent they had defeated in combat. Chief Ekandem was adamant and withdrew his children from the church. He proceeded with the initiation ceremonies and, to further spite the Qua Iboe Church, he went to Anua Catholic Mission, negotiated with the resident priest and introduced the Catholic denomination into his village. Dominic Ekandem later recalled, “Thus my father was responsible for my conversion: first as a Protestant and later as a Catholic. I doubt if he himself knew the difference between the two.”[3]

In 1928, Dominic completed his Standard I education at St. Peter’s Primary School at Ikot Mbang and then transferred to St. Joseph’s Primary School at Anua to continue his education. Early in the 1920s, Fr. Biechy had begun his missionary advance into the then remote and little-known land of Obio Ibiono. As was his habit, Chief Ekandem struck up a friendship with the Irish missionaries and Fr. Biechy was partly responsible for the furthering Dominic’s education. Some years later, when he was a bishop, Dominic recollected:

The friendly relationship between my father and the missionaries appeared to have prepared the way for my vocation. When the time came, some years afterwards, and I manifested my desire to study for the priesthood, I had no difficulty in obtaining my father’s consent even though he was still a pagan.[4]

This was in spite of the fact that Dominic's priesthood came at a cost to his father.

In 1928, when Dominic was only eleven years old, he suffered a great tragedy. He had hardly settled down to his studies in Anua when his mother died, Dominic having been brought home the day before by his father. After the mourning and burial, Dominic went back to school, struggling not to let the death of his mother affect his education. He was able to turn the pain of his tragedy into a determination to pursue academic excellence. His only regret later was that his mother was not baptized before she died.

In 1932 Dominic passed his First School-Leaving Certificate of Education, also known as Standard Six Examination. His performance enabled him to continue his further education.

Dominic's upbringing at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Anua, not only provided him with an education but also contributed to his spiritual formation. This caused him to reconsider his initiation into the cults and African Traditional Religion and led to his conversion to a new religion. On June 23, 1925, at the age of eight, Dominic was baptized by Rev. Fr. J. Hanson and was given the name Dominic. From then on he no longer went by the names Tom or Udo: only Dominic. To baptize means to immerse or plunge and Dominic took the plunge and became immersed as a new creature in Christ. In 1926, at St. Peter's Parish, Ibiono, he received his first Holy Communion. It is somewhat surprising that Chief Ekandem not only gave consent to the Christianization of his children but positively encouraged them to embrace the Catholic faith, which he held in high esteem. In 1928 Dominic was confirmed and adopted the name Ignatius.

Priesthood beckoned and Dominic answered the call in 1933. He entered the seminary in Onitsha to study for the Sacred Priesthood. His environment was unfamiliar and he was not among his tribesmen, but he found himself among friends. He later reminisced:

I was the only student from my tribe in the Junior Seminary at Onitsha when I started off, but fortunately, I found myself among sincerely genuine friends, companions, devoted brothers and deeply religious Seminarians. The thought of giving up and running home quickly deserted me. Nobody attempted to quarrel with me. I noticed no discrimination. Small and young as I was, nobody attempted to enslave or boss over me.[5]

The priests and teachers were equally supportive and helpful during those difficult days away from home. Rev. Fr. Leo William Brolly, who doubled as the Principal of CKC and the Rector of the Seminary, took care of Dominic in a fatherly way. The seminary turned out to be a happy home and congenial

environment for him. It was his experience in the seminary that gave him the idea for a national seminary of Nigeria later on.

In 1938, after the Junior Seminary course, Dominic was sent to do probation (field work) in Calabar, so as to have field experience for the priesthood. He taught for three years at Sacred Heart College in Calabar and was also involved in liturgical services. In 1941, he began his Senior Seminary training. His family background was a stumbling block in the way of his becoming ordained, but his father's sacrifice and a dispensation from Pope Pius XII succeeded in securing his ordination as a priest on December 7, 1947. He was ordained by Archbishop Charles Henry of Onitsha in Ifuho Church, which later became his Cathedral Church.

Dominic's path to ordination was an uphill climb. In the view of the expatriate missionaries, the son of a chief and priest of African Traditional Religion (with thirty-two wives) could not be ordained as a Roman Catholic priest. If he was going to teach the truth and convince people to follow the message of Christ and that of the Church, he must first of all convince his father. It was a difficult but not impossible task, and Dominic set out to do it. One of the greatest achievements of his life, he believed, was getting his father baptized in the Catholic Church. This took place in 1945, in Anua. Chief Ekandem was treated no differently from the other people being baptized. There was no special regard for his age or position, as "we are all equal in the presence of God." Chief Ekandem submitted to the sacrament not only for the salvation of his soul but also due to the honor and respect he had for his son: it was believed that it would be improper for the son of a pagan to become a priest. Only after he had taken just one of his remaining twenty-eight wives as his "legal" wife, was Chief Ekandem baptized and named Paul. The old man died a committed Catholic in 1955, barely a year after seeing his son consecrated as the first African Catholic bishop in Nigeria and, indeed, in Anglophone West Africa. Chief Ekandem paid a high price for his son to become a priest. In addition to Chief Ekandem's sacrifice for his son, a letter of dispensation was required from Rome. This only came two years after Chief Ekandem's baptism, in 1947. Chief Ekandem had nevertheless remained hopeful that Dominic would become a priest.

After ordination, Rev. Fr. Dominic Ekandem blessed his father and spent a few months in Ifuho Mission. Subsequently he was appointed to assist Rev. Fr. Murray, who was sent to start a new parish in Afaha Obong. The grounding Ekandem had received at home through the guardianship of Philip and others, his time at the Junior Seminary, probation and his time at the Senior Seminary all combined to provide the tools he needed to be a successful assistant, well fit to work with Rev. Fr. Murray. Looking back on his life and work as assistant priest in Afaha Obong, he reminisced:

I was very fortunate to have Rev. Fr. Joe Murray, now a missionary in Kenya, as my superior. Having realized that I was, by the grace of God, a priest like himself, he overlooked all other differences between us and started to prepare me by word and example for the task ahead. He ordered. I obeyed. We agreed not to disagree.[6]

The working conditions in Afaha Obong were, to say the least, not the best, but both Fr. Murray and Fr. Ekandem bore it well. Fr. Murray, expressing his appreciation for Ekandem, maintained that: "All Nigerian Catholics of goodwill accept or reject a priest for what he is – a good priest, another Christ, or a bad priest, a false Christ – not because of his color, race or tribe, notions which would destroy the unity and universality of the Church." [7]

Ekandem was initiated into pastoral ministry and evangelization through the long-lasting education he received from Murray, who was an inspiring teacher. They had a "harmony comparable to that resulting from the combination of white and black on the keyboard of a harmonium or piano." Murray and Ekandem provided pastoral and missionary care to the people of Afaha Obong which had outstations at Nto Edino, Nko, Urua Akpan, Okon, Ukana, Urua Iyang, Midim and Obong. Murray led the way in pastoral and evangelical visits to the outstations. This was known as "trekking" and he bore its hardships with great sacrifice and equanimity. Over the years, Ekandem came to appreciate the value of trekking, especially as an opportunity to make contact between priests and parishioners and to discuss and share in people's problems. It was while living and working with missionaries like Murray that Ekandem cultivated the spirit and skills that enabled him to be successful in his pastoral ministry.

In the early days of 1952, Bishop Moynagh appointed Ekandem as parish priest of Abak. As a pastor, certain aspects of the life of the parish were of special interest and concern to Ekandem. First was the welfare of the members of his parish. He made visits and went trekking to ensure that through contact, consultation, discussion and encouragement a caring community could be established. His second particular concern was evangelization. For Ekandem, it was not enough for the faithful to know their catechism and support the Church: they must also evangelize and win converts. He preached and encouraged evangelization through personal contact, both in groups and through individual home visits and connections. He came to realize that the task was made lighter and more fruitful when he worked with and through pious societies in the Church. He therefore organized the laity of his parish into various pious societies under the patronage of particular saints. He entrusted them with specific responsibilities and duties while trekking or making pastoral visits: one of



these duties was the construction of rest houses for teachers and priests. He drastically reduced the confusion and difficulties which often attended pastoral visits by making the pious societies maintain these rest houses and provide food and cooking utensils for the use of visiting priests and teachers. This meant that the priests and teachers could travel lightly and accomplish more pastorally. The Legion of Mary was one of the pious societies established by Ekandem at Afaha Obong mission station. The Legion was introduced into Africa by Bishop Moynagh at Ifuho in 1932 as the first *Presidium* of the Legion in the continent. Evangelization was a mission shared by all the societies and as a result, the Church grew.

Ekandem also gave special attention to the issue of Christian marriage. He encouraged as many couples as possible to undergo the Sacrament of Marriage. He made it a point of duty to see that Christian couples received adequate preparation prior to their wedding. He established marriage preparation quarters in the central station of the parish for would-be couples, mostly women, who came for a period of about three months. The future brides were instructed in home economics and in the Christian faith, especially as it pertained to motherhood and being a wife. The marriage quarters served as a school of Christian doctrine with a special emphasis on Christian marriage and family life. Instruction was provided by expert teachers with relevant experience. Ekandem helped couples resolve the problems preventing them from getting married such as the incomplete payment of a dowry. He would contact the parents and plead for the wedding to go ahead. Ekandem succeeded in getting many marriages blessed and solemnized, thereby increasing the number of Christian families in the parish and in the vicariate. Bishop Moynagh commended his efforts in this regard.

The third issue that concerned Ekandem was the spirituality of the laity, especially with regard to the Sacrament of Penance, corporal works of mercy, and generosity to the Church as demonstrated through Sunday collections. To encourage the spirituality of his parishioners, he introduced the First Friday and First Sunday devotions and made them important activities of the parish. In his pastoral ministry he also gave special attention to the training of catechists and teachers. There were few priests, and pastoral needs were great so the assistance of catechists and teachers was indispensable in spreading the Word. In Ekandem's assessment, the catechists were the greatest and most important group of pastoral agents and leaders, after the priests. These catechists and teachers were generally men of intelligence, industry and integrity, who taught not only in words but also through their exemplary Christian lifestyles.

Ekandem had always admired the quality of "taking the initiative,"

which he found in most missionaries he associated with. He took on this virtue and utilized it in his pastoral ministry. This led to another issue that caught his especial attention. When serving as a priest in Abak, he saw to the development of a junior seminary for the vicariate of Calabar. He was convinced that it was an essential part of his duty to recruit and train candidates for the priesthood. As early as 1948, the seminary started out of Holy Family College, where a special group of students who showed interest in the priesthood were “set aside” and lodged in a separate cottage within the college compound. Fr. Michael Hays, the principal of the college, was dissatisfied with this arrangement and he spoke out against it until Ekandem completely separated the seminarians from those pursuing secular education. With the approval of Bishop Moynagh, Ekandem put up some structures at Afaha Obong. By the end of 1952 the seminary was firmly established there – a place where, according to Ekandem, the Catholics had shown great faith, commitment and a positive disposition towards the Church. Thus, Queen of Apostle Junior Seminary was born, and Ekandem was the seminary’s first rector. Through donations, Ekandem was able to mobilize the resources to build and sustain the seminary.

Ekandem achieved all this in the first six years of his pastoral ministry. He worked with committed men and women, and his ministry was successful. He also had the support and encouragement of a man of God in Bishop J. Moynagh who was consecrated Bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Calabar in the year Ekandem was ordained.

In 1950, Rome made Calabar a diocese and made His Lordship the Most Rev. J. Moynagh its first bishop. He set out to organize and built this vast diocese. He built schools, hospitals and development centers. He opened convents, established parishes and trained leaders for both the Church and the state. The continent of Africa owes its first contact with the Legion of Mary to Bishop Moynagh. He was a man of vision, foresight, high intelligence, and intellect: a great shepherd. He also labored relentlessly for the indigenous priests. He sent many of them, including Ekandem, on special visits abroad.

In 1954 Moynagh gave modern Anglo-West Africa its first indigenous Catholic bishop: His Lordship the Most Rev. Bishop D. I. Ekandem. That year, the diocese of Ikot Ekpene was created and Ekandem appointed to administer it. Earlier, in 1953, Moynagh had acted on his vision for the good of the church in Africa, and had asked Rome to appoint Ekandem as his auxiliary bishop. He wanted to emphasize that the church in Nigeria must grow with its own indigenous bishops. Rome agreed, and so Ekandem was the first indigenous Catholic bishop in Nigeria, and in West Africa.

This happened seven years after Ekandem's ordination. He was preaching at Essene Parish Church for teachers in the Calabar diocese when a priest arrived with a letter for him from Bishop Moynagh. He finished preaching, then took the letter and excused himself. Once out of sight, he opened the letter and read its contents. He was visibly agitated but managed to maintain his composure. He returned to his audience and told them that he had been asked to report to Calabar upon receipt of the letter. He did not tell them why, but reassured them that there was no cause for anxiety. He assured them that all would be well and that it was all for good. And all was well. In the letter, Moynagh informed Ekandem that Pope Pius XII had appointed him to the office of bishop, and that he would be the Auxiliary Bishop of Calabar. About two weeks before the consecration, Ekandem withdrew to an undisclosed mission house for a period of quiet prayer, reflection and rest. He needed prayerful silence and solitude to grasp the full meaning and implication of his new responsibility.

Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Catholic Church in Calabar, Ekandem was consecrated as bishop on May 23, 1954. Moynagh's efforts had paid off with the elevation of Ekandem to the bishopric, the youngest in the Catholic Church and a shining example and inspiration to all other Nigerian priests.

The consecration of Ekandem as the auxiliary bishop of Calabar was a milestone for the Catholic Church in Nigeria. The event was designed to coincide with the Golden Jubilee of the advent of Roman Catholicism in Calabar, and was held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral Church, Calabar. Since it was the first time in the modern era that an African bishop was being consecrated in West Africa, it was an international event, which drew people from all walks of life, from both Africa and Europe. Apart from Ekandem himself, the two happiest men on that occasion were his father, Chief Paul Ekandem, and Bishop James Moynagh, who had brought it about.

Ekandem saw his episcopal elevation as a cross, and he so he chose the cross with a crown of thorns as his episcopal insignia and his motto was *in the Cross is Salvation*. After the various rounds of receptions and celebrations, he settled back down to his pastoral ministry. He exercised it in three principal capacities: as auxiliary bishop of Calabar diocese, as the vicar general of Calabar diocese, and as the father-in-charge of St. Joseph's parish, Anua. For the next nine years, Anua was his home and pastoral base until in 1963 he became bishop of that ministry.

How did he perform as a bishop? The indigenization process that was taking place at the political level in 1950s Nigeria did not bypass the church. Speaking about the night of his ordination to the priesthood, Ekandem commented: "In College I used to wonder what I would be...

sometimes, I thought I'd like to be a doctor to heal my people's ills... sometimes a lawyer to plead their cause... or maybe an architect to plan and build for them... now I am all these: I am a Priest.”[8] He was a priest who saw his life and ministry as a means through which God would uplift his people in their spiritual and temporal welfare. He believed and insisted on catholicity in its entirety:

Those who have chosen to be Catholics want nothing but Catholicism in its entirety. We Nigerians do not like adulteration, whether of food or of drinks. Hence, the sincere Catholics do not want and do not need a watered-down Catholicism either by ignoring healthy principles or in the name of adaptation. Nigeria needs the Faith, the whole Faith and nothing but the Faith.[9]

He believed that the Church was a sort of commonwealth, belonging equally to all, since in the theological and traditional language of the Church, she is described as universal. The Church belongs to every nation equally and therefore, although she could be described as a national church, she would be without national vices, corruption or limitations. For Ekandem, the Church in Nigeria must be every inch Catholic and rigorously so. On the other hand, it must be Nigerian. In his view, it was up to Catholic leaders - theologians and philosophers - to bring about necessary and useful adaptations in order to make the Church relevant to Nigeria and Nigerians. To promote the incarnation of the Church in Nigeria, Ekandem urged and invited Nigerian philosophers and theologians to bring their scholarship to bear upon the Nigerian situation.

Ekandem believed that the viability and self-reliance of the incarnated church depended upon indigenous priests whose training must be given a national tone. In a letter dated August 27, 1956, he wrote to the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. J. R. Knox, appealing for a common Majority Seminary for Nigerian students. These are some of the reasons he gave:

1. Languages and customs of another tribe can easily be picked up by students in a common institute. Such knowledge would prove most useful to priests, who at different periods of their ministry are bound to meet men from almost every tribe in Nigeria.
2. It will help to lessen strife and misunderstandings among Nigerian tribes.
3. The cry of every true and selfless Nigerian today is “one Nigeria.” The training of her priests in a common institute will help to create and stabilize that union.
4. Where priests and vocations are few, frequent communications

between the various Dioceses may bring encouragement and perhaps relief. It may even be more economical to do so.[10] After a delay caused by the Nigerian civil war, the National Seminary of St. Paul ultimately took off. As of March 2015, the Seminary has produced 267 priests, three of whom have become bishops. Priests of the order of the Missionary Society of St. Paul are serving as missionaries in eighteen countries in Africa, Europe, North America and the Caribbean.

Ekandem's philosophy of education was founded on the mission given to the Church by Christ to "teach all nations" and directed by Vatican II. In a sermon on April 11, 1971, in Port-Harcourt, he held that education consists essentially in preparing a person for what they must be and what they must do here below, in order to obtain the sublime end for which they were created. The Church is in favor not only of character training and religious formation but also of the study of secular subjects because education brings fulfillment and appreciation of the beauty of God's creation. Ekandem emphasized that Catholics should support and promote education everywhere. Parents have the primary rights and are primarily responsible for the education of their children: those rights and responsibilities come to the family from the Creator and they can neither be surrendered nor infringed by any power on Earth. However, the state also has definite duties towards education: parental and state efforts must be complementary. The Church must not be uninvolved in general education but also accept its grave obligation to see to the moral and religious education of all her children – boys and girls – equally.

Modeling his life and work on his mentor, Moynagh, Ekandem further developed existing secondary schools like Holy Family College, Abak, St. Frances, Ikot Ataku, Regina Coeli, Essene, St. Vincent, Oti Oron, St. Columbus, Ikwen, Cornelia Connelly, Uyo, St. Augustine, Urua Inyang, and Holy Child Teachers' Training College, Ifuho. Ekandem consolidated these and also established Holy Trinity School, Mbiakong, St. Kizito, Adiasim, and Adiaha Obong Secondary School, Uyo. He also established Loreto Girls Juniorate at Afaha Obong for nurturing and training indigenous woman in vocational and religious work as a counterpart to Queen of Apostles Seminary, which he had founded earlier.

In 1954, Bishop Ekandem led the founding of the Federation of Catholic Teachers' Association. The purpose was to enhance the quality of teaching and improve the welfare and well-being of teachers. It was to unite teachers in a spirit of charity so that they

would improve themselves and help one another as architects and builders of a Christian Nation. Ekandem surmounted all obstacles to establish the Association.

In the area of health and social services, Ekandem encouraged the building of health units in villages which were far away from hospitals. Dispensaries and maternity units were built throughout his diocese. In addition to this, he was the proprietor of two hospitals: St. Mary's hospital, Urua Akpan, Ikot Ekpene; and Mercy Hospital, Abak. It is pertinent to mention that these hospitals and health units were very useful during the civil war. Not only did they provide healthcare, but they also served as refugee centers. In economic and social services Ekandem made the joys, hopes, grief and anxieties of the poor his own, in accordance with the statement of Vatican II.

He built a civic center in Ikot Ekpene with departments for domestic science, marriage guidance, vocational training, adult education, typing training, agriculture, industry and manufacturing; a cooperative unit and a place for children with special needs. After the civil war, he founded the Holy Child Children's Home for orphans and the destitute.

He promoted African culture in two ways: by positively encouraging and promoting the good elements in the culture and condemning the bad. He encouraged the revival of culture in the seminary and sponsored research into African names in Christian initiations. This resulted in a book: *Annang, Efik, Ibibio Personal Names – A Cultural Study 1974.*"[11]

It deserves mentioning that when Ekandem became the Bishop of Ikot Ekpene in 1963, he faced the challenges of the new Diocese stoically and successfully. His participation in the Second Vatican Council in 1965 was the experience of a lifetime. According to Ekandem it was a transformative event and he believed that there was hardly anybody who was in Rome for the Council who went home unaffected.

By the time Ekandem returned to Nigeria, the politico-military event which was to have impact on all aspects of Nigerian life was smoldering. As the crisis, which had started on January 15, 1966, was moving towards breaking point, the Catholic bishops of Nigeria urged caution and moderation. However, it seems the bishops were not able to work together in unison and so their episcopal efforts for peace and a joint statement were ineffectual. Some Catholic bishops' delegations were sent to the Federal and regional centers. However,

the eminent delegation sent to Ojukwu in Enugu, (including Ekandem) met a brick wall, as Ojukwu was poised for war. Ekandem was disheartened that Ojukwu, who was a Catholic, did not listen to his “spiritual fathers.” Incidentally, Ekandem was out of the country when the shooting war broke out on July 6, 1967 and he could only return home through Cameroon. Apparently, some Biafran soldiers watched him closely when he returned. The war taxed his charity, generosity and kindness to their limits, but he never gave up on his amity.

Happily, the war came to an end and rehabilitation, reconciliation and reconstruction began in earnest. Ekandem remained passionately committed to his flock and to all those who were in need throughout the crisis of the civil war. With other clergymen he worked tenaciously for peace, which unfortunately did not come about until the war had run its full course. The treatment of south-eastern seminarians in Igboland after the civil war disconcerted Ekandem and the other bishops from his area. This led to the establishment of Bigard Memorial Seminary in Ikot Ekpene on December 5, 1976. Ekandem commanded the respect of his clergymen because of the way he treated them, and also because he had seniority by virtue of his age and his vocational status. After the civil war, Ekandem became the Apostolic Administrator of Port-Harcourt diocese. He held this position from 1970 to 1973.

Rome officially announced the elevation of Dominic Ekandem to the cardinalate at noon on April 27, 1976. The news was communicated to the new cardinal the following day in a congratulatory letter from Monsignor D. Causero, the acting Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Nigeria. Thus, Ekandem became the first Nigerian bishop to be made a cardinal. Cardinals of the Holy Roman Catholic Church constitute the senate or supreme council of the Church for the Holy Father, the Pope, and assist him as his chief counselors and helpers in governing the Church. From 1917, when the Code of Canon Law was promulgated, to be made a cardinal a person had to be a priest and, according to Canon 232, he had to be one of “outstanding learning, piety, judgment and ability.” There is no fixed number for cardinals, but it is the prerogative of the Pope to select those on whom he wants to confer the dignity of a cardinal. When a pope dies or resigns, cardinals have the privilege of electing his replacement.

Cardinal Ekandem’s response to his appointment was both humble and instructive:

For me this is a moment made possible only by Almighty God, our Heavenly Father through our Holy Father Pope Paul. I give thanks to

God for the great honor bestowed on my country. For myself, I can only repeat that I am a Catholic Priest. This is what is really important. Whatever honor may be attached to that priesthood in my humble person, I accept it on the solemn understanding that I was ordained a priest of God to minister to the people, and if necessary, to die for the people.[12]

He called for prayers and characteristically declared “nine days of fasting and prayer with jubilation.” All Nigerians appreciated this great honor done to a worthy compatriot.

Those of us in government were overjoyed and we congratulated the new cardinal, celebrating with him and describing him as a great Nigerian who made us proud. The entry of a Nigerian into the highest governing body of the Church confirmed and consolidated Ekandem’s belief in the catholicity of the Church while maintaining and sustaining its relevance for Nigeria. His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem had always been both a particular and a universal person. His elevation was an encouragement to continue being both rigorously African and rigorously Catholic. He fulfilled both roles. As an experienced priest, missionary and patriot, Ekandem counseled young missionaries to be happy with their place in the priesthood of Christ, and not to waste time worrying or arguing over money and material wealth. He adjured them to go out to their mission fields as ambassadors of Christ, bearing in mind that as Nigerians, they were also ambassadors of their homeland, Nigeria.

Ekandem was the president of the National Episcopal Conference of Nigeria for six years, beginning in 1973. His successor, Archbishop Arinze, had this to say about his leadership: “Dominic Cardinal Ekandem was gentle, friendly, quiet, dependable, persevering and disciplined. He was encouraging in his leadership style.”[13]

Ekandem was elected the first president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in his absence on August 27, 1976, and he nurtured that institution. His peers in the Catholic Bishops Conference were universally positive and commendatory in their opinions on his leadership style and his achievements. Although they had periods of disagreement, he managed to resolve them.

Two events concerning Rome, apart from Vatican II, had a tremendous impact on Ekandem. On August 6, 1978, Pope Paul VI died. As was customary for a cardinal, Ekandem joined the conclave to select the new pope. Not only was he among the electorate, he was also a possible candidate, as are all cardinals. It was historic for Ekandem, and for Nigeria. The second event was the visit of Pope John Paul II to Nigeria in February, 1982. As the most senior clergyman, Ekandem had a pivotal role to play in



the Pope's visit. In his welcome address, Ekandem expressed his confidence and faith in the anticipated blessings of the Pontiff:

Your coming is a great consolation for us, your flock. It satisfies the longing desire of all, since we know you have come to bless us, our nation, our people, our government, rulers in their various categories, missionaries, their collaborators, and all those who have been waiting with anxious expectation for your august arrival. All will be spiritually enriched in many ways.[14]

In his homily, the Pope referred to the first encounter of early missionaries with Nigeria and the generous and open-minded reception given to them.

With the creation of the new Federal Capital Territory of Abuja in 1976, Ekandem spearheaded the establishment of Abuja as a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction. To his surprise, he was appointed to the new ecclesiastical territory in 1989. A man of foresight, he immediately relocated to Suleja. That was three years before the Federal Government officially moved to Abuja. With the appointment, Ekandem graciously cut his umbilical cord with Ikot Ekpene. Bishop Etukudoh was subsequently appointed to be the Bishop of Ikot Ekpene in 1988, resolving the problem of succession. Ekandem laid the foundation of the See of Abuja and remained in charge of the archdiocese of Abuja until he retired in 1992. Three years later in Garki, Abuja, on November 24, 1995, Dominic Cardinal Ekandem died. He was buried on December 2, 1995.

Dominic Cardinal Ekandem has been variously described as a pastor without equal, a true conservative nationalist, and a shepherd among shepherds, whose unquestioning obedience to constituted authority led some clergymen to nickname him, "Rome has spoken; no more arguments."

Edidiong Ekefre encapsulated the qualities of Ekandem in this eulogy:

His goodness and virtues have been interred with his bones.

He was a *primus per excellence*

He was the first residential Bishop of Ikot Ekpene Diocese

He was the first Apostolic Administrator of Port-Harcourt

He was the first Cardinal in English-speaking West Africa

He was the first President of the Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa

He was the first Superior and Bishop of Abuja

He was the first President of Christian Association of Nigeria

He was the first Nigerian Cardinal to qualify as a candidate for the Papacy

He was an originator *par excellence*

He was the founder of the Catholic Women's Organization  
He was the originator of the Catholic Teachers' Association  
The originator of the Association of Catholic Graduates, *Lux Catholica*  
The originator of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, Abuja  
He was the originator of many schools, hospitals and hospice homes.  
In life, Ekandem was what he wanted to be, as a priest in the sacred service of God, and in the spiritual and temporal service of humanity.[15]

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## Notes

1. Cosmas K. O. Nwosuh, *Cardinal Dominic Ekandem and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2012), 16.
2. Conflation of an interview with Dr. Gabriel Ekandem, (of the University of Uyo) and Ekandem, D. Cardinal, *The Church in the Rise of Nigeria*, (Aba: Cynako Int. Press, 1974).
3. Conflation of an interview with Dr. Gabriel Ekandem,(of the University of Uyo) and Cosmas K. O. Nwosuh, *Cardinal Dominic Ekandem and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2012).
4. Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, (Ikeja: May Five Media Ltd, 2013), and Cosmas K. O. Nwosuh, *Cardinal Dominic Ekandem and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2012), 18.
5. Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, 1917-1976: First Nigerian Cardinal*, (Aba: Cynako International Press, 1976), 23. See also Nwosu, V.A., "The Growth of the Catholic Church in Onitsha Ecclesiastical province" in Makozi A.O. and Afolabi Ojo G. J (eds.) *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*.
6. See Ekandem, Dominic Cardinal, *True Spiritual Leadership, A Vital Contribution to Nation-Building*, (Ikot Ekene: De Paul Printing Press, 1976) and particularly, Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, 1917-1976*, (Aba: Cynako International Press, 1976), 23.
7. See Akpan Godwin, *Memoirs of a Pioneer Missionary*, (Iperu Remo: Ambassador Publishing of the Missionary Society of St. Paul, 2001). See also, Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, 23.

8. Fr. U. E. Umoren, *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, 1917-1976*, 23. See also Conolly Dermt, "Making Nigeria Great: Dominic Cardinal Ekandem (1917- 1997)" in *Africa*. July-Aug 1996, 14-16.
9. Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, (Ikeja: May Five Media Ltd, 2013), and Umoren,34.
10. See Ekandem, Dominic Cardinal. *True Spiritual Leadership*. Also, Fr. U. E. Umoren,35.
11. Umoren, 41.
12. See Ekandem, *True Spiritual Leadership*, and Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*.
13. Nwosuh, 365.
14. See Edidiong Ekefre, *A Testament of Light – The Life and Times of Dominic Cardinal Ekandem*, and Nwosuh, 367.
15. See Umoren, and Nwosuh, 367.

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- the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. Lagos, Macmillan, Nigeria Publishers Ltd., 1982.
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- Umoren, U. E. *His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem, 1917-1976*. Aba: Cynako International Press, 1976.
- Program for the Federal Mass of His Eminence Dominic Cardinal Ekandem the Archbishop of Abuja (1917- 1995) at our Lady Queen of Nigeria Roman Catholic Cathedral, Abuja, December 2, 1995.
- Interview conducted with Dr. Gabriel Ekandem, University of Uyo, March 2, 2015.

## Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

**Aderibigbe, Gbola and Carolyn M. Jones Medine. *Contemporary Perspectives on Religions in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. \$67.22 - \$100.00. ISBN-13: 978-1137500519**

*Contemporary Perspectives on Religions in Africa and the African Diaspora* explores African derived religions in a globalized world. The volume focuses on the continent, on African identity in globalization, and on African religion in cultural change. (from the cover).

Essays include: Religious traditions in Africa: an overview of origins, basic beliefs and practices / Ibigbolade S. Aderibigbe. Modern trends in the teaching of African religion in the 21st century: conceptual decolonization / Rotimi Williams Omotoye. African religion in 21st century and the search for philosophical relevance / Francis Adewale Olajide. African religious movements and pentecostalism: the model of Ijo-Orunmila, Ato / Oguntola Oye-Laguda. African religion and health care delivery in Africa / Kelvin Onongha. Some ethical reflections on African indigenous religion and Christianity / Rotimi Williams Omotoye. Christianity in contemporary African religious space / Pius Oyeniran Abioje. Islam in contemporary African society / R. Ibrahim Adebayo. African derived religions in diaspora: an overview / M. I. Oguntoyinbo-Atere. Art and music in African derived diaspora religions / Adeoluwa Okunade. Sojourner Truth, hybrid identity, and multi-vocal text / Carolyn M. Jones Medine. Womanist spirituality: legacies of freedom / Melanie L. Harris. Initiation and possession in Santería, Candomblé, and Voodoo / Umesh Patel. Mythology of rituals and sacrifices in African-derived diaspora religions / Osei A. Mensah. Socio-religious agencies of Santería religions in the United States of America / Robert Y. Owusu. Modern legal issues in the practice of African diaspora religions / Danielle Boaz. African religious systems in the context of world religions: challenges for the American scholars / Maha Marouan. African initiated churches and African immigrants in the United States: a model in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, North America (RCCGNA) / Ibigbolade Aderibigbe. Islamic communities in the United States: issues of religion and political identity / Yushau Sodiq.

**Bongmba, Elias Kifon (editor). *Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*. New York : Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2016. Hardcover \$205.00. ISBN-13: 978-0415705028**

*The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa* offers a multi-disciplinary analysis of the Christian tradition across the African continent and throughout a long historical span. The volume offers historical and thematic essays tracing the introduction of Christianity in Africa, as well as its growth, developments, and effects, including the lived experience of African Christians. Individual chapters address the themes of Christianity and gender, the development of African-initiated churches, the growth of Pentecostalism, and the influence of Christianity on issues of sexuality, music, and public health. This comprehensive volume will serve as a valuable overview and reference work for students and researchers worldwide. (from the cover)

**Heaney, Christopher. *From Historical to Critical Post-Colonial Theology: The Contribution of John S. Mbiti and Jesse N.K. Mugambi*. African Christian Studies Series; 9. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016. Paperback \$29.76 ISBN-13: 978-162564781**

What is post-colonial theology? How does it relate to theology that emerged in historically colonial situations? These are two questions that get to the heart of Robert S. Heaney's work as he considers the extent to which theologians predating the emergence of post-colonial theology might be considered as precursors to this theological movement. Heaney argues that the work of innovative theologians John S. Mbiti and Jesse N. K. Mugambi, important in their own right, must now also be considered in relation to the continued emergence of post-colonial theology. When this is done, fresh perspectives on both the nature of post-colonial theology and contextual theology emerge. Through a sympathetic and critical reading of Mbiti and Mugambi, Heaney offers a series of constructive moves that counter the ongoing temptation toward acontextualism that continues to haunt theology both in the North and in the South. (from the cover)

**West, Gerald O. *The Stolen Bible: From Tool of Imperialism to African Icon*. Biblical interpretation series. Boston: Brill, 2016. Hardback \$184.00. ISBN 9004322752**

*The Stolen Bible* tells the story of how Southern Africans have interacted with the Bible from its arrival in Dutch imperial ships in the mid-1600s through to contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. *The Stolen Bible* emphasizes African agency and distinguishes between African receptions of the Bible and African receptions of missionary-colonial Christianity. Through a series of detailed historical, geographical, and hermeneutical case-studies the book analyses Southern African receptions of the Bible, including the earliest African encounters with the Bible, the

translation of the Bible into an African language, the appropriation of the Bible by African Independent Churches, the use of the Bible in the Black liberation struggle, and the ways in which the Bible is embodied in the lives of ordinary Africans. (from the cover)

### **Recent Dissertations:**

#### **“Empowered belonging through identity transformation: Assemblies of God church planting narratives from West Africa since 1990.”**

*By Jester, Jerry Stephen, Ph.D., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2014, 344; 3683273*

#### **Abstract**

From 1914 to 1990, Assemblies of God (AG) church planting efforts in Africa produced approximately ten thousand local churches and two million adherents. Since 1990, African Assemblies of God (AAG) churches emphasized ambitious church planting initiatives resulting in the addition of approximately fifty-four thousand local churches and fourteen million believers. This study examines the narratives of AAG church planters in West Africa to ascertain those factors influencing their church planting perceptions and activities in relation to Pentecostal missiology, the sociocultural context, leadership, and organizational development.

In order to discover those factors influencing church multiplication and growth, interview narratives of twelve leaders and fifty-one AAG church planters in West Africa were examined, delimited to the Anglophone context of Nigeria and the Francophone context of Togo. Using a qualitative data collection and analysis process known as grounded theory methodology, I discovered those factors that influence the perceptions and activities of church planters in the contexts of the study.

The findings show that church planters experience transformation in Christ and seek the transformation of their past, represented in the village, by planting new churches of transformed converts. This is a process of “backwarding” the Gospel to the village. These efforts lead to a renewal of the African self in a search for true belonging, enabling redemption of the African past and reclamation of the African future through Christ in Spirit empowerment. Church planting results in the local AAG church being a place of belonging and belonging to a place. This is described as ecclesiastical belonging, dimensionalized accordingly as proximal church planting, accessible church planting, and assimilation church planting. Belonging in these contexts is experiential through Gospel proclamation in Spirit empowerment to meet African aspirations to experience the divine. Additionally, belonging is relational, for the local AAG belongs to a global

Pentecostal faith community.

**Available full-text:**

<http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/pubnum/3683273.html>

**“The lived experience of exile and Christianity for the Lost Boys from Sudan: A transcendental-phenomenological study.”**

By *Petronis, Lisa Anne, Ph.D.*, Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2009, 794; 3486446

**Abstract (Summary)**

This study illuminates the essence of exile and shared Christianity for the Lost Boys from Sudan. Interviews and a phenomenological research method were used to deepen the lived experience of 8 Lost Boys from Sudan. The study vividly describes the literal and symbolic journey taken by the Lost Boys over a 15- to 23-year period. The study captures the essence of their exile and provides rich descriptions of the many dimensions of their amazing ordeal, including physical and emotional suffering, tragedy, trauma, spirituality, faith, redemption, and resiliency. This study expands knowledge in the field of clinical psychology related to the topics of coping with violence and aggression, genocide, the migrant experience, and the psychology of religion, as it investigates traits contributing to adaptation and personal growth in the face of trauma, including changes in the subjective structures of time, space, causality, relationship to self, relationship to others, relationship to God, materiality, and bodily concerns.

As young children, the Lost Boys walked hundreds of miles and endured unimaginable suffering. This study gives an in-depth description of their profound journey that informs the reader of the lived experience of their exile. As the first and only depth-psychological study of this group from Southern Sudan, it produces informative results regarding the presence of spirituality alongside suffering, and the power of such a combination. The study shows that, in the face of profound trauma, one is capable of evolving emotionally and spiritually. The Boys’ narratives paint a heartbreaking and heartwarming tale about the power of the human spirit.

**Available full-text:**

<http://pqdtopen.proquest.com/pubnum/3486446.html>

**Frances (Beth) Restricker**, Book Notes Editor  
Head, African Studies Library, Boston University



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