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**FROM JOHN ETEFIA TO CLETUS BASSEY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND  
CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF PROPHETISM (EPH. 4:11/ COR. 12-14) AMONG THE  
CHURCHES IN**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper discussed the phenomenon of prophetism, that is prophet, prophecy and prophesying among the churches in Uyo metropolis. Prophetism is highly valued among the people in whose traditional religion has earlier given them the art of divination which is concomitant to Christian prophetism. With the initial initiative of notable individuals in the 1930s resulting in the establishment of the Mount Zion Churches which are prophetic churches, the coming of the Pentecostal Churches in the 1990s which symbolized the second wave has seen a lot of modification in the earlier Christian prophetism of the Mount Zion churches. Prophetism as a major trend and determinant in church affiliation and ministerial disposition has been noticed in the metropolis. While the Mission Churches has approached the phenomenon in differing ways, the present trend in prophetism seems to be very much welcome in Uyo, and a force that may continue to influence the churches' hermeneutics in the nearest future.*

**KEYWORDS:** John Etefia, Cletus Bassey, Phenomenological, Prophetism Churches

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Biblical interpretation and its effect on the historiography of the Christian church in Nigeria in particular and Uyo the capital of Akwa Ibom State, has been a thing of interest to many observers in the field of Biblical Studies. In particular, there is the strong interest in the Biblical interpretation that takes cognizance of the traditional world view and practices of the people, which has been a major factor in the successful establishment and spread of churches among the people (Ukpong, 1993:149). A very important aspect of the traditional religious practice and culture of the people is the practice of divination, prophecy and healing (Udo 1983: 149). The reception of the fact that the New Testament established the existence of such ministry as prophetism, that is prophet and prophecy with its attendant results in meeting the need of the people as Christians has continued to dictate a major following in membership of the churches. On this note, there are prominent indigenous Ibibio personalities, churches and practices which have emerged in the prophetic movement that warrants attention.

Faced with this background, this paper intend to discuss briefly the prophetic movement among the churches in Uyo metropolis, the traditional Ibibio divination and prophetism as an underlining factor to the understanding of the Biblical prophetism; a survey of the prophetic movement through the indigenous people which is cryptically symbolized by John Etefia through Cletus Bassey; the impact of the hermeneutical effort on the people; the reception of the churches to the movement and the possible future trend of prophetism in Uyo. These are the major burden of this paper. It is purely, a research that describes the prophetic phenomenon among a people in the light of Biblical reflection, on the subject matter.

## Definition of Terms

**Prophetism:** Prophetism involves the office and person of the prophet, the process and practice of prophecy. It is all about the prophetic character, function and authority of, or the system, practice and doctrine of inspired teaching or prophesying. It includes the behavior of a prophet(Hastings 1988:59).

**Prophet:**In Christianity as in some other religions, a prophet is an individual who is claimed to have been contacted by the divine,( in this case the Spirit of God) to speak for them, serving as an intermediary with humanity, delivering this new found knowledge from the supernatural entity to other people ( Hastings 1988: 59).

**Prophecy:** Prophecy is the message that the prophet convey. The message most often could cover the past, present, and future events or situation (Hastings 1988: 60).

**Prophesy:**prophesy is a process in which one or more messages that has been communicated to a prophet are then communicated to others, such messages involved inspiration, interpretation, and or revelation of conditioned events to come. The process of prophesying especially involves reciprocal communication of the prophet with divine source of the message(Hastings 1988:60).

## Uyo Metropolis

“Uyo Metropolis” A metropolis is the chief city of a country; capital (Hornby and Cowrie 1973:542), for the purpose of this paper, ‘metropolis’ is used for Uyo Capital City Development Authority which includes parts of Etoi, OffotUkwa, Oku and IkonoIbom Clans of AkwaIbom State. Uyo has been a native development headquarters in the colonial era, a local government headquarters in the post independent era, and finally in 1987 the capital of AkwaIbom State, one of the thirty six states of Nigeria. The natives of Uyo are Ibibio; a semi Bantu people that speak Ibibio language, that migrated through the Camerouns and Arochukwu to their present area of domicile (Akpan and Atta 2007: 19-25). The major religions of the people are Traditional Religion and Christianity. Between 1846 and 2007, when the first Christian mission came to Uyo (the Methodist Church), six hundred churches were opened, the Roman Catholic has ten; The Apostolic Church has the highest number with forty six followed by the Redeemed Christian church of God with forty-five (45) Mount Zion LightHouse Full Gospel Church has sixteen (16). Until the 1960s, Mission churches dominated Uyo, before the African independent churches came up and lately the Pentecostal churches (Onah 2011:216).

## Traditional Prophetism and Divination among the People of Uyo

Before the advent of Christianity to Uyo in 1846, the Uyo people being Ibibio, belief in the existence of spirits (Ndems) which can possess and use a human person as its functionary and service. When the latter happens, the person will be made inspirationally ecstatic; who may dance and performed other feats which were never possible ordinarily. At the first time of spirit possession which could be during the *Ekombi* and *Ekpofestivals*, when such music as *Ekombi* is played or any moment, the *AbiaIdiongis* consulted to ascertain the wish of the spirit in possessing the person. If it is established that the person has been chosen as a medium, the person will have to be consecrated for the service of such spirit; who can be consulted as occasion demand (Udo 1983: 145). On the other hand the practice of divination *Idiongor Use Mkpo* is an attempt to obtain information about the future and hidden things that are removed from the ordinary perception, by consulting

informants other than humans, it seeks to find out things which are hidden through the use of some oracles or omen. The *MbiaIdiong* (diviner) and priests, who are connected with the cults of certain divinities, or men of power, are the agents of divination. A diviner is believed to be given power to see the unseen, to know the unknown, to tell of the past, present and future events. Divination is consulted for so many reasons which ranges from when a person dreams, when something is lost, when barren women desire children, the presence of inexplicable sickness, strange dreams, moments of crises in a life, marriage proposal, ascertaining the cause of death, the birth of a child, the prospect of a journey or business, the choice and coronation of kings, etc (Udo 1983:144).

According to E.A. Udo; like the prophets of the Old Testament who were divinely called by God to prophesy, so is each member of the *idong* society was divinely called by *AbasiOnyong* (god of the sky), *AbasiIsong* (god of the earth) *MmeNdem* (deities) and ancestors to the membership of *Idiong* society. No one could be a diviner (*AbiaIdiong*) by himself. The office of the diviner is at times hereditary. But a diviner can pass his esoteric knowledge to a close relation. The diviners use different methods to achieve their aim. Some use beads, *eyei* (young palm frond) wooden images, and with a combination of psychology and mind reading techniques, special and keen attention on the right interpretation of signs, to work out the answers to the problems brought before them (1983:146). Generally, the diviner is the person that is consulted at all times, and at important occasions in the life of the people. The diviner is there to find out hidden secrets or knowledge and pass them on to people who wish to know. With this traditional background the reception and practice of prophetism with the advent of Christianity to Uyo metropolis has been a major phenomenon among the people.

### **Prophetism in Ephesians 4:11-12/ 1 COR. 12-14**

To Paul the Apostle, the office of the prophet (Eph 4: 11 -12) and the practice of prophecy is an established fact in the church of God. The prophetic office is one of the five ministry gifts, which are given by Christ to his church for the work of the ministry, the building up of the body of Christ, which is nurturing the church to maturity (Udoette 2012:30). The fivefold ministry gifts are supernatural spiritual endowments, and grace through which, humans are converted to Christ, nurtured and sustained in the faith, and are also enabled to bring others to Christ. In I Corinthians chapters 12-14, St. Paul enunciated the fact that every believer can prophesy, because prophecy is given by Christ as one of the spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit for the edification, comfort, and building up of the church, His body. While prophecy is for every believer (1 Cor. 12:12) but not all believers are called into the prophetic ministry as in Eph. 4:11 (Udoette 2006: 1-16). "Prophecy is a spiritually inspired speech which is intelligible to both the prophets and the community and which aims at building up, strengthening and consoling the same community" (1988:13). It is a pronouncement which includes forth-telling and foretelling, declaration and prediction directed by God - the Holy Spirit (Victor 1993:400). Due to the fact that different people of the world had one form of prophecy or the other in the other world religions, shows that there is the possibility for a person to prophesy under the influence of another spirit other than the Holy Spirit. This is where the result of the prophecy and the discerning of spirit are needed, and the lifestyle and faith of the prophet (I Cor 14: 24). The expression of this gift may not only be vocal but include symbolic activities as in the Old Testament, and the case of Agabus in Acts 21: 14. It is on this note of the nature that Victor Budgen mentioned four principal character of a true prophecy from God which includes the following:

- (i) Infallibility: That is, the absence of perhaps, and 'may be' in its vocabulary
- (ii) Supernaturalism: All the prophets move in the realm of the supernatural to accomplish various tasks.
- (iii) Divine urgency: The prophet is engaged in an irresistible task (Jere 6:20).
- (iv) Testing: The prophet's prophecy are tested (Deut. 18:20) with the scriptures, and any sign of falsity or inaccuracy would get them killed or stoned to death (1993:43).

While in the OT, prophets are specially anointed individuals, in the NT, all believers can prophesy (I Cor 14: 31, 3), but not all are specially anointed to function in the office of the prophet (I Cor 12: 28). G. L. Lasebikan has outlined some characteristic features of a prophet which runs through the OT to the NT; which include: The prophet is the servant of God; he is the mouthpiece of God, and a seer, supernaturally endowed to know things as revealed to him by God. A prophet has an unreserved obedience to God. He is the watchman over God's people, and also watches the activity of the state on behalf of Yahweh. To the prophet Yahweh is first in all things; the prophet cannot be bought, and also risks his life to accomplish God's purpose. The prophet is under God's supernatural protection, and this enables them to deliver their messages without fear. The prophet is called of God, God empowered him with remarkable spiritual gifts (word of knowledge, word of wisdom and discerning of spirit 1 Cor. 12:10) to see what ordinary eyes would not see; to know and to tell. The prophet is he who is lifted up by the Spirit of God in order to commune with Him, so that he is enabled to interpret the divine will and to act as a medium between God and men (Lasebikan 1984:2-5).

In Israel as in the church the prophet is the moral and religious teacher of their nation, the authoritative preacher of righteousness, statesmen who guided the religious life of the nation, they are counselors to the kings, revivalists and reformers, they forewarn about the certainty of coming judgments. They give directions about future bliss (Hastings 1988:61)

In the NT, Jesus is the great prophet of the church (Luke 13: 33), Agabus (Acts 21:14), Judas (Acts 15: 32) and Paul (Ephesians 3: 3) were all prophets. In all, from the OT to the NT the characteristics of the Prophets are similar which include: (a) interrupted communion (b) divine flavor (c) excessive zeal for devotion to God, holiness, guidance to the people etc.

#### **4. A Phenomenological Appraisal of the emergence and practice of Prophetism among the churches in Uyo Metropolis**

##### **(A) The Earliest Waves of Prophetism: The Apostolic Church to The Mount Zion and other Prophetic Churches in Uyo.**

The emergence of the prophetic ministries popularly called *Ufokakam*—prayer churches (*aladura* churches in Yoruba land) began in the early 1930s (Lasebikan 1984:5); and they have had much impact on the people, that the tenor of Christianity is hardly appreciated in any part of Uyo if it does not accommodate some element of the spiritual. This is as a result of the claim of the prophetic churches to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit which controls all their activities such as worship and praise. Membership of the prophetic ministries is mostly drawn from the existing mission churches, and the splinter groups of the prophetic ministries.

**(I) The Apostolic Church:** The first prophetic ministry to arrive Uyo was the Apostolic Church which came in on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1933 (Esuh 1991:1-7). The church is surmised as the father of Nigeria's proliferation of churches. The Apostolic Church, having been established in Lagos in 1931 was brought to Duke Town, and Creek Town in Calabar in 1933 through the strong evangelistic efforts of evangelist I. J. Vaughan from Britain and Joseph Ayo Babalola from western Nigeria.

The messages of the duo led to a great spiritual revival that spread throughout the South Eastern part of Nigeria. Pastor I. J. Vaughan was eventually stationed at Calabar, and this prevented the Calabar and Akwa Ibom Churches from being part of the Christ Apostolic Church at the 1936 breakup of the Apostolic Church. The Apostolic Church came to Oron, and Uyo Ikot Ekpene in 1933 and has since had its strong base in Akwa Ibom State with 3 fields, Uyo metropolis is the major constituent of Uyo field (1991:4).

**(a) Prophet and prophetism in The Apostolic Church Uyo Metropolis.**

1. The Apostolic Church Uyo metropolis, places great premium on the office of the prophet and practice of prophecy generally. To the Church, prophecy guides every day decision of the church. Prophecy is called *Uyo-Obong* i.e. voice of the Lord (Uyire: interview) which can be a prophecy that can cover every area of life of the clientele of the word. Most especially, when people are sick, and they are brought to the church for prayers and to be guided by prophesy on the way out. In case of spiritual attacks, the individual is placed on fasting for some days. A prophetic session in the church is most often accompanied with speaking in tongues, the shaking of the individual, screams, at times staggering and rolling on the floor in such cases, the doors of the church building could close (Uyire: interviewed).

**( b) The issue of ‘assignment’:** The Apostolic Church in Uyo metropolis has been greatly influenced by the splinter groups which have absorbed the African traditional religious practice of assignment. Assignment means the directive given to an individual through prophecy which could include specific days of fasting and items to be brought for prayers. Such items as clothe, coconut, salt, rice, yam, soap, broom, olive oil, classified sand from one's compound or as directed are the common elements of the assignment for clientele (Ekpe and Asuquo: interview). At the local assemblies, there are the individual ordinary persons who prophesies who are called Channels, ‘*ekwa*’ ( *orokpusong*- the revealer of the way, the shower of the way, that is a person that prophesy who is not yet ordained in to the prophetic office. The members of the church believe that without prophecy in a church service, the ‘Lord’ has not visited the service; and most programmes are attended basically for the prophecy that will be given by the channels. Most often prophecy is regulated to two or three in a service, and these can only happen after worship or after preaching. There are special days in the week such as Thursdays which are devoted for prayers, prophecy and healing. The Thursday prayer is called *Usennkaakam Apostolic*, that is the day for prayer band in the apostolic. Prophecy is not entertained during burial and marriage services.

A channel that has been accurate in his prophecy can be ordained a prophet, and this is at the local assembly level. Such a fellow can be promoted to Council prophet, a position which entails the prophet being the guide from the ‘Lord’ to the Council in meetings and decisions and in conventions. The prophets are remunerated but not as the apostles who have the spiritual and administrative charge of an assembly. Prophecy is an open exercise to all who are so gifted without any discrimination. Anyone can prophesy in the assembly right from the age of six till old age (Godwin: Interview).

The prophets are categorized into national prophets who operate and prophesy at the national and international conventions. There is the council prophet for the council, the area prophets who prophesy in the area temple, and the channels in the local assembly, who prophesy in the local assembly during fasting, tarry nights and Sunday services. Members can also visit the homes of these channels for prophesy, or guidance on any issue. There are times that human elements and sentiments are injected into the prophetic in the Apostolic Church. Prophecy can be sponsored against perceived enemy for personal gratification. Prophecy unless, there is a counter, is accepted



without questioning; prophecy can be bizarre at times like telling a pregnant woman to embark on a fast, it can even dictate a spouse to a seeker. In the assemblies where the leadership is vested in Biblical teachings the prophecies in such places could be very reliable (Godwin: interview). At times, prophecies have been rejected in the assemblies due to such reasons as when a channel is perceived to always give false prophecies, or when there is a counter prophecy. There are times also when fear is instilled in the hearts of the people due to fake prophecy.

The prominent role of prophecy in the church could easily be noticed when the working class, the business people are seen crowding the church premises during fasting and prayer days, to receive prophetic messages which they believe guide their lives and movement and association with people during working hours

## **(II) (a) John Etefia and the establishment of Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church, Uyo.**

John Etefia is a household name, and a highly revered figure in the prophetic circle and among the Zion churches in Ibibio land. He it was that established the Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church in Calabar in 1944, which signified the beginning of indigenous Ibibio initiative at establishing their independent churches in the area (Akpabio : interview).

John Etefia was an Ibibio from Ikot Akpan Den, in Mkpata Enin L.G. Area of Akwa Ibom State, who was born around 1908. He was a British trained nurse under the colonial rule, and was stationed at Calabar Hospital. Etefia was a pioneer member of the Apostolic Church at Calabar and Oron, in Akwa Ibom State. He witnessed and was part of those that were converted to the Apostolic Church at Calabar in the 1933-34 revival. He was an ardent and fervent prayer warrior and a gifted prophet in the Apostolic Church, Calabar and Oron until 1944.

There are two background accounts of the establishment of the Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church. The first account from the Apostolic Church circle, has it that it was because Etefia was relegated to the background by the white pastors of the Apostolic Church despite his prophetic gift, prayer life and contributions to the church; without any remunerations for his activities that led to his leaving the Apostolic Church (Godwin: interview). While from the Mount Zion source, Etefia left because of the high level of immorality, homosexual practices and corruption of the white leaders of the Apostolic Church, coupled with the persecution that was meted on him for his prayer and prophetic prowess (Akpabio: interview). Etefia after many prayers was instructed by prophecy through himself as the channel, to establish Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church. Etefia inquired further and was instructed to go to America and have a link with The Mount Zion Church, Tennessee in the U.S.A. Through the effort of his prayer team, and himself, with the help of his supporters he was able to raise the fare to America. And on returning from America, he established the Mount Zion Church at Uyo, before relocating to No. 9 Inyang Street Calabar, where the international headquarters is till date (Udokang : interview).

Bishop John Etefia as he was eventually called, having adopted the Episcopalian system of government in order to distinguish it from the Apostolic Church, led the church for more than 30 years. The church is the first and the largest indigenous prophetic church in Akwa Ibom and Cross River State of Nigeria. It has spread to most parts of Nigeria, the Cameroons, and beyond (Akpabio : interview).

## **( b) Prophetism in Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church, Uyo.**

The church in practice places more emphasis and faith in prophesy than the preaching of the word in any service. Prophesy is taken without questioning. The prophecies are rendered in the local Efik/Ibibio language ( Umoh 2011: 8). There are special days for prophesy and healing, which is

Thursday, a reminiscence of the Apostolic Church background. The use of Efik/Ibibio language in service and prophecy was as a result of the time and environment where the church started, that is the literacy level and the cultural background of the people. Communication in the local language has been a major factor that warrants so many people to flock to the church. Prophecy can be allowed to lead the worship service from the beginning to the end. Service can be interrupted at any point for prophecy. The prophets while prophesying can pause and then continue intermittently, with strange songs often tagged 'songs of the spirit', which at times exalt human sorrow (2011: 9).

From the beginning of the church, there is the belief and practice of 'assignment', that is prophecy can direct an individual to use water, olive oil, stone, prayer cloths and sometimes classified sand for prayers: sands from the sea, river, family compound, grave yard, farm etc.

Like its pedigree the Apostolic Church, the church has graded prophets; local prophets and prophetesses who are called channels. To provoke prophecy in a service, there are particular time during worship when the traditional *Ekombi* drum and music is played to a heightened level, and the 'spirit' will possess and use a channel, or some channels. The Thursdays prayers which is called '*AkamUyetAran*' that is anointing oil prayer (Bassey 2013:23), and tarry nights called in local language *taddynai*, are often occasions for spectacular ecstatic manifestation that amazes the members.

A typical prophetic scene in Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church, Nwanniba Uyo was aptly described by Cletus Bassey who was healed in one of those sessions as follows:

It was one of the Thursday *AkamUyetaran* (Anointing oil prayer). That suddenly in the course of meeting (uwen, singing, dancing) that the spirit came upon Mma the wife of the *Etubom*' pastor in charge, usually the spirit would come down to use any of the prophet or prophetesses during such point in the service, and when the spirit come like that, all the doors of the church would be closed. On this occasion, Mma ran by the spirit down the aisle to the back of the church, and from there began to comb in between the rows of the benches, as if she was looking for something or someone, till she got to the exact area where I lay. From my weak state having lost much energy I could see lazily as she approached. When she got to where I lay around the last bench, she scooped me up and brought me to where the "covenant box" was kept in the church. She kept me there, then went to her husband the pastor and said... You have to redeem this child. He is going to die. His case has been judged and concluded. He does not have many days to live... At the prophetic instruction the pastor brought money in coins, put it in the "covenant box", anointed my head, feet, arm, and drop some oil into my mouth, and prayed, rebuked the spirit, and now claim ownership of me as his son... eventually I was healed (2013:23).

It is of note that prophecy in Mount Zion Light House is seen as what cover all areas of the individuals and the church. It is also acknowledged that there have been prophetic messages at one time or the other that has led to hatred in families, disunity among church members, and times leading to a break away in membership to form another church, or leaving for another denomination (Udokang: interview).

At present plethora of Mount Zion Churches have sprung up from the Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church, due to some reasons, prominent among which is leadership squabbles, false prophecies and immorality (Akpabio: interview). The leaders are allowed to marry many wives, and there is no retirement date for the Bishops. The open ended structure of leadership of the church has warranted jealous and gifted members to leave the church to form their own brand of Mount Zion Church.

In 1976 Mount Zion Christ Church at no 6 Atakpo Street, Uyo, which used to be the second branch of Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church in Uyo urban, broke away from the church due to the post-civil-war leadership imbroglio between Bishop Etefias Calabar and Bishop Eka Asuquo Udo of Uyo first branch at no 11 Udo Street, which later has been relocated to no 19 Eka Street, and has remained the Uyo Diocesan headquarters (Nsikan 2012:42). The squabble lasted from February 1969 and March 1970. Due to the prolonged disagreement, there was the prophecy by a woman, elder Mrs. Esther Simon Umoh, by which the Mount Zion Christ Church was formed. The Prophecy had it that the Atakpo church should come out from among them (from Etefias' church) and have nothing to do with them... according to 2 Cor 6: 17 -18., (Nsikan 2012 : 43). The name of the church was also given through prophecy. It is acknowledged that though as of the 1970s the members of Atakpo Street branch who were not so much educated and exposed was led through prophecy on how to get the church registered with the Nigerian government in Lagos in 1972. This is an event that is annually celebrated as the confirmation of the authenticity of the prophetic guidance of the church from inception till date. The church has continued to be nurtured through prophecy.

The Mount Zion Churches in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States are like the Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Yoruba land whose brands are numerous. There is the Mount Zion Gospel Church Nwaniba Road, Uyo; the Sanctified Mount Zion Church Ikot Ekpene Road, Uyo, led by Bishop E.T. Etukidem who broke away from Eka Street Church to form his own in 1983 due to disagreement (Nsikan 2012:46). There also is The Redeemed Mount Zion Church, The Mount Zion Church, etc. all lay claim to being led through prophecy for the splinter.

**(III) The Full Gospel Assembly:** The Full Gospel Assembly was founded in 1962 at Ikot Ukpoin Ibom L.G.A. of Akwa Ibom State by Apostle Donald Etim Asuquo. Apostle Donald was an educated fellow, a teacher and eventually a prophet. Through his prophetic gift, he drew multitudes to his church, and had raised many prophets and prophetesses. The church has large assemblies in Uyo Metropolis, and is known for its prophetism (Umoh 2011:10). All services in the church are normally punctuated with prophecy. A service can last for 12 to 14 hours depending on the prophecy that is in progress. The church has so many visioners who are appointed through prophecy and they are mostly women. The church in practice has prayer groups that go round to members' houses for prayers, visions, and prophecies. The prayer groups are remunerated for their services. Prophecies are given during counseling. Apostle Donald the founder has three wives through prophecy. As a practice the members of the church are often encouraged to spend days in church premises for prayers and prophecies. To receive Prophecy in this church depends on the affluence of the clientele. The Full Gospel Assembly has an international school and is an affiliate with churches in America. It is of note that the church is acclaimed to be a rich church, within the comity of churches in Uyo metropolis. It receives yearly visit by Apostles and Prophets from the USA, a connection that a lot of churches covet after as a means of wealth (2011:12).

### **(B) The Second Wave of Prophetism among the Churches in Uyo Metropolis: The Pentecostal perspective**

#### **I Cletus Bassey and Prophetism among the Pentecostal Churches in Uyo Metropolis**

Cletus Bassey is the first Pentecostal Bishop to be elected chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (C.A.N), Akwa Ibom State on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 till date. He also has been elected severally as the president of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Akwa Ibom State branch, president and founder Destiny Mission International Church on 6 July 1996; and president Vision Bible College and seminary Uyo, a college that is adjudged the largest Pentecostal Bible College



in AkwaIbom state, which also is credited to have trained about seventy percent of the Pentecostal preachers in the state (Bassey 2013: 125-186).

Cletus Bassey was an Apostle, who was consecrated a Bishop in 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 and an Archbishop on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014. He was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1962. The circumstance of his birth was said to be unusual, he was groomed at an early age to be native doctor, *AbiaIbok*, and *Abiaidiong* diviner; in the step of his grandfather. At an early age, Cletus has been initiated into the Ekombi dance, the Ekpeta traditional cult. By his training and initiations, in traditional dance he could perform such feats as dancing in the suspended air and could invoke thunder and perform other feats. A Roman Catholic Church member, who at 15 years of age was taken to Mount Zion Light House Full Gospel Church Nwaniba Road Uyo due to an illness that has defied the traditional medicine. It was an illness that was said to be diabolical in source and nature, and involved spirit possession and torment. He was healed at the church during the Thursday prayer session through prophecy. He eventually left Mount Zion and Catholic Church, after becoming born again. He claims to have had Jesus appearing and teaching him the bible several times. After joining many early Pentecostal churches in Uyo, he finally enrolled at a bible college in Aba as a result of a prophetic word given to him in 1989 at Abak Gospel Village, by Prophet Elijah Mboho, now archbishop (Bassey 2013:98). Elijah Mboho can be said to be the pioneer Pentecostal prophet in AkwaIbom State, but his area of operation is out of the coverage of this paper. Cletus went to America from Aba on scholarship for his Doctorate degree in Theology, according to the prophecy of Prophet Elijah Mboho. On his return from the U.S.A., in 1990, he established the Vision Bible College, Uyo, and also the church in 1996. The startling prophetic gift of Cletus has drawn many to his programmes, which include government officials, job seekers, and travelers. At his annual washing of feet programme, it is always a session through which he gives prophecy, about the state the nation and the individuals. At his Bishopric consecration service in 2011, he prophesied to the governor, Godswill Akpabio that he will be re-elected for his second tenure in office, despite other negative prophecies that had filled the air. This particular incident was very significant, considering the fact that, there were so many court cases against the reelection of the governor. On this occasion, Cletus was given a jeep by the governor. Cletus as a follow up to his prophecy in his Church, he also physically followed the Ibibio traditional chiefs to anoint the governor at the *Asan Ibibio*; (the shrine on the spot of the dispersal of the Ibibio to their present locations in the state). Though the governor won the election, but public image of the Bishop as a servant of God, a prophet and a Bishop was dented. Cletus is the most popular Pentecostal Pastor and prophet in the state that has so much political attention. His prophetic session include the holding of the palm of an individual, washing of feet, anointing with oil, laying on of hand in order to have a word from the 'Lord' for the clientele.

Several other notable Pentecostal pastors and prophets have followed in the step of Cletus Bassey. These include such pastors as:

(II) **Dr Sylvanus Ukafia of Insight Bible Church, Nsikak Eduok Avenue Uyo.** Ukafia organizes Prophecy and Healing conferences once a year as a week long programme that has always featured Prophet Joe Akanya as preacher; the style has been the holding of the hands of the individual and giving words of prophecy (Abasiono 2012: 41).

(III) On the line is also **Prophet John Linus** the son of Elder Linus Michael of the King of Kings Church Idoro Road Uyo. John Linus was a Pentecostal pastor of City of Truth Church at Oron, which was a branch of the City of Truth Church Uyo, headed by Rev Dr Israel Usoro. Linus had pastored this branch church for some years, and meeting with some problems has to leave the

church and relocated to Uyo. After a period of prolonged fasting and prayer, he established The Word of Faith Fellowship in 2006 at the Summit Complex hotel. It was a fellowship that holds tarry nights, through which mostly prophecies are given to those in attendance. His own prophetic sessions do not require the reading of the Bible or preaching. Quotation from the Bible can be seen as an appendage to the word of the prophet who also is called Papa (Ceelot 2013:56).

The coming and style of John Linus has given another dimension to the Pentecostal perspective of prophecy in Uyo. He has established his church with a large number of memberships, which is The Word of Faith Covenant Assembly, Aka Etina Road, Uyo. His services are purely for giving of prophecies. He has fleet of exotic cars with registration numbers as: Prophet I; Prophet 2; Prophet 3, etc

(IV) Following in the same Pentecostal prophetic trend is **Apostle Dr. Akan Weeks of Reigners Bible Church** located at Uyo Village Road, Uyo. Akan Weeks is a Graduate of Vision Bible College, Uyo, who on a very fast note has a large membership in his church. Akan Weeks organizes on quarterly basis such programmes as: Prophetic Night of Answer. This programme is purely for prayers and prophecy to the clientele. As a result of this programme, his headquarter church complex is a village on its own.

(V) There also is the dimension of Pentecostal Prophets residing outside Uyo, who are regular invitees and Guest Preachers at programmes that are designed for prophetic exercises in Uyo. The most prominent among such regular preacher is Apostle Oscar Nobles the founder and pastor of Abundant Grace Assembly Ikot Ekpene (Ceelot 2013: 60). Oscar Nobles was an Apostle who operates a prophetic gift, Nobles was consecrated bishop in April 2012. Nobles' style of prophecy includes the calling of a clientele's name, the name of the individuals' place of work and profession, the mention of the time that a particular event had occurred or will occur in the individuals' life, and the prayers to pray, at times including fasting (Umoh 2012: 5). This also is reminiscent of the assignment of the Mount Zion Churches.

There are others that have been featuring for some time in Uyo Metropolis, with such themes as; Uyo Koboko Night; My father My father; That Witch Must Die; By this Time Tomorrow, etc.. The numbers of attendees in the programmes most of which holds at Uyo Sport Stadium, shows the trend and impact of prophetism in the Christian church among the people of Uyo Metropolis.

### **5. False Political Prophecies in Uyo Metropolis**

There has been many prophecies with political overtone, that were highlighted by the mass media which had failed in fulfillment; and these have made a lot of people to cast doubt on the prophetic ministry of some of the churches. Prophet Anietie Inyang of Salvation Ministries located at no 1 Salvation Avenue, off Ikpong Road, Ikot Ekpene, in Ikot Ekpene LGA. Prophet Inyang has a large following in Ikot Ekpene, who in 2011 has prophesied that in the 2011 election, that the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) will win the election in the state, and it failed, the People's Democratic Party won. In the same vein, Apostle Dr. John Okoriko president and founder of Solid Rock Kingdom Church located at no 194, Ikot Ekpene Road, Uyo, did prophesied like Prophet Inyang on the same election about the victory of the ANPP, and it failed to be true (Umoh 2011: 6-7).

### **6. Prophecy Among The Mission Churches in Uyo Metropolis**

The Mission Churches in Uyo metropolis such as the Roman Catholic Mission, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Qua Iboe, Salvation Army, which were not raised with the prophetic orientation like the prophetic churches has been reacting differently to the Prophetic phenomenon. The reactions and approaches of the churches can be seen in three ways which include:

i. **Alienation:** Many of the Mission Churches in Uyoofficially have been known to strongly oppose and reject any suggestion of prophetism either in other groups or within their folds. Most prayer team and Charismatic groups of the churches where elements of prophetismis noticed is closely monitored and most oftenis either banned, or members are shown the way out of the church. This was the position of Qua Iboe Church, until recently. The Catholic Church in Uyoat present has the Charismatic group under a close check with the appointment of a priest to be in charge, with the directive that all programmes and prayers must be in the church within the approved time.

ii. **Accommodation:** The fact that prophetism hasinvaded all the churches canno longer be denied. At the Qua IboeChurch,No. 2 Abak Road,Uyo, the Church accepted prophecy since the 1990s and now at its yearly conventions, invite ministers with sound prophetic gifts to minister. The prophetic sessions have always attracted large attendance (Akpan 2014:77).Similar experience has been recorded at the Methodist Church Nigeria, no 48 UdoUmanah street, Uyo., and the Anglican Cathedral Church 40 Brooks / Gibbs Street Uyo (Akpan 2014: 77).

iii. **Ambivalence:** Some churches neither accept nor reject prophetism, and their members are drifting to other churches, where such members think that their needs could be met. This attitude has bolstered the growth in number of the Prayer houses and the Spiritual Churches, and of late the Pentecostal Churches in Uyo Metropolis.

### Conclusion

This paper has brieflyexamined prophecy as a phenomenon in Uyometropolis as an offshoot of prophetism in the New Testamentwith its concomitantpedigree in the Old Testament. The people's traditional concept and practice of divination and prophesy has played a major role in their flavor for the propheticin their Christian experience and expression. At the interpersonal, congregational and political level various individualsand churches have been involved in prophetism. In a contextualdimension, it can be said that there is the Replacement Theology, and Accommodation Theology being adopted by the churches in the context of the traditional religious practice of divination and the interpretation of Eph. 4:11/ 1 Cor. 12 –14. Prophecy is a major factor in church growth currently in Uyo metropolis, and it is also a means of deception to the unsuspecting public. Prophetism as an aspect of the interpretation of the content and practice of New Testament among the Ibibio and in Uyo in particularhas been a very pronounced expression of the Ibibio Christianity over the years. What has been the practice of the African Independent Churches like the Mount Zions is currently been rebranded by the New Generation Pentecostal Churches, as the current expression of prophetism in Christianity in Uyo metropolis. It is most likely that this trend will continue for a long period in the future, with the Mission Churches' gradually shifting their position towards a positive direction in the accommodation of prophetism in their theological milieu.

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