

A Historical Account of the Advent and Growth of Christ Apostolic Church in Akoko Nigeria.

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Abstract

This paper gives a historical account of the Advent and Growth of Christ Apostolic Church in Akoko Nigeria. It identifies the Geographical location of Akoko and traces the advent of Christ Apostolic Church from 1930. The expansion, growth, and development from 1930 to 2010 are discussed. It identifies the source and factors responsible for her numerical growth. It discusses the impact of the church in Akokoland. The paper concludes with suggestion and recommendations for further improvement on her present status. Historical method is used in achieving our objective in the work. The growth of churches in Akokoland is noticed to be graphical as the number of churches increased graphically to suggest a model of growth from 1930 to 2010.

Introduction:

Christ Apostolic Church is one of the frontline African Indigenous churches in Nigeria. The church has spread its tentacles all over Nigeria and its presence is felt in almost every village in Akokoland. "Indigenisation and inculturation"¹ of Christ Apostolic church has gained her some measure of respect.

The main objective of this paper is to give a Historical Account of the Advent and Growth of Christ Apostolic church in Akoko, Nigeria. This work will identify the Geographical location of Akoko and trace the advent of Christ Apostolic Church from 1930. The expansion, growth and development between 1930 and 20110 will be discussed. It will identify the source and factors responsible for her numerical growth. The impact of the church in Akokoland is discussed. The paper concludes with suggestion and recommendation for further improvement on her present status. In 1930, CAC church was established in Ilepa, Ikare and in 2010 CAC became the leading indigenous African church in Akokoland.

The Geographical Location and the People of Akoko

The people of Akoko settle in North Eastern part of Ondo State of Nigeria.² Akoko is made up of a collection of fifty-two towns and villages³. It shares a common boundary with Edo, Kogi and Ekiti States. It is a geographical entity that finds itself within an enclosure of River Ose. The Ose River marks the Northern and Eastern boundaries with Kogi and Edo States of Nigeria. It shares its Western boundaries with Ekiti State. It is an area with multi-lingua peculiarities. Akeredoluopined that "Akokoland appears to be a meeting place of different migrants who peacefully settled together in brotherhood"⁴.

The people occupy forest area where rainfall is moderate all the year round. The common cash crops grown by the people include Cocoa, Kolanut, and Coffee; while the major food crops are yam, cassava, cocoyam, plantain and maize⁵. The occupations of the people include farming, hunting, and trading. The people have big rivers which drain their land and make the land fertile for agriculture. Such rivers include Awara River in Ikare, Ajuwa and Ugbo rivers in Okeagbe among others. The animals common in this area include deer, antelope, grass cutter and monkey.

Akokoland is full of mountains and hills. These hills and rocks served as hidden places and sources of protection for the people during the "various wars in Yorubaland in late 19th Century"⁶. The nature of Akoko topography confirms that Akoko hills which apparently cluster together and classed with springs were popularly covered with forest in the ancient days. The area thus, served as a convenient place for refuge, where eminent clans competed for settlement in their emigration from their original homes in Ile-Ife and elsewhere. This was why many towns and villages usually come together to form a big town. For example, the people of Afa, Oge, Ido and Aje fall in to this category as they settled in one place after the war to form the present town known as Okeagbe and they speak four variations of Yoruba dialet. In the same vein, the present Ajowa town was made up of eight villages that formerly lived in various clusters but presently formed a big town known as Ajowa with each village retaining her beaded crown.

The language of the people can play a great role in explaining the identity. This is the case of Akoko people that have different Yoruba dialects peculiar to them which are not easily understandable to other Yoruba groups. Within the towns in Akoko area, there are different villages that understand the dialect. The people of Ipesi, Ishua, Ifira and Shosan speak the same dialect with their Edo neighbours from Auchi and Agenebode in Akoko Edo. The people of Eriti, Afin, Irun, Iro and Eshe speak the same dialect with Ekiti. The people of Oba speak the same dialect with Owo who are their closest neighbours. The Akoko people though claimed to have come from Ile-Ife in the 19th Century, are probably influenced by their closest neighbours as seen from the similarities in their dialects or languages.

Advent of Christ Apostolic Church in Akokoland

The genesis of C A C in Akokoland took a gradual process as a result of the Great revival of AyodeleBabalola at Ikare in 1930. The Great Revival that occurred at Ilepalkare took root from Oke-AduraEfon-Alaaye. It was from Ikare revival of November 1930 that CAC church spread to many towns in Akokoland and some parts of Edo State as well⁷. Apostle Joseph AyodeleBabalola was instrumental to the establishment of Christ Apostolic Church in Akokoland.

As Apostle Joseph AyodeleBabalola was one day conducting a Revival meeting at Oke-Adura, Efon-Alaaye he received a revelation from God to proceed to Oshogbo as the next venue of Revival. He relayed the vision to his audience. As he was about to go to Oshogbo, for the revival, he received another divine message to ‘‘change his Oshogbo route to Ikare in Akokoland’’⁸. He made up his mind for the journey to IlepalkareAkokoimmediately. John Odunayo reported that Ojo Amos Olisa an indigene of Ikare was the driver who drove him to Akokoland⁹. His entourage took off at Efon-Alaaye at 2.00 A.M on 8th November 1930 and arrived at Ikare at 2P.M. on the same day. At Akure and Owo, the people there pressurised him to stay a while with them for revival, but he disregarded their pleas and went straight to Ikare.

At Ikare, he was warmly received by the people. The King who was on the throne at Ikare during Apostle AyodeleBabalola’s first visit was Oba JubrilAdumomoh II, the Olukareland. Oba JubrilAdumomoh, Olukare of Ikare, like Oba Adejare of Efon-Alaaye, lodged Apostle AyodeleBabalola and his entourage at a ‘‘Comfortable storey-building opposite the palace’’¹⁰ in the town. The king provided a plain terrain for the revival. It was a very successful revival as converts voluntarily surrendered their charms, amulets, fetishes and idols to the Apostle who burnt them. The news of the revival spread widely as a result of ‘‘miraculous healing performed by Apostle Ayodele Babalola’’¹¹.

The first visit of Apostle AyodeleBabalola took him to Oka Akoko at the invitation of one Samuel AjileyeAsooto who had earlier been cured of acute malaria fever by Apostle Babalola at Efon-AlaayeOke-Adura revival. AjileyeAsooto mobilised his town people in Oka to receive the Apostle warmly. In response to the effort of AjileyeAsooto, the Olubaka of Okaland, Oba Ilegbusi accorded the revivalist a warm and hearty welcome. The people of Oka embraced the revival of AyodeleBabalola. It was Philip Bamigbade that prepared the ground for the success of Oka revival. The first church building in Oka according to Odunayo was built between 1934 and 1935.

After the Great revival at Ilepalkare, the first prayer house was built in the front of the house of late John Omotola at IlepQuarter where the new converts had prayers in the morning and evening daily¹². The foundation members of CAC church at Ikare were John Omotola, Chief Alapin of Edo Quarter, Ademati from Okela Quarter and Pa Orijah from Ilep. They worshiped temporarily under the palm leaf shed erected in the front of John Omotola’s residence for four years before they were allocated a piece of land for church building. The first ‘‘permanent church building for worship was built at OkelaIkare in 1938’’¹³. It is to be noted that CAC was very successful in Ikare and Okaland. The reflection of this success is seen in the number of churches established in Oka and Ikar today. It was from Ikare and Oka as nucleus of CAC that the church spread to other parts of Akokoland.

The second phase of Apostle Babalola’s revival was in 1934. Prominent among those who spearheaded the continuity of the Great Revival in Akokoland in 1934 was John Omotolaof IlepStreetIkare. It was Omotola who gave accommodation to JosephBabalola and his followers whenOba JubrilMomoh, the Olukarerefused to accommodate them in July 1934. John Omotolaallowed temporary shed to be constructed at the front of his house for the purpose of conducting morning and evening Sunday services. Joseph Babalola was about to use the occasion of his second visit to Akokoland to strengthen the revival activities of the towns that had earlier accepted his teaching and to also break new grounds in some of the other towns that had not hitherto accepted the new faith.

The second revival soon penetrated in full force to different parts of Akokoland. Thus Epinmi became an important revival centre in the neighbourhood, more so, as Abraham Omotosho, one of the two revival workers who were first ordained pastors in up-section came to be resident in Epinmi¹⁴. At Ishua, Jeremiah Ologun who mobilised his town mates to accept and organise the revival had himself experienced divine healing of Okeoye where he was cured of leprosy. After Jeremiah Ologun had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Lord used him in establishing and consolidating the Revival at Idogun, Upe, Ikun, Sosan and Idoani. When Joseph Babalola arrived at Ipesi, many miracles took place. The miracles attracted many people far and near. He encountered with the Babalawos (herbalist) who had earlier vowed to prevent him from disturbing the operation of their idols. The revival was a success at Ipesi: and Idogun as the faith was widely accepted.

It is to be noted here that the different revival groups in Akokoland had no funds to erect convenient and standard building either as places of worship or houses for accommodation; converts at first met in members houses for devotion and they resided in houses borrowed from members. However, they soon erected temporary sheds called 'ago' or 'pepe' and later mission house. The 'pepe' built at John Omotosho's premises was used for four years before the Oke-Igbala church that replaced it was dedicated for use in 1938. The first mission house, formerly a bungalow and later a storey building was completed in 1940.

Each Assembly in Akokoland had a formidable and verile choir made up of those who were able to sing and capable of reading and writing Yoruba language. They stood firm in promoting the growth of the revival; in this way contributed to the rapid development of the Revival groups. All over Akokoland, there were male and female local leaders within the different revival groups. The first six elders to advise the revival in the administration of Akokoland (that is, Alagbamefa Akoko) were Elisha Dadi (Ikare), Abraham Ariyo (Epinmi), Joseph Ajileye (Oka), Noah (Ikakumo), Semola (Akungba) and Joseph Aborowa (Ipesi). Prominent among the workers (Evangelist/Pastors) that strenuously promoted the growth of the Revival at Ikare were J.A Medaiye, Noah Ojo from Aramoko, Daniel Abidakun, Ade-Yilu from Lagos, and R.A. Adedipe from Erio. J.A. Medaiye was the pivot of development of mission-house buildings and physical development in Akokoland.

Expansion and Growth of CAC in Akokoland.

The period of expansion and growth is divided into three stages namely 1930- to 1960, 1960-1990; and 1990-2010. In this section, the expansion and growth of CAC is divided into three periods as listed below.

A. 1930-1960 (36 Churches)

/N	TOWN	Church and Year of Establishment
	Ikare	CAC OkeIgbala, Okela 1930; OkeIsegun Edo Ikare 1956; OkeAlaafia 1956; OkeIsegunIllelabo 1958.
	Oka	CAC Oke Ayo Agba 1932; OkeIye 1944; OkeAlaafia, Oka 1952; BolorunduroIwaro 1955.
	Arigidi	CAC OkeIsegun 1932; OkeAnuArigidiOja 1957; OkeIye 1958.
	Ajowa	CAC OkeIgbala 1957; OkeIsegun 1957.
	Ishua	CAC Isegun 1958; OkeIgbala 1958.
	Ipe	CAC OkeAlaafia 1957; OkeIgbala 1960.
	Akungba	CAC OkeIsegunAkunmi 1931.

	Ogbagi	CAC OkeAlaafia 1932.
	Epinmi	CAC OkeIye 1938.
0	Oyin	CAC OkeIsegun 1942; OkeIsegun 1957.
1	Ikanmu	CAC OkeIsegun 1944.
2	Ese	CAC OkeIye
3	Afin	CAC OkeIgbala 1955.
4	Irun	CAC OkeIsegun 1955.
5	Ikaramu	CAC OkeIgbala 1955.
6	Oba	CAC OkeIgbala 1956.
7	Okeagbe	CAC OkeIgbala, Oge 1956.
8	Igasi	CAC OkeIgbala 1957.
9	Akunmi	CAC OkeIye 1958.
0	Ikun	CAC OkeIgbala 1958.
1	Ipesi	CAC Oke Ayo 1958.
2	Iye	CAC OkeIye 1960.
3	Auga	CAC OkeIgbagbo 1960.
4	Ilelabo	CAC OkeIsegun 1958.

It is to be noted here that Thirty six churches were established between 1930 and 1960; out of these, four were established each in Ikare and Oka, three established in Arigidi, two established each in Ajowa, Oyin, Ipe and Ishua; while the remaining Seventeen towns established one church each.

B. 1961-1990 (47 Churches)

/N	TOWN	Church and Year of Establishment
	Ikare	CAC Okeayo, Okoja 1964; OkeIyanuAlapata 1965; OkeIye, Okegbee 1965; OkeItura, Ese 1965; OkeHalleluyah, Okeruwa 1966; OkeIbukun Hospital Road 1966; Oke Ore Ofe 1969; OkeItunu Ministry 1986.
	Oka	CAC OkeIgbalaSierin 1969; OkeIyanuUba 1969; WakatiAduraIkanmu 1970; OkeIbukun 1970; OkeIturaAyepelwaro 1972, OkeIbukunAyegunle 1972.
	Arigidi	CAC OkeAnuAgbaluku 1972; OkeIbukunAgbaluku 1986.
	Oba	CAC OkeIsegun 1973; OkeIsodotun 1977.
	Ogbagi	CAC OkeIgbala, OkeAyetoro 1964; OkeAgbara 1990; OkeAnu 1990; OkeItunu 1990.
	Supare	CAC Olomiye 1962.
	Irun	CAC OkeIgbala, Oke-Irun 1964; OkeIsinmiMolejiOke-Irun 1986; OkeAgbaraSurulere 1986.
	Iboropa	CAC OkeAnu 1964.
	Ise	CAC OkeIbukun 1964.
0	Ugbe	CAC OkeAnu 1965.
1	Akungba	CAC OluwatedoIbaka 1968.
2	OkeAgbe	CAC Oke Ayo, Afa 1968.
3	Ikaram	CAC OkeAlaafia, Ayeteju 1977, OkeIsegunIjoke 1987; OkeOyage 1978.
4	Gedegede	CAC OkeIgbala 1986.
5	Iro	CAC OkeIgbala 1986.
6	Ajowa	CAC OkeIyanu 1986; OkeIye 1986.
7	Erusu	CAC OkeIgbala 1986.
8	Sosan	CAC OkeAnu 1987.
9	Ishua	CAC OkeIyeIdofin 1987; OkeImoleOyara 1989; OkeAgbara 1989.
	Ikakunmo	CAC OkeAlaafia 1989.

0		
1	Auga	CAC OkeImole 1989.

A total number of Forty-seven churches were established between 1961 and 1990. Out of which Eight churches were established in Ikare; Seven established in Oka; Five established in Ogbagi; Three established each in Ikaram, Oba and Ishua; Two established each in Irun and Arigidi, while the remaining eleven towns established one church each.

C. 1991-2010 (64 Churches)

/N	TOWN	Church and Year of Establishment
	Ikare	CAC Alasepe Opposite Rockson Hotel 1998; OkeItunu, Ishankunmi/Eho 1998; MadakeAdura,Ese 1998; Revival Centre Ilepá 1998; OkeAnuOyinmo 1998, OkeIyanu Ayo 2004; Oke Ife Ekanile 2004; AgbalaIwosan 2004; OkeAnuEse 2004; OkeIyin, iku 2005; Oluwasogo Semusemu 1996; OkeIsinmiAlapata 2006; OkeAjayeEse 2006; OkeAgbara, Agboriki2006; Miracle CenterOkorun 2006; OkeIbudaOlorun, Oyinmo 2006; OkeIyanuOdo 2007; Gbaremu Ministry 1993.
	Oka	CAC IwoyeAgonIwoye 2003; Mountain Power,Ikese 1998; OkeIdandeIwonrin 1995; OkeIyanuIwonrin 1991; OkeIrapapdaOsan 1996; OkeIyanuIkese 1994; Victory Chapel Sabo 1996; OkeIsegunEbinrin 1995; OkeAgbaraOwase 1997; OkeSioniAkusa 1991; OkeIrapadaEbo 1998; OkeIyanuOwakeIwaro 2001; OkeIgbalaOkelaIwaro 2002.
	Supare	CAC Oke Ayo Oluwatomiwa 2006; Okegbegun 1990; OkeIsegun 1998; CanaanlandAyedara 1996; OkeAgbaraOlorun, Owode 1999.
	Eti Oro	CAC IyanuEti Oro 1995.
	Akungba	CAC Idande 1996; Victory Chapel 2005; OkeItunu 2007.
	OkeAgbe	CAC OkeAnu, Ido 1994; AjeOkeagbe 2004.
	Oba	CAC Araromi Oba 1999.
	Karam	CAC AgbaraIyotu 1994; OkeIyanu 1996.
	Irun	CAC Oke Ayo Odo-Irun 1998; Oke Ago 1990.
0	Arigidi	CAC OgoOluwa 2001; Miracle Centre Imo 2005; OkeIyanuOluwa 2006.
1	Eriti	CAC OKE Idande 2006.
2	Ugbe	CAC OkeImole 2001; ItusileJesu 2006; OkeSioni 2002; OkeOluwabamise 2007; OkeAseyori 2004; Oke Ina (Mountain Of Fire) 2004; Prayer Centre 2006.

3	Ishua	CAC OkeIturaIzo 2000; OkeAseyori 2007; OkeOlorunsogo 2007.
4	Ogbagi	CAC OkeIbukun 2007.

A total number of sixty-four churches were established between 1990 and 2010. Out of these Ikare established Eighteen churches; Oka Thirteen churches; Ugbe Six churches; Supare and Akungba Five each, Ishua three churches; Two each in Okeagbe, Ikaram and Irun, while the remaining four towns established one church each.

It is to be noted here that there are One Hundred and Forty-Seven Church Assemblies established in Akokoland between 1930 and 2010 as listed above. The Evangelistic zeal and strategic method of evangelism witnessing in form of planned crusades and revivals led to the expansion of churches in the period covered.

As a result of explosion of churches, the method of creating Area Church Council (ACC) and District Church Council (DCC) were introduced for administrative purpose in 1986 and 2004 respectively. Oka was uplifted to Area Council status in 1986 and District Church Council (DCC) status in 2004.

In 1996, as a result of the numerical growth of Churches in Ikare area, the churches in Ikare District Church Council (DDC) were sub-divided and upgraded to the status of District Church Council (DCC). A District Church Council (DCC) is made up of at least five or more churches. This method was adopted for the purpose of easy administration and expansion of churches.

The following Thirteen Districts were carved out of Ikare District Church Council in 1996 namely Edo, Ilepa, Ile Oluwa, Epinmi, Ishua, Arigidi, Akungba, Ogbagi, Irun, Ielabo Districts. Each District Church Council (DCC) was led by a District Superintendent (DS) as the sole leader and administrator of the Districts.

The analysis of the numerical growth and spread of CAC as stated above is noticed to be graphical in the sense that the number of churches increased graphically to suggest a model of growth. In other words, 1930 -1960 witnessed the establishment of 36 churches as against 47 churches in 1960 -1990, while the number of churches in 1990-2010 increased tremendously from 47 to 64 churches. On the whole between 1930 and 2010 the total number of churches was 147.

The factors that are accounted for this numerical increase are hinged on the features of CAC and methods adopted for conversion and establishment of churches.

Factors Responsible for Advent and Growth.

The factors responsible for the advent and growth of Christ Apostolic Church are hinged on the features of African Independent churches and methods adopted for church planting. The features of CAC that aided growth include Liturgy, prayer, faith healing, zeal for evangelism and revival and use of symbols.

1. **Liturgy:-** Liturgy is a ‘fixed form or order of public worship in a church’¹⁵. In CAC, liturgy such as music and prayer are lively unlike abstract and inconceivable liturgies of Western theology of the orthodox ‘Mission Churches’. CAC believes in participatory worship. The Hymns of CAC are often short and simple. Most of the songs are two or three lines refrain thereby making it easy for members to follow. The theology of CAC is embedded in her songs. The contents of Aladura songs embrace confession, prayers and praises with refrain such as Amen and Halleluyah. These are symbolic actions, which fulfil the corporate and individual needs. In this way, her social, psychological and religious needs are fulfilled. Because of the participatory nature, worship in CAC is always very lively. Adherents always have a feeling of satisfaction. Singing of lyrics accompanied

with drumming or clapping and dancing; the use of native plays arrest and attracts the mind of the audience.

2. **Prayer:-** Prayer is the focal point of all doctrines and practices of CAC. The prayer offered in CAC is said to be extempore, that is, spontaneous as directed by the Holy Spirit. Hence it does not have Prayer Book which she follows as practice in the 'mission orthodox churches'. It believes in faith and prayer for the solution of human problems. CAC believes in Baptism of Holy Ghost with accompanying signs. This is what makes it different from other Aladura churches. Prayer forms the bedrock of their practice and doctrine; it is also the fountain head of all their blessings¹⁶. CAC have intercessory prayer warriors called 'Afadurajagun'. It is the sole responsibility of prayer warrior (i.e. Afadurajagun) to pray and fast for those who have problems, and to commit special programmes of the church into God's hand. The church makes use of hills and mountains as places of worship and saying solitary prayers. These places that are usually far away from the hustle and bustles of life are observed as sacred places of intercessory prayers and worship.

It is a general practice among the CAC to keep 'Faith home' (AgboleIgbagbo) or Protection home (Ile-Abo or Ipamo) part of which serves as the minister's residence or vicarage. Members of the CAC Church as well as non-members seeking divine protection are often lodged there so that they can benefit from the regular prayers conducted in such homes. The sick and mental patients may be kept there for a special prayer attention. The unemployed, and the barren are accommodated there for prayer assistance. The faith-home is also used as a Healing home or maternity for special prayers, fasting and meditation which are often impossible to do in their personal residences.

3. **Faith Healing:-** Faith forms a central part of the life of many members of CAC in Akokoland. CAC generally regard illness or disaster which befalls a man as a result to sin or satanic attack and also as the handiwork of witches, wizards and enemies. This practice is in line with the African traditional belief that divinities or witches must be appeased to avert disaster and misfortunes in order to seek special favours.

On the basis of this belief, CAC practice faith healing through prayers. The church to a large extent practices faith healing alone. Hence, the church forbids the use of medicine in any form. She maintains that medicine is a human means which is against the ways of God. She holds special prayer sessions for healing and for victory over enemies. It is observed by Oshintelu that the main reason for the emergence of Aladura Churches CAC inclusive is 'spiritual hunger'¹⁷. Just as in traditional religion the Aladura offer the essential spiritual resources to help them achieve a satisfactory life's destiny, which is very crucial to every Yoruba regardless of education and social status. This includes wealth, children, longlife and freedom from fear of evil powers and witchcraft. Like in the traditional belief, whatever is a man's problem or predicament, is seen as an illness, which needs to be healed. In Yoruba traditional religion as indeed most African religions, spiritual experience is of primal importance, this is also true of the CAC. Healing, prophesying and divining revolve around the idea of spirit possession. CAC incorporate elements of the Christian religion and African tradition belief, particularly as regards the supernatural powers of the prophets and the healing miracles that counter the forces of evil, disease and witchcraft, which most Yoruba believe are real. To African, evil is real. It is a reality which confronts them almost every day

Faith healing forms a central part of the life of many members of CAC in Akokoland. There are some ailments which defied Western medical cure that had been cured by CAC in Akoko. Example of such case is reported by Okafor Sunday¹⁸ that one Joseph Balogun of No15, Ishakunmi Street Ikare was healed at CAC AgbalaIwosan, Ekan-Ikare on 25th March 2006 of an object that move up and down in his tommy but could not be diagonised by medical practitioners. The patient had visited many orthodox medical doctors but no solution until he was brought to CAC Ekan-IkareAkoko where he regained his health.

In our finding, sickness and its remedy is the most common reason attracting people to CAC. Testimonies of healing, soundness and miracles are heard from many testimonies of the people that received healing power in CAC as seen in the testimony of Joseph Balogun referred to elsewhere in this work. In a number of testimonies given, they claimed to have attended hospitals and consulted traditional healers to no avail before finally coming to CAC. The CAC Akoko set aside Wednesdays and Friday s weekly for the purpose of healing. In some instances, healing services are conducted daily; such was the case of CAC Revival Centre at Ilepalkare who conduct healing ministry daily. Sometimes the invalid would be expected to stay in the church, in the 'faith-home' nearby or in some apartments in the pastorium while they are receiving treatment.

4. **Zeal for Evangelism and Revival:**The Christ Apostolic Churches have zeal for evangelistic ministry and revival. CAC initiated regular crusades, revivals, and prayer session in every nook and corner of towns and villages. Open air service was very important in her method of evangelism. There is a growing enthusiasm among members to preach and spread the good news of salvation. Personal evangelism is also important as each member takes up the responsibility of winning one soul to the church. In addition to personal evangelism, members organised themselves into societies and guilds in carrying the gospel to villages and towns in Akoko.

Three methods or techniques are adopted in arresting the audience to listen to them. One, singing of lyrics accompanied with drumming, clapping and dancing..Two, use of native play let organised by the youths in form of orchestra and thereby parading towns and villages playing and dancing with the uniforms they wear.Three, Reading of portions of the Holy Bible at open air crusades by prepared members who could search and read fast by displaying reading skill verse by verse as the preacher dictates. These three methods aided attraction of crowds to CAC organised revivals and crusades.

5. **The Use of Symbols:** The use of symbols is part of the practices of CAC. This includes Holy water (omiiye) or cold water, blessed oil (ororo), belief in sacred Hills and mountains (orioke). Holy water (omiiye) and ororoadura(blessed oil) are used for faith healing, like Yoruba traditional, believers for CAC member's, faith is not abstract. CAC believe that faith must be assisted with concrete objects like omiiye (water),Ororoadura(blessed oil) and Abela(candles). The CAC make use of some hills and mountains as places of worship or saying solitary prayers¹⁹. These places which are usually far away from the hustle and bustle of life are observed as sacred places. Churches permanent building or huts have been built on some of these hills for resident pastors, prophets or prophetess to assist those who come there for spiritual assistance. Most of the CAC church branches are known by Oke (hills top) such as Oke-Sioni (Mount Zion) OkeIgbala (mount of victory) among others.

The Effect of Christ Apostolic Church on Akokoland

In this section, we shall discuss the effect of CAC on Akokoland. Christ Apostolic Church has positively affected Akokoland in many ways.

1. The Great Revival of 1930 introduced a new mode of worship, a pragmatic approach that knew no discrimination; both the rich and the poor, the low and the high, the literate and the illiterate came within the range of worship. The open air crusades provided opportunity for all and Sunday to participate actively in worship services; choruses learnt at the Revival Centres were later sung by members on the way to their farms, the brooks and on their journeys. Prayers were said everywhere at any time in every place. The adherents accepted 'fasting and praying as two of the cardinal practices of Christianity'²⁰; Soon most members of the society knew how to move closer to God through praying and fasting. This later helps them in solving their problems of life. No wonder the practice of praying and fasting are widely known and used in different communities in Akokoland today. People attend revival crusades in thousands and in each revival meetings prayers are not read from books but said extemporely.

2. Education: Primary and Secondary Schools were established for the children of converts. Primary Schools were established at Ikare in 1943, 1955 and 1962; At Irun 1966; Ogbagi 1958; Akungba 1968; Oka 1953; Epinmi 1958 and Okeagbe 1964. A Secondary School by name Agboriki High School was established at Ikare.

Adult Education Classes were introduced to train Adult converts how to read the Bible. In Addition to informal Adult literacy class, Bible Study and reading classes were organised in some churches. Scholarships were granted to brilliant students to acquire Secondary, Post-Secondary and University Education. Today, beneficiaries of CAC educational programmes or scholarships are holding responsible posts in the Civil Service, Commerce, private and different sectors of National Economy in Nigeria.

3. Healing Ministry: CAC established faith-homes where pregnant women go for safe delivery and sick people regain their health. Faith Homes are established/built at Ikare, Oka, Arigidi and Okeagbe.

4. CAC was the first Aladura Pentecostal church in Akokoland. The Apostolic power given to Joseph AyodeleBabalola helped the church to spread fastly to every nook and crannies in Akokoland through its method of evangelism and attitude of boldness in witnessing. This resulted in the establishment of one hundred and forty-seven (147) Churches in Akokoland between 1930 and 2010.

The method of Evangelism and soul winning introduced by CAC are today adopted in some none Pentecostal churches. This method has led to the conversion of many souls thus increase the numerical growth of CAC church.

5. CAC influenced the development of spiritual gospel songs of which its explosion is witnessed all over Akokoland. CAC prayer ministry had influenced observing of morning and evening prayer meetings in other orthodox churches as a way of safe guarding and losing their youths and members to Pentecostal churches.

6. Baptism of the Spirit and Speaking in tongues which were condemned or frowned at with contempt in the beginning is now copied by some non CAC churches.

7. Mass Revival introduced by CAC in 1930 had yielded fruitful blessings as the outcomes of the revivals are seen in the area of deliverance from sickness, diseases, and demon possessions, drug abuse and change from social vices. This has led to behavioural change among the youths and members of the society in Akokoland.

8. CAC as a Pentecostal church has satisfied African expression of Christianity. The message passed to the people through its mode of worship and liturgy has endeared it to generality of the community.

Conclusion:

We have attempted in this paper to give a Historical account of the Adven and growth of Christ Apostolic Church in Akokoland. The Geographical location of Akoko has been identified and the advent, growth, expansion and development between 1930 and 2010 discussed. The year 1930 marks the beginning of Christ Apostolic Church as a result of Great revival of Joseph AyodeleBabalola in Ilepakare while in 2010 CAC became the leading indigenous African church inAkokoland. The factors responsible for the numerical growth are hinged on its features which include liturgy, prayer, faith healing, zeal for evangelism and use of symbols. Historical, sociological and phenomenological approaches are adopted in achieving our objectives in this work. CAC according to Oluseye was a product of the great miracles of healing, raising up of the dead, signs and wonders flowing from the Great revival of 1930²¹.

It is discovered in our findings that Christ Apostolic Church holds cardinal principles of the concept of reliance on the power of prayers and the belief in Divine healing, divine provision and Divine protection. The church used sanctified water for healing all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. In

the first thirty years of CAC in Nigeria, it was persecuted and harassed from pillar to post. The established churches especially Anglican churches were hostile and antagonistic to it on the grounds that CAC pulled to her fold a large number of adherents from orthodox churches.

In our findings, CAC indigenises church music, by composing and singing hymns, anthems and choruses in local tunes, using of local musical instruments during worship; by clapping of hands and dancing in the traditional ways in praising God; thereby making worship relevance to the cultural African milieu. With the practice of the use of visions, prophecies and dreams, the CAC had fittingly replaced the traditional system of divination.

In our view, the numerical growth and spread of Christ Apostolic Church in Akokoland is noticed to be graphical in the sense that the number of churches increased graphically to suggest a model and growth from 1930 to 2010.

In our opinion, there is a need for controlled evangelism because uncontrolled evangelism could lead to much room church planting which may eventually result to great enmity and divisions in the church especially among the ministers. It is our suggestion that there must be a standard programme for control over Elders and Deacons; and there should be uniformity in their training and official responsibilities to the church in general. The Finance Board should be subjected to the control and monitoring of the highest ruling body of the church (i.e. General Executive). Ministers should not be allowed to stay put in their home towns as this could breed irreparable loss to the Mission. Abuse of prophetic gift should be curtailed. It is our suggestion that the constitution of Christ Apostolic Church should be made to function effectively, it is only in this way the church can improve on the present status quo.

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