

The United Missionary Church of Africa

By Olusegun Olawoyin, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Entry tags: Christianity, American Christianity, United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA), Religious Group, Language, English, Yoruba Language

United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) is a Mennonite denomination that arrived in Nigeria in 1905. The founding missionaries, whose society is known as United Missionary Society (UMS) came from the United States of America and Canada in the first half of the twentieth century. Their home church was known as the United Missionary Church (UMC). UMC was initially known as Mennonite Brethren in Christ (MBC). Apart from its Mennonite background, the denomination was also heavily influenced by Methodism. The first missionary in Nigeria was Rev. A.W. Banfield who arrived in Nigeria in 1905. He was well-known for reducing the Nupe language to writing, publication of Nupe Dictionary and the translation of the Bible into Nupe language. Other missionaries such as L.R. Sloat, W. Bontrager, G. Schroeder, J. McDowell, L.K. Fuller, and many others also joined Banfield in planting the denomination in Nigeria. The activities of the missionaries was not limited to preaching the gospel, it also included healthcare and education. The denomination however, is well-known through its major Seminary, the UMCA Theological College, Ilorin, which trains clergy, not only from the owner denomination, but from all Protestant churches, including those from African independent churches. Apart from Nigeria, the UMS also established churches in countries of Central America, South America and Asia. The labours of the UMC missionaries in Nigeria resulted in the United Missionary Church of Africa becoming a distinct denomination in the country in 1955. On September 29, 1956, the denomination became a registered corporate body in Nigeria. With the support of indigenous missionaries, the denomination spread from central Nigeria to the North west and South western Nigeria. Today the Church is well established in ten states of the thirty six states in Nigeria, including, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Kwara, Niger, Kogi, Kebbi, Kaduna, Plateau and Nasarawa States. UMCA can also be found in some other African countries, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire. The UMS handed the running of the denomination to indigenous leaders on January 5, 1978 in a service held at the Theological College, in Ilorin. The national leader of the denomination is titled the President, who is elected every four years. A president can use two terms of four years each; thus a President cannot spend more than eight years in office. The regional leaders are called Church District Superintendent (CDS). At present (2023) the church has thirty four (34) Church District Superintendents, in ten states of Nigeria. The District Superintendents are also elected for a term of four years, renewable for another term. Under the District Superintendents are the Area Church Councils (ACC), and then the local Churches. Apart from the Offices, there are standing committees and Boards, overseeing the different aspects of the denomination's activities. The United Missionary Church of Africa in Nigeria is evangelical in nature.



Date Range: 1905 CE - 2023 CE

Region: West Africa

Region tags: South West, North Central and North West Nigeria, Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria, Nigeria, Africa

South West, North Central and North West Nigeria

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Eileen Lageer, *Merging Streams: Story of the Missionary Church*. Elkhart, Indiana, Bethel Publishing Company, 1979
- Source 2: Lois Fuller, *Faith of Our Fathers: Life Stories of Some UMCA Elders*. Ilorin: World Partners, 1999.
- Source 3: Clare Fuller, *Banfield, Nupe and the U.M.C.A.*, Ilorin: World Partners, 2001.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <https://mcusa.org/history>
- Source 1 Description: This is a website that narrated the history of the parent church of UMCA. It also attached some relevant resources that can be downloaded.
- Source 2 URL: <https://umcatc.edu.ng/>
- Source 2 Description: This is the website of the premier theological institution of the church, UMCA Theological College, Ilorin, Nigeria
- Source 3 URL: <https://umcatunga.org/>
- Source 3 Description: This is the website of a local UMCA assembly in Minna, Niger, State, Nigeria

Relevant online primary textual corpora (original languages and/or translations):

- Source 1 URL: <http://www.unitedmissionary.8m.net/>
- Source 1 Description: ARTICLES OF FAITH OF UNITED MISSIONARY CHURCH OF AFRICA
- Source 2 URL: [https://www.worldcat.org/title/UMCA-\(United-Missionary-Church-of-Africa\)-:National-constitution/oclc/212907448](https://www.worldcat.org/title/UMCA-(United-Missionary-Church-of-Africa)-:National-constitution/oclc/212907448)
- Source 2 Description: UMCA (United Missionary Church of Africa) : National constitution
- Source 3 URL: https://gameo.org/index.php?title=United_Missionary_Church
- Source 3 Description: The Story of United Missionary Church in the Global Anabaptist Family

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: This entry is about the UMCA in Nigeria. The country being a secular state accommodates all religious groups which her citizens and residents subscribe to. The three main religious groups in the country are the various African Traditional Religious groups, Islam and Christianity. This religious group is therefore in cultural contact with other faith groups in the country.



Is the cultural contact competitive:

– Yes

Notes: Islam and Indigenous religion are in cultural conflict. Moreover, other Christian denominations are also competing for members in the region. This makes the cultural contact the religious group has with other faith groups competitive.

↳ Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

– Yes

Notes: The cultural contact which this faith group has with others is accommodating. The group is not known to engage in violence or conflict with other groups though her members have been victims of violent attacks by members of other faith groups in the past.

↳ Is the cultural contact neutral:

– No

↳ Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– Yes

Notes: In Kwara, Niger and Kebbi States, the Muslims are usually in conflict with the members of UMCA. The conflict with adherents of indigenous religion was at the arrival of the missionaries of the denomination. This occurred primarily in Oyo, Kwara and Niger States.

↳ Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– Yes

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– Yes

Notes: There are a number of ways by which individuals become members of this religious group. They could become members by birth, by personal choice or by participating in prescribed membership rituals etc.

↳ Assigned at birth (membership is default for this society):

– Yes

Notes: Children born to parents who identify as members of the church are conferred with some degree of rights to the church membership.

↳ Assigned by personal choice:

– Yes

↳ Assigned by class:

– No

↳ Assigned at a specific age:

– No

↳ Assigned by gender:

– No

↳ Assigned by participation in a particular ritual:

– Yes

Notes: By baptism, one can be a member of UMCA

↳ Assigned by some other factor:

– No

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– Yes

Notes: The church embarks on evangelism campaigns using various methods to invite people to the church fold with a view to making them members of the denomination.

↳ Is proselytizing mandated for religious professionals:

– Yes

Notes: Religious professionals in the church are expected to lead the process of proselytizing. They provide leadership and motivate members to get involved in the process.

↳ Is proselytizing mandated for all adherents:

– Yes

Notes: All adherents of the denomination are expected to participate in proselytizing. This is with a view to increasing the membership strength of the church and spreading the good news of Christ to their local community.

↳ Is missionary work mandated for religious professionals:

– Yes

Notes: All religious professionals in the church are required to be involved in the church missionary work.

↳ Is missionary work mandated for all adherents:

– Yes

Notes: All adherents of the church are required to participate in missionary work. However, the church is of the view that just as division of labour contributes significantly to the completion of identified tasks, some of the church members may be active in the field of missions, others

may be professionals who work their secular jobs and support missions with the proceeds of their employment.

↳ Is proselytization coercive:

— No

Notes: The church does not proselytize using coercion or force. It uses the power of persuasion to invite and make non-members subscribe to the church membership.

Does the religion have official political support

— Yes

Notes: In some States in the country, the church enjoys some form of support from the political leaders. This support may not always be in the form of finance but the recognition they receive from the ruling class as they contribute to the polity of their local environment.

↳ Are the priests paid by polity:

— No

Notes: The priests are paid by the church.

↳ Is religious infrastructure paid for by the polity:

— No

Notes: Though the polity may offer gifts to the church as it so desires, the church pays the bills of her religious infrastructure internally.

↳ Are the head of the polity and the head of the religion the same figure:

— No

Notes: The personality of the head of the religion are different from those of the head of the polity.

↳ Are political officials equivalent to religious officials:

— No

Notes: In the church, the political officials are different from the religious officials.

↳ Is religious observance enforced by the polity:

— No

Notes: The state is a secular state allowing the freedom of religious affiliation of citizens and residents. The polity therefore lacks the power to enforce religious observance in this religious group.

↳ Polity legal code is roughly coterminous with religious code:

— No

Notes: Though the nation of Nigeria is a secular polity, in some predominantly Muslim Northern States of the country where the group is found, the Sharia legal code is operational. The sharia code is the official legal code of Islam. So the polity's legal code is not coterminous with the religious code.



Polity provides preferential economic treatment (e.g. tax, exemption)

— No

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

— Yes



Are apostates prosecuted or punished:

— No

Notes: The apostates are excommunicated after official warning from the church.

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

— Estimated population, numeric: 36000

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

— Estimated population, percentage of sample region: 25

Notes: In Kwara State, 25% of the population would be UMCA

Nature of religious group [please select one]:

— Small religious group (seen as being part of a related larger religious group)

Notes: UMCA is comparatively small in relation to some of the most dominant Christian denominations in Nigeria

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

— Yes



Is there a hierarchy among these leaders:

— Yes



A single leader of a local community:

— Yes

Notes: There is usually a senior/head among the leaders in each local community who is supported by other leaders for the smooth operation of the local community.

↳ Multiple religious communities each with its own leader, no hierarchy among these leaders:

— Yes

Notes: In administering their local communities, each religious community is assigned its own leader(s). There is usually no hierarchy among these leaders with respect to the administration of each distinct assembly. However, for the purpose of the general administration of the entire denomination in the country, hierarchies exist among leaders for proper coordination of the church.

↳ "Regional" leaders who oversee one or more local leader(s) (e.g. bishops):

— Yes

↳ A single leader for the religious group that oversees all other leaders in the sample region:

— Yes

Notes: The church president is the overall leader of the denomination in the country.

↳ A council or group of leaders for the religious group that oversees all other leaders in the sample region:

— Yes

Notes: The church president is the chair of the church council in the country. The church council provides leadership and oversees the general running of the ministry in Nigeria.

↳ Estimate how many levels there are in the hierarchy of religious leadership:

— Number of levels [numeric value]: 6

↳ Are leaders believed to possess supernatural powers or qualities:

— No

Notes: Whatever qualities the leaders possess, the church believes that they owe it to the supreme being who freely endows them with it for the benefit of the church and humanity.

↳ Are religious leaders chosen:

— Yes

Notes: Regional and national leaders are elected among the clergy

↳ A leader chooses his/her own replacement:

– No

↳ A leader's retinue or ministers chooses the new leader:

– No

↳ Other leaders in the religious group choose that leader:

– Yes

Notes: Regional and national leaders are elected among the clergy

↳ A political leader chooses the leader:

– No

↳ Other members of the leader's congregation choose the leader:

– No

↳ All members of the religious group in the sample region participate in choosing the leader:

– No

↳ Communication with supernatural power(s) believed to be part of the selection process:

– Yes

Notes: The clergy pray and commit the process of choosing the church leader to the supernatural being who is believed to guide them towards the choice of the leader.

↳ Are leaders considered fallible:

– Yes

↳ Charges of fallibility made by a leader's own followers:

– No

Notes: Followers do not usually make charges against the leaders. They may express their displeasure at certain decisions of the leadership. However, they often find a middle ground and settle matters as a large family usually does.

↳ Charges of fallibility made by other leaders in the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: There are occasions when sections of the leadership or generally speaking the

clergy express their displeasure with decisions made by the overall leaders. However, the church has a mechanism for conflict resolution and reconciliation.

- ↳ Are close followers or disciples of a religious leader required to obediently and unquestionably accept the leader's pronouncements on all matters:
 - No

Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also “oral scriptures” (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– Yes

- ↳ Are they written:

– Yes

Notes: The Protestant Bible, comprising 39 books of the Hebrew Bible and 27 books in the New Testament.

- ↳ Are they oral:

– No

- ↳ Is there a story (or a set of stories) associated with the origin of scripture:

– No

- ↳ Are the scriptures alterable:

– No

- ↳ Are there formal institutions (i.e. institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders) for interpreting the scriptures:

– Yes

- ↳ Can interpretation also take place outside these institutions:

– Yes

- ↳ Interpretation is only allowed by officially sanctioned figures:

– No

↳ Is there a select group of people trained in transmitting the scriptures:

– No

↳ Is there a codified canon of scriptures:

– Yes

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– Yes

Notes: Major church buildings, educational institutions buildings and the national Headquarters in Ilorin, Kwara State

↳ In the average settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Percentage: 10

↳ Size of largest single religious monument, square meters:

– Square meters: 500

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

– Height, meters: 40

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:

– Height, square meters: 20

↳ Height of average monument, meters:

– Height, meters: 20

↳ In the largest settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Percentage of area: 50

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes

↳ Tombs:

– No

↳ Cemeteries:

– No

↳ Temples:

– No

↳ Altars:

– No

↳ Devotional markers:

– Yes

↳ Mass gathering point [plazas, courtyard, square. Places permanently demarcated using visible objects or structures]:

– Yes

↳ Other type of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes [specify]: The major seminary of the denomination, UMCA Theological College, Ilorin, where we also have the grave of some important missionaries.

Is iconography present:

– No

Are there specific sites dedicated to sacred practice or considered sacred:

– No

Are pilgrimages present:

– No

Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer “no” only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body.

Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that

some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

Notes: The church holds that the body and spirit are two distinct components of the human essence. Neither of them can function without the other.

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

– Yes

Notes: The church believes that the spirit is distinct from the physical body and that it takes the decisions which the body implements or carries out.

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

– Yes

↳ Other spirit-body relationship:

– No

Belief in afterlife:

– No

Notes: The church believes that death is the end of this current life and that once dead, humans face the judgement. It is the outcome of the divine judgement that will determine whether the individual will live forever in bliss or in anguish and pain.

Reincarnation in this world:

– No

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes

↳ Cremation:

– No

↳ Mummification:

– No

↳ Interment:

– Yes

↳ Corpse is flexed (legs are bent or body is crouched):

– No

↳ Corpse is extended (lying flat on front or back):

– Yes

↳ Corpse is upright (where body is interred in standing position):

– No

↳ Corpse is interred some other way:

– No

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

– No

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

↳ Secondary burial:

– Yes

↳ Re-treatment of corpse:

– Yes

↳ Other intensive (in terms of time or resources expended) treatment of corpse :

– No

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Notes: Since the church does not believe in reincarnation, they do not practice co-sacrifices while burying corpses of their deceased members.

Are grave goods present:

– No

Notes: Since the church does not believe in reincarnation, they do not provide grave goods to corpses of their deceased members.

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

↳ As cenotaphs:

– No

Notes: The church does not engage in warfare that results in the death of members who may be lost in distant battlefields. As a result, the need does not arise to erect cenotaphs for departed members whose corpses cannot be retrieved home. No cenotaphs are therefore erected among them.

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– No

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– Yes

↳ Other formal burial type:

– No

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: The church believes in the existence of supernatural beings and their manifest involvement in the affairs of running the physical and human world.

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: The supreme high God is seen as the owner, controller and possessor of the physical and human existence on the planetary space. He is assumed to be the all powerful and all knowing being who supervises the happenings on earth.

- ↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:
 - Yes
 - Notes: The religious group believes that supreme high God possesses hands, legs, eyes, ears and other human features.
- ↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:
 - Yes
 - Notes: The religious group believes that the supreme being dwells high up in the heavens or beyond the skies.
- ↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):
 - No
- ↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):
 - No
- ↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:
 - No
- ↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites:
 - No
 - Notes: The UMCA does not confer on elites a special status in relation to their connection with the supreme high God. They see all humans as having the same level of relationship with the supreme being.
- ↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites:
 - No
- ↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good:
 - Yes
- ↳ Other feature(s) of supreme high god:
 - Yes [specify]: He (masculine pronoun is usually used) is all powerful. He manifested supremely in Christ.
- ↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:
 - Yes

↳ The supreme god's knowledge is restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

— No

Notes: The UMCA believes that the supreme high God's knowledge is not restricted to a particular domain of human affairs. The group holds that the supreme high God is all knowing and all powerful.

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

— No

Notes: The UMCA believes that the supreme high God's knowledge is not restricted to a specific area within the sample region. They hold the view that the supreme high God is all knowing and all powerful.

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted within the sample region:

— Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that the supreme high God's knowledge is not restricted within the sample region. They hold the view that the supreme high God is all knowing and all great and eminently powerful.

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted outside of sample region:

— Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that the supreme high God's knowledge is unrestricted outside the sample region. They hold the view that the supreme high God's powers extends through all the universe.

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

— Yes

Notes: The group believes that darkness is not a barrier to the supreme high God. He is held as having the capacity to see through the thickest darkness.

↳ The supreme high god can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

— Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that the heart and mind are accessible to the supreme high God. He sees through them as He wills.

↳ The supreme high god knows your basic character (personal essence):

— Yes

Notes: UMCA believes that no mortal can deceive the supreme high God. He knows the basic character of every human being.

↳ The supreme high god knows what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god has other knowledge of this world:

— Yes [specify]: The Supreme High god has knowledge of how the world began; and indeed, he created it. Nothing happens without his knowledge

— Yes

↳ The supreme god's knowledge is restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

— No

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

— No

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted within the sample region:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted outside of sample region:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god knows your basic character (personal essence):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god knows what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god has other knowledge of this world:

— Yes [specify]: The Supreme High god has knowledge of how the world began; and indeed, he created it. Nothing happens without his knowledge

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

Notes: UMCA shares the views of St. Thomas Aquinas who describes the supreme being as the uncaused cause and the unmoved mover of the universe.

↳ The supreme high god can reward:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god can punish:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god has indirect causal efficacy in the world:

— Yes

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

— No

↳ The supreme high god exhibits negative emotion:

— No

↳ The supreme high god possesses hunger:

— No

↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural beings other than the high god:

– No

↳ The supreme high god possesses/exhibits some other feature:
– Field doesn't know

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:
– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:
– Yes

↳ In dreams:
– Yes

↳ In trance possession:
– Yes

↳ Through divination practices:
– No

↳ Only through religious specialists:
– No

↳ Only through monarch
– No

↳ Other form of communication with living:
– Field doesn't know

↳ Previously human spirits are present:
– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:
– Yes

Notes: UMCA believes that there are heavenly creatures like the twenty-four elders, angels and other ministering spirits which stand before and minister to the supreme being perpetually. They also believe in the existence of demonic spirits which are loyal to the arch enemy of the

human race (the devil).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

– No

- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings knows your basic character (personal essence):
 - No
 - Notes: Except told by God
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):
 - No
 - Notes: Except told by God
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have other knowledge of this world:
 - Yes [specify]: If allowed by God
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings can reward:
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings can punish:
 - No
- ↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:
 - No
- ↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:
 - No
- ↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature:
 - Yes [specify]: They can travel faster than light

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– No

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– No

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: UMCA believes that the supernatural beings are interested in conduct of humans and duly reward and punish those deserving of these treatments. This is in a bid to maintain sanity and uprightness in the world.

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously "moral" or "ethical" norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– Yes

Notes: There are actions which the supernatural beings disapprove of. Such actions when undertaken by humans attract their sanctions,

↳ Food:

– No

↳ Sacred space(s):

– Yes

Notes: To a reasonable level, sacred spaces are meant to be kept holy and profane actions are not expected to be undertaken in such spaces. So supernatural beings care about the conduct of humans around such places.

↳ Sacred object(s):

– Yes

Notes: it is expected that when sacred objects are being handled those handling them should keep themselves sanctified. When profanity comes in contact with the sacred,

there may be some actions/displeasure expressed by the supernatural beings.

- ↳ Supernatural beings care about other:
 - No

- ↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:
 - Yes

Notes: Murder is strongly forbidden by the supernatural beings.

- ↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other religions:
 - Yes

- ↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other polities:
 - Yes

- ↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:
 - Yes

- ↳ Adultery:
 - Yes

Notes: UMCA frowns against adultery and strongly condemns it anytime it is mentioned or alluded to

- ↳ Incest:
 - Yes

Notes: Incest is not permitted among members of the UMCA

- ↳ Other sexual practices:
 - Yes [specify]: Homosexuality is disallowed

- ↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:
 - Yes

Notes: Lies are forbidden in the church.

- ↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:
 - Yes

Notes: The UMCA holds the view that it is better not to make a commitment than to refuse to

honour commitments when they are made.

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:

– Yes

Notes: The church teaches the virtues of hard work and diligence to duty. It frowns at laziness and slothfulness among members.

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about property crimes:

– Yes

Notes: The church holds firmly to the provisions of the ten commandments one of which says 'you shall not covet your neighbour's property'.

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes

Notes: By ritual, the church refers to obligatory spiritual observances like prayers and fellowship with fellow believers. When prayers are to be offered, they should be done with holy hands as the bible says. If the hands of those praying are soiled with iniquity, God will not hear them. So with this view, the UMCA cares about proper observance of rituals.

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

Notes: The supernatural beings care about performance of rituals. The UMCA holds tenaciously to the provision of the holy bible which says Christians should not forsake the gathering/fellowshipping together of brethren. When such rituals as of fellowshiping is

abandoned or forsaken, it displeases the supernatural beings.

↳ Supernatural beings care about conversion of non-religionists:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA holds the believe that the supernatural beings do not want the death of any sinner but their repentance and conversion to God. With this, the group tries to take the good news of salvation to the non-religionists so they could be persuaded to abandon their sinful ways.

↳ Supernatural beings care about economic fairness:

– Yes

Notes: UMCA believes that an unjust weight is an abomination to God and so they teach church members to be fair in their economic activities.

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– Yes [specify]: At the instruction of the supreme being, they care about human beings and are committed to treating all humans in a just and equitable manner.

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that supernatural beings are moral agents and so uphold the principles of justice by rewarding good deeds and punishing unacceptable behaviours.

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

↳ Done only by high god:

– Yes

Notes: The high God alone determines what is good and acceptable and other actions which are not. He may however saddle other supernatural agents with the task of carrying out his will of either rewarding or punishing those deserving of either of these responses from him.

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– No

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:
– Yes

↳ Done by other entities or through other means [specify]
– No

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:
– Yes

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:
– No

↳ Done to enforce group norms:
– No

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:
– Yes

↳ Done randomly:
– No

↳ Other [specify]
– No

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:
– Yes

Notes: In fact the UMCA believes that the afterlife is principally to reap the rewards or punishments of actions humans undertake in this current life.

↳ Supernatural punishments in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:
– Yes

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of mild sensory displeasure:
– No

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory displeasure:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that punishments in the afterlife would be harsh and severe.

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as an inferior life form:

– No

Notes: The UMCA does not believe in reincarnation of the human essence.

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in an inferior realm:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– No

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA holds that it is the duty of the supernatural being to bestow rewards on those deserving of it.

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:

– Yes

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: The supernatural beings involved in bestowing rewards to humans do so at the instruction of the supreme being.

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– Yes

Notes: The supreme being deploys impersonal cause-effect principles as he wills in bestowing supernatural rewards and punishments as the case may be.

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– Yes

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– Yes

↳ Done randomly:

– No

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– Yes

Notes: The church believes that the afterlife is an opportunity to receive supernatural rewards from the supreme being.

↳ Supernatural rewards in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes in the diversity of pleasures in the afterlife. They hold that the supreme being reserves the right to mete out rewards to individuals using his discretionary powers. While some will be heavily decorated, other will make it to heaven narrowly. Therefore the rewards due to people in the afterlife differs according to their actions on earth.

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of eternal happiness:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as a superior life form:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in a superior realm:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that the supernatural beings intervene in the affairs of this world to reward humans with rewards their actions deserve.

↳ Supernatural rewards in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: The group emphasises the existence of supernatural rewards in this lifetime. Hence they admonish members to be well behaved and circumspect in their actions.

↳ Reward in this life consists of good luck:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that good luck is not randomly apportioned. It is their believe that it is orchestrated by the supreme being. And it results from his benevolence to humans.

↳ Reward in this life consists of political success or power:

– Yes

Notes: Israel was eager to regain political power in the days when Jesus trod the earth. This power had eluded them because of their sins. Had they forsaken their sin and turned to God, they would have been free from the oppression of their enemies. UMCA believes that political success and a peaceful nation are rewards from the supreme being.

↳ Reward in this life consists of success in battle:

– Yes

Notes: The church believes that battles can be both physical and spiritual. The church believes that success in any of these categories of battles is a reward from the supreme being.

↳ Reward in this life consists of peace or social stability:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of healthy crops or good weather:

– Yes

Notes: The church believes that good weather, adequate rainfall, healthy crops and bountiful harvests are from the supreme being. They therefore urge members to pray to have all these but most importantly, they admonish them to live right in order to merit such rewards from the supreme being.

↳ Reward in this life consists of success on journeys:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that success on journeys come from the supernatural being. They believe that it is a reward that is bestowed on humans by the supernatural being.

↳ Reward in this life consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that sensory pleasures; mild or extreme are from the supreme being. They are rewards humans receive from him for their life choices. The extent of the supreme being's satisfaction with the life choices of humans therefore determines whether they will receive mild or extreme sensory pleasure in this life.

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced health:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes that enhanced health comes from God. Since he is held as the creator of the human race, the proper functioning of their body and their health is also determined by him as he can redeem or restore their health in the event of their ailing health condition.

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success:

– Yes

↳ Reward in this life consists of fortune visited on descendants:

– Yes

↳ Other [specify]

– Field doesn't know

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– Yes

↳ Is the messiah's whereabouts or time of coming known?

– Yes

Notes: The messiah's whereabouts is known. The UMCA believes he is presently in heaven but his time of return/coming is unknown.

↳ Alive, identified:

– Yes

↳ Coming in this lifetime:

– Yes

↳ Coming on specified date:

– No

↳ Coming in unspecified time in near future:

– Yes

↳ Coming in unspecified time in distant future:

– No

Notes: The UMCA maintains that the messiah is coming in this lifetime. His coming is said to be at a time in the near future though he has been expected from the time of the church fathers and the Apostolic fathers.

↳ Coming has already passed:

– No

↳ One in a line of many past and future messiahs:

– No

Notes: Jesus Christ is the only messiah the UMCA recognises. They are expecting his return soon.

↳ Is the messiah's purpose known:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes the messiah came to restore the broken relationship between God and man.

↳ Messiah is a political figure who restores political rule:

– No

Notes: The UMCA believes Jesus Christ is a religious messiah and not a political saviour.

↳ Messiah is a priestly figure who restores religious traditions:

– Yes

↳ Other purpose:

– No

Is an eschatology present:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA believes there is an eschatology in the future.

↳ Eschaton in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: The church believes that the eschatology will be the last series of events in this lifetime.

↳ Eschaton at specified time in future:

– No

Notes: The exact time of the eschatology is unknown by the church though they believe it will be the last series of events in this lifetime.

↳ Eschaton at unspecified time in near future:

– Yes

↳ Eschaton at unspecified time in distant future:

– No

↳ Eschaton at some other time:

– No

↳ Adherents need to perform specific tasks to bring about World's end:

– Yes

Notes: Adherents must preach the Gospel

↳ Divine judgment event:

– Yes

- ↳ Restoration of the world:
 - Yes
- ↳ Start of a new temporal cycle:
 - Yes
- ↳ Establishment of a new political system:
 - Yes
- ↳ Establishment of a new religious system:
 - No
- ↳ Will anyone survive the eschaton:
 - Yes
 - ↳ All religious in-group members will survive the eschaton:
 - No
 - ↳ A subset of religion in-group members will survive the eschaton:
 - Yes
 - ↳ All members of the sample region will survive the eschaton:
 - No
 - ↳ Everyone in the world will survive the eschaton:
 - No
 - ↳ Other survival condition:
 - Yes [specify]: Those who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and live accordingly.

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

– Yes

↳ What is the nature of this distinction:

– Present (but not emphasized)

↳ Are specifically moral norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Specifically moral norms are implicitly linked to vague metaphysical concepts:

– Yes

↳ Specifically moral norms are explicitly linked to vague metaphysical entities:

– No

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked to impersonal cosmic order (e.g. karma):

– No

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked in some way to an anthropomorphic being:

– Yes

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked explicitly to commands of anthropomorphic being:

– Yes

Notes: Jesus Christ

↳ Specifically moral norms are have no special connection to metaphysical:

– No

↳ Moral norms apply to:

– All individuals within society

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Honesty / trustworthiness / integrity:

– Yes

- ↳ Courage (in battle):
 - Yes
- ↳ Courage (generic):
 - Yes
- ↳ Compassion / empathy / kindness / benevolence:
 - Yes
- ↳ Mercy / forgiveness / tolerance:
 - Yes
- ↳ Generosity / charity:
 - Yes
- ↳ Selflessness / selfless giving:
 - Yes
- ↳ Righteousness / moral rectitude:
 - Yes
- ↳ Ritual purity / ritual adherence / abstention from sources of impurity:
 - Yes
- ↳ Respectfulness / courtesy:
 - Yes
- ↳ Familial obedience / filial piety:
 - Yes
- ↳ Fidelity / loyalty:
 - Yes
- ↳ Cooperation:
 - Yes

- ↳ Independence / creativity / freedom:
 - Yes
- ↳ Moderation / frugality:
 - Yes
- ↳ Forbearance / fortitude / patience:
 - Yes
- ↳ Diligence / self-discipline / excellence:
 - Yes
- ↳ Assertiveness / decisiveness / confidence / initiative:
 - Yes
- ↳ Strength (physical):
 - Yes
- ↳ Power / status / nobility:
 - Yes
- ↳ Humility / modesty:
 - Yes
- ↳ Contentment / serenity / equanimity:
 - Yes
- ↳ Joyfulness / enthusiasm / cheerfulness:
 - Yes
- ↳ Optimism / hope:
 - Yes
- ↳ Gratitude / thankfulness:
 - Yes

- ↳ Reverence / awe / wonder:
 - Yes
- ↳ Faith / belief / trust / devotion:
 - Yes
- ↳ Wisdom / understanding:
 - Yes
- ↳ Discernment / intelligence:
 - Yes
- ↳ Beauty / attractiveness:
 - Yes
- ↳ Cleanliness (physical) / orderliness:
 - Yes
- ↳ Other important virtues advocated by the religious group:
 - Field doesn't know

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: The church does not teach or force members to practice celibacy.

Does membership in this religious group require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence):

– Yes

- ↳ Monogamy (males):
 - Yes

- ↳ Monogamy (females):

– Yes



Other sexual constraints (males):

– Yes

Notes: Male members of the church are not expected to have same sex relationship or sexual intimacy with animals,



Other sexual constraints (females):

– Yes

Notes: Female members of the church are not expected to have same sex relationship or sexual intimacy with animals,

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– Yes

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– No

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: The UMCA does not practice human sacrifice under any guise.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular

Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

— No

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

— No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of property/valuable items:

— No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

— Yes

Notes: The UMCA holds religious meetings which members are expected to attend

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

— Yes

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

— Yes

Does membership in this religious group require marginalization by out-group members:

— No

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

— Yes



What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to small-scale rituals.

— Hours: 24

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale “ceremonies” and “festivals.”

— Yes



On average, for large-scale rituals how many participants gather in one location:

— Number of participants: 200

↳ What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to large-scale rituals.

— Average interval [hours]: 168

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

Orthodoxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are interpreted in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper interpretation, etc.

— Yes

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

Orthopraxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are performed in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper procedure, etc.

— Yes

↳ Does participation entail synchronic practices:

— No

↳ Is there use of intoxicants:

— No

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

E.g. special changes to appearance such as circumcision, tattoos, scarification, etc.

— No

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

— No

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

— A state

Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA provides welfare packages for elderly members of the congregation as well as other vulnerable members of the church.

Is famine relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– Yes

Notes: The UMCA makes efforts to avail members with life skills which is able to lift them out of the poverty bracket.

Is poverty relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm:

– Yes

Is institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: The church takes advantage of manpower development training provided by the government and other organizations to support individuals become self-employed.

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– Yes



Is formal education restricted to religious professionals:

– No



Is such education open to both males and females:

– Yes

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than

the religious group:

— Yes

Notes: The government and private institutions also provide education to UMCA members and the general public.



Is extra-religious education open to both males and females:

— Yes

Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

— Yes

Do the group's adherents interact with other institutional bureaucracies:

— Yes

Notes: The group members interact with the bureaucracies of the government at different levels as they conduct themselves in their daily activities.

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

— No

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: This is provided by the government to the group and the general public.

Does the religious group in question provide water management (irrigation, flood control):

— No

Is water management provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: This is provided by the government to the general public in the northern part of the country where the UMCA churches are located.

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

— No

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: This is provided to the public by the government and private investors.

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

— Yes

Notes: The religious group receives tithes from members who are so willing to give to the church for its programmes and activities.

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: The government levies taxes on the church members.

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

— No

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: The UMCA members interact with the Nigeria Police Force and submits to their authority for the maintenance of the internal security of the country.

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

— No

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Notes: The group interacts with the country's judicial system and submits to this system for adjudication and dispute resolutions.

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

— No

Are the group's adherents subject to institutionalized punishment enforced by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– Yes

Notes: Execution may be pronounced upon convicted criminals only by the judicial system in the country

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– No

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:

– No

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

– Yes

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

– No

Do the group's adherents participate in an institutionalized military provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Are the group's adherents protected by or subject to an institutionalized military provided by

an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– No

Is a non-religion-specific written language available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: The indigenous languages (such as Yoruba, Nupe, Hausa, e.t.c.) of each specific region is used for worship and general communication. In the denomination at large, English is used.

Is a non-religion-specific written language used by the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: The group makes use of the Gregorian calendar in planning and executing her programmes.

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

- Gathering
- Hunting (including marine animals)
- Fishing
- Pastoralism

— Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

Is food provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

— Yes

Reference: Legeer, Eileen. *Merging Steams: Story of the Missionary Church*. Elkhart, Indiana: Bethel Publishing Company, 1979.



Please characterize the forms/levels of food production [choose all that apply]:

— Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

— Large-scale agriculture (e.g., monocropping, organized irrigation systems)

Bibliography

General References

Reference: The United Missionary Church of Africa, Fuller, Clare. *Banfield, Nupe, and the UMCA*. Ilorin: World Patrnrs for the United Missionary Church of Africa, 2001.

Reference: The United Missionary Church of Africa, Fuller, Lois . *Faith of Our Fathers : Life Stories of Some UMCA Elders*. Ilorin: World Partners for the United Missionary Church of Africa, 1999.

Entry/Answer References

Reference: Yes, Legeer, Eileen. *Merging Steams: Story of the Missionary Church*. Elkhart, Indiana: Bethel Publishing Company, 1979.