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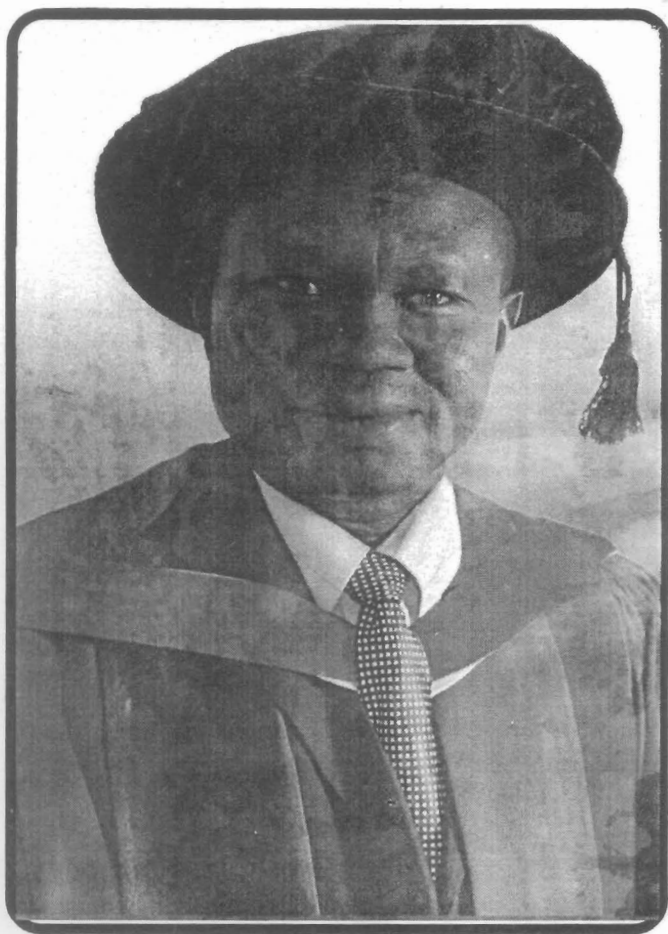
**OF SAINTS AND SINNERS:
PENTECOSTALISM AND THE PARADOX
OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN
MODERN NIGERIA**

By

Matthews A. Ojo
Professor of Religious Studies



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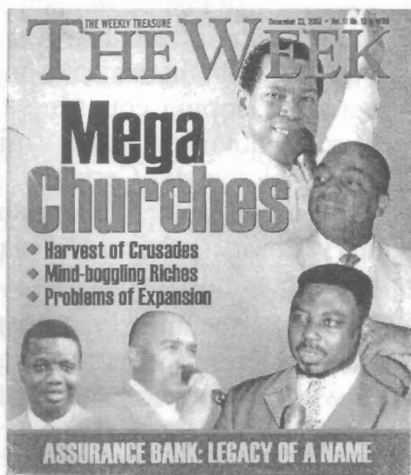
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Introduction

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, today marks the first time an inaugural lecture will be coming from the Department of Religious Studies since its establishment forty eight years ago. Therefore, I am seizing this privilege to discuss a contemporary religious phenomenon which, I believe, is of importance to most people in this university community and the larger society. This lecture, reflecting on my engagement with the discourse on Pentecostalism over the past twenty five years, relates to the response of a new religious movement in Nigeria to the socio-economic and political milieu from which it emerged and grew. Pentecostal and Charismatic movements,¹ are a post civil war development, and to some extent, mirror the social developments and the deep social and economic crises in the country. In fact, the crises of leadership and followership in the nation are equally reflected in the fortune and misfortune of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as they grew to attract public attention and seek social relevance.

The explosion of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Nigeria and globally has been astounding. By the late 1980s, the rise of Charismatic and Pentecostal movements was visible and they could not be ignored because they were reshaping the religious landscape of Africa. In fact, the explosion of Pentecostalism in Nigeria inscribes itself within certain social and political activities and to new modes of power relations in the lives of Charismatics and within the larger society. Hence, in many developing countries, they had immense political import as grassroots movements, or as a middle class religion, or as a segment of the civil society. Certainly, by the 1990s, the movements had become a major factor in Nigerian public life as they sought to give religious visibility to the middle class that had already been decimated by harsh economic realities.

By the beginning of the 21st century, Pentecostalism had become a major expression of Nigerian Christianity partly due to the enthusiasm that goes with its services, the relative novelty of its

¹I am distinguishing the classical Pentecostal churches such as Assemblies of God, Foursquare Gospel Church, etc. which were introduced to in the 1930s and 1940s from the newer 'independent Pentecostal and Charismatic movements', a contemporary indigenous phenomenon.

message, increased media attention on its strategy, and the proliferation of a large number of new churches advertising themselves widely in the print and electronic media in a very competitive religious landscape. Lagos in the 1980s and 1990s was reputed for breeding a type of preachers that operated mainly in *molues* and in other public conveyances exhorting Nigerians to repentance. In the new millennium, not only do they preach and pray, they also collect offerings, a reflection of the changing economic situation of the society. Very often in their prayers they see Satan and his cohorts of demonic spirits, 'vampires' and 'blood sucking demons' on the pot-holed and poorly maintained Nigerian roads, which they assail with 'Holy Ghost Fire' and the blood of Jesus. Their sermons centering on healing and miracles, breakthrough programmes, Holy Ghost Night services, and advertisements of conventions and special programmes provide utopian escape from deteriorating socio-economic and political conditions. The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and groups as well dominate the airwaves and thereby provide huge and easy revenue for many cash-strapped radio and television stations. Indeed, the new religion continues to attract millions of students and college graduates. These educated ones constitute a very articulate group, one that is upwardly mobile and much westernised in outlook. Ironically, it is also a group whose basic religious cosmology is rooted in the African worldviews of spirits, evil, fear of the present and the future, and whose social goal finds some congruence to general aspirations of African traditional quest of long life, money or power or both, success and fame in a competitive but dislocated society.

Historically, six main strands are noticeable in Nigerian Christianity. First, the mainline Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church which resulted from the activities of Western mission societies in the nineteenth century form the largest block of Christians in the country.² The African Churches which came into existence between 1888 and 1917 through secessions from the Protestant churches constitute another major strand.³ The next strand comprises the Aladura churches which

² For more on missionary activities see J.F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite* (London: Longman, 1965), E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis* (London: Longman, 1966).

³ J. B. Webster, *The African Church Among the Yoruba, 1888-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

emerged between 1918 and 1933 from the visionary and healing activities of certain Nigerians who claimed to be prophet-healers.⁴ Foreign Pentecostal churches came in from 1931, while indigenous Pentecostal churches which surfaced from the 1950s constitute the fourth and fifth strands. The Charismatic movements constitute the newest strand. Most of these new churches go by descriptions of 'ministries' or 'fellowships' or 'evangelistic associations'. This new trend is promoted by and through literature, crusades, camp meetings, Fire or 'Holy Ghost or Power' conferences, 'Holy Ghost Nights', 'Healing and Miracle Services', 'Power Crusades', open air evangelistic meetings, etc.



Pentecostals and Charismatics are Christians seeking deeper experience of God beyond regular church attendance. They rely on the 'new birth' and the power of the Holy Spirit. They frequently moralise about the condition of their society, and extend the African spirit world into pictorial but malevolent satanic forces often dogging the lives of believers. Since the 1990s, the media and media technologies have opened up new possibilities for the movements as they now have access to the global world. Indeed, the media has become a powerful tool for enlisting members and for self-expression and for projecting their messages to the larger society.

⁴ See H. W. Turner, *African Independent Church: The Church of the Lord (Aladura)*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); J. D. Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba* (London: International African Institute by the Oxford University Press, 1968); J. A. Omojajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of an African Independent Church* (New York & London: Nok Publishers, 1982).

Right from my pioneering work on Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in the 1980s at the University of London when doing my graduate study, I have devoted much of my research activities to these movements because they inspire a new academic endeavour towards understanding the dynamics of the Nigerian society from the religious perspective. That there has been a paradigm shift in African Christianity from the mission Christianity of the nineteenth century or from its indigenous form in Aladura churches of the early twentieth century, to contemporary Charismatic Christianity is obvious. This religious expansion calls for further evaluation of the dynamics of African Christianity as the new centre of gravity within world Christianity (Walls, 1976 and 1998).

Social Imperatives and Challenges of the New Movements

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, Charismatic movements emerged in Nigeria on a reformist agenda in the early 1970s, to champion a new spirituality that is redemptive, prophetic, hopeful, and progressive, and which is anchored on the premise that a vibrant religion possesses the capacity of re-ordering the society on a pietistic orientation. However, by the late 1990s, this religion which was originally sectarian, promoting a strict holiness ethos, and on the fringe of the society, with membership numbering a few thousands, had moved to the center stage, increased its membership to several millions, and has consequently dissipated its pietistic energy. Moreover, it has now accepted the values of the larger society as it shifted attention to prosperity: a mechanism for upward social mobility and material self-aggrandizement. Hence, it is not strange to find the 'SUs' of the 1970s who were then derided, becoming the founders of prosperity-type churches, riding in SUV vehicles, and being portrayed as celebrities. Besides, men and women shifted their membership from Deeper Life Bible Church with its asceticism to Winners' Chapel with its theology that supports accumulation of wealth. In fact, many evangelists prefer to be known and addressed as bishops and archbishops with all the paraphernalia of power. It is the seeming ambiguity of this spirituality that sought to transform but has been drawn into the cesspool of the corruption of the larger society, which informs the title of this inaugural lecture.

The ambivalence and ambiguity which is reflected in the engagement of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Nigeria with the larger society further provides the rationale for using saints and sinners as metaphors in the title of this discourse for describing the ambiguity of a spirituality which sets out to reform but has ended up being overtaken by societal values. It is a paradox of religiosity and corruption in the society, of religious fundamentalism within a context of moral latitude and of inept governance, of a religious piety that revolves around the self, while the collective is ignored, and of high religiosity within a failed state that is in constant motion but transiting to nowhere in particular. William Kumuyi, Enoch Adeboye, Matthew Ashimolowo, Sunday Adelaja, Chris Oyakhilome and Daniel Olukoya - all Pentecostal pastors - could be exporting the Nigerian brand of Pentecostalism around the world, while their own country still needs the same panacea being offered freely to others. Indeed, both the Pentecostal religion and the personality steering it are important in any critical review of the dynamism of Pentecostalism in Africa. Whereas fourth century monastic movements in the Egyptian desert produced a crop of mystics and saints that distanced themselves from the larger society, and consequently kept to their saintliness, contemporary Pentecostalism reflects every kind of ambiguity that has characterized a nation in need of a savior. In this regard, I refer to a challenge given by a well respected senior colleague, Professor Jacob Olupona in December 2004, that if 'scholars are alert to these seeming contradictions, paradoxes and ambiguities in the religious scene, they will be able to do a better job analyzing and interpreting the trends in our religious national life'. It is this task that I now engage in this inaugural lecture.

With due respect, Sir, in my essentially pioneering work, as indeed in this lecture, I begin by discussing the dynamics of the independent Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as a new religion and as a new cultural matrix promoting diverse transformations as it spreads from Nigeria across West Africa from the 1970s. Among other things, I assess the processes of the growth of the movements, and the resulting social and religious consequences in the country after 40 years of the rise of this religious phenomenon. I attempt to reflect on the extent of understanding Pentecostals and Charismatics as change-agents as they engage in various spiritual and socio-political activities

in their attempt to impact on the society. In this lecture, I wish to submit that the Pentecostal-Charismatic successes in Nigeria and, indeed, in Africa are due mainly to their ability to utilize pneumatic elements of their new gospel to simplify the complexities of modern life in such a way that everyone connected to the religion succeeds in negotiating and finding answers to problems of modern urban life caused by social dislocation and the failure of the state. The Holy Spirit, as they claim, is dynamic and powerful and can be assessed easily by anyone who taps into the conversion ethos. Inept governance creates a system of clienteles which complicates access to social services and makes routine official transactions a Herculean task. Therefore, the transformative power of Pentecostalism is in its presentation as a mechanism that could open up opportunities and thus lift members beyond limitations imposed by the society and the difficult Nigerian bureaucracy.



Allan Anderson has remarked on the primacy of religious experience associated with the Holy Spirit and charismatic gifts as the foundation for Pentecostal spirituality through the ages.⁵ For this reason, Pentecostal spiritual empowerments have become 'tools for a new orientation to life

⁵ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 19-38.

and for building a new community'. We note the increased attention to emotional and enthusiastic worship, to power manifestation and the enlargement of the African spirit world, the increased level of generous giving that could raise over N15 million in a single service with only 3,000 worshippers,⁶ and the numerous claims of miracles that could change one's genotype, cure HIV/AIDS and raise the dead!



*A banner advertising faith healing for HIV/AIDS sufferers, Ikeja, Lagos, (2004).
Courtesy of Asonzeh Ukah, Bayreuth, Germany*

May I reassert that Pentecostal and Charismatic movements pursue their transformations on various levels. First, they promote a religion which provides opportunities for reinterpreting personal experiences as modes of directing and transforming individual conduct and also creating a moral community within the context of the political economy marked by corruption. Their conversionist ethos, though embedded in the evangelical tradition, gives primacy to rescuing the individual from a cosmos of chaos, and guaranteeing well-being as soon as the individual can tap into the fount of salvation construed in religious or cultural terms. Second, their creation of trans-national networks within West Africa has promoted structural religious transformation on a regional level. This missionary and transnationalisation of the Pentecostal religion has continued to promote cross-cultural exchanges as Nigerian Pentecostal groups foster new religious

⁶ In December 2007 at the morning service in Winners' Chapel Ghana in Accra led by a guest preacher, Bishop Owusu Ansah from London, this writer witnessed the raising of over US\$150,000. 74 members contributed a minimum of US\$1,000 to this special offering.

initiatives in other countries. Thirdly, their projection of Pentecostal spirituality into the political sphere sought the transformation of the collective. Nigerian Charismatics often claim that a Christian-controlled public sphere will usher in stability, peace and justice for a traumatized population whose daily existence has been lost to the vagaries of bad political leadership. Although this could be considered utopian, the associated millenarian beliefs provide some interesting social consequences of atrophy and renewal.

Understanding the Charismatic Religion

Pentecostal beliefs have been associated with Christianity since the Montanist movement in the second century. But Pentecostalism became a global phenomenon in the early twentieth century and transformed into new denominations within its first twenty years in the United States. Its modern American roots are associated with the black holiness preacher, William Seymour and the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1900, which was institutionalised in the Apostolic Faith Mission, Foursquare Gospel Church, Assemblies of God, and other smaller denominations. In the 1960s, Pentecostal spirituality penetrated many mainline Protestant churches when some evangelical Christians claimed the Pentecostal experience of baptism of the Holy Spirit and its accompaniment of speaking in tongues.⁷ Though rejected by their mainline Protestant constituency, the experience spread slowly but gradually to some Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, and by 1967 to the Roman Catholic Church. This latter Pentecostal outpouring is referred to as the Charismatic Renewal, and the resulting independent groups as Charismatic movements. Charismatic Renewal later became a worldwide phenomenon absorbing other local developments through American televangelism of T. L. Osborn, Oral Roberts, William Branham, Franklin Hall, etc. and through organizations such as the Kenneth Copeland's Christ for All Nations and Demos Shakarian's Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, both inter-denominational organizations deep-rooted in Pentecostal spirituality.

Charismatics, by tracing their roots to the New Testament times, are attempting a renewal of the Christian faith by claiming to restore whatever

⁷ Richard A. Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1976). See also Dennis J. Bennet, *Nine O'clock in the Morning* (Eastbourne, 1970).

vitality has been lost mainly in the existing Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, and by stating that apostolic Christianity is grounded in the experience of 'being baptized in the Holy Spirit' as a second blessing and definite experience following and different from the conversion experience. This inward experience of baptism of the Holy Spirit, as they claim, is often identified by the initial and outward sign of speaking in tongues and the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit - principally the gift of healing and demonstration of power - mostly in miracles and in personal social transformation.⁸ Both Pentecostals and Charismatics believe in the Pentecostal doctrines of baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. However, Charismatics are trans-denominational and more ecumenical than the Pentecostals, who often come from the classical Pentecostal denominations such as Apostolic Faith Mission, Assemblies of God, Foursquare Gospel Church, The Apostolic Church, Elim Gospel Church, etc. Charismatic Renewal in the 1960s and early 1970s carried with it no desire to form any independent fellowship as the Pentecostal assemblies did in the early decades of the twentieth century. However, since the 1980s, some Nigerian Charismatic groups have adopted independent existence with regular Sunday services. Generally, independent Charismatic churches are led by solitary figures who are either entrepreneurs or visionaries. They are called founders, apostles and general overseers, and their authoritarian leadership are overbearing on their organizations, which they manage almost as personal empires, with little recourse to any constitutional framework.

Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have been noted to be the fastest growing segment of Christianity since the 1980s as the Pentecostal groups proliferated under founders and general overseers and self-styled bishops.⁹ From about ten independent Pentecostal Charismatic organizations in the mid-1970s that were largely restricted to Nigeria, the number has grown to over ten thousand groups across the continent. By 2000, the membership had become substantial with about eight million of the 48.42 million Christians in Nigeria,¹⁰ about two million of the Christian population in Ghana, and not less than 400,000 in Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire, and

⁸ See Michael P. Hamilton, ed. *The Charismatic Movement* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p. 7; Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), pp. 1-2.

⁹ *African Concord* (London & Lagos), 18 February 1985, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰ Figures worked out from Annual Percentage Growth statistics and other reports released by the National Population Commission between 2002 and 2007.

about 300,000 in each of Benin and Burkina Faso, about 150,000 in Togo, and about 2,000 in Niger Republic. It is remarkable that within four decades the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have moved from being a fringe religion into a position of social and religious prominence in many countries. Nigerian Charismatic movements, which had an indigenous origin, were the first to be articulated, and by 2000, had become the largest and the most active in the continent. In many cases, the Nigerian groups fostered the emergence of similar movements in other countries. This spatial expansion of Pentecostalism deserves some critical attention to appreciate some of the profound changes in the Nigerian society since the end of the Civil War.

By the 1990s, Charismatic movements had achieved much social respectability as the political elite began to fraternise with Pentecostal churches. In fact, it became politically expedient for some African leaders to proclaim their evangelical conversion and Pentecostal experience as political tools to garner grassroots support and seek legitimacy. In Nigeria, although Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was not the first, he consistently favoured the Pentecostal environment, and maintained cordial relationship with Enoch Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God throughout his regime.¹¹ At the same time, Yakubu Gowon, a former Head of State, was busy organizing prayers across the country with the cooperation of Pentecostals and Charismatics. Besides, in late 2006 during the bitter feud between President Olusegun Obasanjo and Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Yakubu Gowon, commenting on the issue at an occasion of the tenth anniversary of *Nigeria Prays*, attributed the feud to the operation of demons. He was quoted to have said, 'there is a demon travelling within the presidency that is responsible for what we are witnessing today. We are praying that God should arrest the demon.'¹² If indeed the demon was arrested, certainly it was not securely shackled.

Certainly, it is interesting to note as we do, that in the failure of the centralised state, religion, particularly Pentecostalism, has continued to soar as it presents itself politically relevant and as a mechanism of interpreting events and for decision making. It is therefore pertinent to examine the

¹¹ Ebenezer Obadare, 'Pentecostal Presidency? The Lagos-Ibadan 'Theocratic Class' & the Muslim "Other"', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 110, (2006), pp. 665-678.

¹² *The Sun* (Lagos, Nigeria), 27 September 2006, front page.

factors for the wide appeal of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, and its engagement with the Nigerian publics.

The Beginnings and Growth of Charismatic Movements in Nigeria

Mr Vice Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, my earliest involvement in Pentecostal studies was an analysis I made of the historical development of Charismatic movements in Nigeria in my doctoral thesis in 1986. This principal contribution changed the discourse of African Christianity which, hitherto, had focused on mainline Protestant and Aladura churches, to focusing on the Charismatic movements as a new major development. In acknowledgement of my pioneering study, other scholars including Samuel Adubofour, Kingsley Larbi, Ruth Marshall-Fratani, Richard Burgess, Rosalind Hackett, David Oluwashina, Michael Ogunewu, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Cephaz Omenyo, Hannah Ishola and a host of others have subsequently utilised my discoveries as the foundation and springboard to undertake similar studies on Pentecostalism in Nigeria and Ghana.

Evangelical Christianity already associated with Christian student organisations such as Student Christian Movement and Evangelical Christian Union¹³ in Nigeria's educational institutions prior to the 1970s provided the background to the Charismatic Renewal. The conversion of a Student Union leader, Wilson Badejo in January 1970,¹⁴ into the Christian Union in the University of Ibadan soon sparked a revival and interest in spiritual power. Despite opposition, a few students strongly publicized their new experience such that enthusiasm for the Pentecostal spirituality soon spread among Christian students on the campus.¹⁵ From Ibadan, the revival spread to other universities after the formation of World Action Team for Christ, the first Charismatic organisation, with the objective of spreading Pentecostal spirituality. Christian students in the University of Ife, Ile-Ife eventually took the centre stage when in 1974 they erected a big banner at the gate to the institution with the caption, 'Welcome to Jesus University'.

¹³ They were introduced from Britain into Nigeria. SCM in 1937 and the conservative evangelical movement initially called PAFES from 1955.

¹⁴ Until November 2009, the General Overseer of the Foursquare Gospel Church of Nigeria.

¹⁵ The Tuesday Group, a sectarian group within the IVCU, was the nursery for the latter revival. Interviews with Wilson Badejo, Lagos 2 October 1985 and Biola Adeniran, 21 August 1985. Both were members of the group.

By 1973, Charismatic Renewal was already transforming the beliefs and practices of SCM and Christian Union into the Pentecostal mode.¹⁶ By 1974, graduates already influenced by the Charismatic Renewal were establishing new para-church organizations to project their new faith, and by 1975, about ten of such groups had been formed. Among them were the Hour of Freedom Evangelistic Association, Onitsha,¹⁷ Souls Harvesters in Warri¹⁸, and Christ Ambassadors Evangelistic Team in Ibadan – all established in 1970. Others were Maranatha Evangelical Christian Ministry which was established in Ogbomoso in 1973, the Master's Vessels Group in Umuahia about 1972, and the Deeper Christian Life Ministry in Lagos in 1973.¹⁹

Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) was introduced into Nigeria in 1971 first in the Dominican Community in Ibadan, and by 1973 had spread to the University of Ife, and by 1974 was well established in many Roman Catholic parishes in the country, and finally becoming a national movement in the early 1980.²⁰ Catholic Charismatic Renewal seeks principally to renew the faith of Roman Catholics through the manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and also to evangelise within the Roman Catholic Church. In May 1985, a conference of former members of CCR was held in Kaduna at which the Graduate Charismatic Fellowship was established as a Charismatic organisation less influenced by authority of the parish priests in comparison to the CCR. The Charismatic Renewal Ministries, with headquarters in Owerri under the leadership of Cosmas Ilechukwu was initially part of the CCR and the Graduate Charismatic Fellowship, but its quest for more religious space caused it to secede and become an independent group. It continues to attract membership from dissident Roman Catholics. Members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal have sometimes

¹⁶ Matthews A. Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Established by Stephen Okafor (now holds a Ph.D. degree in Theology) and others in Onitsha from their involvement in evangelistic activities under the Scripture Union.

¹⁸ Established by Emmanuel Onofurho, a graduate of the Auchi Polytechnic.

¹⁹ For more about this organization, see M. A. Ojo, 'Deeper Life Bible Church in Nigeria', in Paul Gifford, ed. *New Dimensions in African Christianity* (Nairobi: All African Council of Churches, 1992), pp. 135- 156. M. A. Ojo 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry: A Case Study of the Charismatic Movements in Western Nigeria', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 18 (1988), pp. 141-162.

²⁰ Abayomi Francis, 'The Catholic Charismatic Renewal on University of Ife Campus', Ile-Ife,

caused stirs in the Catholic Church, and Cardinal Olubunmi Okogie had in the late 1980s given ultimatum to the Charismatics to accept all the church's doctrines or quit the Roman Catholic Church.

The rapid growth of the movements occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, which suffice it to say, were an era of rapid social change in the country. The Nigerian Civil war was a catalyst to the breaking down of old denominational boundaries and the rise of new religious fervency amidst the uncertainty of the civil war. During the war, the revival message and its emphasis on evangelical personal conversion adapted successfully to new and challenging contexts of the disruption and social dislocation. Eventually, the associated charismatic experiences of the revivalists stimulated Pentecostal progeny.²¹ Besides, the buoyant economy derived from crude oil from the early 1970s to mid-1980s²² brought in rapid social development though it undermined moral values as corruption began to thrive. By the late 1980s, the country witnessed economic decline and government later adopted the IMF-inspired structural adjustment programme. The more government shifted the burden of the economic decline to the citizens, the more the hardship that prevailed in the country. In response, Nigerians began to search for messianic intervention in their situation, thus creating space for the proliferation of Charismatic organizations that were offering every kind of healing services without much price. Indeed, such an ever-present reality of the supernatural is central to the worldview of Nigerians.

In their early years of the 1970s, Charismatic organizations were rather amorphous, and membership was not clearly defined. In fact, most organizations claimed then that they only existed to provide avenues for

²¹ Richard Burgess, *Nigeria's Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2008).

²²For example, in 1973 Nigeria's daily oil production was about 2.256 million barrels a day at a price rising from \$3.39 to \$14.69 within the year, while cost of production remain the same. For more on the buoyant oil economy see Anthony Kirk-Greene and Douglas Rimmer, *Nigeria Since 1970: A Political and Economic Outline* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1981), pp. 84-5. Likewise, Nigeria's foreign reserves rose from N409.1 million in 1973 to N3,540.9 million as a result of the October 1973 oil price increases. See Richard A. Joseph, 'Affluence and Underdevelopment: The Nigerian Experience', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Jun., 1978), pp. 221-239.

Bible studies and prayer meetings to Christians, hoping that these activities would inaugurate revival within their mainline churches. However, by the late 1980s, many Charismatic organisations have adopted independent existence due to certain factors, including the pressure of growth over the years, the quest for leadership opportunities, personal ambition, opposition from the mainline churches, territorial expansion, and the need for pastoral care for converts. A sociological rationale for their independence is that over a period of time charisma normally becomes institutionalised. When this happens, the religious group in question adopts some organizational structure and assumes an independent denominational existence.²³

Charismatic organizations adopted many strategies to maintain their denominational tendencies. Sunday services were introduced to strengthen the midweek programmes of the early years, while residential retreats or camp meetings with an offer of free food, lodging and transport as well gave way to regular and better organized national conferences or crusades. Tracts and personal evangelism of the early years were replaced by regular newsletters and periodicals with the aim of linking members. The messages shifted from personal evangelism and baptism of the Holy Spirit to healing, miracles and prosperity. The millennial belief in Christ's second coming which was a constant stimulus for Charismatics in the 1970s and early 1980s, had by the 1990s, shifted to this-worldly concerns with power, material wealth and enviable status. Institutionally, Charismatic organizations erected permanent places of worship, inaugurated structures of administration, built up permanent membership, accepted trained and paid clergy and embarked on territorial expansion which initially were construed under the rubrics of 'church planting and church growth', and so on. The Episcopal polity with all its grandeur characteristic of the Anglican, Methodist and Catholic churches which they had condemned in the 1970s, became very appealing and had, by the mid-1990s, been adopted by most founders and General Overseers to replace the congregational polity of the 1970s and early 1980s. Indeed, this management of the scarce resources through streamlining and routinization was a strategy for survival and growth.

²³ A recent study on routinization within the Pentecostal constituency is John Ghartey Esubonteng, 'Routinization and Governance in Some Charismatic Churches in Ghana', Unpublished M.Th thesis, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, April 2010.

Essential Features of the Charismatic Movements

Charismatic spirituality is predominantly an urban phenomenon and a religion of the youth. It is not only the age factor that matters but such attitudes as creativity, protest, non-conformism, and so on. These attitudes seem to give strength to the Charismatic renewal, because as a prophetic religion, the Renewal relies on changing situations to gain more grounds. Moreover, the captions of their publicity materials are attractive as the messages they preach, and have been successful in providing responses to pressing needs in the society and in the life of churches in contemporary Nigeria. 'Breakthrough', 'End-Time Winners', 'Grace and Power', 'Good Bye to Poverty', 'Triumphant Over All Difficulties', 'Ultimate breakthrough', 'Your Story Must Change', 'Power Must Change Hands', are samples of the captions of their advertisements. Of course, they have been successful in appropriating marketing techniques to gain the attention of the public and enlist members. Hence, the relevance of Pentecostal churches stems from the fact that they address their messages to the contemporary urban problems of insecurity, unemployment, financial hardship, inadequate housing, poor health care and social services.

The pastors are not ordinary men to the members. They are 'men of God' 'the anointed', 'Baba' or 'Papa', 'Daddy G.O.', 'the Anointed men of God', 'the men with power-packed messages', and lately 'the Rev. Dr' or 'Evangelist Dr'. They are also 'the Holy Spirit-soaked demon destroyers', who often take joy in worthless honorary degrees conferred by unaccredited foreign institutions. They are also bishops and archbishops, and some are chauffeured with bodyguards. The founders and leading pastors have achieved a kind of celebrity profile through the command of numbers, flamboyant lifestyles and the effective use of the media. Even before the controversy over Enoch Adeboye's private jet in March 2009, two of them had been reported to have bought private jets in the late 1990s.²⁴ The conservative and ascetic approach to the Gospel does not appeal to them in a materialist age. Undeniably, Pentecostal pastors have been remarkable because of their entrepreneurship as they transcend traditional notions of pastoral leadership, and sometimes these pastors act as celebrities,

²⁴These were the late Gabriel Oduyemi of Bethel Ministries, Lekki and David Oyedepo. See *The Guardian*, November, 24, 1996, pp. B1 & B2.

superheroes and business executives.²⁵ According to Ogbu Kalu, these are the 'big men of a big God'.²⁶ In fact, Pentecostal pastors just like the indigenous entrepreneurs of the mid-1970s continue to desire bigger cars, flashy clothes, constant travels to the USA and Europe, and strive for an enviable public image though without any firm moral foundation. Thus, the frantic grab for power and celebrity status has eroded the moral values of evangelicalism with its glorious past.



Diana Adjartey and Ehigie, Bishops of African Pentecostal churches in Italy with branches in Nigeria. Courtesy of Dr. Annalisa Butticci, Padua, Italy (2009)



Archbishop Benson Idahosa and Margaret Idahosa of Church of God Mission, Benin City

²⁵ F.-K. Asonzeh Ukah, 'Roadside Pentecostalism: Religious Advertising in Nigeria and the Marketing of Charisma' *Critical Interventions*, Vol 2, (Spring 2008), pp. 124-141.

²⁶ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). pp. 103-122.

African Pentecostalism is a religion steeped in the primal worldviews, which has been made elastic by Pentecostals to accommodate existential questions about life whether in its traditional moorings or in its modern perspectives. Although, the Bible has broadened the outlook of Pentecostals and Charismatics, their basic traditional African cosmology was little affected; hence they continue to grapple with power in its various manifestations. The emphases on healing, success, prosperity and deliverance are all rooted in the appropriation of power in its traditional and modern forms. The increasing popularity of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, as noted by Birgit Meyer (1999), stems from the fact that they tie into historically generated local understandings of Christianity despite a dislike of African traditional religion.

The Pentecostal Constituency

Three streams of Pentecostalism can be discerned in the country.²⁷ The first is made up of classical Pentecostal churches many of which resulted from the activities of Western missionaries in Nigeria. The Foursquare Gospel Church, The Apostolic Faith, The Apostolic Church, and Assemblies of God Church which were introduced into Nigeria in the 1930s and 1940s are the best examples of this type. The second type is made up of the indigenous Pentecostal churches, which resulted from the visionary experiences and activities of some men and women in the 1950s and 1960s. Though initially rooted in Aladura spirituality, they had, by the 1960s, become Pentecostal in doctrine and practice. Among these are the Salem Gospel Mission with headquarters in Ile-Ife, the Gospel Faith Mission which originated in Ibadan, and the Redeemed Christian Church of God which has its head office in Ebute Meta, Lagos. The Redeemed Christian Church of God had by the mid-1990s moved from a local African group to becoming global by catering for the needs of Africans in the Diaspora, mainly in the Western world. The third category, which is the most visible of Pentecostal Christianity, is the newer independent Charismatic churches, which emerged from a revival on the university campuses in the 1970s, and which is the main focus of this lecture.

Despite the inadequacy of statistics in Nigeria, it is still necessary to provide some statistics which will give a concrete picture of this new

²⁷In an earlier study, I have constructed a typology of six distinct types of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Nigeria. See Matthews A. Ojo 'African Charismatics', in Stephen Glazier, ed., *Encyclopedia of African & African-American Religion*, (New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 2-6).

religious phenomenon. The census of November 1991 put the country's population at 88.51 million, of which 23.43 million were in Western Nigeria, with 54% of this figure being Christians.²⁸ Therefore, making projections from the 1963 figures of religious affiliations, 44% of the country's population of 140 million in 2006 were Christians. About fifty six per cent of these Christians were Protestants, while Roman Catholics constituted twenty one per cent; the Indigenous African Churches number about eight per cent, while the Pentecostals and Charismatics constituted about fourteen per cent, other Christians including sabbatarians, constitute the remaining one per cent. All over the country, Pentecostals and Charismatics numbered about eight and a half million. About eighty per cent of these are in the independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, while the rest are in the mainline Protestant churches.

By 1994, Deeper Life had the largest membership of all Charismatic organizations with between 330,000 and 400,000 members. In addition, about 65,000 were in its overseas branches, of which about 22,000 members were in Ghana,²⁹ while about a thousand members were in its U.K. branches, and about three thousand in the USA, and the rest in the other parts of the world. Majority of Deeper Life members are Nigerians and they come from the Yoruba-speaking areas of the country. Lagos metropolis had the largest membership with about 60,000 regular attendance at its weekly Sunday services, and followed by Ibadan with about 22,000 members. Since about 1996, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, a church with an Aladura background which had undergone remarkable transformation under an educated charismatic leader to become a Pentecostal church, has shot into media prominence. Upon assumption of leadership in 1981, Adebayo transformed the church through many innovations including a mega campground, a global outreach to the Western world, the monthly Holy Ghost Night, mass elevation of members as pastors, etc. which eventually made the membership to construct a public image for him as the figure of divine power and the physical voice of God among human beings.³⁰ The

²⁸National Population Commission, *Census News 1992 – 1991 Population Census (Provisional Results)* (Lagos, 1992), p. 8.

²⁹*National Church Survey 1993 Update* (Accra: Ghana Evangelism Committee, 1993), pp. 16 & 18.

³⁰See Asonzeh F.-K. Ukah, *A New Paradigm of Pentecostal Power: A Study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008). 183-196. Ukah estimates the membership by 2005 to just a million.

number of Redeemed congregations in Western Nigeria grew from about two hundred in 1994 to over two thousand in 1997 largely because of decentralisation and an effective church planting strategy. However, the church fared poorly in number of branches and in membership in other West African countries.³¹

The membership of the Living Faith Church (Winners' Chapel) in 2000 was about 170,000 nation-wide, while the Church of God Mission in the same period had about 95,000 members. Since 1996, the Living Faith Church, under its Africa Gospel Invasion Programme (AGIP), has expanded to about thirty African countries with subsequent increase in membership. Other organisations like Christian Pentecostal Mission, Lagos; The Redeemed Evangelical Mission Lagos; the Sword of the Spirit Ministry (Christ Life Chapel), Ibadan; New Covenant Church; Ever Increasing Word Ministries (Rhema Chapel); have membership of about 50,000 each. Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries since its establishment in 1991 has grown steadily to about 120,000 in the new millennium, and by 2000 had established branches in Ghana, USA and the United Kingdom, Germany and the Scandinavian countries, and has continued to project a new brand of Christianity rooted in the African cosmology of evil and witchcraft. Others like Redemption Ministries, Port Harcourt; Master's Vessel Church, Umuahia; Church of Grace, Onitsha; Hour of Freedom Evangelistic Association, Ojoto, Onitsha; Peoples' Redeemed Mission, Jos; each has membership over 10,000 but less than 50,000 members. There are other churches like the Voice of Faith Ministries (Christ Chapel), Lagos; the Latter Rain Assembly, Lagos; Bethel Ministries Incorporated, Lekki Peninsula, Lagos; Glory Tabernacle Ministries, Ibadan; Scripture Pasture Ministries, Ibadan; El-Shaddai Ministries, Akure; Logos Ministries, Port Harcourt; Faith Foundation Ministry, Sokoto, etc. - each with a single nucleus and mega congregation with membership ranging from 3,000 to 6,000. By 2000, there were an estimated five thousand independent Charismatic organizations in the country, which has kept increasing. These Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are concentrated in the cities, particularly Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Zaria, Jos, Benin City, Ilorin, Kano,

³¹ Olufunke A. Adeboye, 'Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria' in *Entreprises Religieuses Transnationales En Afrique d'ouest* edited by Laurent Fourchard, André Mary, and Rene Otayek, Paris: Editions Karthala & Ibadan: IFRA, 2005, pp. 439-465.

Port Harcourt, Enugu, Ondo, Ado Ekiti, Osogbo, Ile-Ife, Aba, Abeokuta, Onitsha, Oyo, Uyo, Ilesa, Abuja, Akure, Warri, Asaba, Owerri, Umuahia, Calabar, and Ogbomoso. All the same, the mainline Protestant churches put together still command a far larger number of adherents than the new Charismatic churches. Charismatic organisations are nevertheless significant because they are concentrated in a highly articulated and highly prestigious group of people. In addition, they are led by the educated elite, which though small in number, exert considerable influence in the society.

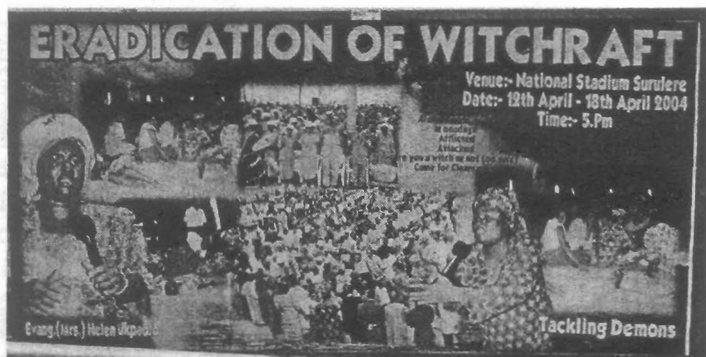
The Roots of Nigerian Pentecostalism

I have shown that Charismatic movements in Nigeria have indigenous roots, and are sustained because of their affirmation of African cosmology of spiritual powers. As I have argued in many articles on this issue that the interconnections that exist between American Pentecostalism and their African counterparts do not automatically translate into corresponding historical and ideological roots because Christianity as a world religion shares certain features in common across cultures and boundaries.³² William Kumuyi, David Oyedepo, Benson Idahosa, Helen Ukpabio, Uma Ukpai etc. first knew about the malevolent spirits in the African world, before they ever knew which airlines travel direct to the United States. In support of my assertion, Ogbu Kalu stated that Nigerian Pentecostalism is not an off-shoot of Azusa Street revival ... or an extension of American electronic church or a creation of televangelists. It has a certain uniqueness which could best be understood from its fit in African primal worldview... Its problems and idioms are sourced from the interior of African spirituality.³³ In another contribution, Ogbu Kalu noted that although American Pentecostalism dominates current Pentecostal historiography, the fact is evident that worldwide Pentecostal churches are not outposts of American Pentecostalism.³⁴

³²See Matthews A. Ojo 'American Pentecostalism and the Growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements in Nigeria' in *Freedom's Distant Shores: American Protestants and Post Colonial Alliances with Africa*. Edited by R. Drew Smith, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), pp. 155-168.

³³Ogbu Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: The Challenges of Poverty and Pluralism in African Christianity, 1960-1996* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 104.

³⁴Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 11-22.



Courtesy of Asonzeh Ukah, Bayreuth, Germany

Likewise, Edward L. Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino with reference to Pentecostalism in Latin America have remarked that American Pentecostalism only helped to spark, not create, a Latin American institution.³⁵ The same is true of Nigerian Pentecostalism which arose from the first decade of the twentieth century long before modern communication technologies or travels were able to link countries. Therefore, the arguments of Western scholars such as Paul Gifford (1991, 1994, 1995), van Dijk, Rosalind Hackett (1998), and Ruth Marshall (1992, 1998, 2009) that African Charismatic churches are American extensions or that religious influences flow only in the West-to-East direction ignore some pertinent factors about the dynamism of African religious movements going back to the rise of the Zionist/Aladura and Messianic churches of the early twentieth century.

³⁵Edward L. Cleary & Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino, *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), p. 4.

A small pilot survey we carried out in 1999 at the Glory Tabernacle, Ibadan on the Media and Religion project provided some insights into the membership of the independent Charismatic churches.

Table 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS

AGE RANGE (YRS)	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
20-25	1	2.33	1	2.33	2	4.66
26-30	6	13.95	3	6.97	9	20.92
31-35	6	13.95	9	20.93	15	34.88
36-40	4	9.30	3	6.97	7	16.27
41-45	1	2.33	2	4.65	3	6.98
46-50	2	4.65	1	2.33	3	6.98
50+	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.33
No Response	2	4.65	1	2.33	3	6.98
TOTAL	23	53.49	20	46.51	43	100

Table 2: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
O-School Certificate	4	9.30	6	13.95	10	23.25
Sub-Degree	3	6.97	3	6.97	6	13.94
Undergraduate	3	6.97	1	2.33	4	9.30
1 st Degree + M. A.	12	27.92	8	18.61	20	46.53
Ph.D.	1	2.33	2	4.65	3	6.98
No Response	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	23	53.49	20	46.51	43	100

Table 3: PREVIOUS RELIGION/DENOMINATION

RELIGION /DENOMINATION	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Methodist	2	4.65	2	4.65	4	9.30
Presbyterian	0	0	1	2.33	1	2.33
Anglican	3	6.97	7	16.27	10	23.24
Baptist	0	0	1	2.33	1	2.33
C. A. C.	1	2.33	2	4.65	3	6.98
United Church of Christ	0	0	1	2.33	1	2.33
Assemblies of God	0	0	1	2.33	1	2.33
Roman Catholic	2	4.65	2	4.65	4	9.30
“Christianity”	2	4.65	2	4.65	4	9.30
Islam	2	4.65	0	0	2	4.65
Pentecostal	8	18.61	1	2.33	9	20.92
Foursquare Gospel Church	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.33
The Apostolic Church	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.33
ECWA	1	2.33	0	0	1	2.33
TOTAL	23	53.49	20	46.51	43	100

The above data indicate that Pentecostalism is a middle class religion with 62.81% of those surveyed having university education, and 72.07% within the age bracket of 26 to 40 years. In terms of previous background, Anglicans are greatly represented, though it is not the dominant denomination in the location, and mobility across boundaries with the Pentecostal churches is also indicated with 34.89% of those surveyed coming from other Pentecostal churches.

Typology of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements in Nigeria

Charismatic organisations show interesting variety. Some are large while some are small. Some have fossilised without any impact, while new ones like the Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries have achieved social prominence since the 1990s through the utilisation of the media. Each has its uniqueness and often appeals to different classes of people. In fact, it is rather strange to group William Kumuyi's strict holiness ethos with David Oyedepo's this-worldly concern, or associate Daniel Olukoya's MFM steeped in the African cosmology of evil with the politically conscious Tunde Bakare's Latter Rain Assembly. With this in mind, I have in my research attempted a typology of Nigerian Charismatic movements in order to simplify the complexity of the movements and untangle the religious labyrinths. Using the paradigm of power and piety as the analytical tool, I have categorized Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic movements into six groups according to their perceptions of how they believe the world and individuals would be redeemed from the malevolent forces and consequently members would have dominion over the world.

First, the *faith seekers* are conversionist and they manifest this attitude with vigorous evangelistic activities directed at the individual. They insist that the individual has to undergo certain experiences that will transform his or her chaotic and egoistic life to one that acknowledges a creator God and his plan of redemption for the world. In terms of social and economic characteristics, faith seekers are generally from the lower level of the socio-economic ladder, their asceticism compensates for the social inequality they suffer, and they often distance themselves from the values of the secular society. Second are the *faith builders* who emphasize the realization of human potentials in the individual to overcome contemporary difficulties of life. Most of these groups tend to prosper in the urban areas and among the educated middle class. Faith builders rely on harnessing the potentials of the individual, but which are construed as divine favours. They also believe that Christians must achieve success in life and be wealthy; hence material success measured by riding 'big' cars, putting up big houses and boasting about fat bank deposits is the mark of true spirituality. In terms of social and economic characteristics, they tend to accept the values of the secular society, though certain aspects of their doctrinal emphases tend to regulate the ethical ways of acquiring wealth. Members of faith builders

groups are those seeking rapid social mobility through material comfort or societal recognition.

I call the third group the *faith transformers*. They resemble the conversionists but are more concerned with seeking the conversion of large and isolated ethnic groups rather than individuals. They are traditionally the mission agencies sending full time missionaries to work among 'tribal' peoples. They are also ascetic largely because they lack any viable economic base and support for the demanding task of missions. Certain feelings of heroism keep them going. The fourth group, *the Reformists*, are those who have been influenced by Pentecostal spirituality and found within the mainline Protestant denominations and want to remain as members but are seeking renewal of these churches on their own self-defined religious values. They are literalists who see their denominations as their religious inheritance which must be improved upon. In the past two decades, their activities in the Anglican churches have been noticed in the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC) or the Anglican Youth Fellowship. In the Baptist faith, they make up the Baptist Student Fellowship; in the Methodist Church they form the majority of those in the Methodist Evangelical Movement, in the Roman Catholic Church as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and similarly in other denominations. They are socially characterized as second or third generation of Christians in these churches, are middle class, educated and have shared in the Charismatic Renewal on the campuses.

I identify the fifth category as *the Deliverance churches*. They constitute a new phenomenon within Nigerian Pentecostalism. They are preoccupied with healing and thus act as 'forensic experts' viewing African cultural roots as being responsible for the contemporary dislocation in the lives of individuals and the society as a whole. They often associate evil with some traditional names, the origin of what they call 'generational' or 'ancestral' curses', and prescribe a total break with ancestral roots. Their prescriptions are ritualistic in manner – certain kinds of prayers, disconnection with the cultural roots, including changing of names, etc. Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, which is now spreading to many African countries, best represents this. Finally, *the Modernists* are the old Aladura (African Independent Churches) members who believe that they have to present their faith in a more acceptable form to a more enlightened society. Some have sympathy for Pentecostal spirituality or have shared in

Pentecostal activities, and are mindful of the marketing success of the Charismatics, which they want to replicate in their own constituency. T. B. Joshua's Synagogue Church of All Nations with headquarters in Lagos is also an example, but its preoccupation with physical healing shows its affinity as well to the Deliverance churches.

This typology, which could be applied to other African contexts, provides an analytical framework to make an in-depth enquiry and avoid generalization as has been found in some existing literature on African Pentecostalism. More important, this typology further indicates that Pentecostalism in Africa displays a wide variety of focus and trajectories. Mr. Vice Chancellor, this typology is also one of my special and original contributions to the discourse of Pentecostalism, and provides one of the ways I have tried to renovate the study of African Christianity in the past twenty years.

Let me, however, make one last significant point on this matter. Some may wonder whether Prophet Temitope Balogun Joshua should be included among Pentecostals. The Pentecostal constituency has always been an inclusive one; hence T. B. Joshua deserves recognition. Often in the news and having been accused of horrendous rituals, the radio and TV ombudsmen have not helped matters by magnifying some of the baseless accusations.³⁶ However, unlike the college or university graduates, T. B. Joshua was a man born in a rural town, from a humble background, and who could not complete a secondary education but, since 1992 when he established the Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos, has transformed the Nigerian religious landscape with his spectacular healings, miracles, charity and poverty alleviation programmes. His church attracts foreigners from all parts of the world seeking succor from T. B. Joshua. While Pentecostal leaders have been asking about T. B. Joshua's background, training, and the source of his power, he in turn has been pointing to his activities as evidence of God's power in his life. Without doubt his fame has surpassed that of some well known Pentecostal pastors. The controversies about T. B. Joshua are many to record here. For example, in November 2001, Chris Okotie of the Household of God Ministries, Lagos accused Chris

³⁶ T.B. Joshua also refers to some of the false news about him. See *Tell magazine*, (Lagos, Nigeria), March 8, 2004 'Special Focus', pp. 2-6.

Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy, Lagos of associating with Joshua, a satanic agent.³⁷ In a recent face off between T. B. Joshua and Enoch Adeboye, Joshua has replied that Adeboye has joined hands with his persecutors, but to him persecutions have strengthened him as he continues to execute God's mandate to Nigerians and the world. Finally, he said judgment belongs to God, and he would not judge anybody no matter the situation.³⁸ The point to be made, as the above typology has shown, is that Pentecostal movements have various orientations.



³⁷ For account of the running battle between Chris Okotie and Chris Oyakhilome/T. B. Joshua, see the defunct *New Treasure* magazine, 12 Nov; 19 Nov; 26 Nov, & 17 Dec. 2001.

³⁸ 'T. B. Joshua Replies Adeboye: Criticism Strengthens my Resolve' *The Nation* (Lagos, Nigeria), 21 February 2009.

TYPOLOGY OF PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS IN NIGERIA

CATEGORY	Goal and Religious Characteristics	Social Characteristics	Activities	Types of Testimonies	Examples
FAITH SEEKERS	The means of acquiring power is for the individual to establish a relationship with God through conversion.	Very often other-worldly, ascetic in lifestyle, very sectarian and emphasis on separateness. Membership more from the lower social economic strata of the society. Often regulates behavior and have disciplinary rules based on standard of conduct.	Vigorous and regular evangelistic activities such as door-to-door witnessing open air evangelistic meetings, retreats, and camp meetings, the publication of evangelistic tracts, and the constant teaching and training of evangelists.	The testimonies of members are usually of deliverance and of changed situations brought about by intimacy with Jesus Christ.	The best examples are Deeper Life Christian Ministry in Nigeria & Zacharias Fomum's Communauté Missionnaire Chrétienne Internationale in Cameroon.
FAITH BUILDERS	They emphasize the realization of the potentials in individuals to overcome contemporary difficulties of life or to achieve rapid social mobility through the acquisition of material comfort or societal recognition.	Generally, members are often educated and seeking upward social mobility. They often affirm the values of the larger society and claim that what matters is inner faith. The media plays a dominant role in the life of the organization.	They frequently organize "breakthrough" and success seminars, arrange banquets, and "sow seed money." Their messages are motivational, and successes of members are publicly advertised as the validity of their doctrinal emphasis.	Their leaders rely on the electronic media more than any other religious group in advertising themselves and the success of their churches.	Winners' Chapel, Christ Life Chapel, Church of God Mission International, Victory Chapel, Life Oasis Ministries, etc.

<p>FAITH TRANSFORMERS</p> <p>They seek to alter the socio-cultural and religious milieu of large groups of people, frequently along ethnic or national lines. A subgroup includes those who see whatever happens within any nation or the political sphere as the result of certain spiritual activities.</p>	<p>Very often other-worldly, but not sectarian but may adopt the ascetic lifestyle. Very often millenarian emphases inform social responses to secular events. Membership more from the lower social economic strata of the society.</p>	<p>They are oriented to evangelistic and missionary activities to ethnic groups rather than individuals.</p>	<p>Testimonies often depict spiritual warfare, and the success of development projects among non-literate indigenous ethnic groups.</p>	<p>The Calvary Ministries (CAPRO), Men of Issachar Vision, and Christian Missionary Foundation are some major examples.</p>
<p>REFORMISTS</p> <p>These are individuals and sectarian groups within the mainline Protestant denominations seeking to rekindle revival and renewal on the basis of Pentecostal spirituality.</p>	<p>They are literalists, educated middle class and students, stable in profession, respectable in society because of economic power and social standing. They believe that Pentecostal spirituality will bring what they perceive as 'genuine revival' into their denominations.</p>	<p>These Christians participate in the activities of the other Pentecostal groups, yet they are keenly attached to their non-Pentecostal denominations. Most members might have had interaction with the Charismatic Renewal on campuses.</p>	<p>Testimonies centre on revivals and the deepening of religious faith</p>	<p>They include the Methodist Evangelical Movement, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the Baptist Student Fellowship, and the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Church.</p>

DELIVER- ANCE CHURCHES

They are preoccupied with liberating or extricating Christians from their traditional past, which they consider as stumbling blocks to a fulfilling life in the contemporary world. They also try to resolve the dilemma of the traditional past within a modern westernized capitalist context.

Members are from the lower class and few in the middle class. Economically, they are on the fringe of the society or living within disrupted social relations.

They emphasize healing particularly the casting out of a demonic past, ancestral curses, and the traditional gods. They operate as religious clinics. Their clients come for consultations at appointed times and are given "prescriptions" of certain spiritual exercise to break the past.

Emphasis is on how their prayers have unshackled them from Satanic oppression or the bondage of ancestral curses.

The best example is Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, which was established in Nigeria in 1991.

MODERNISTS

These churches have adopted or are trying to adopt the religious style of the Charismatics and Pentecostals. Their preoccupation is how to present the "old" Aladura religion to the modern world of the educated.

Middle class and educated at college or university level, stable in profession, respectable in society because of economic power and social standing.

They usually start from the premise of imitation, and later adopt certain religious emphases of the Pentecostals. They rely on the electronic media as the tool of their modernizing enterprise, as they abandon certain rituals of their churches.

The same old Aladura spirituality that is centered on dreams and visions, healing and overcoming malevolent spiritual forces.

Most that include the word 'Gospel' in their names. T. B. Joshua's Synagogue Church of All Nations is an example.

Nigerian Pentecostalism and Social Transformation

The emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit and its transforming power cannot be glossed over in studying Pentecostalism. The Charismatic Renewal has been able to shape the lives of individuals as it forcefully links spirituality to the socio-economic and political spheres. As noted by Ogbu Kalu, 'Pentecostalism seeks to transform the mental and material cultures of communities and challenges extant religious structures as it seeks to transform the religious landscape. In every context, it critiques accepted doctrine, polity, liturgy, and ethics of other religions'.³⁹ This new experience and the new identity consolidated in a new religious ethics further create new possibilities of change for the individual and the society. I will now provide some discussion of the transformation fostered by Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

Using the Power in the Word to Transform the World

Evangelism was central to Pentecostal spirituality in the 1970s. Though its vitality declined from the 1980s as other emphases such as prosperity and deliverance shot up, its understanding will shed light on the structural dynamism of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements. Arising from the strong millennial belief in the 1970s and the expectation that the end of the world was imminent, Charismatics adopted a self-imposed responsibility that required them to export the 'full Gospel' to all parts of Nigeria and the world. It was this ideological standpoint that set in motion the vigorous pentecostalising activities of Charismatics into the mainline Protestant churches thus attracting criticism and opposition, but which eventually ensured easy and continuous enlistment of members, who were previously members of the Protestant churches. By the late 1980s, 'you must be born again', had become a popular slogan and has provided a symbol to enlist many pastors and church founders who perceive their vision as global and worldwide. The early activities of William Kumuyi, founder of Deeper Christian Life Ministry, were based on this belief. So also was Benson Idahosa's evangelistic programme under the banner of Idahosa World Outreach, which by the 1990s had taken him to over eighty countries. Evangelism further fostered a new sense of identity beyond the emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, mss. Chapter 1.

From its Biblical mooring in Matthew 28: 18-20, evangelism fostered a sense of urgency. In practical terms, evangelism was carried out through camp meetings, tract distribution, preaching in buses or street corners, going from one house to the other, from person to person and so on. In the 1990s, its development resulted in mega evangelistic meetings for which the German evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, partnered with many Nigerian churches, and held open air meetings in many cities. Though Bonnke's evangelistic meetings achieved political propaganda, its gain in conversions was few to record, according to a research done by Ezekiel Ajani between 2000 and 2005 under my supervision.⁴⁰ Besides, in two well received papers, I have examined Charismatics' evangelistic and missionary activities as unique African initiatives in Christian missions, and concluded that Africa previously regarded as a mission field by western mission societies, has become a mission base, and thus Africa still has a place in world Christianity in the twenty first century.⁴¹

There is a three-fold consensus among Charismatic organisations about the goals of evangelism. Primarily, when the biblical aspect is stressed, evangelism is directed towards conversion. Secondly, it constitutes a work of redemption to loosen humans from the grip of evil spirits, witches, and forces of darkness, enemies, and bad luck, repeated failures, which are ever present and prevalent in the African worldview. This cultural dimension of evangelism is central to the healing sessions that are integral to evangelistic activities, and often attract large attendance. Thirdly, evangelism constitutes a metaphor of change that Charismatics hope for in the economic, social and political situation of Nigeria. 'Africa's deliverance', as a Charismatic said, 'does not lie in shrewd politicians, renowned economists or learned educationist . . . but in using the strategy of evangelism'.⁴² Evangelism has indeed provided to Charismatics a model for adopting alternative perspectives to development issues and for coming to terms with their contemporary condition.

⁴⁰ Ezekiel O. Ajani, 'The Dynamics of Reinhard Bonnke's Crusades in Nigeria', unpublished M.Th thesis, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, June 2003.

⁴¹ Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Dynamics of Indigenous Charismatic Missionary Enterprises in West Africa', *Missionalia*, Vol. 25, No 4, (1997), pp. 537-561. Internet edition in <http://www.geocities.com/missionalia/ojo1.htm>

⁴² Christian Missionary Foundation (Ibadan, Nigeria) *Newsletter*, vol. 6, combined Nos 4-6, July-November 1987, p.8.

The emphasis on evangelism soon developed into a consciousness of missions with much political significance. As already noted the oil wealth of the 1970s provided Nigeria the opportunity of involvement in and support to the liberation movements in southern Africa by making available scholarships that enabled nationals of Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Angola to be educated in Nigerian universities in the 1970s. From such a vantage point and fuelled by certain prophetic pronouncements from leaders of the Charismatic groups which linked Nigeria's prosperity to a global responsibility to other African countries, some Charismatics insist that Nigeria, should be a bastion for the evangelisation of the continent. In 1982, Emeka Nwankpa, a 1977 graduate of Law from the University of Ife and a leader of a Charismatic organization, said 'God expressly intends that Nigeria should be the base for the gospel for West Africa and indeed the whole of Africa'.⁴³ Another prophecy published in a newsletter stated thus, 'Yea that the church in this land is my hope for this continent. I say the church in this land is my hope in this continent'.⁴⁴ Thus, in response, Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic groups embarked upon a number of international and cross-cultural evangelistic activities. One of the earliest Charismatic groups to do so was Calvary Ministries, an evangelistic association founded in April 1975 in Zaria, Northern Nigeria by some young Christian graduates who were undergoing their compulsory National Youth Service in Northern Nigeria. By the 1990s, about twenty Charismatic organizations devoting their activities to cross-cultural evangelism were already in operation.

In summary, largely through the formation of indigenous mission agencies mostly non-denominational for the recruitment, training, sending, supporting and supervising missionaries, and through the territorial extension of branches of Charismatic organizations to new areas, Charismatic missions are advancing rapidly all over Africa. Their missionary activities have included evangelism and church planting with the goal of countering Traditional Religion and the advance of Islam in Africa. In this spirit, Nigerian Charismatics have been training leaders of Charismatic organisations from other African nations since the early 1980s. For example,

⁴³Emeka Nwankpa, 'Missionary Challenges Facing Nigeria Christians Today', address read at launching ceremony of CMF on 15 May 1982, typescript, p. 3, CMF archives.

⁴⁴CSSM, 'Post-National Prayer Conference Letter', 2 August 1983, p. 3.

in 1980 the Deeper Life established the *International Bible Training Centre* in Lagos for the training of Africans all over the continent. By 1981, there were about 600 students from about twenty countries in the institution.⁴⁵

Charismatics' evangelism constitutes a causality of change in Africa's religious landscape. Really, the vigorous nature of Charismatic missions in Africa has contributed to church growth in the twentieth century.

Fostering Transformation Through Trans-national Networks

In keeping with the expansion of Pentecostalism, I have also extended the scope of my research to cope with this spatial growth. Thus, in another study, I discussed how Nigerian Pentecostalism from the late 1970s moved into cross-cultural and trans-frontier expansion, and consequently stimulated indigenous initiatives in Pentecostalism in other West African countries, thus sustaining significant social and religious change. In their expansion beyond Nigeria, webs of networks were created with similar Charismatic-Pentecostal churches in other African countries.⁴⁶ Improvement in road networks, mobile communications, computer communications, the promotion of social and economic integration following the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975, - all opened new possibilities for trans-frontier expansion of Nigerian religious movements.

Benson Idahosa (1939-1998), the founder of the Church of God Mission Incorporated and the flamboyant preacher of prosperity, miracles and 'productive faith', and the agent of change in Nigerian Pentecostalism, was also the pioneer of this trans-national networking across Africa. Idahosa was the first African evangelist to embark on televangelism and international open air evangelist meetings, thus challenging the erstwhile dominance of American televangelists.⁴⁷ In 1978, he visited Ghana and after a successful crusade, the impressed and over-joyous Idahosa offered scholarships to Ghanaians for a nine-month Bible and theological training in his school,

⁴⁵ *Deeper Life Newsletter* (Lagos, Nigeria), September & October 1983, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁶ Marshall-Fratani and Corten have noted the complex internal multicultural characteristics of Charismatic movements that fit into the processes of globalization. See Corten, André & Marshall-Fratani, Ruth, eds., *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001,) p.10.

⁴⁷ Matthews A. Ojo, 2005 'Nigerian Pentecostalism and Transnational Religious Networks in West African Coastal Region' in *Entreprises Religieuses Transnationales En Afrique d l'Ouest* edited by Laurent Fourchard, André Mary, and Rene Otayek, Paris: Editions Karthala & Ibadan: IFRA, 2005. pp. 395-415. See also, Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Dynamics of Indigenous Charismatic Missionary Enterprises in West Africa' *Missionalia*, vol. 25, No 4, December 1997, pp. 537-561. Internet edition in <http://www.geocities.com/missionalia/ojo1.htm>

All Nations for Christ Bible Institute.⁴⁸ This initiative soon became a burgeoning development for the Idahosa World Outreach and his Redemption Hour television broadcast in Nigeria and other African countries.⁴⁹ It also marked a beginning of formal ministerial formation and theological education for Pentecostals in Africa. Eventually, hundreds of Africans were trained by Idahosa in his school in Benin City, and many of them returned to their countries to become pioneers of the Charismatic movements. Among the notable ones are Nicholas Duncan-Williams, who upon his graduation returned to Ghana in 1979 and established the Christian Action Faith Ministries International as Ghana's first indigenous Charismatic Church. The Associate Bishop of the CAFM, Bishop James Saah was also trained by Idahosa. He worked with Idahosa's evangelistic organization for about a decade before returning to Ghana in the mid-1990s. There is also Bishop Charles Agyin Asare, who trained in 1986 and later established the World Miracle Bible Church, as one of the largest Charismatic churches in Ghana.⁵⁰ Pastor Suleiman Umar, from Niger Republic, who also trained under Idahosa upon his return to Niamey, Niger Republic, established *Eglise Vie Abondante*, in 1990 as the first independent Charismatic church in the country. Indeed, it was largely Idahosa's influence that brought independence to Pentecostal Christianity in some West African countries, because Idahosa instilled in those he trained the idea of religious entrepreneurship, and really many of his disciples became pioneers in their own localities.⁵¹

Next is William F. Kumuyi and the Deeper Christian Life Ministry with its church arm, Deeper Life Bible Church. Beginning with Bible study in Kumuyi's flat in the University of Lagos in April 1973, the church achieved significant growth through the use of literature and vigorous evangelistic activities. Deeper Life was a world-rejecting or holiness sect; hence, it places strong emphasis on the doctrine of sanctification. It preaches against the possession and viewing of television as unchristian, condemns the wearing of earrings and wedding rings and rigidly specifies what dress

⁴⁸The Bible College was granted approval as a university in 2000, and is now known as Benson Idahosa University, Benin City.

⁴⁹*Redemption Faith magazine*, (official voice of Idahosa World Outreach), vol. 3, Nov. 1985, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁰Paul Gifford, "Ghana's Charismatic Churches", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 24, no 3, (1994) pp. 241-265 and interviews conducted with Ghana's Pentecostal leaders in 2003 and 2004.

⁵¹*Redemption Faith Magazine*, March-April 1988, Vol. 4, No 23, p. 8

to wear in order to keep the sanctification experience.⁵² Despite such strictness, Deeper Life has grown and spread widely within Africa and in the Western world. From 1978, it expanded outside Nigeria through Nigerians sent out as missionaries and by foreigners returning to their countries. For example, from one branch in Kumasi, Ghana in 1978,⁵³ the church grew to seventy two churches in 1988, to 270 churches with a total membership of 20,832 in 1993.⁵⁴

In the mid-1990s, many more Nigerian Pentecostal evangelists and churches established their presence in other African countries. Among them was David Oyedepo, a graduate of Architecture, who established the Living Faith Church (Winners' Chapel) in late 1983 in Ilorin. With a strong emphasis on success and prosperity,⁵⁵ he embarked on a planned expansion tagged the Africa Gospel Invasion Programme (AGIP) in 1994 into other African countries.⁵⁶ The gospel of health and wealth has appealed to the young and upwardly mobile educated Nigerians seeking a modernizing milieu for self-expression. Consequently, the church's membership grew to about 10,000 in Accra and Tema in 2003, before a bitter internal crisis in April 2004 caused divisions resulting into two churches: Winners Chapel (Ghana) under the leadership of Bishop George Agyeman, its former pastor, and Winners' Chapel International, which maintains affiliation with its Nigerian base.

A new Pentecostal variety is the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries founded in Lagos in November 1991,⁵⁷ but which has grown and spread beyond Nigeria within the first ten years of its existence. Its

⁵² Matthews A. Ojo, 'Deeper Christian Life Ministry: A Case Study of the Charismatic Movements in Western Nigeria', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XVII, 2 (1988), pp. 141-162. -

⁵³ Adubofor, Samuel B. "Evangelical Parachurch Movements in Ghanaian Christianity c. 1950-early 1990s". Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1994, pp. 325-6. Also interview with some Deeper Life pastors and others in Accra, May 1996.

⁵⁴ *National Church Survey 1993 Update* (Accra: Ghana Evangelism Committee, 1993), pp. 16 & 18.

⁵⁵ For details, see Matthews A. Ojo, 'The Charismatic Movements in Nigeria Today', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 19, no 3, 1995, pp. 114-118. and Matthews A. Ojo, 'Charismatic Movements in Africa' in A. F. Walls & Christopher Fyfe, *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, (Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 92 -110.

⁵⁶ 'The Liberation Mandate at 25: The Story Behind the Glory', *The Winners' World*, (Ota, Nigeria) May 2006.

⁵⁷ The group has started as a prayer meeting in the flat of Olukoya in the National Institute of Medical Research, Yaba, Lagos in late 1989. In 1991, it began Sunday services and became an independent Charismatic church.

founder, Daniel Olukoya, a molecular geneticist, coming from an Aladura background, has brought traditional worldviews into real situational manifestation in the contemporary society. The church promotes a religious tradition, which instead of erasing indigenous worldviews rather appropriates and magnifies them to become the basis of a new religious meaning for depressed urbanized Africans. Believers are encouraged to identify the spirits or demons responsible for ill-health or other life difficulties and then drive them out using rituals of vigorous and 'dangerous' prayers.⁵⁸ Unlike the Redeemed Christian Church of God which is largely populated by Yoruba and Igbo Nigerians, MFM in other African countries has become indigenized and has attracted other nationals since the theology of evil, often associated with witchcraft and 'enemies' fits into basic African cosmology of the spirit world. The growth of the church in Ghana slowed down in 2002, when one of its pastors, Enoch Aminu, pulled out to establish Pure Fire and Miracles Ministries, which received media attention in January 2009, when John Atta-Mills, Ghana's president, had his election victory thanksgiving in the church. Indeed, as Nigerian Charismatic and Pentecostal churches expanded across West Africa, so they instigated significant social and religious changes

Nigerian Charismatic and Pentecostal churches even took advantage of the liberalization of the electronic media to achieve some expansion. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Nigeria-based Charismatic churches were already purchasing airtime on the radio and television stations of other countries. A prominent example on Ghana's Metro TV every Sunday afternoon was a religious programme on relationships for young people, which was hosted by late Bimbo Odukoya's The Fountain of Life Church, based in Lagos.⁵⁹ Likewise, Nigerian evangelists are also known to be purchasing airtime on *Rádio Bonne Nouvelle* in Yaoundé, and in other countries to broadcast their messages. the financial buoyancy of Nigerian Pentecostal churches in comparison with those of other West African countries has enabled Nigerians to influence the pace and nature of

⁵⁸ Ralph Adewale Aderogba, 'The Influence of Yoruba Culture on The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries in South-Western Nigeria, 1991-2000' (unpublished M. A. thesis, Obafemi Awolowo University, 2005). See also D. K. Olukoya, *Power Against Spiritual Terrorists*, (Lagos, MFM Press, 1998), pp. 4-7 and Olukoya, D. K. *Power Against Local Wickedness* (Lagos, MFM Press, 1997).

⁵⁹ Personal observation while in Ghana in February 2003.

Pentecostalism in West Africa. Certainly, Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have shown that they can transcend their restricted local origins and enter into new cultural milieus.

As has been seen, different modalities have enabled Pentecostal and Charismatic churches to become transnational and trans-cultural. The churches' entrepreneurial organization, sophisticated marketing techniques, and modernizing tendencies have facilitated large-scale networks across political borders. This has further been enhanced by the gospel of prosperity, which is being promoted using a trans-national register. There is a burgeoning trade and exchange of Pentecostal products such as recorded audio and video cassettes, home video films on religious themes, religious songs on cassettes and CDs, devotional literature, etc. mostly produced in Nigeria and distributed widely in the West African sub-region. These products, found in homes, offices and bookstores, provide a continuous flow of Nigerian Pentecostal culture into other West African countries: hence they have become tangible resources for a new religion. The popularity of Nigerian religious products can be explained in terms of their contextual relevance to the African situation, and the fact that they also provide a richer variety of spiritual nourishment more than similar products from other countries.⁶⁰

Promoting Family Ethic for Transforming the Society

One significant transformation fostered by Pentecostalism through its doctrinal emphases is the enhancement of family values by challenging the prevalent values of the permissive society. The concern about marriage and the home is reflected in the number of books and numerous teachings on the subject. Generally, they have created elaborate regulations on marriage and family life. By and large, Pentecostals are concerned for the ways in which the marriages and sexual expressions of their members influence spirituality within the movements. S. G. Elton, one of the pioneers of Nigerian Pentecostal movements, in the late 1970s stressed the importance of the Christian family because, to him, it was becoming the target of the devil using anti-family crusaders and policy makers to propagate free sexual expressions with no commitment to life long relationship. It is therefore

⁶⁰Matthews A. Ojo, 'Nigerian Pentecostalism and Transnational Religious Networks in West African Coastal Region' in *Entreprises Religieuses Transnationales En Afrique d l'Ouest* edited by Laurent Fouchard, André Mary, and Rene Otayek, Paris: Editions Karthala & Ibadan: IFRA, 2005, pp. 395-415.

one of the plans of Satan to cause disunity in the Christian family and Christian churches.⁶¹ Other preachers have warned that Christian marriages must be different from the worldly pattern since it is the most precious relationship in life. Consequently, Pentecostals have tried to construct a marriage pattern that is different from the contemporary society norms.

They allow only monogamous marriages, hence polygamy is condemned. They forbid divorce which is viewed as an outcome of individualism and self-centeredness. They regulate the type of wedding dresses brides can wear into the church. They prohibit inter-faith marriages while some even discourage inter-church marriages. They teach that family responsibilities must be mutually shared, and the husband is saddled with caring for his wife and the children, leading them in daily devotion and motivating them to attend church activities. Pentecostals promote the keeping of a joint account for a family, a significant value not previously accommodated by the society. Children are expected to read the Bible daily, pray regularly and not indulge in worldly amusements. Overall, Pentecostal spirituality helps to create new priorities and statuses that are projected into marriage and the family life.

Furthermore, Pentecostal spirituality fosters a heightened sense of responsibility in men, compelling them to stay closer to the family and be frugal as they shun beer parlours and the cinema. In fact, finances in the homes are better managed as the health of the family is given priority. In addition, the wife's economic earnings are channeled into the family instead of being used for personal luxuries. Ogbu Kalu has noted that the conversion experience creates 'the backdrop for accessing *charisma* as the power freely given to achieve self discipline, sobriety, holiness and righteousness', and this experience is further consolidated in new ethics as part of the new Christian identity.⁶² Generally, these teachings have lifted the status of women to be equal partners in marriages.

Therefore, Pentecostals have indirectly lifted up the status of women in the African society by affording them equality and respect. Wives are not subordinates but partners, and at times household chores are shared between the husband and the wife. Invariably, women in Pentecostal families

⁶¹ S. G. Elton, *Herald of the Last Days*, No 39, (n.d), p. 10.

⁶² Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 6.

enjoy a much higher sense of worth and esteem than others generally by redefining their roles and status. Pentecostalism with its emphasis on the Spirit and equality rather than tradition is succeeding in creating in-roads for African women.



Healing as the Power to Transform Self

In the 1970s, Pentecostals directed their teaching to the transformation of the individual. The most noticeable of this change is in the emphasis on healing. Healing and miracles are central to the religious ideas of African Charismatics. The emphasis is very wide in its scope and application, and presently comprises of four major areas. The first is physical healing which is basic among all Pentecostal groups and forms the bulk of testimonies focusing on healing. Second, there is healing constructed specifically with the African worldview of evil, witchcraft, and the world of spirits. Within this realm, Pentecostals obtain healing when malevolent forces are cast out. This process is termed 'Deliverance'. In deliverance, Pentecostals try to interpret the historical past and the cultural past specifically within an African context and thereby construct meaning for the present and the future. Thirdly, the progressive nature of Pentecostalism is reflected in what is termed Success and Prosperity, which is healing over the socio-economic difficulties of the individual. Lastly, Pentecostals have extended their healing activities over the political and socio-economic conditions of a nation. This process is termed 'Prayer for the Nations'. These four spheres of healing are found in varying degrees among Pentecostal and Charismatic organizations in Nigeria.

Regular healing and miracle services are organised, and there are often claims of spectacular healing in these services. Moreover, they boldly advertise healing through the print and electronic media. Captions like 'The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the oppressed will be set free, and the dead will rise' have become a popular slogan among Pentecostals and Charismatics. Indeed, it is in the area of healing that they have succeeded greatly in domesticating power to have practical application. 'The power in the blood of Jesus', as they have often said, can transform every situation and individuals. 'Power must change hands', a popular slogan of the monthly prayer meeting of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, has become a potent symbol of Pentecostal and Charismatic organizations seeking to break yokes and class boundaries; create new space as well as promote discourses of change or give new life to existing ones, and take in their strides large numbers of people as well as some of the state's traditional functions. Interpretatively, the popular images of the grandiose: miracles, health, success, and wealth have become part of the religious imagination of those who are socially and economically marginalized in the society.

Generally, Pentecostals have made literal interpretation of the scriptures with potentially far-reaching implications. Hence, their definitions of healing depict how they have positively taken account of traditional causative factors of diseases as well as coming to terms with the socio-economic and political dislocations of contemporary life. They have looked at illness as evil and have utilized the symbol of Satan to pinpoint social and religious tensions in the society. These definitions thus have an explanatory function as well as an ethical dimension. This healing system being used by Charismatics has a flexibility which makes it possible to make adjustment to suit every situation, and to respond both to social and personal needs. Since, health services in Nigeria are poorly developed, poorly managed, and inadequate, the claims to healing and miracles by the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches afford people a simple, easier and inexpensive way out of their problems. Therefore, as agents of social disclosure, Charismatic movements have developed therapeutic apparatuses to cope with the realities of their modern situations, and thus offer simple solutions to the complexities of contemporary life.

Prosperity, the Power for Wealth

One of the recent developments in Pentecostal spirituality is the continuing emphasis on prosperity. This new emphasis began to gain ground from the early 1980s, when Benson Idahosa began to assert that his God drove cars bigger than the Volkswagen Beetle car, which then was a popular car for the uprising middle class.⁶³ By the end of that decade, the emphasis had been popularised by David Oyedepo, whom Idahosa consecrated and enthroned in August 1988 as the Pentecostal Bishop of Northern Nigeria. 'Prosperity', according to David Oyedepo, 'is a state of well being in your spirit and body. It is the ability to use God's power to meet every need of men . . . In prosperity you enjoy a life of plenty and fulfilment. Prosperity is a state of being successful, it is life on a big scale'.⁶⁴ Elsewhere, Oyedepo wrote, 'Riches are God's will for you. Wealth is with God, but He has given men the power to get it . . .'.⁶⁵ According to the prosperity preachers, failure, poverty, unhappiness and all forms of difficulties should not be the lot of Christians. Hence, Christians should be successful and prosperous.

In practical terms, messages on this emphasis have been motivational and depict instances of triumphalism. Members often give testimonies of what they termed 'supernatural financial breakthrough'. Without any finance or land, some have been able to put up two large buildings within a year or have earned millions as profit in small businesses!⁶⁶ Indeed, the miraculous has become the immediate proof of fulfillment, and it resonates with the corrupt system where everyone with or without job seeks to become a millionaire. Thus, the testimonies replicate the magic wealth seen in the Nigerian home videos. Lastly, advertisements have gone out frequently to propagate and strengthen the emphasis on material wealth.

What sustains their apparent quest for material resources is partly the culture of materialism and magical wealth that has become the new culture for the Nigerian middle class. In Nigeria and most parts of Africa, wealth is a means to recognition in the society and the means towards political power. People have used various means to acquire wealth. For Pentecostals, becoming a 'Born Again' often provides a mode of tapping into spiritual

⁶³ It was a popular, common and affordable car in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁶⁴ *Weekly Faith Digest*, published by Living Faith Church, No 89/20, p. 3.

⁶⁵ David O. Oyedepo, *Signs and Wonders: A Catalogue of the Amazing Acts of God Among Men* (Canaan Land, Ota, Nigeria: Dominion Publishing House, 2006), p. 166.

⁶⁶ For a catalogue of these testimonies, see David O. Oyedepo, *Signs and Wonders*, pp. 172-217.

knowledge and power for one's social mobility. Therefore, Charismatics have been able to link together a dynamic relationship among salvation, wealth and power. It is against this broad background that we can evaluate the Pentecostal worldview about wealth.

Prosperity as a religious idea was not introduced into Africa by American tele-evangelists and they are not 'foreign' element in African Christianity, as Paul Gifford and others have argued.⁶⁷ Rather the emphasis was indigenously developed as a response to the socio-economic changes of the 1980s. The rigid and cumbersome nature of the bureaucratic system and the lack of any guiding moral culture have projected wealth as the ultimate index of success, which the emphasis on prosperity mirrors. Pentecostalism as a middle class religion therefore reflects every kind of ambiguity in the contemporary Nigerian society.

Piety, the Public Space, the State, and Social Transformation

Finally, Mr. Vice Chancellor, I wish to state that one of the conclusions that can be drawn from my studies so far is that Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have started to raise some doubts about their own originality and intentions, basically, because of the contradictions inherent in their posture towards politics and materialism. In this regard, it is necessary to recollect this event before pointing out the emerging issues and concerns about the body politic and the Spirit. In March 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, one time military Head of State, was declared elected in the presidential election of February 1999. While Nigerians were expectant of the swearing in ceremony fixed for May 29, Tunde Bakare, an ebullient but caustic preacher, the founder and pastor of the Lagos-based Latter Rain Assembly, an independent Charismatic church, came out with a prophecy that Olusegun Obasanjo would not be sworn in on May 29 as the new President of Nigeria.⁶⁸ According to Bakare, God's axe of judgment would come upon past and present corrupt Nigerian leaders beginning with Obasanjo. He declared emphatically, 'Obasanjo is Agag,⁶⁹ he is the ram kept for slaughter, he is not our messiah. ... He will be the first victim of a

⁶⁷ Gifford, Paul, "Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity", *RELIGION*, 20, (1990), 382-400.

⁶⁸ See *Weekend Concord*, May 15, pp. 2-3 for a full text of the prophecy.

⁶⁹ An allusion to the king of the Amalekites, whom King Saul of Israel spared after defeating the Amalekites. He was later executed by Prophet Samuel. Before his death, he has rejoiced thinking that the worst was over for him. (I Samuel 15: 10 - 33).

prophetic axe, it is coming, it is coming upon his head before May 29. It is the judgement of God'. He added that the transfer of power scheduled for May 29 was going to give a temporary joy, but after God's cleansing, a new Nigeria will be restored.⁷⁰ Had the prophecy been fulfilled, that transition programme to democratic civil rule that was begun in 1998 would most probably have suffered the same fate as the two preceding ones dating back to 1992. The prophecy regarding Obasanjo was thus much publicized. It was placed on the Internet circulated to Nigerian communities abroad, reviewed, commented upon with reactions printed in several newspapers. The controversy became complicated because Obasanjo, who had ruled the country as a military Head of State between 1976 and 1979, claimed that he has been born again in 1998 while in prison. At that time, many Nigerians expected the inauguration of the civilian government to end military rule. In fact, some Christians saw Obasanjo's election as the answer to prayers for the installation of a Christian president.

In the ensuing controversy over Bakare's prophecy, religious euphoria blinded many Nigerians including Pentecostals from seeing the futility of the hope in Obasanjo or in any elected political or military leader. In fact, there were numerous media attacks against Bakare by the same Pentecostal constituency. Indeed, the *National Concord* of May 15 carried the bold headline on its front page "SPIRITUAL WAR OVER OBASANJO ... PASTOR BAKARE IN TROUBLE"⁷¹ While Obasanjo's election was seen by millions of Nigerians as a sign of relief and hope, Bakare's prophecy was an unexpected anti-climax that did not go down well. In a way, this controversy over religion and politics depicts how the saints could become sinners, and sinners become saints within the public sphere devoid of any standard of morality, but whose elected or anointed officials assume that they have some moral power left that could be exercised legislatively.

As already noted, the nature of the pietism of Charismatics changed in the 1990s. There was no more visible separation of the sacred from the profane as Nigeria became increasingly a faith-based society.⁷² Although Nigerian Pentecostals have moved from being apolitical as they were in the 1970s, their political engagement has not yet emerged into a discernible

⁷⁰See *Weekend Concord*, May 15, pp. 2-3 for a full text of the prophecy.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷²Ebenezer Obadare, 'Pentecostal Presidency? The Lagos-Ibadan 'Theocratic Class' & the Muslim 'Other''

pattern. The foray of Chris Okotie, a converted pop singer and founder of the Household of God Church in Lagos into presidential politics in 1999 and 2003 only represented a marginal movement and not the dominant value of Pentecostalism. Hence, Okotie received very insignificant number of votes in the elections.⁷³ Evidence from Latin America would suggest that Pentecostals do not vote along the sympathies of their pastors and General Overseers because they have the same self-interests as other people and possibly because Pentecostals believe that political participation would never yield the desired positive change in governance and society.⁷⁴



The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, an ecumenical association of Pentecostals, that was created in 1985 with the aim of fostering unity among Pentecostal churches in order to have political relevance and visibility on a national platform and give Pentecostalism an identity within the Nigerian socio-religious and political context, equally failed to midwife Pentecostals to socio-political actions. PFN has been bogged down in over twenty years with personality clashes among top Pentecostal leaders, denominational loyalty and the appropriation of some secular values which are also plaguing the society in general, especially the lust for power, status and wealth. The resultant effect is that the PFN was by the late 1990s caught up in the same web of materialism and vain glory that it sets out to change at the beginning of the Charismatic revival in the early 1970s. The embarrassing crisis of how about N87,000,000 (US\$600,000) provided by the American televangelist, Benny Hinn, for a poorly attended three-day crusade in Lagos in April 2005 was squandered on some frivolities by some leading figures of Pentecostal churches in Lagos depicts how the saints could fail on the moral scale of accountability.⁷⁵

The rise of Pentecostal political interests also coincides with the rise of radical Islamic reformism which also claims interests in the political

⁷³The crusade scam, if we were to call it so, was widely reported by the press. For example, see *The Week*, June 6, 2005, pp. 9-19; and *The Guardian*, 13 May 2005.

sphere. Under the Ibrahim Babangida's administration from 1986, Pentecostals began to link the overt support of the government for Islam with an Islamization agenda, and consequently the demonization of Islamic groups became a feature of Pentecostal discourse.⁷⁶ Consequently, there was a measure of political sensitization and mobilization under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), which united evangelicals and Pentecostals against Islamic fundamentalism. The ideological orientation towards the centralization of the political order and public sphere by Muslims contrasts sharply with the decentralization which Pentecostals and Christians in general have promoted through their various activities and pronouncements.⁷⁷ In fact, the Sharia debate from 1999 came to be seen by Charismatics as Muslims' attempt to control national politics. Interestingly, both Charismatics and radical Muslims conjure the devil in the name of the other – a reflection of the distrust and competition between the two religions, whose adherents make up over 80% of Nigeria's 140 million population.

With very few exceptions, Pentecostals have shunned direct political involvement, such as seeking elective political offices through electioneering campaign. However, they have linked righteousness with authority and have attached much importance to the political sphere as a factor that can affect the lives of Christians and the church. Generally, they have infused some kind of spirituality into political issues and often claim that the public sphere could be subjected to the control of spiritual forces. Because Pentecostals and Charismatics failed to understand the complexities of the socio-economic and political factors pertaining to governance, they still hold on to the belief that governance could be better if Christians were in the position of power, a myopic perception which negates the everyday reality on ground. Government and religious bodies reflect diverse interests and represent a multitude of ambitions of both altruistic and self-interested motivations, which the Pentecostal constituency ought to be aware of. Hence, Obasanjo was seen as the Christian symbol in the public sphere, which Bakare's prophecy tried to discredit. By 2007, frustration against Chief Obasanjo's government seemed to have vindicated Tunde Bakare.

⁷⁶One of such publication on this subject is Christian Association of Nigeria Publicity, Northern Zone, *Leadership in Nigeria* (Kaduna, c. 1989).

⁷⁷Matthews A. Ojo, 'Pentecostal Movements, Islam and the Contest for Public Space in Northern Nigeria' *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 2, April 2007, 175–188.

Overall, many Pentecostals have tended to spiritualize and link biblical references to social and economic issues. There are a number of reasons for this position, including the biblical stress on patience in suffering, the association of economic struggle with greed and covetousness, the longstanding Christian tradition of obedience to the ruling powers, the dismissal of social action as a worthy pursuit for spiritually minded Christians, the reduction of social concern to works of compassion, and upward social mobility and affluence of the Pentecostal churches in the 1980s. Regrettably, it was clear that by the new millennium, Pentecostalism and its messianic action towards politics has failed to redeem the Nigerian past, just as it has failed to secure promises of security, accountability and justice for the present.

The Conclusion

Mr. Vice Chancellor sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, in line with the core values of Religious Studies as an interdisciplinary field that explores religious phenomena such as beliefs, practices, religious institutions, sacred writings, sacred time, and sacred persons, and which also objectively examines religion as a social phenomenon in order to provide some understanding of the dynamics of, and the changes in the human society, I have followed this tradition, already part of the tradition of the Department of Religious Studies of this university since 1983, in discussing the dynamism of Pentecostalism in contemporary Nigeria. This lecture has been a culmination of a wide experience beginning from a first degree in English from this university, a diploma in Management Studies, to a research degree in Religious Studies, another research degree in Public Administration, some training in Sociology and Missiology, and a terminal degree in Theology. Though these disciplines vary in content, they have united in building up a veritable international scholar and a pioneer of Pentecostal studies in Africa. It has been a fruitful journey of various academic endeavors, and I am greatly indebted to my teachers in the Faculties of Arts and Administration of this university, and to my colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies, and Dr. Niyi Okunoye of the Department of English. I recognize as well my teachers, mentors and colleagues in Kings College, London and School of Oriental and African Studies, London; the Faculty of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, particularly Professors John Peel, Andrew F.

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My research into the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements is still ongoing largely because of its importance in the contemporary society, as this lecture has tried to show. In sum, Pentecostalism has continued to redefine the relationships between the public and private spheres, between the powerful and the marginalized, and between social classes. It is not only by creating symbolic power for the marginalized but by democratising and domesticating access to power for the grassroots. In all, Pentecostal spirituality has become an overbearing symbol of change that is promoting a significant appreciation of the need for progress among members and providing philosophical and pragmatic pushing to the individual. Consequently, Pentecostalism could be seen as a cultural matrix that is positive, progressive, challenging, promoting triumphalism and engendering fundamental change and which could be harnessed for development. However, it is yet to be seen how this transforming force could be brought to bear on a dying nation so that the saints will find no lasting company with the sinners, and the ambiguity and paradox of Pentecostal spirituality will be jettisoned.

Finally, it is imperative to note that the Pentecost event in Act 2 is about the collective; hence the commonwealth that was created was exemplary. By that very act, the transformation of individuals was channeled

into making the collective stronger and purposeful.⁷⁸ Hence, the betrayal of Ananias and Sapphira was promptly dealt with and not allowed to undermine the integrity of the collective. Therefore, the Pentecost experience could become a paradigm for development and for building a healthy and purposeful society if the collective is given the priority.

Looking into the history of Christianity, renewal movements had always impacted positively on the society. For example, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century transformed individuals as well as the society. John Calvin's reform in Geneva, Switzerland instilled discipline as a way of life, promoted frugality and championed a new work ethic and social values which Max Weber and other sociologists have argued were instrumental to the development of capitalism in the Western society. Likewise, the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century in England produced many social movements including the abolitionist movement, the Christian Social Gospel, and the missionary movement with its overwhelming impact in Africa. What then has made contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism to follow the same trajectory of the corrupt society and focus on the individual and materialism to the neglect of the collective? Does the contemporary Charismatic Renewal in Nigeria stand the chance of moving beyond hero worship and personality-centred movement and seek to engineer an ideology that will be redemptive to the Nigerian society and survive the test of time! Why are General Overseers of Pentecostal churches too cosy with discredited politicians and business executives consecrating them as pastors or receiving large donations from them? Why are the media headlines about Pentecostal churches more about the pursuit of money and material wealth and less of holiness, frugality and redemptive sacrifice? Do Pentecostal leaders care about the pain they inflict needlessly on innocent travelers caught in traffic hold-ups when they hold their monthly religious programmes? Unless the contradictions in contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism are first resolved by the leaders themselves, our salvation and transformation may not be nearer as we thought. It is necessary, therefore, to call on the leadership of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries and the Redeemed Christian Church of God to responsibly and urgently consider alternatives to their monthly programmes that will not

⁷⁸ Acts 4: 32-34 records that 'Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. ... There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold'

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