

# MATURE JOURNAL

International Institute of Christian  
Theologians, Scholars and Professionals



## Changing Faces of African Christianity: The Role of Dr. Mojola Agbebi

Dele Alaba ILEASANMI, Ph.D.

The Redeemed Christian Bible College, Nigeria

<https://mature.ictsp.org/>

Pstdeleilesanmi3@gmail.com

### Abstract

The call to change the face of African Christianity began with Dr. Mojola Agbebi (formerly referred to as David Vincent) in 1889, when he made this classic statement in his book titled *Africa and the Gospel*: "To render Christianity indigenous to Africa, it must be watered by native hands, pruned by native hatchets, and tended with native earth". He continues to say that "It is a curse if we intend for ever to hold at the apron strings of foreign teachers, doing the baby for aye (Ayandele, E.A., 2005). Agbebi fought European-American racial and cultural imperialism, mental enslavement, and spiritual thralldom and created for Africans a Christianity that catered for their cultural identities and sensibilities, concerns, needs, and aspirations to properly align the African worldview with global Christianity and contextualize its practices. His Africanization of Christianity to reject Eurocentricism and Americentrism of Christianity is an eloquent testimony of his move to change the faces of African Christianity to give African Christians a voice in the religious market. This study is therefore set to examine the impact of African Christianity on contemporary world Christianity, especially in the Global North, and the role of Dr. Mojola Agbebi in reshaping the face of Christianity in Africa and the Diaspora. The study concludes that Christianity should not be seen as a Western religion. The methodology adopted in this work to collect relevant data is historical, qualitative, and explanatory.

**Keywords:** changing faces, christianity, Mojola Agbebi, africanization, eurocentricism and americentricism.

## Introduction

It will be apt to say that *the changing faces of African Christianity* began with Dr. Mojola Agbebi, who published a small book titled *Africa and the Gospel* in 1889. In this pamphlet, he articulated the creation of African Churches as written by Ayandele, E.A. (2005, cited in Ilesanmi, D.A., 2022), and declared that he, Dr. Agbebi Mojola, declared that:

To render Christianity indigenous to Africa, it must be watered by native hands, pruned with native hatchets and tended with native earth... It is a curse if we intend for ever to hold at the apron strings of foreign teachers, doing the baby for aye (see Adedoyin, I.A. (ed.).p.23)

The spread of Christianity to the Global South by the West was a great step in the annals of world Christianity, particularly in Africa. The dark, forested African continent was illuminated by the unchanging power of the Gospel of Christ. To give the truth a clapping hand, the forestep of the West to bring Christianity to Africa was an iconic role played in the lives of the Africans. This emergence has thus far changed the religious landscape of a politically and religiously volatile African continent. The arrival of Christianity on the soil of Africa with its product, western education, sold concomitantly to Africans, has, in no small measure, transformed the African continent and her people. In summarizing, The development of science and technology, the multiplicities of social, economic, political, and cultural dynamics globally accentuated by pluralities of media technologies, and migration indicate that Christianity is indeed currently undergoing transformation. In fact, the current transformation is a clear detour from the dominant changes in Christianity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which were a European phenomenon that ultimately heralded Protestantism (Adedibu, Babatunde Aderemi, 2018).<sup>1</sup> Even though Christianity was originally a Middle Eastern religion, it is now a major world religion; the epicentre of Christianity has indeed shifted over time.<sup>2</sup> The changes in the geo-center of Christianity can be seen in three phases: first, the Middle East (until 400 AD); second, Europe (from 400 to 1800) and North America (from 1800 to now); and third, the 'Third World' (today), referring to the nations of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania, which includes their emigrants to the West.<sup>3</sup> Today, Christianity's centre of gravity has moved from the Global North to the Global South. And Africa remains the brightest spot in world Christianity today.

## The Role of Dr. Mojola Agbebi in the Changing Faces of African Christianity

### Who is Dr. Mojola Agbebi?

---

<sup>1</sup> Adedibu, Babatunde Aderemi and Igboin, Benson Ohihon (eds.). (2018). The Redrawing of the Political Map of World Christianity through the Glocalisation of African Pentecostal Churches. pp.10-31. In *The Changing Face of African Pentecostalism*. Adekunle Ajasin University Press, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

First and foremost, it is pertinent to know about this man called Dr. Mojola Agbebi. Dele Ilesanmi (2022) gives a vivid biography of Dr. Mojola Agbebi in his book titled *'African Christianity and Nationalism: The Biography of Dr. Mojola Agbebi (1860–1917), The Moses of Africa.'* He writes that Rev. Dr. Mojola Agbebi was born on the 10th of April, 1860, in Ilesha. He was the son of a Yoruba Anglican catechist from Oye-Ekiti in the present-day Ekiti State, Nigeria. He was a leading proponent of "Ethiopianism," which advocated an African-centered Christianity. He studied for the ministry at the Baptist Mission. In the 1880s, as an indication of his full acceptance of African culture, he changed his Creole name, "David Brown Vincent," to Mojola Agbebi. In 1888, Agbebi was a founder of the Native Baptist Church (now the First Baptist Church) in Lagos, Nigeria. Later that year, he helped to establish the Ebenezer Baptist Church in that city (Lagos, Nigeria). And that same year, at twenty-eight years of age, he founded the Hope Institute, an agricultural and technical institute that received the backing of the Educational Board of Lagos. A year later, he published his first book, "Africa and the Gospel". Agbebi was one of the first Africans to hold a degree in civil engineering from a British university and the first black man to be honoured and awarded Master of Arts (M.A) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) for his racial fidelity, literary prowess, and scholarly works, but he was primarily known for his missionary work in southern Nigeria and the Cameroons between 1890 and 1910. Dr. Mojola Agbebi became the most outstanding product of entirely West African institutions of learning. His belief in Ethiopianism is outlined in his 1902 Inaugural sermon.

The London press underscored Mojola Agbebi's reform activities and quoted a reference to him in the Lagos press that described him as "holding a prominent place among the intellectual, moral, and religious personalities of that colony, his youth, manhood, education, intelligence, literary and domestic struggle, and his plodding career being all local and well-known." But it was at the sixth session of the Universal Races Congress, held in London in 1911, that Agbebi established himself as a scholar and lecturer of international stature. He frequently used his pulpit to deliver anticolonial sermons, which was also a common feature of his poems, for which he was hailed as the uncrowned poet laureate of Lagos. Dr. Mojola Agbebi was an icon in the agitation for Yorùbá dress and language. He challenged the missionaries' right to name the particular tune, language, drums, dress, and songs that would be conducive to worship in another culture. He believed that worshippers could use any tune, language or dialect, drums, songs, and wear clothes suited for them to worship their God. He argued that dress, tunes, and songs depend on the frame of mind, the breadth of the soul, the experiences of life, the attitude of faith, and the latitude of love of the individual within a sociocultural space. Dr. Agbebi Mojola cited Biblical verses in support of his theological idea that individual cultures should be permitted to dictate the dress, songs, language, etc. of worship.

Between 1880 and 1914, he sat on the editorial chairs of nearly all the major Lagos newspapers. He was an astute editor, an excellent writer, and a fine preacher of note. No doubt, Dr. Mojola Agbebi created one of the most powerful "Africanization" movements of Christianity in colonial West Africa. The emergence of this Ekiti illustrious cerebral mini-Paul, "the Moses of African Christianity and pan-Africanism and nationalism", Dr. Mojola Agbebi, like a meteor in the firmament of Christian missions in 1889 with his hard-hitting work titled "Africa and the Gospel", his vitriol of tongue and pen became galling to the negrophobic American missionaries. His intellectual apogee was in his expository paper titled "The West Africa Problem "at the Universal Racial Congress held at the University of London. This, in no doubt, along with other vituperations, coming from the African intellectual caterpillar, Dr. Mojola Agbebi, with his sole aim to lead his people to Canaan land, away from the Babylonian captivity of European-American racial and cultural imperialism, mental enslavement, and spiritual subjugation, gave the American missionaries a coup de grace that eventually brought them to their knees. In 1902, Rev. Dr. Mojola Agbebi, who was the Director of the Ekiti Baptist Mission, received in Lagos the first set of converts from his own Ekiti country church, First Baptist Church, Igede-Ekiti, to be baptized. Those who participated in the baptismal exercise in Lagos were the following:

Daniel Amoloye, Daniel Ayo, Famoroti John, and D. Okebiorun. Other prominent early converts into the fold of the Baptist prominent personalities were later baptized in the town. ‘The climactic recognition of Mojola Agbebi as the personification of the African Personality came directly from the United States of America when The Men’s Sunday Club of Yonkers, New York, observed October 1, 1911, as "Agbebi Mojola Day." Indelibly remarkable was his work; unfortunately, though, the sudden demise of this intellectual juggernaut on Thursday, May 17, 1917, made his incorrigible dogmatic theologies and philosophies in the Southern American Baptist fold in particular and Africa, in general, a spent force. Dr. Mojola Agbebi will be remembered as a champion of cultural nationalism and as a Church leader who articulated authentic African Christianity and/or theology.<sup>4</sup>

---

## **Agbebi’s Africanisation and Contextualisation of Christianity**

---

### **Contextualisation and Indigenisation of African Christian Worship**

Dr. Agbebi Mojola was at the cutting-edge of the contextualisation and indigenisation of the drama of worship within the Nigerian Baptist Convention churches and in all African Churches. This he did through his speeches, writings, preaching, and teachings until his death in 1917. Alluding to this, Rev. Isaac Osakpamwan Ibude (2020, cited in Ilesanmi, 2022) writes thus:

---

Prominent among those in the forefront of contextualising worship through indigenous music in the Baptist denomination was Rev. Dr. Mojola Agbebi of the Native Baptist Church who before his ordination as a Baptist minister was known as David Brown Vincent (Atanda, 1988). He insisted on the use of Yoruba indigenous melodies and compositions with new text in Christian worship among Baptists. Furthermore, in the quest to contextualise Christian worship Omojola (1995) noted that Rev. Dr. Mojola Agbebi instructed Baptist churches in Ekiti land not to use European hymns for seven years during worship services. Baptist work in Nigeria before the 1890s was restricted to Southwest Nigeria. The evangelistic effort to other parts of Nigeria by indigenous preacher gained ground from 1893. The work spread to Buguma and Niger Delta areas in the then Eastern and Mid-West Nigeria through the effort of a European Baptist Missionary, Rev. William Hughes (Ajayi, 2010, p. 83). Rev. Dr. Mojola Agbebi in 1898 took over the leadership of the church and encouraged the church members to read, write and compose songs in Kalabari which were used in worship services he conducted (George, 2010, p. 20). This initiative, according to Suku B. Ngiangia (Interview the 10th of December, 2018) gave rise to a musical heritage among converts, a major tool used for communicating the gospel among Kalabari up to this contemporary time.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ilesanmi, D.A. (2022). See For details, check [christopre ss.org/shop/](http://christopre ss.org/shop/).

---

No doubt, Dr. Mojola Agbebi created one of the most powerful Africanisation movements of Christianity in colonial West Africa to change the face of African Christianity. The most noteworthy characteristic of Dr. Mojola Agbebi was his inflexibility towards justice, self-determination, and Africanism. He was not favourably disposed to European and American cultural imperialism, spiritual and political subjugation, and economic colonialism. He fought tooth and nail against *Eurocentrism* and *Americocentrism* in African territories. His education in Africa does not alone explain his strong African pride and consciousness. As a product of missionary schools, he would have imbibed European teaching, even though he did not travel to Europe at the beginning.

Mojola Agbebi's independent stance, "new theology," and philosophy, which found expression in his *Afrocentrism*, culminated in his dismissal from the CMS in 1880. He was therefore liberated from his ties to the apron strings of the missionaries and ready to formulate his own thoughts and goals, especially in Christian worship. His position here, in his Inaugural sermon of 1902, has brought many changes to African Christian modes of worship. He posited that:

---

The Christians of England may sing hymns different from the Christians of Armenia, of France, or of Africa, and one tribe may sing differently from another tribe. The grave Old Hundred, which may induce solemnity in Saint Paul's Cathedral, and the grand 'Hallelujah Chorus,' which has just been triumphantly rendered by your estimable choir, may both excite ridicule or disgust in a church among the Kroomen. Tastes differ. English tunes and metres, English songs and hymns, some of them most unsuited to African aspiration and intelligence, have proved effective in weakening the talent for hymnology among African Christians. In one of the churches planted up-country, I have found it necessary to advise that for seven years, at least, no hymn-books but original hymns should be used at worship. African Christians dance to foreign music in their social festivities, they sing to foreign music in their churches, they march to foreign music in their funerals, and use foreign instruments to cultivate their musical aspirations. Throughout the entire scriptures there was not a case in which Christians sing foreign hymns, or an instance where prayers were unanswered or worship unaccepted because hymns were not sung. We are come to the times when religious developments demand original songs and original tunes from the African Christian.<sup>5</sup>

---

As part of Agbebi's quest for African cultural nationalism and theology, the change of clothing from European to African clothing. He wanted Africans to dress like Africans and not like Europeans or Americans. He was not ashamed of putting on his Yoruba dress anywhere in the world when he was alive. He was not favourably disposed to the Africans, who like to behave like Europeans or Americans in their own land, Africa. It was said that, Dr. Agbebi, the proudly African man,

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

He would wear his Agbada (Yoruba clothing) in the cold weathers of Britain and the USA. He also did not appreciate the resettled slaves in Liberia who were behaving like Americans in Africa. He told them to disperse into the interior and be absorbed into African culture. In addition, he made attempts to reconcile Christianity with African institutions and customs. He did this by collecting African gods for study, instructed converts in local languages and appreciation of African arts and music. Agbebi believed that if European missionaries had taken time to understand African religions and culture it would have helped indigenise Christianity among Africans. In this thought, he predated the ideas later articulated by African theologians such as Bolaji Idowu, John S Mbiti and Kwesi Dickson.<sup>6</sup>

---

He challenged the missionaries' right to name the particular tune, language, drums, dress, and songs that would be conducive to worship in another culture. He believed that worshippers could use any tune, language or dialect, drums, songs, and clothes suited for them to worship their God. He argued that dress, tunes, and songs depend on the frame of mind, the breadth of the soul, the experiences of life, the attitude of faith, and the latitude of love of the individual within a sociocultural space. After recognising the secular and profane origin of many "sacred" hymns in the famous collections of hymns by Ira D. Sankey, which were used in many West African Protestant churches, Dr. Agbebi cited Biblical verses in support of his African theological idea that individual culture should be permitted to dictate the dress, songs, language, etc. of worship. What is more, Oyeniyi (2012), as cited in Ilesanmi, (2022), writes:

Dr. Agbebi noted further that the effects of intercultural contacts upon the African, "whose mode of life is entirely dissimilar to that of the European, if not actually opposed to it" must be evaluated. Agbebi saw the collision of European and African cultures as bound to have far-reaching and disturbing effects of great dimension upon the moral and social arrangement of the Africans, especially upon "the foundation and vital parts of African life.

In 1889, he published a small book titled *Africa and the Gospel*. In this pamphlet, as earlier said in this work, he articulated the creation of African Churches. He declared that: "To render Christianity indigenous to Africa, it must be watered by native hands, pruned with native hatchets, and tended with native earth. It is a curse if we intend for ever to hold on to the apron strings of foreign teachers, doing the baby for aye". This view fanned the ember of contraction between him and the foreign missionaries. There is a saying that the truth is bitter. He (Dr. Agbebi) believed that we could not continue to depend forever on these white missionaries; he believed that Africans should have their own pastors who would speak to their own people in their own language. In this way, it will be very easy to contextualize Christian worship.

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## A Brief History of Christianity in Africa: The Nigerian Case

---

African Christianity has a long and checkered history in Africa. The first contact with Christianity in Africa was during the apostolic age. This was in the first and second centuries, through the popular Alexandria and Carthage centres in modern-day Egypt and Tunisia, respectively (Richard Ayo Adekoya, 2019). During this period, according to Adekoya (2019), the church experienced rapid growth with gradual spread to other parts of the region until the Arab invasion during the seventh century. This invasion almost culminated in the painful end of Christianity for that era, with only pockets of Christianity remaining in the region. It will interest us to know that before the Arab invasion, Christianity had spread to Ethiopia in East Africa, and King Ezana, the paramount ruler of the Ethiopian Empire, had already made Christianity the kingdom's official religion (Adekoya, *ibid.*). Edward Smith (2014, p. 46, cited in Adekoy, 2019) opined that the early church of this era traveled and crossed cultures to preach the gospel of Christ and establish churches. Edward regarded the church of this era as "a missionary church." The mission of the church was to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, win souls to the Kingdom of God, and plant churches. Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, some successful attempts were made by the church. According to Adekoya (2019, citing Omoyajowo and Akin), "Efforts from the middle ages through Portuguese and later French missionaries, on the West coast from Guinea to Angola and up the East Coast from Mozambique to Mombasa, yielded initial, considerable successes. [And the greatest success was achieved in the Congo.]"

Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were pockets of missionary activity in Africa. For example, Christianity came to Nigeria in the 15<sup>th</sup> century through the efforts of Capuchin and Augustinian monks from Portugal who sailed through the Atlantic to the shores of Nigeria. Though, according to Fafunwa (1974) and Dele Ilesanmi (2009), this influence was nearly wiped out by the slave trade that ravaged West Africa for roughly 300 years. The second missionary endeavor in Nigeria was led by the first English-speaking Christian Mission, the Church of England, headed by Henry Townsend in Badagry, Lagos, South Western Nigeria, on September 24, 1842. Other foreign missions, like the Roman Catholics, Methodists, and Baptists, were not left out in the spiritual scramble for Nigeria at that time (Fafunwa, 1974; Ilesanmi, 2009).

The Baptist Mission first appeared on the soil of Nigeria in 1850, when Rev. Thomas Jefferson Bowen, the pioneer American Baptist missionary, arrived in Nigeria. He arrived in the Badagry area of the current Lagos State, in south-western Nigeria, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 1850. First Baptist Church, Lagos, was originally known as American Baptist Church. The Nigerian Baptist Convention was officially formed in 1914 (it metamorphosed from the Yoruba Baptist Association) and had the Ekiti illustrious cerebral mini-Paul, "the Moses of Africa", Dr. Mojola Agbebi (formally known as **David Brown Vincent**) as its first elected president. While Dr. Mojola Agbebi saw the introduction of Christianity by white westerners as an important step in the progress of African peoples, he argued that the introductory phase was over and that it was time for Africans 'to infuse Christianity with their own spirit'. This was the beginning of a change in the face of African Christianity. Ilesanmi writes that Through African appreciation and performance of Christian songs, Agbebi called for a distinctive African religious voice: "We are coming to the times when religious developments demand original songs and original tunes from the African Christian." Dr. Mojola Agbebi was a prominent critic of white, European, and American Christianity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1908, he married Adeotan Sikuade, and the marriage was blessed with children. He gave his children African names, and one of them is Ibironke. The man Agbebi changed the face of African Christianity for it to find expression in Africa (see Ilesanmi, 2022 for a better understanding).

---

## Christianity in the Global South and the African Impact in the Global North

It has become a cliché that "Africans are religious." However, it is a truism and an apothegm considering the avalanche of religious activities cascading daily on African soil. Religion and African life seem to be inseparable, or rather synonymous. In his understanding of the nexus between an African and Religion and, of course, in a way of lending credence to the aphorism that Africans are religious, Kofi A. Opoku (1978, as cited in Josiah A. Bolarinwa, 2018) writes that "Religion is at the root of African culture and is the determining principle of African life", thus, "religion is life and life, religion." Therefore, the history of Christianity will not be complete in the twenty-first century without taking into account the exponential growth of African Christianity in both Africa and the diaspora. Babatunde Aderemi Adelabu (2018), citing Todd, Johnson, et al. (2009, pp. 110–113), observed that more than five hundred million people have converted to Christianity in the space of one hundred years, with 80% of them converting after 1970. It is interesting to state that if you want to know anything about Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, you must know something about Africa (Adedibu, 2018; Walls, Andrew 2000), especially African Pentecostalism, a dynamic brand of Christianity that has greatly challenged the mainland churches. He further stressed that African Christianities, mainly Pentecostalism, are not geographically delineated, as they are quite noticeable in the West and North America. He claims that African Pentecostalism appears to be the most verifiable export from the continent to Europe and North America.

The shift in the centre of gravity of Christianity to the Global South with its concomitant global rise of Pentecostalism has greatly culminated in redefining world Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. African Christianity has also witnessed a change due to the rise of African Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. This has again reshaped African Christianity. Indeed, "Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, in all their "multifaceted variety, probably constitute the fastest-growing churches within Christianity today (Adedibu, 2018; Allan and Anderson, 2014). It has also been suggested that if present trends continue, by 2025, 69% of the world's Christians will live in the Global South, with only 31% in the Global North (Adedibu cited David and Barrett, 2002).

The breakaway of some African Christian leaders from established European and American churches has led to the exponential growth of African Christianity. African leaders like Dr. Rev. Mojola Agbebi revolted against European and American dominance. The resistance movement by African Christian leaders was due to the inhuman treatment of Africans and the practice of European and American ideology in theology and Christianity. These Eurocentrisms and Americocentrisms in Christianity on African soil found no expression in African life and spirituality. They promoted a brand of Christianity that could be called *Eurocentrism* or *Americocentrism*—Christianity that responded to their worldviews. They "created" Christianity that catered to their cultural and ideological sensibilities, concerns, and agendas. They polished their worldviews in consonance with their indigenous maps of the universe without contextualizing their practices in African lands. Africans were attached to their religious, cultural, and ideological apron strings. Any good culture is a creation and reflection of divinity. Africans have good cultures and have been practicing them before the introduction of Christianity in their lands. The imposition of supposedly superior European and American cultures on the rest of the world, particularly the African continent, greatly affected the expansion of Christianity in Africa until Africans like Dr. Mojola Agbebi revolted and chartered a new course of identity in gospel worship, dressing, songs, naming, and so on to change the face of African Christianity and create Christianity that caters for



African identity. This helped to bring God closer to their people. African people no longer see God as a foreign or western God but as the God of all and for all, the God of the universe. The Africanization of Christianity or contextualization of Christianity in Africa was the concern of Dr. Agbebi throughout his life.<sup>7</sup> Today, African churches have incorporated some of the African traditional practices that are not at war with the word of God into their traditions, doctrines, or dogmas. Such as preaching, teaching, and singing in African languages; interpreting and reading the Bible in African languages; preaching in African wear or dress; introduction of beating drums to Christianity; giving African names as baptismal names; giving African names to children in honour of the God of the Bible, such as Oluwaseun (thank you Lord); Tijesunimi (I am of Jesus; Jesus owns me); etc.

In fact, Africa's sway on the world Christianity is predicated on her people's predilection for and receptivity to religious life because religion is at the root of African culture. It is now wrong to view Christianity as a western religion, especially now that the center of Christianity's gravity has been moved out of the West and settled in the Global South. Andrew Walls (2002, p. 119) observed that:

For African Christianity is undoubtedly African religion, as developed by Africans and shaped by the concerns and agenda of Africa; it is no pale copy of an institution existing somewhere else... African Christianity must be seen as a major component of contemporary representative Christianity, the standard Christianity of the present age, a demonstration model of its character. That is, we may need to look at Africa may be the theatre in which some of the determinative new directions in Christian thought and activity are being taken.<sup>8</sup>

The twenty-first century missionary movement may, therefore, involve more non-Western than Western Christians. We can now see how Dr. Agbebi changed the face of African Christianity. It is evidently clear that African-led Pentecostal churches are the most viable and visible among the different genres of new African Christianities that have burgeoned in Europe and North America, especially since 1980, up to the present time.<sup>9</sup> To buttress this, Adedibu writes:

The Christian landscape in Kiev, Ukraine was once redefined by Sunday Adelaja who leads the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations, Ukraine before his alleged moral disdemeanour. Adelaja's missionary work has altered the ecclesial landscape of Eastern Europe, installing African religious sensibilities in a region that was previously dominated by Orthodox Christianity. Similarly, in the United Kingdom (UK), the largest single congregation is Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) led by Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo with a membership of 12,000 adherents. Other mega churches in London include: Jesus

---

<sup>7</sup> See Ilesanmi, Dele A (2022). African Christianity and Nationalism: The Biography of Dr. Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917), The Moses of Africa, for better understanding.

<sup>8</sup> Adedibu (2018) cited Andrew, Walls (2002, p.119)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Adedibu (2018)

House, a parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God led by Pastor Agu Irukwu with a membership of over 2,000, Victory Pentecostal Assembly, in Barking, London, led by Pastor Alex Omokudu with a membership of over 3,000 and Mount Zion Christian Ministry International (Freedom Arena) Plumstead, London, pioneered by Pastor Debo Akande, with a membership of over 2,000 (see Adedibu and Igboin (eds.), pp.16-17 for more information).

The impact of African missionaries in the Global North cannot be downplayed; it is enormous. For instance, it is no longer news that the Redeemed Christian Church of God, from Africa, Nigeria, led by Pastor E.A. Adeboye, has a transnational network of churches in not less than 198 nations of the world today, including 736 parishes in the United Kingdom and over 800 parishes in the United States of America (Adedibu, *ibid.*, p. 17). Perhaps the Redeemed Christian Church of God is the single largest, widespread church playing a reverse mission role in the Global Northern hemisphere. Interestingly, African missionaries are now serving in non-African congregations in Southeast Asia (Ogbu and Kalu, 2008, cited in Adedibu, 2018, p. 288). It is noteworthy to say that the missionary enterprise from Africa is multifaceted and not limited to the global north and South alone. Thus, Africa has greatly impacted the world spiritually. No doubt, the explosion of African Christianities in Africa and the Diaspora has changed the face of global Christianity, as there has been a gradual de-Europeanization and de-Americanization of Christianity in various contexts in the Global South and Diaspora. Today, it is evidently clear that African Christianities are prevalent in both West and North America, especially in urban cities, due to the deterritorialization of these Christian strands across various cultural frontiers. In fact, Adedibu observes that to encounter the richness and diversities of African Christianities in Britain today, all you might need to do is spare a day and get a bus to Old Kent Road in south-east London. He quoted Andrew Rogers (2013, p. 17) as saying that "Old Kent Road [in Southwark Borough, London] has become something of a shop window for their growth, proclaiming the globalization of Christianity with over 25 Black Majority churches [mostly African-led Pentecostal churches] on a road less than 1.5 miles long". Today, "Africa's sway on the world Christian scene is increasing, and it is becoming much more common to see Africans leading Christian agencies and modeling Christian thought" (Adedibu, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

This paper has been able to demonstrate the enormous impact of African Christianity in the Global South and North vis-à-vis the role played by Dr. Mojola Agbebi in redefining Christianity on the African continent by creating Christianity that caters for the cultural identities and sensibilities, concerns, needs, and aspirations of the African people in Christian thought and worship. This was done through the de-Europeanization and de-Americanization of Christianity, particularly on the African continent. His Africanization of Christianity and rejection of Eurocentricism and Americocentrism of Christianity is an eloquent testimony of his move to change the faces of African Christianity to give African Christians a voice in the religious market and to prove that Christianity is not a Western religion.

## Reference

- Adedibu, Babatunde Aderemi and Igboin, Benson Ohihon(2018). The Redrawing of the Political Map of World Christianity through the Glocalisation of African Pentecostal Churches. In Adedibu and Igboin(eds.). *The Changing Face of African Pentecostalism*. Adekunle Ajasin University Press, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- Adekoya, Richard Ayo (2019). African pentecostalism: Mission within and in diaspora. In Adedibu, et tal. (eds.). *spectrum:journal of contemporary Christianity and society*. Vol.4,1.pp.40-67
- Bolarinwa, Josiah A (2018). African Pentecostalism and Political Development. In Adedibu and Igboin(eds.). *The Changing Face of African Pentecostalism*. Adekunle Ajasin University Press, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.
- Colin Legum, Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in Joseph C. Anene and Godfrey N. Brown (eds.) *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Ibadan University Press, 1966) P.529. Colin Legum was a Commonwealth correspondent of The Observer.
- E.A. Ayandele(1971), A visionary of the african church: Mojola Agbebi, 1860- 1917
- E.A Ayandele(2005). The historical context. In Adedoyin, I.A(ed.). *The Place of Ogbomoso in the History of Nigerian Baptists*.(Penthouse Publications, Nigeria, 2005) Pp.23-36.
- Fafunwa, A.B., History of Education (NPS Educational Publishers Limited, 1974) Pp.123-124. See also Abernethy, D.B, The Political Dilemma of Popular Education (Stanford University Press, 1969) p.67, and J.B Webster, The African Churches among the Yoruba, 1888-1922 (O.U.P, 1964)
- Ilesanmi, Dele A(2009). Ekiti and the Role of Roman Catholic Mission in Girl-

child Education Since 1912. In *Unswerving Mater Christi Girls, The Glory of Ekiti State* (published by Mater Christi Press Club, Igede-Ekiti, 2009) Pp.26-27)

Ilesanmi, Dele A (2022). African Christianity and Nationalism: The Biography of

Dr. Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917), The Moses of Africa.

Isaac Osakpamwan Ibude (2020) African Art Music and the Drama of Christian Worship among Baptists in Nigeria : <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajtr.2.1.226>*Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, Macmillan Reference USA, copyright © 1998 Gerald H. Anderson, by permission of Macmillan Reference USA, New York, NY. All rights reserved. By Matthews A. Ojo.

Mojola Agbebi (1911). The West African Problem. In G. Spiller(ed.). *Papers on Interracial Problems Contributed to the First International Races Congress... (1911)*, reprinted in *H. S. Wilson, Origins of West African Nationalism (1969)*

Akinsola Akiwowo (1965). The Place of Mojola Agbebi in the African Nationalists Movements, 1890-1917,” *Pylon* 26 (1965): 122-139

Hazel King (1986). Cooperation in contextualization: Two visionaries of the African church—Mojola Agbebi and William Hughes of the African Institute, Colwyn Bay,” *JRA* 16(1986):2-21.

John David M<sup>c</sup>Gee (2006). The reminiscence (An Amazing Story) on Baptist Mission Work in Western Nigeria. This was contributed by Rev. & Mrs. John S. M<sup>c</sup>Gee (Published by SOLA ORESSON & ASSOCIATE, Church street, Agege, Lagos, Nigeria

J.B. Webster, *The African Churches among the Yoruba, 1888-1922* (1964).

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/1902-rev-mojola-agbebi-inaugural-sermon/>

<https://israelolofinjana.wordpress.com/2012/10/08/black-history-month-series-african-nationalism-dr-mojola-agbebis-contribution/>

<https://www.bu.edu/missiology/2017/08/16/agbebi-mojola-david-brown-vincent-1860-1917/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276401248\\_Mojola\\_Agbebi\\_Apostle\\_of\\_The\\_African\\_Personality](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276401248_Mojola_Agbebi_Apostle_of_The_African_Personality)

<https://litcaf.com/mojola-agbebi/>

### **Notes on contributor**

**Dele Alaba Ilesanmi** (HND, B.Ed., PGDE, PGDTh., M.A., and Ph.D.) has been a lecturer at the Redeemed Christian Bible College (Satellite Campus) for over 15 years now and an Assistant Research Professor at Testament Business Theology and Seminary (online) with expertise in Biblical Research and Christian Education with a special interest in Christian Biblical Educational Learning Theory and Practice (a field he is currently pioneering), Christian Education, Biblical Theory, and Theology. He is a pastor and teacher of the Word. He is currently pursuing two other doctorate degrees in Theology and Biblical Educational Learning Theory. He has written eight books and not less than 40 articles. His bestseller is "**Globalizing True Education: A Divine Mandate**". He serves as the President and CEO of ChristoPress Academy, a Biblically based online Research Institute. You can contact him on +234-08062197040 or pstdeleilesanmi3@gmail.com.