

## Emergence of Charismatic Movement in Urhobo, Niger Delta, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The work of Christian missionaries in penetrating Africa with the Gospel was expanded as natives responded to the call of God in evangelising the continent. The native agents, through their sweat, blood, and tears immensely contributed to the rooting of Christianity in Africa communities. The contributions of these unsung heroes and heroines deserve attention in contemporary African scholarship. In church growth, charismatic leadership is a cardinal factor as everything rises and falls on the leader. This study traced the emergence of charismatic movements in the Anglican Church in Urhobo of Western Delta (Ijaw) of Niger Delta region, Nigeria. It adopted the participant observation and historical methods; and data were drawn from primary and secondary sources. The paper applied the Craven's theory of domestication of Christianity which is based on the hypothesis that Christianity could best be expressed in a cultural framework and championed by Africans. This could be done by appreciating the cultural elements for enhanced acceptance and expansion of the Christian mission. Charismatic seed was sown in the area by Bishop James Johnson who organised the Anglican churches in 1901. Between 1929 and 1984, the church witnessed the activities of three charismatic movements namely; *Ishoshi Erhi* (Spirit movement), Anglican Adam Preaching Society, and Anglican Fasting and Prayer Society. The dynamic response of the church leadership to these movements positioned Anglican churches in Urhobo for growth and relevance to the people. The paper recommended unbiased interaction between church leadership and charismatic movements as to harness the various gifting of members for development of the Church of God.

**Key words:** Charismatic, Dynamism, Emergence, Leadership, Movement, and Pentecostalism.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Urhobo is located in Delta state, Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Their neighbours are the Isoko, Itsekiri and Ukwani of Delta state; and the Bini of Edo state. Urhobo kingdom of Ogor with Ughelli, Agbarha and Orogun all of Delta state descended from a common ancestor, Prince Owhowha, a hunter who migrated from Benin (Aka in Urhobo) in about the middle of the fourteenth century during the hostility of a reigning Oba (Otite, 2003). He met on arrival at Ogorovire two aborigines (Ijaw), Ovwere and Umuvo; and married the daughter of Ovwere called Oberuke or Oberukevwe through whom he had two sons, Ogor or Agbarha. His second wife, Ogelle also of Ijaw (Tarakiri) was the mother of Ughelli and Orogun. Some claim that the wives of Owhowha were Ogelle and Ekan (Oduavwoyan). The three brothers; Ogor, Agbarha and Ughelli with their sister Orogun could not fully live together in Ogorovire due to increase in

family size and some major domestic problems which resulted to clashes, acrimony and bitterness (Okome, 2004). Consequently, Ughelli being the second son migrated and founded Ovwodaware which is the heart of the present day Ughelli town. Thus, the believed that Ughelli people migrated from Aka (Urhobo name for Benin) and that their mother hailed from Ijaw (Tarakiri).

Urhobo and Benin have linguistic similarities. For instance, while Urhobo says Erha, it is Eha in Benin; Spirit is pronounced as Erhi in Benin; Oil is Evri in Urhobo and Evwi in Benin. The significant difference in both languages is the letter 'r' which is omitted in Benin pronunciation. Both languages use same word for antelope (*Uzo*), elephant (*Eni*), gorilla (*Osi*), and pig (*Esi*) (Ekeh, 2014). Common language remains the symbol of unity between Ughelli and the rest descendants of Owhowha. Presently, Urhobo is one of the seven ethnic groups of Delta state whose social

organization is based on small units-clans ruled by an *Ovie* or *Okpako*. Majority of Urhobo have their main settlement in Ughelli which comprise of about 21 villages with strong presence of Christianity. It is said that as early as 1571, Portuguese missionaries arrived Warri and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Olu of Itsekiri, head of Warri Kingdom which probably comprised of the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo. In examining the emergence of charismatic movements in Urhobo Anglican churches, the paper reviewed the concept of charismatic and Pentecostalism, advent of Christianity in Urhobo, challenges of the early congregations, and the development of charismatic movements in the area.

## Concept Clarifications

### Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is the worldwide movement in and outside main stream Christianity that emphasis the belief that Christians in every age by living a life of holiness and prayers may receive the baptism in the Spirit and the same charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as did the first Christians on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Onu, 2020, citing Kurian, 2005). Pentecostalism stresses upon the descent of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues and has been associated with Christianity since the second century. It became a global phenomenon in the early twentieth century and organised into new denominations within its first twenty years in the United States (Ojo, 2012). The modern Pentecostalism could be traced to the independent revival services organised by the black holiness preacher, William Seymour, at Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1900, out of which came the Apostolic Faith Mission, Four Square Church and Assemblies of God Church, and others. However, some scholars of Pentecostal historiography aver that it was Charles Fox Parham's Revival in Topeka Kansas that gave birth to the Pentecostal movement. Charles Fox Parham, a holiness preacher and former Methodist pastor (he resigned in 1895) was influenced by Irving Edward, established Bethel Bible School at Topeka Kansas in 1900, and on January 1, 1901 he laid hands on one of his students-Miss Agnes Ozman to receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and she spoke in tongues. Others who joined included the school Principal while Charles himself spoke in tongues three days later. This marked what Charles Parham called the 'Apostolic Faith Movement' (Onu, 2020).

Contrary to the general speculation, is argued that between 1895 and 1900 Pope Leo X111, urged by Blessed Elema Guerra, founder of the Oblate Sisters of the Holy Spirit in Lucca, and issued Apostolic letters asking all faithful to celebrate a solemn *Niovena* (nine days of prayers) to the Holy Spirit between the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost. On January 1, 1901, the Pope

invoked the Holy Spirit by singing *Veni creator Spiritus* (Come Holy Spirit come) in the name of the whole church (Onipkite, 2019 citing Cyril, 2007). Consequently and coincidentally, it was on that same day in Topeka, Kansas (Southern America) that an out pouring of the Holy Spirit occurred which is generally accepted as the beginning of Pentecostalism. Thus, the descent of the Holy Spirit on that faithful day was as a result of the prayers of Pope Leo X111.

### Charismatic Movement

Charismatic is derived from the Greek *charismata* meaning gift of the Holy Spirit; and can be seen as 'as the root and stem from which the other gifts flow' (Synan, 1997, p.87). Charismatic denotes the new movement of the Holy Spirit within the older churches. Charismatic movement bothers on the exercise of the *charismata*, gifts of grace of the spirit. It is a worldwide phenomenon of the Holy Spirit which is rooted in the experience of the Day of Pentecost and emphasis suchb gifts as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing, but also sees the importance of other gifts mentioned in the New Testament (Scotland, 2000). The movement is characterised by 'free' expression of worship, most often with untraditional words and music. It is the demonstration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people with practical evidence of healing, deliverance and conversion and may be referred to as revival movements.

Charismatic movement has always been in the Church and from time to time the Church has always witnessed the breaking forth or outburst of movements whose members claimed to be specially imbued by the Holy Spirit (Erivwo, 1983). This position, to a large extent can discredit any claim as to when or where charismatic movement began apart from the biblical account in Acts. It was with this understanding that M.O Oladeji (2008) opined that the emergence of charismatic movement in Nigeria could be traceable to the Aladura movement in the saga of the influenza epidemic in 1918. Oladeji did not take into cognisance the Garrick Sokari Braide's ministry which evolved between 1914 and 1916 in the Niger Delta Pastorate region (Tasie, 1980; Onu, 2019).

Both Pentecostal, charismatic and revival movements believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as foundational experience and emphasises on healing and miracles as manifestations of the Holy Spirit. This lends credence to the existence of the Charismatic movements in the Anglican Church (Badawusi, 2016). Today, Charismatic and Pentecostal movements has penetrated Nigeria mainline churches with various degrees of influence. They operate under such umbrellas as Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria, Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC), Methodist Evangelical Movements and Presbyterian Young People's

Association of Nigeria (YPAN) (Achunike, 2004). There are also the Great Anglican Revival Team established in 1993 with Sosthenes Eze as the team leader, Anglican Adam Preaching Society (AAPS), and Anglican Fasting and Prayer Society (AFPS).

### Christianity in Urhobo

Urhobo would have been numbered as one of the early centres of Christianity in Nigeria but for the unsuccessful Portuguese mission. The failure of the Roman Catholic mission in penetrating Urhobo hinterland from Ode Itsekiri in the 16<sup>th</sup> century led to the non-Christianisation of Urhobo country for about four centuries (Arawore, 1982). This paved way for the Reformation (Protestants) churches, especially Anglican to champion the Christianisation of the area (Kenny, 1983; Ogue, 2003). History has it that in course of the Niger expeditions of 1841, 1854 and 1857, Samuel Ajayi Crowther sought to introduce the Christian faith at Okwagbe in Ughievwen ethnic group of Urhobo, present Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State. The effort did not yield fruit as the people could not comprehend how a mere human could claim to have received a message from *Oghene* (God) who is often identified with the sky. The rejection of Crowther's message delayed the evangelisation of the region until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Christianity was informally introduced in Urhobo probably in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by a set of freed slaves led by Efnodo (Ifenodun in Yoruba) from Akatogbo and Owo in Yoruba country. Their first point of call was Urhovie in Abraka. Leadership of the new community was left in the hands of Ededje. As the faith of the brethren kept growing, sick and afflicted foes from neighbouring communities were taken to Urhovie. The mercy of God located many and they received their healing and became converted. A good number of them went back to their communities and started Christian worship centres. One of such centres was Ukwokori (Onokpite, 2019 citing Eriwwo, 2003).

In about 1910, one Ewvwaire of Ogbowwan from Ukwokori church took the Gospel to Ughelli, from where the faith spread into many other Urhobo communities. When Ewvwaire first heard of the new faith from Mr Oghenebrume at Ukwokori (Ewvwaire's maternal home), he was accompanied by Oghenebrume and they went for some inquiry at Etefe, a village of the Agbarha clan. There they met one Ohre who taught them about the faith and further directed them to Sapele to see Bishop James Johnson. The Bishop charged Ewvwaire to take the new faith to Ughelli and other places. When Ewvwaire got to Ogbowwan in Afiesere, he built a hut where he worshipped and delivered the message committed to him by Bishop Johnson. He said thus; *Otu re g'edjo g'irhe g'ame, vwa yarhe ra g'Oghene, Orhe* meaning, people who are serving

carved images, wood, water and other deities other than the living God should come now and surrender to Him. Many of the people believed and surrendered their traditional worship objects which were publicly burnt. Thus, the word of God grew in Ughelli and its environs (Onokpite, 2019, citing Eriwwo, 2003). Those who believed at Afiesere were referred to as *Ogbegua* (people who defiled powers of the gods).

Bishop James Johnson, after his consecration as assistant Bishop of the Niger Delta mission visited Warri, Avwra (Abraka), Sapele, and Benin. He met some worshipping communities at Warri and Sapele; and "On July 28, 1901 Bishop Johnson held the first organized worship in Warri attended by 230 people" (Onu, 2018, p. 131). He demonstrated leadership over these congregations and organised them under Anglican Communion. Thereafter, he paid episcopal visits to the region every year until 1917 when he joined the church triumphant. It can therefore be said that from Sapele and Warri Christianity penetrated into the rest parts of Urhobo. Some native evangelists like Pa Abi Oghnenkaro who embraced the faith while working at Lagos, returned and started a church in his father's compound at Udu. He also extended to Ughievwen clans. A member of Owhorde church, Mr Akpigun followed suit and planted the present St Peter's Anglican Church, Ekrokpe.

As the churches were planted through individual efforts, almost every founder claimed a sort of 'ownership' over each congregation. The early converts and local people also called the churches after the names of their 'founders' or 'headmen'. This would have given room for proper indigenisation of the Anglican congregations; however, some people took undue advantage of the situation by turning some to other denominations.

The spiritual energy infused into these congregations by James Johnson re-invigorated the zeal of members and other converts like Omofoye Emuakpor of Ephron, Masima Eboza of Ughoton, Ogugun of Ohre, Ewvwaire of Ughelli, and Ejovi Agambi of Eku who established Anglican congregations in Ukwokori, Urhovie-Avwra, Ohre, Agbarho, and Eku among others.

### Challenges of Early Anglican Congregations in Urhobo

The Urhobo congregations were from inception placed under Yoruba Church Missionary Society (CMS) mission. The converts were compelled to learn catechism in Yoruba language before baptism which did not go well with the natives who could not understand why they had to learn Christian principles in a language they do not understand. It will be recalled that in Anglican public worship, the Scripture is to be read in the language of the people (Onu, 2019). As a

result of the demand, some converts withdrew from Anglican Church and joined other churches that later entered the area. Omofoye Emuakpor for instance joined the African Church. At St Luke's Sapele, Aghoghin Omatsola staged a walkout in protest and started the Baptist Church. His action was fuelled by an allegation of domination by Yoruba team as well as financial misappropriation in the church.

Secondly, the congregations organised by James Johnson lacked manpower to nurture the converts; a problem associated with new mission stations. In quick response, Bishop Johnson used available native agents. The interest, zeal, and willingness to serve the Lord by Masima Ebosa caught his attention, and he Ebosa was appointed a church teacher. He supervised the Urhobo churches which looked up to St Andrew's Warri for pastoral oversight; served as missionary assistant to priests from Warri whenever they visited any Urhobo outstation; and could interpret the Bible. However, he had no formal education or basic training in Anglicanism, and communicated more in Itsekiri than Urhobo language.

The Urhobo congregations were uncomfortable and protested against the ministry of Ebosa to the bishop. They complained of being starved of the word of God due to his poor teaching. Their hunger for the word of God was to enable them receive light and understanding in their simple walk with God as "The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple" (Ps 119:130). They also hungered for the sacrament. Jesus said; "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:56-57). The people desired a properly trained catechist who could teach them in a more effective manner. The Bishop decided to send the son of Ebosa to catechist training, but he could not complete the training.

The situation necessitated urgent training of Urhobo native Christians to effectively minister to the growing congregation. The native converts resolved to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). They committed themselves to the 'self-propagating' and 'self-financing' principle of the CMS in preparation for 'self-governing'. They taxed themselves and sponsored one of their young man, Awori Iwe who had just completed his primary education at St Andrew's school Warri. He was sent to a catechist training in Oyo in 1924, and upon graduation, was commissioned a Catechist in December 1927 and posted to St Luke's church Otowodo Ughelli by Rev J. C. C. Thomas, then vicar of St Andrew's Warri. Thus, Agori Iwe became the first Urhobo native Anglican trained catechist; later became the pioneer ordained minister and bishop (Arhawho, 2015).

### **Birth of *Ishoshi Erhi* (Spirit Movement) in Urhobo**

The posting of Catechist Agori Iwe to Otowodo Ughelli led to personality clash and factionalism in the church. Many members and leaders who saw Ebosa as their mentor and hero opposed Agori-Iwe's leadership and argued that he should have been posted to Eruemukowharien. Umukoro Kaigho, Lelegbele, Oluku, and Adjarho among others wrote several petitions against the leadership of Rev. J.C.C Thomas to the Bishop of Lagos, Rt. Rev. Frank Melville Jones. In one of such petitions dated April 26, 1929 they rejected J.C.C Thomas and requested the Bishop to instruct Rev I.T Akande then at Sapele to come and administer the sacrament to Urhobo congregations. Part of the letter reads thus; "We have decided not to have Rev. Thomas as our minister. We now pray your worship to instruct Revd. I.T. Akande of Sapele to be given the communicants the Lord's Supper at intervals and his expenses to and fro will be paid by us" (Erivwo 1998, p.39). Following the series of petition and counter petitions, the Bishop invited Ebosa and his group as well as Rev J.C.C Thomas and Agori-Iwe to Lagos. After hearing from the both parties, Bishop Jones urged them to reconcile with one another.

Aftermath of the Lagos meeting was the formation of a charismatic movement. It is said that when Ebosa returned, he decided to start *Ishoshi Erhi* (Spirit movement) in the church. Others claimed that after the trio had returned from Lagos in May 1929, Ebosa found that his daughter had died. Disturbed by the sudden death, he decided to fast and pray that if his sins were responsible for the tragedy, he should be forgiven. For J. Abi Oghenekaro (2008), the evolution of *Ishoshi Erhi* by Ebosa and his followers in 1929, came through some inspiration from fasting and prayers. Erivwo (1983) reported that consequent upon Ebosa and his group's fasting and prayers, the *Ishoshi Erhi* charismatic movement was born. And while they were praying and fasting at Egborodo, a number of them became ecstatic and claimed to have been filled with the Holy Spirit. Again, that through them, God's promise in Joel 2:28; "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions" had been fulfilled in the Urhobo Anglican Church.

The group embarked on militant evangelism, sending people out two-by-two preaching and absolving sins of confessors. For instance, one Diasao who was suspended by Rev. Thomas on ground of adultery, was prayed for by Ebosa after which Diasao received the Holy Spirit. The group members together with their leader, declared him forgiven by the Holy Spirit. The movement spread like wildfire into every nook and cranny of Urhobo. It is very probable that they erected a brick building in Ughoton which stands today as "Zion

quarters” and headquarters of the movement. The movement is characterised by fasting and prayers, militant evangelism, orgiastic and ecstatic displays (Erivwo, 1983).

The emergence of *Ishoshi Erhi* charismatic movement seemed to have thrown the Anglican churches in Urhobo into utter confusion and consternation. The activities of the movement affected the church as some members overtly asserted their righteousness and adopted a ‘holier than thou’ attitude that led to some acts of schism. The Bishop of Lagos, F. M. Jones on hearing about the situation in Warri sent Rev. Canon S.C Philips, then resident at Ondo to investigate the matter and make recommendations to him. The report of Canon Philips proved the unreasonableness and unscripturalness of the movement. Some of the members who were present at the venue of the investigative gathering displayed raving and orgiastic acts. Based on the recommendations, *Ishoshi Erhi* movement was curtailed and many of the members like Pa Kila of Oginibo, Pa Oghenekaro Philip Abi of Owrode, and Pa Isaiah Akpigun Ikpen of Ekrokpe among others who were contemplating leaving the church retained their membership. Both Ebosa and others who stuck to their gun, namely; Ije (Edjekota woman), Orhiunu of Edjekota, Edjedia of Okpavuer, Owhoyovwere of Eruemukowharie and Ogegede of Ovwor withdrew and continued with *Ishoshi Erhi* outside the Anglican Church (Erivwo 1979).

When Pa Abi Oghenekaro was transferred to Ovwor in 1941 as church Agent, he discovered that the *Ishoshi Erhi* led by Ogegede was still in existence. The leader, Ogegede and his assistants carried long beards because they had no time to eat, bathe or shave, because of their devotion to fasting and prayers. Again, the members were always shouting and crying during prayers, prophesying and carrying out faith healing activities, and speaking in strange languages, *glossolalia*. There were several miraculous signs that attested to their prayers.

Be it as it may, Ebosa’s nascent charismatic movement, the *Ishoshi Erhi* dwindled and petered out in the 1940’s. Ebosa himself and many members of the group who were on the verge of separating from the Anglican Church returned; though a few from the community where Ebosa had strong influence continued independently and later seceded from Anglicanism. Significantly, those who were involved in the movement, later recanted and returned to the Anglican Church did not see any ill with the movement. Rather, they held the view that the church’s hierarchy did not direct the movement properly and use it to the advantage and edification of the church.

It is held by the people that if all those who were in *Ishoshi Erhi* movement had recanted and retraced their steps (as many did) after Canon Philip’s report, the schism would have been averted. However, the remarkable thing about the development was that despite the conflict between Ebosa and his followers on one hand and Rev J.C.C Thomas and Agori-Iwe and their supporters on the other, there was no return to traditional religion. It was only another brand of Christianity, and indeed one which claimed to be more practical than institutionalised Christianity, one which claimed to be going back to pristine Christianity, one which now flowers in Charismatic or Pentecostal Christianity.

#### Anglican Adam Preaching Society (AAPS)

One of the impactful charismatic group in western delta Anglicanism is the Anglican Adam Preaching Society (AAPS) founded by Cornelius Adam Igbudu of Araya, Isoko, Delta state. He was probably born in 1916, two years after a mysterious Bible was found in the community. Though he had no formal education, he was raised in a Christian (Anglican) family and learnt to read and write Isoko language through Catechist John Mark I. Eloho and Michael A. Akara which later boasted his spiritual development and enhanced his evangelistic performances (Ogwunewu and Ayegboyin, 2019 citing Nabofa, 1992). He had an exceptional gift of singing and dancing and was an evangelist *per excellence* whose ministry produced remarkable miracles and great revival.

His gift of music was first noticed when he joined a cultural dance group, *Usini* or *Igoru*. He later withdrew and founded the *Ole-Orufo*, meaning “Prayer group for cleanliness and purity”. The group was involved in community sanitation and charity works. In course of time, the group became established as a movement in the church. They sang native melodious songs with local musical instruments, clapping and dancing to the praise and glory of God. They became popular among churches including the Roman Catholic within and beyond the community. In their evangelistic activities they prayed for people and encouraged them to “love one another and give faithful service to the one and true God” (Ogwunewu and Ayegboyin, 2019, p.27).

Through their evangelistic tours many souls were revived and new converts won into the Christian faith in Itsekiri, Urhobo and Isoko. The recommendation of the superintendent of Isoko CMS who was pleased with Adam’s ministerial exploits; made Adam to be licensed a district lay reader in 1945. The next year, 1946, the group’s name was changed to “*Ukoko Adam*”, meaning “Adam’s Preaching Society”. Later, the tag ‘Anglican’ was added to it, thus, Anglican Adam Preaching Society (AAPS). In 1968, he was made a diocesan lay reader under Diocese of Benin.

The impact of Adam's charismatic movement is visible in most Anglican churches in the south-south region of Nigeria.

### Anglican Fasting and Prayer Society (AFPS)

The Anglican Fasting and Prayer Society (AFPS) started as "Anglican Mimeyeraye Fasting and Prayer Society" (AMFPS) in the 1980s with a group of persons led by Daniel D. Mimeyeraye. They met every Friday at Saint Andrew's Cathedral Okere Road, Warri to fast and pray. Among those who started the prayer band group which later metamorphosed into a charismatic movement were Johnson Ivukiwhiaye (now Ivukevweraye), Evang S.U Ayanyen, Evang. M. Mufia and others. As Evang. F. Asama (13/4/2018, oral interview) revealed, the group began fasting and praying fervently every Friday from 10am till 5pm for the church and success of evangelistic campaigns of AAPS. Gradually, they started experiencing the manifestation of power of God and members of the Cathedral and other Anglicans started joining them. Many who attended their prayer meetings went home with testimonies of healing and deliverance.

The group was formally constituted on July 13, 1984 at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Warri. In 1987, they acquired a piece of land at Okumagba layout of Warri and moved the prayer and fasting meetings to the site which became their headquarters. One of the reasons for leaving the Cathedral was because the leader, Mimeyeraye was not fluent in English language and uses Urhobo language as a medium of communication and operation. No wonder, till date, the church that emerged from the group uses Urhobo language for worship.

When they witnessed numerical growth with accompanying miracles, signs and wonders, they sought for official recognition from Right Reverend John

Dafiewhare, then Bishop of Warri Diocese. At the 1990 Synod held at St Andrew's Cathedral, the Bishop named the group "Anglican Mimeyeraye Fasting and Prayer Society" (AMFPS). The quick recognition stemmed from the fact that the Bishop saw in Mimeyeraye another Adam Igbudu, who will do greater works and cause revivalism in Urhobo Anglican churches and beyond. In fact, from the testimony of many clergy and lay, Daniel Dikeji Mimeyeraye was an acknowledged charismatic character whose ministry was approved from heaven with visible signs and wonders.

### The five objectives of AMFPS are:

- i. To enable members to realize the effectiveness of prayers coupled with fasting.
- ii. To pray for the sick and needy who are willing to be Christians
- iii. Members are to fast and pray every Friday throughout the year.
- iv. To inculcate in our families and the members of the church the idea of living a holy life.
- v. To heal the sick, cast out demons and preach the gospel and thereby revive the church.

Their pioneer executive officers were Evangelist D.D Mimeyeraye (founder and leader); Evang. J.O Ivikiwhiaye (Assistant leader); Evang. M. E Okome (General Secretary); Evang. J. E.W. Omogoisibo (Assistant General Secretary); and Evang. S.U Ayanye (Treasurer). Other executive members (Evangelists) included; E.G Amreketa, J.O Okorodudu, M. Umufia, D. Diabeta, J. Okoloko, J. Okugbe, P. Filaba, A. P. Ogigi, S. Orhuerakpor, Mrs Mary Kakpo, Mrs Angelina Orhuerakpor, and Mrs Victoria Ekpobuvie. The twelve new branches group opened by AMFPS between 1987 and 1991 within and outside then Warri Diocese were:

SN	Branch	Date	Leader
1	Ekue	16/09/87	Rev L.A Abiri
2	Sapele	17/11/87	Evang. F.A Tibekpe
3	Okwagbe	24/02/88	Evang. M. Onoguere
4	Abraka	16/08/88	Evang. Dr J.A. Ighedo
5	Ughelli	26/07/89	Evang. M.E Utoro
6	Ewhu	22/12/89	Evang. J.O Oruma
7	Ogor	21/02/90	Evang. S.E Otoberise
8	Okpe-Olomu	29/04/90	Evang. D. Ejereje
9	Lagos	27/05/90	Evang. G.E.I Oserowhovo
10	Ohoror	21/11/90	Evang. J.I. Orobevwe
11	Uduophori	30/01/91	Evang. J.E. Onoriose
12	Ososuo-Urhie	24/02/91	Evang. V.E. Umukoro

In addition, there were long list of others proposed to be inaugurated. The numerical growth of the society at the headquarters in 1991 was about two thousand members, and hoped to exceed 3,000 before the end of 1992.

Surprisingly, the foundation leader of AMFPS, Evang. D.D Mimeyeraye on November 15, 1993, withdrew from the church with some of executive officers and branch leaders. They left with many properties of the church that were acquired or donated

afore time by sympathizers and members of the group. The main reason for the separation according to many people was greed for money. They claimed that he heeded the counsel of some people that if he separated from the church, he would become sole controller of the group's finances (Ogue, 2003; Ivwighren, 2/4/1018). The separated leader immediately formed a personal ministry named; 'God's Grace Ministry'. He refers to himself as Saint D.K.G Miyerijesu *aka* Bishop of the whole world, Jesus Holiness, Demon Destroyer and the Only Begotten Son of God.

The leaders and members of the movement who stayed back continued with their activities in the church. Expectedly, the name "Mimeyeraye" was removed, thus, the current name "Anglican Fasting and Prayer Society" (AFPS). The pioneer treasurer, Evang S.U Ayanyen took over leadership of the group while St. James Church Ojagbogbe remained their headquarters. The movement kept increasing as converts were made and new branches inaugurated. However, on July 7, 2003, Evangelist S. U. Ayanyen also withdrew from the church and started his own personal ministry, named; 'New Glory Revival Ministry International Incorporated'. Consequently, Evangelist B. O. Okotete became the current National President of AFPS. Other principal national officers included Paris Lafua (Vice President), Rose Ofem (Secretary), and Dr Francis Ghana Asama (Zonal Chairman). Under their leadership, more branches continued to be opened.

## CONCLUSION

We have in this paper, examined the emergence of charismatic movements in Urhobo Anglican churches in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Christian worship that started in the area through some liberated slaves were organised in 1901 by Bishop James Johnson, a charismatic leader of the Niger Delta CMS mission. Native believers demonstrated responsibility in the growth of the churches through their "self-supporting" mission in raising native ministers.

Three church charismatic movements emerged in Urhobo in the twentieth century. The *Ishoshi Erhi* Spirit movement founded by Masimo Ebosea appeared in 1929. It was characterised by frequent fasting and prayers and several miraculous signs were said to have attested to their prayers, and in about 1940 the group petered out. The Anglican Adam Preaching Society (AAPS) founded by Cornelius Adam Igbudu in the 1940s. He was an exceptional gifted singer, dancer and an evangelist *per excellence* whose ministry produced remarkable miracles and great revival in most Anglican churches in the south-south and south-west Nigeria. Then came the "Anglican Mimeyeraye Fasting and Prayer Society" in the 1980s that later became "Anglican Fasting and Prayer Society" (AFPS) as it stands today. When the founder Daniel D. Mimeyeraye

branched out and founded a personal church, the group name became. The church leadership in their dynamism encouraged and incorporated these charismatic movements which positioned the church in Urhobo for expansion and relevance to the people. The developments affirmed that Africans have not been passive in the evangelisation of their people.

It will be healthy for the church leadership to avoid the temptation of naming any group, unit or arm of the church after individuals who are in active ministry. Also, unbiased interaction between the church leadership and groups and movements in the church should be encouraged to harness the various gifting of members for the development of the Church of God.

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