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APPROVAL SHEET
CONTEXTUALIZING AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCH WORSHIP: INTO

BAPTIST CHURCH WORSHIP

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BY

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ABSTRACT

Worship is an aspect of African Heritage with some distinct elements from that of the Western background. The emergence of church worship in Africa which was introduced by Missionaries had condemned the black concepts of worship and regarded them to be heathen. They were suppressed and rebranded into foreign culture, thereby making the whites more comfortable at the disadvantage of their hosts. These worship services are viewed as that of the Euro-American, since the Christianity that was presented to Africans is equaled to Gospel + Semitic Culture + Graeco-Roman culture and Western thought form. In essence, the ingredients in worship that meet the existential needs of Africans are missing. Thus, this turns the idea of worship to be more western than religions.

However, the concern of this studies embraced worship in the African context in order to make it more meaningful and fulfilling, impacting the spiritual growth of African Christians into Christ likeness and attracting numerical growth to the church.

The method of research employed was pure library as the researcher made good use of available resources in the J.C. Pool library of the NBTS, Ogbomoso by going through many fields of thought such as "Theology, Cross-cultural mission, liturgy in the early church, African religion and the use of dictionaries, journals, periodic, magazines, encyclopedia, and unpublished materials etc.

Moreover, it was discovered that the success and progress of the African indigenous, or independent churches and some Pentecostals in the soil of Africa took cognizance of the deep spiritual yearnings and worship consciousness of the

people's cultural view which inform their existential need. In other words religion is embedded in African culture, and culture is in the blood. This inform the African life. By and large, the cultural elements which are compatible with the scriptures should be retained while those that are contrary should be discarded. Since our context has the tendency to influence our understanding of God and the expression of our faith, our theology must be inculturated to fit in to value system.

Finally, in order to achieved good result in this aspect of worship, literal translation of the scriptures into the indigenous languages, teachings, preaching using familiar symbols, and illustrations from Africa thought form, demonstration of the Power of God over evil confrontations miracles, healings and testimonies must be duly considered. Likewise, meaningful music and songs in native dialect with deep spiritual emotional touch as well as the use of local indigenous instruments are recommended. It is fact that worship reveal nature and state of being, therefore, it must be Christ centred and Bible based with sound theological foundation which shape beliefs and practices.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The contributions of authors concerning the attitude of the early Christian church towards African indigenous beliefs and culture as well African cultural

revolution and the Christian faith were discovered to be imperialistic and mere dichotomy, more of distorting the African cultural heritage rather than preaching the pure gospel in the host context.

However, in order to nail the subject matter on the head, it became crystal clear that contextualizing the indigenous church worship in Baptist denomination from the African perspective need to take cognizance of the following views:

1. Cultural elements which are compatible with scriptural norms should be retained while those which counter should be discarded or modified to reflect Biblical truths.
2. Since our context influenced our understanding of God and the expression of our faith, therefore our theology must be inculturated to fit in our value system.

By and large, the major goals of contextualizing indigenous church worship particularly at Baptist local assemblies in Africa will;

1. Definitely produce an indigenous Christianity that is rooted in obedience to Christ, spontaneously using forms of thought as modes of action, natural and familiar in the environment of its adherents, that is, in direct, clear and close relationship with the cultural and religious heritage of the Africans.
2. In addition, it will provide an African experience of Christianity which will help Christians to live an authentic moral life and thus be able to respond authentically to the ideals and values of the Gospel message.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based upon interaction with books and literatures as well as personal view on the contextualization of indigenous church

worship or Africanisation of the church worship in the Baptist as denomination within Africa.

1. Since faith on the gospel message as well as all other elements of worship is and can only be culture bound, that is, it is received and interpreted by people in a given culture who are influenced by its values, it is difficult to think of transmitting pure gospel news" uninfluenced by some culture to people of a different culture. Therefore, African Christians should keep those cultural values which are in agreement with the Bible or scriptures and those which are contrary to the Bible should be rejected.

2. The church in Africa should seek to avoid superficiality, pretense and hypocrisy in worship, instead desire and maintain the culture of reverence, humility and sincerity. Moreover, mode of preaching should not be mere oratory performance but should convey sound doctrine through attentive communication. Of course, all elements of worship should be free from distraction and instead accentuate the glory of our head Jesus Christ.

3. In order to check the influence of westernization and crippling of African cultural heritage, which may seem as a possible shift from the indigenous worship and practice therefore, the African theological institution particularly from the Baptist denomination should offer programmes and courses related to African cultural values and world view for the indigenous pastors.

4. Religion is embedded in our culture, And our culture is in our blood, therefore spiritual hymns, psalms and songs of praises should be meaningfully sung in local dialects with our local traditional instrument during church worship services, so as to encourage and motivate, their participation, it will go long way

into the heart and memory, by this the young one will appreciate their culture and heritage.

5. There should be literal translation of the Bible or scriptures into the indigenous native language as well as communicate and preach in the same, using familiar symbols thought forms, illustrations that fit in our context eg? Bibeli in Yoruba, Littafi MaiTserki, in Hausa, Kpa Kazar in Bajju, Akwukwo Nso in Igbo

6. African Baptist must shape to its own life by responding to the desire for a church where Africans may feel at home. This desire must shape worship, beliefs and practices to make the African churches distinctly African, Christ centred and Bible based.

7. African churches must seek more adequate ways to worship than those given them from Europe or America. In other words, there must be experiments in adaptation of services for marriage, confirmation, birth, regular thanksgiving services for individual blessings, befitting church funeral services for deserving members.

8. There should be efforts to establish an African Christian theology other than the one written by the western theologians. This will help to relate the Biblical witness to African life, without necessarily going by way of the Hellenistic, and European interpretation of this witness. In essence, the indigenous theologians should design theology from context and Christian thought form.