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An Assessment of the Origin of Nigerian Pentecostalism and Garrick Sokari Braide's Healing Ministry of the Niger Delta (1882-1918)

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Introduction

Early Christian missionaries that were accountable for planting Christianity in the present day area called Nigeria in the 1840s-50s were mainly from Europe and North America.¹ Since then, Christianity has expanded from western and southeastern Nigeria to every part of the country. From the beginning of Christianity in Nigeria, the religion went through several stages of developments, which include the schism in Baptist Church at Lagos in 1888 that led to the commencement of African independent church movements, which eventually became the precursor of indigenous Pentecostalism in Nigeria. The Aladura movement was another stage of development in Nigerian Christianity that precedes the significant Pentecostal-charismatic movements revival of the 1970s. Above all, Pentecostalism is the fastest growing religious phenomenon in the twenty-first century not only in Nigeria but also in the world. This phenomenon has led to social changes. African church historian Asonzeh Ukah says, "Pentecostalism in its latest incarnation is one of the principal driving forces of this phenomenon of socio-cultural change" in Nigerian society.² Ukah pays attention to the growth of

¹Flora Shaw gave the name, "Nigeria," to this area. She was the wife of the former colonial master, Frederick Lugard and the name became official after the amalgamation of Southern and Northern protectorate under the leadership of colonial master in 1914. The name first emerged in The Times of London on January 8, 1897, in Flora Essay who eventually became the wife of Lord Fredrick Lugard. Before the name was put forward, Nigeria had been known by other names in different areas such as Yoruba kingdom, Hausa Kingdom, Ibo Societies, etc. The word Nigeria is a derogatory smaller expression, which was used in replacement of "agglomeration of pagan and Mahomedan States" which is another derogatory word being used in the replacement of Britain official title for the area known as, "Royal Niger Company Territories." The reason is due to Flora assumption that the phrase "Royal Niger Company Territories" is too long and weird to be used as nomenclature of Real Estate property under the Trading Company in that part of Africa. See Kunlekunle, Nigeria As a Name and the Amalgamation in <http://www.nairaland.com/844612/nigeria-name-amalgamation>

²Asonzeh F.K. Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power: A Study of the Redeemed*

the Pentecostal denomination that Nimi Wariboko refers to as “the largest Pentecostal denomination in Nigeria, the Redeemed Christian Church of God.”³ In agreement with Ukah and Wariboko on the remarkable growth of Pentecostalism in Africa, Philip Jenkins asserts, “Pentecostal expansion across the Southern continents has been so astonishing as to justify claims of a new Reformation.”⁴ In his insightful work, Ogbu Kalu noted, “there is no aspect of the globalization discourse that has attracted more attention than the analyses of charismatic Pentecostal spirituality in the third world.”⁵ Timothy Tennent in his work highlighted the features of global Pentecostalism as he remarked: “Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon with adherents in nearly every country in the world.”⁶ Randy Ray Arnett’s observation in his dissertation is instructive in this regard, “Pentecostalism has changed the face of Christianity globally and most especially in the majority world.”⁷

The Nigerian Pentecostal Movement has experienced tremendous growth that outweighs that of the foreign mission-based denominations in Nigeria such as the Anglicans, Baptists, and Methodists in the twenty-first century. What are the roots of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria? Andrew F. Walls in his scholarly discussion and views on the origin of the Pentecostal movement traces its foundation to Azusa Street. “Pentecostalism is a worldwide phenomenon. It must not be forgotten that even in the west it was originally a product of black Christian activity.”⁸ Reinforcing the opinion of Walls in tracing the origin of Pentecostalism to the Azusa Street Revival of 1906, Paul Freston in his work *Contour of Latin American Pentecostalism* holds that “Pentecostalism’s early arrival in Latin America is because of the proximity of Los Angeles, the birthplace of Pentecostalism to the Mexican border.”⁹ In contrast to the opinions of Walls and Freston, Ogbu Kalu points out that the root of Pentecostalism in Africa is indigenous. Furthermore, Kalu noted that the connection between Western Pentecostal evangelists and that of African Pentecostal evangelists contrasts the pattern

Christian Church of God in Nigeria (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), 412.

³Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism, Studies in African History and the Diaspora*, (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 19.

⁴Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

⁵Ogbu Kalu and Alaine M. Low, *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 19.

⁶Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 167.

⁷Randy Ray Arnett, “Pentecostalization: The Changing Face of Baptists in West Africa” (PhD. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 48.

⁸Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 46.

⁹Paul Freston, “Contours of Latin American Pentecostalism,” in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 224.

of the old missionary Christianity of the mainline churches.¹⁰ Kalu strengthens his argument when he declares “one may need a foreign missionary to hear the gospel for the first time, but not necessarily for experiencing the baptism of the Spirit.”¹¹ In addition, Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelis Van Der Laan commented on the origin of Pentecostalism, “the ‘made in the USA’ assumption is of the great disservices done to the worldwide Pentecostalism.”¹² In the same vein, these authors called attention to the fact that due recognition and respect needs to be given to the places in the world that the Pentecostal movement started without the influence of Azusa Street in America. Respect is required for those places that claim the experience of the Pentecostal movement in their history before the so-called “made in the USA” assumption, which is the Azusa Street Pentecostal movement.

Should the Nigerian Pentecostal movement identify its roots in the Azusa Street Revival of the USA, or did it have an indigenous origin that is rooted in a homegrown revival, which was not influenced nor attached to any Western Pentecostal movement? According to Matthews Ojo, the Pentecostal revival in Nigeria is rooted in “an indigenous religious movement of the revival of Garrick Sokari Braide, who was an Anglican member in Niger Delta in the 1910s.”¹³ Richard Burges also places the origin of Pentecostalism in Nigeria in the time of the Garrick Sokari Braide revival and concludes that the revival started when he was in the mainline church.¹⁴ Additionally, Moses Oludele Idowu referred to Garrick Braide’s Movement as the first prophet-healing revival movement in Nigeria.¹⁵ While Ojo, Burges, Wariboko, and Ukah, mention that the Sokari Braide revival movement in Nigeria could be the origin of the indigenous Pentecostal movement, none of them has eventually accounted for the history of the movement to support their argument. This article claims that Braide’s revival came before the Azusa Street revival of 1906 in the USA, which establishes the fact that there was more than one Pentecostal stream. Braide’s revival in the Niger Delta was an indigenous one responding to what mainline churches such as Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist in their theology consider to be their normal indigenous Christianity in the nineteenth century of Nigeria.¹⁶ The

¹⁰Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), vii.

¹¹Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, vii.

¹²Michael Bergunder, et al., *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods, The Anthropology of Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 57.

¹³Matthews A. Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria, Religion in Contemporary Africa Series* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006), 31.

¹⁴Richard Hugh Burgess, “The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny: A Religious Movement among the Igbo People of Eastern Nigeria.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2004).

¹⁵Moses Oludele Idowu, *The Great Revival of 1930: The Origin of Modern Pentecostalism in Nigeria*, 2nd ed., African Church History Series (Ikeja, Lagos State: Divine Artillery, 2007), 24.

¹⁶Indigenous Christianity as used here from the view of mainline churches in Nigeria

paper also strengthens the arguments that Pentecostalism in Nigeria is not a branch of the Azusa Street revival movement of 1906. In the first segment of the paper, focus will be given to Garrick Sokari Braide's life and ministry in the Niger Delta as he attempts to investigate some of the available sources of the revival. Second analysis will be given to the miracle and healing ministry of Braide to underscore the indigenous nature of the movement. Finally, the Braide revival will be related to the contemporary Pentecostal movements in Nigeria.

The Background of Garrick Sokari Braide and the Great Revival

Harold Turner introduces Garrick Sokari Braide's Christian journey as an Anglican convert who was baptized at Bakana in the Niger Delta.¹⁷ He eventually became the first evangelist in Nigeria who was successful in his methods of evangelism. Miracles, healings, and serious opposition to African Traditional religious practices characterized Braide's revival movements by burning charms and amulets. Elsewhere, Turner also supports this description of Braide's movements as the first Pentecostal movement in Nigeria.¹⁸

Onah Augustine Odey supports Turner as he noted that Garrick Sokari Idakemita Marian Braide (1882–1918) is not only the first evangelist in Nigeria but also the one that “laid the foundations of Pentecostalism in Nigerian Church History.”¹⁹ Braide, a native of Nigeria, implemented a practical contextualization approach in the presentation of the gospel in the Niger Delta that makes Christianity real among the people in their own context. G.O.M. Tasié in his monumental work noted that Braide was born in Obonoma, which was one of the smallest villages in the Niger Delta and the traditional midpoint for the religious excursion among the Kalabari people.²⁰ The deity of Obonoma titled “ogu” is the most powerful among the deities in the community and the parents of Braide spearheaded the “ogu cult,” which was the deity of the village. Braide grew up in Bakana, one of the areas in the same community of the Niger Delta. The poor background of his parents could not grant him the opportunity of formal education. In her work *A History of Christianity in Africa, From Antiquity to the Present*, Elizabeth Isichei explains that Braide's mother was from the Kalabari family and his

is the form of Christian expression and meanings that are biblical, culturally fitting for the adherents of Christianity in Nigeria, and in agreement with the understanding and doctrines of the early Christian missionaries that brought the Christianity to the land. This is in contrary to syncretistic Christianity that allows and promotes any form of rituals.

¹⁷H.W. Turner, “Prophets and Politics: A Nigerian Test Case,” *Bulletin of the Society for African Church History* 2 (1965): 97–118.

¹⁸Harold W. Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Religious Movements* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979), 2.

¹⁹Onah Augustine Odey, “Prophet-Evangelist Garrick Sokari Idaketima Marian Braide: The First Revivalist in Nigeria, (1882–1918),” *International Journals of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 3, no. 17 (September, 2013): 286.

²⁰G.O.M. Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864–1918* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 323.

father was a humble Ibo slave.²¹ As a result of a lack of formal education, he eventually became a fisherman and trader who toured across the region of the Niger Delta in Nigeria.

Garrick Sokari Braide started his evangelistic ministry among the Kalabari people of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. Ekebuisi and Tasie's work, which primarily focuses on the culture of the area, noted that the Kalabari tribe is a confederation of about thirty-two villages in the nineteenth-century, which generally consisted of three major towns known as Abonnema, Bakanna, and Buguma.²² The major occupation of Kalabari at that time was fishing, and the religious traditional beliefs include the beliefs in good and evil spirits with diversities of the means of worship. Ekeibuisi noted that in the traditional worldviews of the Kalabari people, nothing happens by chance because it is always associated with supernatural forces, which can be either good or evil.²³ It is in the background of these traditional beliefs that Garrick Sokari Braide's ministry emerged and began to grow as a result of the demonstration of the supernatural power of God over other forces and traditional powers.

Although Tasie noted that it was not certain when exactly Braide became a Christian, Ayegboyin and Ademola Ishola agreed with him that it was in the 1890s. Braide had been attending Sunday school at St. Andrew's in Bakana under Rev. Kemmer since he was eight years old.²⁴ He became a full member of the Anglican Communion in his village in 1906 and began to make an impact in the denomination in January 23, 1910, in Bakana. In the same vein, Lamin Sanneh asserts, "he was baptized and confirmed by Bishop James Johnson."²⁵ Although there had been reports from all around and proclamation about his prophetic prayers, miracles, and healing gifts in the Niger Delta, Braide officially made the public declaration to ministry in 1912 and became a preacher. Odey insists, "in 1909 M.A. Kemma his pastor published official pronouncement in the Niger Delta Pastorate Chronicle, an official organ of the Niger Delta Anglican Church. In it, the pastor enumerated many instances of Braide's prayer power."²⁶ Ekeibuisi notes that Bishop Johnson, who confirmed the call and ministry of Braide, made an appeal for the rejection of Braide's movements and teachings by going to different places preaching and teaching without eating any food except cold water

²¹Elizabeth Isichei *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995), 268.

²²Chinonyerem Chijioko Ekebuisi, *The Life and Ministry of Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide: Elijah the Second of Niger Delta, Nigeria (C. 1882–1918)* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 53; Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864–1918*, 96.

²³Ekebuisi, *The Life and Ministry of Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide*, 59.

²⁴Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864–1918*, 168; Deji Ayegboyin and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective* (Lagos, Nigeria: Greater Heights, 1997), 30.

²⁵Lamin O. Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983), 181.

²⁶Odey, "Prophet-Evangelist Garrick Sokari Idaketima Marian Braide," 288.

until his death at Bonny on 17 May 1917 where he preached his last message.²⁷ Anderson, relying on secondary sources, affirms this as he notes that Bishop Johnson, who had established the Ministry of Braide to be authentic by ordaining him into ministry, declared him to be a “devil inspired heretic” and would suspend any clergy who supported Braide’s ministry.²⁸

His Call and Ministry

Many people in Nigeria have never heard about Garrick Braide’s ministry because many scholars and church historians did not emphasize his crucial role in the history of the Pentecostal revival in Nigeria. Olofinjana noted that he became a Christian at the age of eight and joined the Sunday school class in the church where he was taught on how to memorize the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Creeds before being qualified for confirmation. Braide was an enthusiastic and committed Christian. His original biography by one of his relatives unveils his passion for prayers and alone time with God. His brother asserts:

It was his custom to slip in secretly into St. Andrews Church on weekdays and here prostrate himself in prayer to Almighty God imploring forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. Sometimes he asks the pastor’s permission to spend the whole night in prayer in the church with his Bible and prayer book.²⁹

After Garrick Braide’s confirmation, his prayer life became effective. Turner affirms that “Braide had revealed charismatic powers as early as 1909 and had given considerable pastoral assistance for some six years in his home parish before springing into wider fame.”³⁰ Israel Olofinjana accounts for his call to ministry:

This happened as he was taking the Lord’s Supper with others; he saw a bright light flash over him as the elements of the Lord’s Supper entered his mouth. He then heard a still small voice say to him “Jesus died for you; He gave His body and shed His blood on the cross to wash away your sins.” After the experience Braide knelt down and prayed to God. For the entire night he could not sleep so he got up from his bed and prayed with tears

²⁷Ekebuisi, *The Life and Ministry of Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide*, 177.

²⁸Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Africa World Press, 2001), 81.

²⁹Ekebuisi, *The Life of Prophet Garrick Braide of Bakana*, 4. A.C. Baride was one of the brothers of Garrick Sokari of the same parents who eventually become one of the ministers and co-evangelists with Garrick Braide in his revival movements in the Niger Delta. See also, Tasié, Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864-1918*, 174. Resources about the trials of Braide by the colonial government in Nigeria can be located at the court record books and some relevant reports about his ministry at National Archives at Enugu in Nigeria.

³⁰Harold W. Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa*, 139.

streaming from his eyes. He felt unworthy in the presence of God's goodness and holiness. After this experience he heard a still small voice calling and asking, "Garrick! Garrick! Are you prepared to be my servant? Are you ready to witness to mankind the saving truths of the Gospel?"³¹

The important question to ask is what sparked such a fast growth and successful ministry of Braide? Saale Lazarus Baribiae argued that the devotees were made to feel at home during the worship service because of the use of the native liturgy of worshiping and praising God and the implementation of local cultures of singing, dancing, and clapping in the service—all of which were forbidden in mission churches.³² In the same manner, Matthew Kustenbauder perceived that Braide's focus on "public preaching and healing" enabled him to have an extraordinarily effective ministry.³³ In addition, Richard Hugh Burgess in his doctoral dissertation supports the notion as he unveils that the "local response was spectacular, mainly due to Braide's healing gifts and crusade against idolatry, a radical departure from the conversion by catechism approach of the established church"³⁴ Braide's revival practices such as singing, dancing, drumming, healing, and miracles bear semblance to the Niger Delta traditional cultures before the advent of Christianity. The traditional mindset of the people was one of the major factors of the successful ministry of Braide in the Niger Delta.

Braide's Healing Ministry

In describing the healing and evangelistic ministry of Braide, Tasié notes that his method was:

To organize a crusade against charms, fetishes, and idols, probably believing that until the people lost faith in the powers of these objects they would not find peace in Christianity. His demands upon his hearers were simple: that they should destroy fetishes, confess their sins and put absolute faith in the sufficiency of Christ, He prescribed for converts strenuous religious exercises, which help them to cultivate certain Christian discipline. He emphasized prayer sometimes specifying the numbers of times a day; he encouraged fasting and promoted the practice of praising God in local songs and shouting.³⁵

³¹Israel O. Olofinjana, *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies* vol. 1 (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2011), 3.

³²Lazarus Baribiae Saale, "The Christ Army Church and Socio-Cultural Changes in Khana Local Government of Ogoniland" *African Research Review* 9, no. 1 (2015): 109–22.

³³Matthew Kustenbauder, "Prophetic Movements: Western Africa," in *New Encyclopedia of Africa* 4, ed. John Middleton and Joseph C. Miller (Detroit: Thomson/Gale: 2008), 273–79.

³⁴Burgess, "The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny," 126.

³⁵Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864–1918*, 336.

Also, Israel Olofinjana itemizes what Braide emphasizes in his ministry that makes him earn a good reputation and popularity among the people. In analyzing Braide's call to ministry and pioneering work, Olofinjana records five crucial characteristics of his teachings that redefined Christianity among the people in the following areas: First, he stressed complete reliance on God and taught people to trust God by discouraging them from seeking healing and help from traditional medicine. Second, he discouraged people from taking alcoholic beverages and magical practices. Third, he encouraged them to fast and pray. Fourth, he taught them to observe the Lord's Day and abstain from any work on Sunday. Finally, he encouraged people to praise God in their language with their local songs and to take the worldview of Africans into consideration in the presentation of the gospel.³⁶ Allan Anderson comments on what causes an African to embrace the gospel of Christ is because it is relevant to their worldviews and perception.

To be relevant to all of Africa needs the biblical message must provide a comprehensive and qualitatively higher alternative to the solutions traditional people seek. It must provide dynamic, life-giving power that secures deliverance from evil and allows people to feel safe in a hostile world. It must furthermore provide for the existential "this worldly needs" and not only for "the life to come." It must counter the dominant fear and suspicion that traditionalists feel. It is in these and host of others areas that a dynamic pneumatology must speak.³⁷

Despite the support and recognition, Braide received from the indigenous people of the Niger Delta, both Bishop James Johnson, who was the head of the Anglican pastorate of the Niger Delta, and the Colonial Government of Nigeria condemned him. Braide's evangelical and healing ministry in addition to his preaching against alcoholic drinks, declination of moral values, condemnation of charms and magic, confrontation of magicians, and destruction of shrines, did not only pose a threat to Johnson who ordained him to ministry, but also invited the wrath of the colonial government that was affected on account of the decrease in tax revenue.³⁸ For example, Johnson did not recognize him as the prophet in Anglican Church, and this caused him to separate from the Anglican Communion. In his work *Elijah II Radicalization and Consolidation of The Garrick Braide Movement in 1915-1918*, Frieder Ludwig describes how Bishop Johnson insisted that Sokari Braide should not be referred to as the prophet in his presence.

³⁶Olofinjana, *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies*, 4–5.

³⁷Allan H. Anderson, "Pentecostal Pneumatology and African Power Concepts: Continuity or Change?" *Missionalia* 19, no. 1 (1991): 65–74.

³⁸Anderson, "Pentecostal Pneumatology and African Power Concepts?" 65–74.

Christmas Eve 1915 was not a good day for James Johnson, the African Assistant Bishop and President of the Niger Delta Church Board. On that day, a meeting between Johnson and Garrick Sokari Braide had been arranged by some Bonny chiefs in an attempt to reconcile the Bishop with the charismatic catechist. The failure of this attempt is described as follows: Chief Alexander Hart introduced Braide and said: "Your Lordship, this is the young man in other words the prophet we have come to present to you for recognition and induction." Then the Bishop said: "Don't call him a prophet. Change that name. I shall listen to you when you have changed the name." Since Johnson refused to listen to Braide unless the title "prophet" was changed to "evangelist," the meeting ended in the withdrawal of Braide and his followers.³⁹

Agreeing with Ludwig, I.D. Samuel explains the reaction of Braide from this meeting. "Garrick picked up his walking stick and walked out of the Bishop's Court, about 2200 people of different walks of life followed him to Chief Uku alias Oko Jumbo."⁴⁰

In the articles from 1916 that he wrote to state the reason for the rejection of Braide's ministry, Bishop Johnson commented about the healing ministry of Braide as he declared that:

Many of these people return home rejoicing, having been thoroughly cured of their sickness either through his prayer directly, or through the use of a few words of prayer dictated to them by him, or through a mere touch of his hand upon them. However, if the exercise by Garrick of his healing art was at one time of an entirely wholesome and helpful character, as we presume was the case, it has certainly degenerated.⁴¹

In addition, Olabimitan Kehinde comments that Braide's evangelistic work "made cultural and political impacts in his context," which is, "the very reason his activities alarmed colonial authorities."⁴² Degema Percy A. Talbot, who was the then colonial district officer representing the British government, accused Braide of promoting "Ethiopianism" of blacks against the ruling of white colonial leaders that is tantamount to violation of the laws of the government and sentenced to prison in 1917.⁴³ In addition, Turner noted

³⁹Frieder Ludwig, "Elijah Ii: Radicalization and Consolidation of the Garrick Braide Movement 1915–1918." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 23, no. 4 (1993): 296–317.

⁴⁰Samuel I.D., *Life of Garrick Braide*, 1965, 7A–9A.

⁴¹James Johnson, Elijah II, *Church Missionary Review* (August, 1916): 455–62.

⁴²Kehinde Olabimtan, *Samuel Johnson of Yorubaland, 1846–1901: Identity, Change and the Making of the Mission Agent*. Africa in Development (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 13.

⁴³Simeon A. Coker, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert A. Hill (Columbia, SC: Model Editions Partnership, 2000). Electronic

that “the principal result of his movements has been first a seditious against the government, secondly, a great loss to trade... and thirdly a large increase in the death rate due to the excitement and the filthy observances enacted.”⁴⁴ Olofinjana also noted the “colonial administration faced a deficit of 576,000 pounds in 1916” in the sales of alcohol on account of Garrick Braide’s evangelistic ministry.⁴⁵

Assessment of Garrick Braide’s Healing Ministry

In assessing Garrick Sokari Braide’s movements in the Niger Delta and the origin of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria, I examined the following aspects: First, an Independent revival movement of Garrick Braide reflects the African Traditional Religion’s features in its strategies of evangelism. In addition, his methods of organizing crusades are completely different from the worship and evangelism strategies of the Anglican Church where Braide became a Christian. The observations of John Grimley and Gordon Robinson in *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria* are informative on this point. John Grimley claims that in an attempt of many Independent African churches to construct “their ecclesiastical organization, they borrowed some elements of traditional churches and also followed the basic pattern of organization of African communities.”⁴⁶ The attempt to incorporate such cultural elements has been criticized by some as an invitation to pagan ideas in some of these independent movements, which is tantamount to syncretism but some scholars have seen this as contextualization that enables the gospel to be at home with the indigenous people.

Braide’s prophetic leanings, by demonstrating gifts of healings, led the Anglican Communion of his days in the Niger Delta to conclude that his ministry contained “extravagant excesses” and charged him of integrating traditional African religious rituals into the spirituality of the church.⁴⁷ It is true that emphasizing prosperity, miracles, and healings at the expense of the biblical gospel is an aberration to the church and the gospel of Christ. Destruction of shrines, charms, and discouraging the use of traditional medicines proved that Braide’s movement did not comply with African Traditional Religion that could lead to syncretism, but instead, it was a movement led by an indigenous leader with the aim of challenging the indigenous worldview with the gospel. The strategy of the contextualization of the Gospel used by Braide in his proclamation of the message of salvation among the indigenous people of his community is worthy to note. Andrew Walls in his assessment of the evangelical revival and the missionary

version based on The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, ed. Robert A. Hill, vol. 8, (Berkeley: University of California Press, [year?]), 2.

⁴⁴Harold W. Turner, *Religious Innovation in Africa*, 140.

⁴⁵Olofinjana, *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria*, 6.

⁴⁶John B. Grimley and Gordon E. Robinson, *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria*, Church Growth Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 300.

⁴⁷Grimley and Robinson, *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria*, 301.

movements in Africa observes that although Braide's movement did not fit into the Anglican communion of the Niger Delta, "the leadership of the church could not deny the effectiveness of his ministry."⁴⁸ Ekeibuisi noted that Braide regarded his prophethood as perfectly compatible with the doctrines of the Niger Delta Anglican pastorate church and sought official recognition according to the demands of people who want to who want to institutionalize the office of prophet in the church.⁴⁹ Johnson's refusal proves that Anglicanism in the Niger Delta around 1890 and early 1900s did not recognize such an office. Braides' movement—which based his call into ministry on the direct call from God through visions and dreams and was focused on miracles, signs, and wonders—is the foundation for the Pentecostal Charismatic movement in Nigeria today.

Second, despite the fact that Braide's revival movements did not have speaking in tongues or the prosperity gospel, which have become the major characteristics of the contemporary Pentecostal movement in Nigeria today, his movement became the soil in which the contemporary Pentecostal movement grew in Nigeria. Scholars such as Richard Burgess, in his dissertation *The Civil War and Its Pentecostal Progeny: A Religious Movement Among the Igbo People of Eastern Nigeria, (1967-2002)*, describe the movement as "the first Pentecostal movement in Nigeria."⁵⁰ Idowu Oludele affirms that after the death of Braide in 1918, his followers eventually established a congregation, called "Christ Army Church," which was "the first indigenous church in Nigeria, [that] is still standing today."⁵¹

Furthermore, the healing ministry of Braide contradicted that of the Anglican mission strategies, and it invited persecution from Anglican Church leaders and the colonial government. Braide's ministry claimed to have followed the biblical pattern of the Old Testament, however, Idowu Oludele comments on the excesses and the derailing of the movement:

Owing to lack of watchfulness, ignorance, fanaticism of the revival movements, excesses of his associates, some elements of the spirit of pride and a spirit of insubordinations fanned by the envy of the Anglican Church authorities, Braide finally fell into the hand of the enemies. He was arrested in 1916 and tried by the colonial authority on series of charges bordering on treason. He was jailed in November 1916 and died two years later.⁵²

⁴⁸Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

⁴⁹Chinonyerem Chijioko Ekeibuisi, *The Life and Ministry of Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide: Elijah the Second of Niger Delta, Nigeria (C. 1882-1918)*. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 141.

⁵⁰Burgess, "The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny," 126.

⁵¹Moses Oludele Idowu, *The Great Revival of 1930: The Origin of Modern Pentecostalism in Nigeria* (Ikeja, Lagos State: Divine Artillery, 2007), 25.

⁵²Idowu, *The Great Revival of 1930*, 25.

Additionally, the missionaries who started the Anglican Communion in the Niger Delta understood that until the natives become the agents and Ministers, there could be no native church, and consequently there can be no significant progress in mission work that would lead to the “mission euthanasia” in the community.⁵³ Furthermore, Tasié had noted that in 1887 Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther had also emphasized “the necessity of raising native-born youth of the Delta in the ministry of the church.”⁵⁴ Braide’s ministry arose due to this circumstance in the Niger Delta among his community but he was eventually rejected by the Anglican pastorate. It is not out of place to strongly agree that Braide’s movement of 1882–1918 is the first precursor to the contemporary Pentecostal movement in Nigerian Christianity. He was the first Nigerian to start divine healing, miracles, and prophetic movement for Nigerians on Nigerian soil in response to the spiritual and socio-political and religious situation of Nigeria during the colonial government. All the events of his movements and revival happened ever before Nigeria got her independence from British government in 1960.

Braide’s use of the indigenous language of his community to propagate the gospel instead of the Ibo language that was forced on the people by the colonial government and promoted by the Anglican missionaries is an evidence of an indigenous movement that enhances the effectiveness of his ministry and brought the gospel home to his people. It is important to note that for any effective mission work to be well rooted in any culture, the gospel must be preached in the native language of the indigenous people, the Bible must be translated in the same language and the indigenous people must be disciplined to take leadership in the local church. Braide fulfilled one of these important elements when he preached in the indigenous language of his community. Tasié remarks that Braide “spoke their local language ... knew their idioms and was familiar with their cosmology and fears of the forces of nature.”⁵⁵ Anderson accentuates that early missionaries who took the gospel to Africa and started mainline churches such as the Anglican Communion in the Niger Delta were inclusive, but were ineffectual in reaching the local people with their message because they did not speak the language of the people.⁵⁶ Braide’s preaching in the indigenous language of the

⁵³Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864–1918*, 172; According to the principle of Henry Venn native church policy of Anglican in Nigeria, any serious progress of a mission hinges on the training and making disciples of the native leaders and pastors who will eventually take over from the missionaries as native pastors and native Congregational church leaders. Euthanasia of mission is the process by which a mission progressively becomes indigenous and independent. See Jehu Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission: African Church Autonomy in a Colonial Context* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 26. The euthanasia of mission only takes place when the church becomes self-governing and self-propagating and self-supporting that leads to the formation of settled Christian community, see William Knight, *Memoir of the Rev. H. Venn*. (London, 1882), 307.

⁵⁴Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864–1918*, 170.

⁵⁵G.O.M. Tasié, “The Prophetic Calling: Garrick Sokari Braide of Bakana (d. 1918),” in *Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria*, ed. Elizabeth Isichei (London: Macmillan, 1982).

⁵⁶Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*

local people was able to confront the traditional religion of the community and help displace their gods and idols. His desire was to remain an Anglican, but to revive and bring new strategies to evangelism that would result in the conversion of the native people. The designation of prophetic ministry that he employed, which underscored his pneumatic and Pentecostal orientation, was against the expression and strategies of the mission work of the Anglicans in the Niger Delta.

Braide's main messages centered on dependence on God by forsaking idols and discouraging the use of charms and alcohol. This message sustained persecution from the colonial government because it effected the tax revenue for the state as well as the leadership theology of the Anglican Church. Braide paid attention to meeting the daily needs of the people in his presentation of the gospel, but ultimately his message affected the main source of revenue of the colonial government, which was one of the charges against him when he was arrested and jailed.⁵⁷ In 1915 Braide was imprisoned on a false charge in 1915 and later died in 1918.⁵⁸

It is not out of place to contend that Braide led the Christian Reformation in the Anglican Communion in the Niger Delta. Braide's ministry that emphasized healing, crusades, prayers, and prophetic activities aided in reaching the local people. His ministry is a display of African Christianity that attempts to demonstrate the authenticity of spiritual things in general and biblical promises in particular. Lamin Sanneh maintains that:

Braide did not deny the reality of the supernatural world; he merely offered what he considered to be more effective ways of dealing with that world. In his duel with the traditional rainmakers, for example, he settles the dispute by calling on what he regarded as a higher power to achieve precisely what this opponent had previously achieved by calling on intermediary power. It is clear that Braide had merely asserted the power of a Christian God over a territory of long familiarity, rather than shifting the religious context to totally new ground. Furthermore, his charismatic powers transformed him into the familiar local figure, the powerful medicine man whom this time achieved miracles by the use of Christian religious symbols.⁵⁹

His movement can be seen as the representation of the Niger Delta's response to the Anglican missionary enterprise in the community. Braide demonstrated an African quest for the presence of the Holy Spirit to tackle

(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 24–25.

⁵⁷Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983), 180–84; Isichei and). *A History of Christianity in Africa*, 286–87.

⁵⁸Ogbu Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007), 278–308.

⁵⁹Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 182.

the troubles, evils, and vexations of the local and indigenous people of his community. Kwabena Asamoah–Gyadu in his evaluation of the theological legacy of African Independent Churches (AIC) asserts:

One of the distinctive features of the indigenous prophets whose ministries brought the AICs into being is that they functioned very firmly as prophets and modeled their ministries after Old Testament prophets, particularly Elijah. It is not surprising that Prophet Harris became known as the Black Elijah and Garrick Braide was known as Elijah II. Their religious dispositions were quite intense as they spent long periods in seclusion praying and fasting that they may be endued with the power for the work.⁶⁰

Sokari Braide's prayer life and message of calling people from the traditional religion of Africa to God and his emphasis of fasting as an indispensable spiritual exercise bears semblance to the ministry of the Old Testament prophets such as Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Malachi. The preaching of the gospel took priority in his revival movement before he would agree to go and perform any miracle. Lamin Sanneh comments that Braide would not go and perform any miracle except "on the condition that there is an agreement that he will be allowed to preach his message."⁶¹ In addition, it is a herculean task to assess the preaching of Braide on faith in God; the effect of this aspect of his ministry is that Braide's movement increased the numbers of Christian baptism by 150 percent from 1912–1918. In 1909, the converts who demanded baptism were numbered at 902, but as of 1918 when Braide died, it had increased to 11,694. By 1921 after his death, his disciples had counted 43,000 converts for baptism.⁶²

One of the dark sides of Braide's movements is the superstitious admiration and unnecessary veneration for the personality of Braide, which is a major part of the cause for the deviation of his movement from the biblical pattern. His followers attached too much importance to his personality and touched his physical body for miracles of healing and safety from evils. Today, this way of elevating human beings is manifested in many Pentecostal movements in Africa because many give the worship due to God to their human church leaders. Sanneh noted that "the water in which he washed was collected and dispensed as containing magical properties, and his words were received as charged with spiritual force."⁶³ In addition, Tasie noted that Braide was a monogamist, but he accepted polygamy in his movement, which is one of the most difficult issues to handle in African churches up till today.

⁶⁰J. Kwabena Asamoah–Gyadu, "Spirit of Elijah: Reinvention of the Prophetism in African Initiated Christianity," *Ogbomosho Journal of Theology* 13, no. 1 (2008): 43–56.

⁶¹Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 181.

⁶²Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 182.

⁶³Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 182.

For him, the essential requirements for one to become Christian can be summarized as, first, the complete breach with traditional religion; and secondly, absolute dependence upon God. Following his approach, therefore, the essential question for a Christian was whether he had destroyed his fetishes and confessed his acceptance of Christ. If so, Braide would say, he could be admitted into the church, whether he had been taught (intellectually) the rudiments of Christianity or not.⁶⁴

Many Anglican pastors were drawn by Braide's methodology in his days in the same way that mainline churches began to tolerate Pentecostal charismatic doctrines in an attempt to curtail "the steady drift of their members."⁶⁵

The Garrick Braide movement and its contribution to the transformation and reformation of the indigenous Christianity in the Niger Delta cannot be overemphasized. The reformation that his movement and revival brought to Niger Delta Christianity reverberates to the contemporary Pentecostal charismatic movement in Nigeria today. As a matter of fact, Braide is the first and a major source of Indigenous Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Chinonyerem Chijioke Ekebuisi, noted that part of the legacies and innovation which has been ascribed to Braide's movements includes, "effective indigenization," attractive and realistic view of salvation to the indigenous people in his teachings, mediating supernatural powers, the impartation of anointing and charisma-exuberant and lively liturgy.⁶⁶ All these characteristics and others manifest themselves in the Pentecostal-charismatic movements in Nigeria today.

Comparing Garrick Braide's movement with the characteristics of the Asuza Street movement revealed the indigenous nature of Pentecostal movement in Nigeria. One of the major differences between the Asuza Street revival and the Garrick Braide movements is that the American media popularized and publicized the Asuza Street revival, but there were no such media in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in Nigeria to publicize and popularize Garrick Braide's revival movements. Azusa Street has also been noted to emphasize the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues, healings, miracles and deliverance,⁶⁷ whereas the movement of Garrick Braide emphasized healings, miracles, and conversion.

⁶⁴Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1846-19*, 187.

⁶⁵Asamoah-Gyadu, "Spirit of Elijah: Reinvention of the Prophetism in African Initiated Christianity."

⁶⁶Ekebuisi, *The Life and Ministry of Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide*, 185-203.

⁶⁷Edith, Blumhofer. "Azusa Street Revival." *The Christian Century* 123, no. 5 (2006): 22.

Braide's Revival Connection to Contemporary Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria

It is true that Scholars such as G.O.M. Tasié, Ogbu Kalu, Ojo Matthews, Wariboko and Ade Ajayi report that Braide did not observe speaking in tongues as part of his revival movement; prophecy, miracles, healings, and mass conversion characterized the revival. Odey insists that Braide's method of evangelism redefined Christianity as a practical religion of the Niger Delta, which led to great numbers of converts.⁶⁸ Elizabeth Isichei affirms that "Braide won Christians by appealing to their deepest needs" through the demonstration of his gifts of healing to the multitudes gathered at his meetings.⁶⁹ This is a popular strategy of the contemporary Pentecostal campaigns in Nigeria who emphasize the prosperity gospel, freedom from demonic powers, and healing in their attempt gain the attention of the poor and the needy. Ekebuisi also notes that Braide's ministry benefited the main-line churches of Igboland and that his impact captures the attention of many people including the British public.⁷⁰ In addition, in order to underscore that the Anglican Communion in the Niger Delta where Braide was converted to Christianity has been instrumental to the origin of Pentecostalism at its seedling stage.

Anglican mission introduced Pentecostalism into Igboland through their charismatic activities long before the churches that claim exclusive Pentecostalism came about a century later. The only difference is that the original Anglican was imbued in their Evangelical tradition as opposed to the modern Pentecostalism, which is characterized by seemingly emotional and ecstatic tendencies without much biblical anchorage.⁷¹

Biara and Christian reflect that Braide initiated a radical method of evangelism that served as the nursing mother of the contemporary Pentecostalism in Nigeria. He is one of the early prophets in the history of Nigerian Christianity that prepared the soil in which modern Pentecostals grow. Although he was groomed in the Anglican Communion, his way of responding to the gospel and methods of evangelism is more in line with the indigenous worldview added to a biblical worldview. Kanayo Nwadiolor

⁶⁸Odey, "Prophet-Evangelist Garrick Sokari Idaketima Marian Braide." In 1909 for instance, the report shows that there are about 300 converts to Christianity in the Niger Delta, but when Braide became involved in evangelistic activities, the number was said to have risen to (2,933). The ministry of Braide accomplishes in three months what the CMS, which is the Evangelical arms of Anglican Communion, cannot achieve in half of a century in the Niger Delta.

⁶⁹Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*, 286–98.

⁷⁰Ekebuisi, *The Life and Ministry of Prophet Garrick Sokari Braide*, 7.

⁷¹Benjamin C.D. Diara and Nche George Christian, "Anglican Church and the Development of Pentecostalism in Igboland," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 3, no. 10 (2013): 43.

buttresses this argument when he declares, “the seeds that indigenous prophets sowed sprouted in the inter-war years into the root of modern Pentecostal movements.”⁷² Elsewhere, Ojo argued that the Pentecostal movement has “an indigenous origin that takes his root from two revival movements” which include the Garrick Sokari Braide movement and the Diamond Society movement in southwestern Nigeria.⁷³

Garrick Braide’s movement provided thriving fruit for the origins of Pentecostalism in Nigerian church. The result ministry was dynamic and gave great attention to healings and the destruction of charms and traditional medicines. The movement was not a replication of Western Christianity but was of an indigenous origin which set loose Africans to encounter the life and the needs of the Niger Delta. Many advocates for mainline church movements have criticized Braide’s movement, but it was a movement that showed how local people responded to the gospel indigenously and not from a western perspective. The movement is one of the earliest major revivals in Nigeria that reformed the face of Nigerian Christianity which gave birth to later Pentecostal movements that eventually brought about the enormous development that contributed to the “shift of the center of gravity of Christianity to the south” in the twenty first century.⁷⁴

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article examined the root of the indigenous Pentecostal movement in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria prior to the Azusa Street Pentecostal experience of 1906. The core argument in this work centered on the fact that Braide’s prophetic revival in the Niger Delta was an indigenous revival that did not depend on any western affiliated revival or movement. This indigenous revival defines and establishes the charismatic Nigerian Christian spirituality that clearly shows how the Niger Delta responds to the gospel in an indigenous manner. The movement shows a reliable, conservative, and evangelical movement that centered on the Bible without any western help.

Contrary to the opinion of many scholars of missions and church historians, this research shows that the origin of Nigerian Pentecostalism was in the Braide revival movement of 1882–1918. Proving that the movement preceded the Azusa Street revival and, thus, was not dependent on Western Pentecostalism and shows another stream of modern Pentecostalism. Braide’s movement and ministry is an original and indigenous work birthed out of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

⁷²Kanayo Louis Nwadiolor, “Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Commercialization of the Gospel Message in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Research* 2, no. 2 (2015): 1278.

⁷³Matthews Ojo, “American Pentecostalism and the Growth of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements in Nigeria,” in *Freedom’s Distant Shores: American Protestants and Post-Colonial Alliances with Africa*, ed. R. Drew Smith (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 157.

⁷⁴Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002).

