
PENTECOSTALISM AS MAJOR BANE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS DANCE ART IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Critics and anthropologists attest to the indispensable and integral nature of the art of dance since early man first acknowledged the position of the supernatural to the period when man discovered himself as a thinking being. Several authors, dancers and choreographers also have given the subject an academic face-lift in both theory and practice. Ever since the dawn of man's existence, man always danced for everything. For Africans, existence and survival to a large extent depended on how well they could align themselves to the forces that be, and dancing was a medium through which they bridged the gaps between themselves and the cosmic forces. This gave dance and dancers a pride of place in the early African societies before the advent of colonialism (with its several conflicting ideologies and norms) which had remained with us as footprints after they have gone and now, have defaced the art of dancing in several African countries. This study using the survey research method, focuses on an aspect of the colonialist very many footprints- religion, as the chief militating factor to the growth of indigenous dance art in Nigeria. It recommends enlightenment, education and sensitization of the present and younger generations to apply rationality in the adoption of western civilization and not to sacrifice the African cultural identity at the altar of "born-againism".

Keywords: Art, development, indigenous dance, Pentecostalism.

Background to the Study

Nigeria is a religiously diverse society with Islam and Christianity being the most widely professed religions. According to recent estimates, 50% of Nigeria's population adheres to Islam (mainly Sunni). Christianity is practiced by 48% of the population (74% Protestant, 25% Catholic, 1% other Christian). Adherents of Animism and other religions collectively represent 1.4% of the population (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria#Religion, no page indicated). The term "Pentecostal" is derived from the word 'Pentecost', the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks. For Christians, this event commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the second book of Acts. Pentecostalism is a renewal movement within the protestant Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/pentecostalism, no page indicated). Pentecostalism

appeared in the early 20th century among radical adherents of the Holiness movement who were animated by the spirit of revivalism and the earnest expectation of the coming again of Jesus Christ with the strong belief that the end of the world is imminent and that spiritual renewal by way of restoring the lost spiritual gifts is necessary for a better standing in this ephemeral world of man.

On the above online source, Pentecostalism adheres to the inerrancy of scripture and the necessity of accepting Christ as personal lord and savior. It is distinguished by belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an experience separate from conversion that enables a Christian to live a Holy Spirit-filled and empowered life. This empowerment includes the use of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and divine healing- two other defining characteristics of Pentecostalism. Because of their commitment to biblical authority, spiritual gifts and the miraculous, Pentecostals tend to see their movement as reflecting the same kind of spiritual power and teachings that were found in the Apostolic Age of the early church. For this reason, some Pentecostals also use the term 'Apostolic' or 'full gospel' to describe their movement (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/pentecostalism, no page indicated).

Pentecostalism has increasingly gained acceptance from other Christian traditions and Pentecostal beliefs concerning spirit baptism and spiritual gifts have been embraced by non-Pentecostal Christians in Protestant and Catholic churches through the Charismatic Movement (pew forum, 67). Pentecostals believe in the infallibility of the Gospel of Christ, it preaches sole reliance on the Bible (word of God) and the transformation of individual life through faith in Jesus. The inerrancy of the gospel of salvation, baptism, eschatology (Christ the soon coming king), divine healing and spiritual gift are the fundamental beliefs of Pentecostalism. These ideologies as provided by Pentecostalism tend to see every aspect of human endeavor including cultural norms and ethos which are not traceable to written portions of the Bible as sin and one that attracts eternal curse with the biblical backing from the book of Galatians 3:13 which says that "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us". The death of Christ on the cross for them is the ultimate price for eternal life and living by his dictates guarantees the individual eternal rest at his bosom in heaven. Therefore, every cultural norm, values and ethics that are not perceived as giving glory to God are frowned at and seriously avoided, in most cases, completely jettisoned. This made Nigerians view their cultural acts, traditional beliefs and norms as sinful in all ramifications and is therefore slain at the altar of "born-againism".

Pentecostalism preaches total abandonment/denial of self, cultural values and ethics, even the family and whole adoption of biblical living because to them, Jesus is the perfect example who had replied according to St. Luke's gospel when he was told that his mother and brethren were waiting for him outside the temple saying "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." (Luke 8:21). Therefore to effectively do the will of God, the believer must let everything go because "If any man will come after Me (Jesus), let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me (Luke 9:23). Placed against this backdrop, everything outside biblical explanations becomes sin, including culture and the performing arts.

Dance being almost at the centre of every traditional activity and a strong factor in cultural delineation, survival and existence of man is disregarded following the dictates of Pentecostalism. Pentecostals are therefore not allowed to participate in their own cultural activity because they are believed to incur the wrath of God who has afore warned them not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14) and that they "are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; nor it gives light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

(Matthew 5:14-16). Following this, it therefore means that they must forsake totally, their cultural practices as a mark of good followership, and live a life that evangelizes Jesus Christ so that the world (those who are not Pentecostalists) will be converted, leaving sinful practices (mostly cultural) and follow Christ.

Literature and Theoretical Review

Nature and Sources of Africa - Nigerian Dance

Africans danced for everything. Dance played an important role in issues connecting the life and general well being of Africans. It permeates all phases of human existence and forms a bridge towards accessing other areas of life and towards reaching levels of expressions that defies verbal rhetoric. Geoffrey Gorer in strong terms stated that Africans danced for everything. "They dance for joy, and they dance for grief; they dance for love and they dance for hate; they dance to bring prosperity and they dance to avert calamity; they dance for religion and they dance to pass time" (213).

The afore stated observations by Gorer on the subject, attest to the indispensable nature of dance for Africans and indeed for Nigerians. Dance for us is like a mirror through which we cast a glance at our past (a retrospective medium) as well as a standard for evaluating the present and peeping/securing our future with view to harness and project our cultural norms and ethos. Nigerian like other parts of the world incorporate dance into their lives. For Uji Charles and Awuawuer Tijime Justin,

African cultures and countries have national and ceremonial dances; few of them carry the social and historical significance of their Dancing. These elaborate dances not only help communities celebrate their festivals and special events, they also help them tell their stories and record their history. For example, the *kuza* dance of the Tiv people of central Nigeria reflects the agony during the mining in Jos. Because writing and reading came late to some parts of Africa, music and dance were used as a form of unique oral storytelling that was utilized by people from many different cultural backgrounds. These dances were not only celebratory they were also instructive and were used to teach the younger generation about morals and values. They were also used to praise and pray to the gods and give thanks for a bountiful harvest or a successful hunt (253).

Dance for Africans serve both functional and aesthetic purposes. Dance is so kneaded in Nigerian communal life so much that ceremonies in Nigeria are regarded as squalid or sordid without dances. Dance is the rhythmic form of body movement which externalizes thought or satisfies its reason for being. Nigerian indigenous dances have sufficiently been predicated on performance and because of the fighting views about performance in various academic fields and the cultural diversification of the country; the dances in Nigeria are classified under ethnic dances which can otherwise be called traditional dance. From birth through death, dance serves as navigator of man's way of life and the directional signs towards a better, peaceful and purposeful human existence. According to the above source,

Dance is also presented as a controlled emotional outlet whose form reflects cosmology; as a creative experience that draws an extension of speech and gesture that add further levels of meaning to formal occasions; as a strategy for orchestrating the climax of a successful exchange; as a challenge to the power of authorities that generates an alternative reality; as a communal response to crisis that recreates order out of confusion; and as a sequence of transformations that periodically resolves an inherent social dilemma (251).

Dances in Nigeria vary from one ethnic group to another. However, it will suffice to say that factors like acculturation have affected the indigenization, perception and utilization of dances in various parts of the country which have also irrigated the grounds for theories of Nigerian dance;

1. Embodied Theory: This theory holds that dances within the traditional Nigeria community are first born out of the need for the individual to express their ideas, principles, values and thought either for ritual, religious and/or aesthetics reasons. The individual use dance to reach the points of expression that hitherto defied verbal rhetoric's. This theory literally points to the fact that dances are innate in everybody and could be used as a medium to express the thoughts of the individual. This theory holds that certain dances in the community are devised or derived from certain individuals (usually priests, priestesses, therapists and shamans) who out of sympathetic magic related to the with the supernatural forces on behalf of the community. Talented individuals in the community on special occasions devise dances spontaneously that conveyed the mood of the event and also related the intention of the dancers.
2. Race Theory: This theory holds that a given people within the same ancestry exude similar rhythmic movement patterns. The community ethos affects the music, musical instruments and movement pattern of the people. From the individuals (priests and shamans) who devise dance movements, the community adopts these dances, accords them a place in their cultural practices and passes same from one generation to the other through participation and oral traditions. These dance movements become the indigenous dance of the community, which marks them out as unique and different from other community/race. Chris Nwamuo on this theory (which he discusses as indigenous theory) observes that;

Dances and their steps are devised and created from within the community and environment of talented individuals who inhabit the community. The community history, norms, tradition and custom inform community songs, music behavior and musical instruments (6).

Thus dances and their choreographic patterns originate from the immediate community and are accorded a place in the cultural makeup of the community, making them uniquely distinct from other communities. Therefore, the occasion could be the same but the dances vary as long as the race differs. For example, the arrival of a new baby, the dances and music done vary from community to community even though the occasion is similar.

3. Theory of Exposition: This theory is born out of the need to project the rich cultural heritage of a certain community, race or country. It is no doubt that there is this sentimental pride and feeling of supremacy in an individual about his or her culture and in so doing, he sees other cultures and their movement patterns as being inferior and vague, devoid of any aesthetic or functional ideals. These sentimental attachments one owes to his traditional dances have led to several twisted definitions and perspectives of dance art. Most definitions of dance are made to project consciously or unconsciously, one form of dance or the other which the individual is mostly identified with. Little wonder then Lois Ellfeldt explains that

Those who know and enjoy classical ballet, this is dance to them. The teenager brought up on rock n'roll will declare the latest fad dance to be 'what its all about'. To those who know dance as the intricate tapping of the feet, tap dance is dance to them. Therefore dance is what you have known it to be, dance is what you expect it to be and anything that does not equate with your expectations of dance is just not dance (10).

The experience people have with dance from their immediate community/environment becomes dance to them and their efforts to project their cultural heritage yields the theory of exposition. At the national level Ojuade avers that exposition theory "is an experiment to bring together a representative of country in order to showcase our dances to the international audience" (6).

4. **Theft Theory:** this theory holds that some dances done in some communities are not indigenous to them but have been elaborately copied or perhaps stolen from other communities and then given popular acceptance and relevance. Rudiments of many dances seen in the world today are born from movement and rhythmic patterns from other parts of the world. The case of African slave trade around the world has been argued to be the bane at which African dances have been proliferated in the western world which thus have yielded several variations and forms of dances as are known today. This theory argues that dances, rhythmic patterns and movements have filtered into other cultures to serve on purpose or the other via the theory of exposition. Nwamuo on this state succinctly that dances and their patterns are either borrowed, imported or in some cases stolen... In African societies, artists go to other communities to learn dances and dance patterns. On return, these dances are performed in public during events as new dances originating from the community. There is also the case of some African Blacks who travelled to Ghana to learn some dance steps and today, have full monopoly of those dance steps to the extent that the original version now appears out molded (6).

The theft theory is consequent on the exposition theory and attest to the dynamic nature of dance art. Our various ethnic dances could be recognized functionally within a homogenous society as religious ritual, as an expression of social organization, and as a re-creative process. Invariably dance performances of the above medium equally entertain, in that it delights and create spectacle for the watching audience.

Religious rituals are one of the dominant sources of Nigerian dances. It links dance to “expressions of cosmic principles and helps the mediums in attunement” (Adinku, 16). Dance from time immemorial as explained by the above source, has been linked with portraying various laws and principles that are believed to be found within cosmic nature.

Successful portrayal of these cosmic principles in dance movements are believed to be a means to easily establish rapport with these cosmic hosts whose characteristics also have been thought to relate integrally to these principles (16).

Religious ritual dances prompt the relationship between the members of the society and the supernatural powers that are believed to be in control of human existence and survival. These could be exemplified in the several festivals and masquerade dances in various communities.

In its social context, dance dwell on the expressions of role differentiations as well as traditional norms, it safeguards the traditionally instituted social and political hierarchy and equally emphasizes the standard of behavior and instructs on morals within the society. Hence there are dances for the royal class, elders, maidens and other age grades in a particular community. Though entertaining, these dances also state their status and responsibility within the community. The recreative context of dance is restricted to the entertainment needs of the users. It is a free for all affairs to the members of the community usually improvisational. It could be an expression of individual talent and expertise in the performance of dance movements. There was a high level of communal involvement in dance activities in Nigeria; the value of dance in the community was reputable and consequently recognized in almost all levels in the society (religious, economic, political, social, individual and collective). Its feature in events was that it graces the event by also reiterating the values, norms and ethos of the society. In his observations of Nigerian dances in pre-colonial times, Ojuade points out that the traditional dances of our people developed in an unrestricted manner because creativity was freely encouraged within the limits of the norms and conventions of the people. There were specific dances tailored to specific occasions. Every major stage of human development such as birth, growing up and death had dances which however were not performed in isolation. The dances were associated with ceremonies rites and festivals

which characterize such stages. In the pre-colonial era therefore, dances can be classified into four main categories: vocational dances, rites of passage dances, religious ritual dances and recreational dance.

Categories of Dance

Vocational Dances: these are dances that portray the pre-requisites and favorable conditions of services. They are dances that reflect the physical means of survival in the community. They are dances that relay the general occupational systems and standards of the community. "The famous Boat Regattas and water plays of the Warri people in the riverine and coastal areas reflect the predominant economic pre-occupation of the society which are fishing and rowing" (Ojuade, 9) also in the Egbenuoba dance in Anambra.

Rites of Passage Dances: these are dances performed to mark the maturity or coming of age of young men and women. It also reflect the transition from one state of being to another for young men and women. These dances build pride and infuse into them, a stronger sense of commitment in communal issues. Hence, dances that mark the safe transition of the spirit of the dead into the other world are also rites of passage dances as well as dances that induct or welcome new members into an existing group. Also funeral dances where death is viewed as a passage route to immortality. "The Nkim Nkat maiden dance of the Calabar people in Cross River and Obitun dance of the Ondo people" (Enem 99) are instances buttressing these facts.

Religious Ritual Dances: Another early use of dance was as a precursor to ecstatic trance states in healing rituals. It is still adopted for this purpose in many Nigerian cultures. dance is present in mythology and religion globally. It has certainly been an integral part of ceremonies, rituals, celebrations and entertainment. Religious ritual dances are essential part of the worship procedure where it becomes a crucial communication link between god and man.

For instance, the Mai Bori possession dance during the Mai Bori healing rituals, are regarded as the conclusive evidence that the chasm of communication between the worshipped and the worshipper has been bridged (Ojuade, 8).

Recreational Dances: this is a social dance form whose primary aim is to interact with other individuals through dance. It is done for its social, educational and health benefits. Within the Nigeria culture, these dances are categorized by age and status but they are devoid of religious or mystic attachments. It is done to satisfy the entertainment needs of the community. Instances of this typology can be found in the Mkpokiti and Atilogwu dances done by youngsters in the eastern parts of the country. Dances of this nature can be used also by the community as dances of welcome and for satirical purposes. It can also be employed as a means of addressing political issues within the community.

Pentecostalist Ideology and the Fate of Indigenous Dances in Nigeria.

Africa is a dancing race. Dance for them is a means of assuring themselves of their existence and survival in the world they find themselves. It is difficult to separate African music and dance because they devised several dances for several kinds of music and perform them together in equal proportion so much that each may become unpleasant when performed alone. Dances in the pre-colonial era were accorded values that touch all spheres of life. Nigerians before now placed dance at the center of existence and viewed it as a medium towards consummating their communal patronage. The Pentecostalist ideology of the colonial missionaries is at the core fore of defacing elements of the art of indigenous dancing in this country. They campaigned against the traditional relevance of dances within the community leading to the extinction and unhealthy adulteration of several traditionally functional dances. The church (mainly protestant churches) made Nigerians believe their indigenous dances and cultural practices were lead ways to hell fire where their souls will perpetually suffer and gnash their teeth for all eternity.

They viewed and termed our cultural practices as fetish and sinful and therefore revolted against our way of life. With the Pentecostalist ideology, they fought our tradition and cultural standards in all ramifications- family, worship, economy and beliefs making Nigerians believe that they were sinful. Their quest through radical approaches and crusades succeeded in yielding the desired goal as many Nigerians accepted that indeed their cultural practices were sinful in nature. Therefore to be totally pure and free from their culture which was termed the “bondage of sin”, one must according to Romans 3:23 repent by knowing that he has “sinned and come short of the glory of God” and also accept that Christ paid the price to free us from the curse that the laws in Moses' Teachings by becoming cursed instead of us. Scripture says, “Everyone who is hung on a tree is cursed. Christ paid the price so that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to all the people of the world through Jesus Christ and we would receive the promised Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3: 13-15). Therefore, the Nigerian Pentecostalist has no obligation to cultural beliefs anymore if he is to live the true spirit-filled life which guarantees him a place in the bosom of God.

This psychological invasion of Nigerians by the packaging and projection of the western religion was a huge success and its consequence was the total abandonment of culture and tradition. Hence, the psychological and physical factions between holy living and tradition came into existence. Indeed by the preaching of the whites in the early Catholic Church in Nigeria, indigenous dance art did not totally fade. It was incorporated in several occasions in the Catholic Church. Its functionality was rather tampered and twisted because the dance artists must now perform the dance to the glory of God and not the deities, in church premises or gatherings instead of the shrines, market places or any traditionally found space. What the catholic did was to adulterate the functionality of our indigenous dances but encouraged its performance traditionally for aesthetic and recreative reasons. Even till now, we can still see and hear the catholic priest patronizing cultural performances in the church premises. Several catholic churches go to the point of raising their own cultural dance troupes where they groom young dancers in indigenous dances. To a large extent, catholic churches support indigenous dancing in the country. In several events like Church Bazaar, priestly ordinations, Christian women organization meetings, launchings, knight's celebrations and church openings, several indigenous dances are performed to grace these events. Unlike the protestant churches (Pentecostal churches) where nothing of cultural value is patronized based on their operational principles from biblical standards. Several catholic churches organize and facilitate programmes that bother on the sustenance of culture and tradition. A typical example of this is the “Odenigbo” geared towards the sustenance of the Igbo culture, language and traditions. This performance held yearly usually in September and sponsored by the Owerri Arch Diocese (Assumpta Cathedral) of the Catholic Church is packed with indigenous performances like music, dance, wrestling, drama and moonlight performances.

It is worthy to note at this point that several priests are masters in their indigenous dances so much that when it is performed they can tell the wrong movements and postures from the right ones performed by the dancers because they align themselves to their roots. Pastors will not do this having forsaken their brethren and cultural practices which they consider as dirty and unclean, being taught to live by the word of God which warns them by the St. James Gospel to “lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls”(James 1:21). Culture is viewed as filthy and naughty and the Pentecostalist is taught to understand that “the night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light”(Romans 13:12). Using Christ as the perfect example of true Christianity the first verse in the twelfth chapter book of Hebrews says that Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfected of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the

shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1). Therefore, given these dictates that harshly invades the psychology of Nigerian Pentecostalist, they abandon our ways of life even when they incorporate dance in church programmes, they perform calisthenics using western indigenous music and dance patterns, therefore, promoting cultural colonialism. One can only imagine then, the harm this is meting to the indigenous dances in Nigeria given the fact that protestant churches constitute the majority of Christianity in the country.

Observations and Conclusion

It is noteworthy at this point to state that Pentecostalist ideologies are really deceitful in all ramifications and are footprints marking the presence of the dominance of western culture on our soil. If indeed we say we are independent, it is paramount to liberate our identity (culture) from alien influences and dominance of western cultures. A true African must dance and dance the dance he is familiar with because Africa is a dancing race. It is an error for the pastors to preach total abandonment of cultural traits and norms, yet they do their indigenous dances in the church during offerings and praises, the same thing they preach against.

The bible preached rationality and not outright cast away of cultural practices that's why even Jesus himself had to go to Pilate to be judged as custom demands and had on one occasion in the gospel according to St. Mark;

When they (the Pharisees) were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regards not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus answering said unto them, renders to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him. (12: 12-17).

The above reference did not spell the outright cast away of tradition, even Jesus obeyed the laws of every area he went and acknowledged the positions of custom and tradition. Jesus followed the law and so did His parents for after His birth it was "at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised" (Luke 2:21a) and being the first born He was consecrated "And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:22-24). Not only this but Jesus kept the Holy Days, as we have already read as He kept the Passover but also the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths (John 7:2) and "About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching" (John 7:14). He had been observing the Holy Days since He was a child, regularly attending with His parents (Luke 2:41-42) and observed all Jewish customs and norms. Now, should we, as followers of Christ abandon our traditions and customs and still say we are following Christ who himself obeyed the Jewish laws?

Nigerian Pentecostalist has betrayed the art of indigenous dancing, promoting western norms and practices. The people who brought Christianity to us are also champions in the projection and packaging of their cultural practices like masquerades. Here, Pentecostalist see masquerading as sin but gorgeously dress their children up to see "Father Christmas" which is the masquerade of the Whiteman. We must retrace our steps and take measures towards the restoration of Nigerian indigenous dances and customs.

First, we must liberate ourselves from this psychological invasion that demeans our perception of indigenous dancing in Nigeria. To do this, the Pentecostalist must be taught to see culture as his identity. After all, the Whiteman who brought Christianity to us also created avenues to consummate their cultural heritage like carnivals where their indigenous dancing and practices. It is therefore an error to jettison our rich cultural heritage and sacrifice them at the altar of "Born-againism".

We should also acknowledge the uniqueness of our rhythmic movement patterns. Several dances that are making waves today which we now call modern or contemporary dancing have their roots in the rhythmic movement patterns of Africans which are nurtured and given relevance on their soil, projected and performed all over the world. The issue here is if these dances were totally sinful in all ramifications, why then were they stolen from us, modified and brought back to us? We must begin to see our dances as unique and functional in the sense of marking us out as a unique race.

The Government should also champion the training of cultural experts from the cradle by incorporating the teaching of indigenous dances at all levels of education in the country so as to give Nigerian dance as well as other cultural practices a pride of place. In the Western world, Ballet dancers are trained from the cradle. We can adopt such approach to expose the Nigerian child to the ideal cultural norms and dictates so that they begin to appreciate the Nigerian culture. Also, government must involve/create positions for research personnel in the various councils for arts and culture to dig deep into our localities and revive the dead and forgotten indigenous dances in the country to ensure longevity in our cultural practices.

The Pentecostal church must awaken from their self inflicted mental oppression of believing that total abandonment of culture is equal to total dedication and good followership in the Christian faith. We mustn't abandon our practices for whole adoption of Christianity being the traditional religion of the Whiteman. We should rather apply rationality, and find a common ground in which we can balance Nigerian indigenous practices and the dictates of Christianity. Our culture must not totally be slain at the altar of Christianity.

Africans were religious people before the coming of the Whiteman and their psychodemeaning ideologies through Christianity. During the catholic era, our practices were adjusted to pave way for the peaceful co-existence of indigenous practices and Catholicism. They encouraged our practices and in turn enjoyed a conducive atmosphere and fertile grounds for their growth. However, Pentecostalism as an offshoot of Catholic Christianity, now threatens our indigenous practices and it is only pertinent in a time like this, to raise this cry for a restoration of the fast eroding indigenous practices in Nigeria, beginning from our indigenous dances

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