

TRACING THE “SPIRIT”: THE ROLE OF POVERTY, REVIVAL, AND
INCLUSIVITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH

by

DANIELLE LYNN CLAUSNITZER

(Under the Direction of IBIGBOLADE ADERIBIGBE)

ABSTRACT

Since the first Pentecostal Revival in Wales in 1904, a series of factors have influenced the growth of Pentecostalism around the world. As missionaries carried this message of the Pentecost first to the United States and later to West Africa, the theological and social benefits of Pentecostalism became abundantly clear. When this message of equality in turn reached hinterland Nigeria, it affected a permanent shift in religious sensibility, consequently revealing the potency and universality of the Pentecostal message. Recognizing the clear Pentecostal influence that has pervaded Nigerian culture throughout its history as well as in the postcolonial period, this thesis will argue that the socioeconomic status of its constituents, the role of revival in spreading the Pentecostal message, and the inclusivity and access to God provided in the theological understanding of glossolalia all provided the impetus for the overwhelming and continued growth of this Pentecostal denomination into the postcolonial era.

INDEX WORDS: Religion, Religious Studies, African Traditional Religion, Christianity, Pentecostalism, Nigeria, Xenoglossy, Glossolalia, and Christ Apostolic Church.

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DEDICATION

Nobody wants to die on the way
and caught between ghosts of whiteness
and the real water
none of us wanted to leave
our bones
on the way to salvation
three planets to the left
a century of light years ago
our spices are separate and particular
but our skins sing in complimentary keys
at a quarter to eight mean time
we were telling the same stories
over and over and over.

Broken down gods survive
in the crevasses and mudpots
of every beleaguered city
where it is obvious
there are too many bodies
to cart to the ovens
or gallows
and our uses have become
more important than our silence
after the fall
too many empty cases
of blood to bury or burn
there will be no body left
to listen
and our labor has become more important
than our silence

and our labor has become
more important
than our silence

- Audre Lorde

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INTRODUCTION

With the incursion of Portuguese “explorers” into West Africa in the 15th century, an impassioned desire to “study” the African people emerged in Europe. Eurocentric in nature, this theoretically “scholarly” endeavor provided a good number of foundational materials that comprised the first iteration of “African Studies” in the West. Though our libraries and research methodologies have improved since then, the academy seems to remain entrenched in this European and American-centric mindset. Exemplified by the work of Benjamin Ray whose 1976 book *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community* inspired John S. Mbiti¹ to respond that, “[s]urely African religion should be described without this constant recourse to comparison with the West, as if the West were the canon by which to measure and judge the affairs of other parts of the world.”² As a result of this inherent bias in the American Academy, this work is resolved to build upon the “comparative” and judgmental history pioneered by Ray, with the individualized history created by those Nigerians who remained notably absent from the overarching power structure, namely those who remained “othered,” impoverished, and oppressed. By thus eschewing this problematic, qualifying methodology in favor of a historical and situational analysis, this work will seek to not only explain the growth of the Christ Apostolic Church, but also do so in the context in which Aladura Pentecostalism finds its roots, Nigeria.

¹ John S. Mbiti is a preeminent scholar of African Traditional Religion whose analysis of the status, growth, and structure of this religious manifestation are renowned throughout the world.

² Mbiti, John S. “Review of Benjamin Ray’s *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community*.” *Worldview*. Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1976. 56.

Continuing to break from the colonial and missionary methodology espoused by scholars of African Religion, the argument of this text will also emerge as inherently antiauthoritarian. As the title states, this work is concerned primarily with the poverty, revivalism, and inclusivity of the Pentecostal church, centered in both the structure of and structures within the church itself as well as in the act of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues. The first chapter of this thesis will deal with the creation of both the ecumenical structure and theological assumptions of Pentecostals in the United Kingdom and the United States, the place of origin for the majority of Pentecostal denominations around the world. This “creation story” will provide a context for the developing African Independent Church movement that closely followed, theologically and chronologically, the development of this premillennial, glossolalic conception of the divine. By tracing the beliefs and history of figures such as William Seymour and Charles Parham, this chapter will serve to reinforce the foundational events in the creation of Pentecostal ideology and culminate in the foundation of a settled Pentecostal theology, one that would later be spread around the world.

The second chapter of this thesis further addresses the global implications of Pentecostalism, namely within the context of both missionary work and, later, revivals. Beginning in Liberia, droves of sickly, underprivileged, and strictly antiauthoritarian Pentecostals moved throughout West Africa preaching a message of tolerance and equality, a popular sentiment among these colonized populations. With God as the primary authority and glossolalia as the language of the divine, this religious structure provided a means to escape the oppressive and devastating colonial structure. Reinforcing the strong sense of nationalism that pervaded anti-colonial discourse prior to their arrival,

missionaries worked to not only established schools but also to establish a continued period of revival, breaking down the traditional missionary system and reinforcing an independent sense of religiosity among West African practitioners. Subsequently, as this message of Pentecostal agency spread into Yorubaland, Nigeria, a wholly new manifestation of Pentecostalism emerged, rooted in the assertion of Nigerians as equal, independent beings unrestricted by Western comparison or judgment.

This “Aladura” Pentecostalism embraced a history of its own, the subject of the third chapter of this work. Beginning in 1918, with the emergence of “the devil’s flu,” an epidemic that killed almost 18 million people in Nigeria alone, the pervasive anti-colonial sentiment contained within the Nigerian proletariat reached its climax. Pentecostals turned to their American counterparts in the Faith Tabernacle church and formed a Faith Tabernacle institution of their own in Nigeria, a structure devoted to the preservation of African lives such as faith healing, and open dissent against governmental authority through glossolalia. In the 1920s, facing pressure from their American counterparts to break with traditional conceptions of healing, these Nigerian Pentecostals made the conscious and Afro-centric decision to split from the West. Thus, they retained a modicum of independence and maintained their internal and external presence, despite harsh and continuous oppression at the hands of their British colonial masters. Though Western influence again came into play with the collaboration of the Nigerian Pentecostal church with the British Apostolic Church, a Welsh Pentecostal denomination, in the succeeding decades, the Aladura church emerged as its own denomination in 1941, following their split from this Eurocentric organization, again on the grounds that they would not separate their traditional conception of healing from their syncretic religious

identity. Thus, these Aladura independent churches emerged from the devastation wrought by colonial control, maintaining their independence to this day without support from or submission to the West.

The final chapter of this work focuses on the “modern” iterations of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Although very little has been written about these more recent forms of Pentecostal thought, a hindrance to the comprehensive study of independent manifestations of Pentecostalism across Africa, this chapter will summarize a few of the major events that have contributed to the development of Pentecostal thought in Nigeria. The first of these occurrences is the declaration of Nigerian Independence in 1960, a moment in Nigerian history that did little to quell colonial influence on the nation. With the rise of leadership that was African in ancestry but postcolonial in mindset, the landscape of Nigeria still featured harrowing levels of oppression and poverty, spurring a secondary period of Pentecostal revival. Between 1960 and 1967, Pentecostal churches reported, primarily due to continued subjugation by the postcolonial government, that they experienced the largest number of adherents in their history. With the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967, Pentecostal membership continued to expand into areas of the country previously dominated by Westernized missionary influence, such as Igboland. Fueled by the instability, Igbo soldiers and displaced students, whose schools were closed to furnish the war effort, flocked to Pentecostal churches seeking the support denied to them by the warring postcolonial government. Following the end of this unsuccessful war effort, the Nigerian people faced immense and continued degradation by the postcolonial, African government. Though in the modern period misogyny and illiteracy stand as a testament to the oppressive postcolonial state, the Christ Apostolic

Church remains firmly committed to, and has achieved success in, advocating for women's rights and the growth of privatized education.

As the realm of African Studies continues to expand, so too does our understanding of its importance. Despite early scholarship on the subject, African Studies should, as Mbiti explains in his review, be understood as independently important and not reliant on another cultural context for legitimization. Thus, the importance of this document lays in the individuals it addresses, the impoverished, hard working, and highly spiritual sect of Aladura Pentecostals who remain determined to assert their independence in a series of colonial and postcolonial systems designed to both marginalize and oppress them. Through careful analysis of individual and cultural development, the use of glossolalia, and a reliance on revivalism to break down barriers, these re-visionaries of history have continued to assert their freedom. As these brave religious pioneers, young and old, male and female, educated and illiterate, continue to push on, the words of Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian author, continue to ring on: "if you don't like someone's story, you write your own. If you don't like what somebody says, you say what it is you don't like."³ It is this determination of selfhood through education, this discovery of a voice through glossolalia that creates, within a church of over a million people, a profound sense of importance for the individual.

³ "The Paris Review." Paris Review. Accessed April 30, 2016. <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1720/the-art-of-fiction-no-139-chinua-achebe>

CHAPTER 1
THE DEVELOPMENT OF PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY IN AMERICA: CHARLES
PARHAM, WILLIAM SEYMOUR, AND THE RECREATION OF THE
“PENTECOST”

Spiritualism and the Rise of Welsh Pentecostal Revivalism

By the turn of the century, the Spiritualism movement had reached its peak in English speaking countries across the globe, namely Wales and the United States.⁴ Spiritualists whose “greatest prevalence is ever with the ruling power” were defined both by their “credibility,” which primarily translated to wealth or status, and their belief in spiritual intervention into the physical realm of being.⁵ In choosing to engage with humanity, the plethora of manifestations of both “low level” and “high level” spirits were reported to have created disturbances, counseled family members, and even recreated crimes they had committed in past lives.⁶ Varying in nature and purpose, these spirits were not identified as static, uniform experiences but instead were lauded as experiences

⁴ Tuttle, Hudson, and James M. Preebles. *The Year-book of Spiritualism for 1871; Presenting the Status of Spiritualism for the Current Year throughout the World; Philosophical, Scientific, and Religious Essays, Review of Its Literature; History of American Associations; State and Local Societies; Progressive Lyceums; Lecturers; Mediums; and Other Matters Relating to the Momentous Subject* accounts for an awareness of spiritualism in Cardiff, the location of the 1904 Welsh Revival though it is mentioned that because of economic disparity and depopulation of rural areas occurring prior to the Industrial Revolution, these towns were not likely to invest in the movement.

⁵ Britten, Emma Hardinge. *Nineteenth Century Miracles: Or, Spirits and Their Work in Every Country of the Earth*. New York: Arno Press, 1976. 91.

⁶ Ibid. 103.

with “ancestors.”⁷ These “ancestors,” in turn, came to define the experience of the sacred as varied and often dependent on the conscious decisions made by spirits to intervene in various ways in the lives of, often unsuspecting, Englishmen and women.

In terms of their experiencing the spiritual on the corporeal plane of existence, no spirit had a more profound involvement in the lives of human beings than the Holy Spirit. For Spiritualists,

It would be denying the known realities and doubting the possibilities of Spiritualism to accept or assert the impossibility of Christ becoming absolutely one with God in certain exalted moments of the mediumistic mood.... I see no difficulty [because of the nature of Christ as human and divine], from the spiritualistic standpoint, of believing that God could possess and control [humanity] so fully at time as to be audible as well as visible through him who would thus personify the Deity in presence, and speak with the voice of very God.⁸

Speaking in tongues, therefore, was considered to be not only preferable to the traditional Catholic or Protestant experience of Christ, but was necessary for the “renewal of Apostolic gifts and powers.”⁹ The act of “speaking with the voice of very God” or speaking in tongues, was therefore posited by Spiritualist practitioners as a means by which religious men and women, namely those involved in the Irvingite proto-

⁷ Historically, African Traditional Religious thought has also ascribed to a version of spiritualism in which the ancestral spirits play an immense role in guiding, aiding, and determining the fate of those people that remain within the corporeal realm of being. Though the Spiritualism movement does not directly label these spirits as ancestors, they do connect their spiritual existence to their former life and, subsequently, acknowledge their presence as being part of the earthly realm, both key characteristics of ancestral elements in African Traditional Religion.

⁸ Massey, Gerald. *Concerning Spiritualism*. London: J. Burns, 1871. 107-108.

⁹ Britten, Emma Hardinge. *Nineteenth Century Miracles: Or, Spirits and Their Work in Every Country of the Earth*. New York: Arno Press, 1976. 107.

Pentecostal movement in England, could legitimize and build upon their own experiences with and understandings of the nature of the Holy Spirit. A careful distinction was made however, between the “true” experiences of the Spirit and “the people upon whom ‘the power fell’ [who] were so far removed in rank and national isolation from the cultured classes amongst whom Spiritualism... took root.”¹⁰ For practicing Spiritualists, this class distinction inspired a delegitimizing of the spiritual experiences of the impoverished and undereducated Irish and Welsh populations as, for wealthy Spiritualists, “there [did] not seem even a possibility of tracing any [connection] between the two movements (Spiritualist and Pentecostalism), unless we admit the hypothesis of a universal outpouring of the Spirit all over the world and one... [drawing] influence from all points of the compass.”¹¹

For Spiritualists, these revivals were “more in the spirit of orthodox sympathy with the actors than that of philosophic and deliberate investigation...”¹² For these believers in spiritual intervention, a clearly class-based dimension existed within the analysis and understanding of the true nature of “Spiritualism.” Pentecostalism, as it developed in Wales and Ireland, presented a counterpoint to the rigid, aristocratic system of governance contained within the Spiritualist movement, instead highlighting the power of any man or woman and not simply those of the advantaged classes to participate in this sacred experience. For impoverished and “Othered” practitioners of Pentecostalism however, the importance of these revivals remained clear, as an individual and physical engagement with the sacred assured their relationship with the sacred and subsequently

¹⁰ Ibid. Britten, 110.

¹¹ Ibid. 110.

¹² Ibid. 110.

their salvation, something not guaranteed by aristocratic and class-based theological thought.

Beyond Wales – Missionary Revivals and the Rise of Xenoglossy

Following the conclusion of the Welsh Revival in 1905, noted Pentecostal leader Evan Roberts circulated a short note that ended with this simple charge: ‘Forward, forward, forward.’¹³ Missionary practitioners were quick to take up the call for progress espoused by Roberts’ seemingly simplistic statement as they carried the teachings of this burgeoning Pentecostalism to a variety of different countries, most notably, the United States and other then current and former English colonies.¹⁴ For missionaries, the impetus for converting these global populations was clear as, driven by the spirit of “pessimistic” premillennialism,¹⁵ they “believed that the world would get progressively worse until the return of Christ... [and that their task] was to rescue individuals from imminent peril rather than seek to transform society.”¹⁶ In addition to the “imminent” need for societal and individual salvation, both the industrial boom in England as well as the prominent missionary communities that had already been established in England’s colonial territories aided the development of Pentecostal missions during this period.¹⁷ In drawing upon these physical and spiritual factors for support in the early 20th century, Pentecostal

¹³ Jones, Brynmor Pierce. *Voices from the Welsh Revival: An Anthology of Testimonies, Reports and Eyewitness Statements from Wales's Year of Blessing, 1904-05*. Bridgend: Evangelical Press of Wales, 1995. 34.

¹⁴ It is important to note here that there were several parallel “spirit baptism” movements happening in locations like India and North Korea. These movements, facilitated by Christian missionary involvement, are often dismissed as being “isolated” movements but would provide an interesting incursion into Pentecostal history that, unfortunately, lies outside of the scope of this work.

¹⁵ Studebaker provides a concise note on the shift in premillennial sensibilities from “positive” to “negative” in his 2010 work, *Pentecostalism and Globalization: The Impact of Globalization on Pentecostal Theology and Ministry*, page 4.

¹⁶ Studebaker, Steven M. *Pentecostalism and Globalization: The Impact of Globalization on Pentecostal Theology and Ministry*. Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2010. 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 3-4.

missionaries were subsequently able to solidify the foundation for what is considered one of the largest and fastest growing Christian denominations today.

Though immensely popular, these Pentecostal missions often possessed a disjointedness that resulted from the disconnect between lofty, academic engagements with missionization and the experiences of the missionaries themselves, similar to that of the preceding Spiritualist movement. Often impoverished working class men and women, the Pentecostal practitioners that participated in this global engagement had not and would not be entitled to the same highly academic, theological understanding of religion held by members of the British upper class. As one scholar described it, “the ‘Older brother’ has spent much time in library in trying to formulate the principle of the missionary nature of the church as accurately as possible, [while] the ‘Younger Brother,’ has just gone about doing the missions work in the harvest field!”¹⁸ For these “Younger Brother” practitioners, this physical engagement with religion through missionization in turn greatly contributed to their understanding of Pentecostal theology as “[though Pentecostal] missionaries were for the most part inexperienced... [they had] one common qualification: an overwhelming conviction that they had been filled with the Holy Spirit...”¹⁹ By continuing to emphasize the experiential and not the theological nature of religion, missionaries were able to not only appeal to impoverished men and women in Wales, but also around the world.

When missionaries began to arrive in West Africa, they realized that their inability to communicate with indigenous populations created a marked disruption in

¹⁸ Veli-Matti Karkkainen. “The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission.” In *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*. eds. Wonsuk, Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Knud Jørgensen, Kim Kirsteen, and Tony Gray, Regnum Publishing, 2014. 26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 26.

their push towards imminent salvation for all. This issue arose primarily because, these undereducated populations of missionaries often did not speak the same languages or dialects as the people they sought to missionize. Education, and later translation, therefore became a significant part of the “work” of missionaries like M. Jennie Glassey, a 19th century American Pentecostal missionary to Africa.²⁰ Within the ever-expanding Pentecostal community, Glassey became an exemplary figure in the struggle to overcome the language barrier. This status as exemplar was bestowed on Glassey because she had “the remarkable ability to command certain native dialects” to the point that her success in learning indigenous languages seemed almost divinely inspired.²¹ American Pentecostal leaders especially saw a clear relation between her experiences with language, and those of the disciples during Pentecost understood as the fulfillment of the prophet Joel’s statement, “[in] the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy.... Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”²² The work of these missionaries remained, in other words, reliant on a *physical* manifestation of the power of God through this invocation of xenoglossy, or the ability of a practitioner to speak in a language foreign to them, allowing all men, women, and even children, to engage with the Spirit directly.

²⁰ It may be of value to interject here that M. Jennie Glassey, a 17 year old girl of unknown racial origin, may have been discounted as having “spoken” in tongues simply because of her gendered or racialized status in history and not simply because of her impressive ability to speak in multiple African dialects.

²¹ Goff, James R. *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988, 73. from Robinson, James. *Divine Healing: The Holiness-Pentecostal Transition Years, 1890-1906: Theological Transposition in the Transatlantic World*. Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2013, 10.

²² Acts 2:17-18. *The Bible: New International Version*. Colorado Springs, CO: International Bible Society, 1984.

Early Pentecostal Development in the United States – Holiness Christianity, Frank Sandford, and Charles Parham

American practitioners of Holiness Christianity, a denomination rooted in both emotional and physical experiences of the spirit as evidence of sanctification, were captivated by the success of these missionary movements, both Pentecostal and otherwise. As a result of this ever present missionary spirit in the latter part of the 19th century, churches developed across the country that espoused missionization as a core tenet, seeing their congregation as “a community... that would serve as a base for world evangelization.”²³ When reaching global communities, both physically and spiritually, proved difficult, these missionization efforts were turned inward as Holiness leaders such as Frank Sandford and John Dowie began targeting Americans for conversion in place of their international counterparts. In drawing upon the success of advertisements such as: “Curriculum’ there is none: it is the Bible. ‘Faculty’ there is none: it is the Holy Ghost. ‘Length [of] course’ there is none: students go when the Director (Sandford) sends them. This is the Holy Ghost’s work. This is the real teaching. This is supernatural...”²⁴ Sandford’s school grew exponentially after its foundation in 1895. Subsequently, Holiness preachers and practitioners were drawn to Sandford’s school, later renamed “Shiloh,” to receive instruction on how to experience the “supernatural” first hand.²⁵

Upon arriving at “Shiloh,” practitioners of Holiness Christianity were exposed to a theology that seemed to parallel that of the 1904 Welsh Revival. Despite the difference

²³ Hayford, Jack W., and S. David Moore. *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival*. New York: Warner Faith, 2006.

²⁴ Fudge, Thomas A. *Christianity without the Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism*. Parkland, FL: Universal Pub., 2003, 21-22.

²⁵ Hayford, Jack W., and S. David Moore. *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival*. New York: Warner Faith, 2006.

in nomenclature, Holiness Christianity's reliance on "...emotionalism, the centrality of the Bible, preaching, plain religion, lay involvement, an emphasis on faith, healing, a distrust of education and intellectualism, and a quest after power for living,"²⁶ revealed that, on a theological level, very little separated the Holiness movement from its developing Pentecostal counterpart. The departure of Pentecostal churches, ultimately, materialized from the experience of "speaking in tongues" recorded in the biblical account of the Pentecost. Practitioners of Holiness Christianity struggled with this concept because despite the "growing fixation on Pentecostal texts like the Acts of the Apostles and Mark 16.... Glossolalia, then, loomed as something very near a textual imperative for the movement..."²⁷ Citing Pentecostal denominations' failure to comprehend the *true* meaning of this passage, Holiness Christians were quick to disassociate their conception of salvation with that of their Pentecostal counterparts, primarily by condemning the act of speaking in tongues as a meaningful experience of the sacred.

As Holiness practitioners continually reformulated the place of glossolalia in their theology, one man, Charles Fox Parham, undertook his own engagement with this theological conundrum. Prior to his enrollment at Shiloh, Parham travelled extensively, seeking an answer to the question, "How might believers know for certain that they had experienced a third work of grace?"²⁸ During his tenure at Shiloh, "...Sandford's emphasis on healing, [his] anti-institutional character, and end time restorationism

²⁶ Fudge, Thomas A. *Christianity without the Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism*. Parkland, FL: Universal Pub., 2003, 12.

²⁷ Robins, R. G. *Pentecostalism in America*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010. 21.

²⁸ Stephens, Randall J. *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008, 189.

undoubtedly affected Parham...”²⁹ It was Sandford’s inclusion of xenoglossy that truly fascinated Parham however, as he became convinced of the necessity of xenoglossy in the Holiness conception of salvation.³⁰ For Parham, experiences with the Holy Spirit provided a means by which he, a sickly, impoverished man, could access the divine outside of the classist, Calvinist, religious realm. In affirming the appeal of Pentecostalism to “Othered” populations, both Parham as well as the Revivalists in Wales, almost simultaneously ascribed to the same theological understanding of salvation as involving xenoglossy.³¹ For Parham, this personal exultation of faith provided what his parents, his church leaders, and his fellow practitioners could not provide, an undisputable confirmation that he had been uplifted and thereby distanced from his meager corporeal life.

Following his return from Shiloh, Parham immediately founded a school whose primary purpose was to highlight the theological importance of xenoglossy within Holiness Christianity. After its establishment, Parham gathered his students together and declared, “he believed *he* would soon speak in other tongues.”³² Following his declaration, Parham witnessed “twelve denominational ministers.... sitting, kneeling, and standing with hands raised, and they were all speaking in other tongues...”³³ which only served to reinforce the legitimacy he perceived within his newfound theological message.

²⁹ Hayford, Jack W., and S. David Moore. *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival*. New York: Warner Faith, 2006.

³⁰ Stephens, Randall J. *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008, 189.

³¹ At this stage in Pentecostal history the word “xenoglossy” was favored, as there was no established nomenclature for Pentecostal experience and practice. Parham’s congregation also believed unwaveringly that the languages that they were speaking were not the “nonsense” commonly associated with the modern act of speaking in tongues but were, in actuality, foreign languages that none of the congregations were familiar with.

³² Roberts Liardon. “Charles F. Parham” in *God's Generals: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Failed*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2003, 13. Emphasis added.

³³ *Ibid.* 13.

After witnessing his ecclesiastical peers being “filled” with the Holy Spirit, Parham was reassured of not only the novelty of his message, but also the power contained within it. Subsequently, Parham became determined to share this power internationally as, after stumbling upon tales of missionary Jennie Glassey, he turned his attention towards global missionization.³⁴ Driven by the same pessimistic premillennialism as his predecessors, Parham believed that it was his duty to spread the message of the Pentecost across the globe before the imminent arrival of Christ.³⁵

As Parham continued to pursue the expansion of his vision outward he simultaneously began to crystallize his theological message. For Parham, this meant capturing the *true* function of the practice of speaking in tongues as conveyed in the Book of Acts.³⁶ Later that year, through careful, private consultation of the Bible, Parham emerged with the revelation he had been looking for. The connection, for Parham, existed between the notion of salvation and the experience of *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues, not the xenoglossy previously espoused by leaders like Roberts and Sandford.³⁷ Thus, for Parham, “Glossolalia confirmed this sealing process and thus was an incontrovertible part of the new doctrine...”³⁸ In firmly establishing his doctrine, Parham simultaneously managed to isolate himself from the Holiness congregations he once called home as even his former followers concluded that, “individuals went insane through the ‘unhealthy craving for new and religious sensations’ and some of those so afflicted conceded that

³⁴ Goff, James R. *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988, 14.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 15.

³⁶ For Parham, the notion of Sola Scriptura was not only factual, but also incontestable. He believed that the Bible was for the simpleminded and was not solely to be understood by academics. His readings of the Bible therefore, were often private and lead to what has been identified as “eccentric” revelations about the text itself.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 23.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 23.

studying the Bible had driven them crazy.”³⁹ In refusing to relent despite this slew of disparaging commentary, however, Parham was able to hold fast to his racialist, ecstatic theological message and, simultaneously, established what would be the foundational belief system for the developing Pentecostal church, further developed by his student William J. Seymour.

William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival

Inspired by a divine calling similar to that of Parham, William Joseph Seymour travelled the United States, ultimately settling in Cincinnati, Ohio, a city whose religious diversity presented for Seymour a clear opportunity for religious growth.⁴⁰ In Cincinnati, he discovered “Beulah Land”⁴¹ or a place where racial equality thrived, unlike his home state of Louisiana. He quickly became affiliated with the Martin Wells Knapp’s God Bible School and his formal religious education began.⁴² After his experiences in Cincinnati, Seymour travelled to Jackson, Mississippi in early 1905 where he encountered Charles Mason and Charles Price Jones, two of the most influential Holiness leaders of the time.⁴³ The guidance of Mason and Jones did not fulfill Seymour’s desire for religious understanding, however. It would take an encounter with Charles Parham to not only spark Seymour’s interest in Parham’s newly created Pentecostal theology but also reaffirm for him the possibility of divesting Christianity of Parham’s pervasive racist

³⁹ Fudge, Thomas A. *Christianity without the Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism*. Parkland, FL: Universal Pub., 2003, 28.

⁴⁰ Cincinnati, Ohio was the home to a thriving and constantly expanding Jewish population who found the city amenable to their development in addition to the numerous and varied Christian groups that called Cincinnati home.

⁴¹ Isaiah 62:4. *The Holy Bible: New International Version, Containing the Old Testament and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1978.

⁴² Espinosa, Gastón. *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*. Durham, North Carolina. Duke University Press, 2008, 49.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 49.

ideologies. This dispensation of racist ideologies arose primarily from the xenophobic thought contained within the theology of Parham's Houston Bible School, a segregated institution. At HBS, Parham, despite taking in an African American student, continued to teach "... racial separation, Eighth-Day Creationism, white supremacy, and the idea that miscegenation caused Noah's flood.... Parham also promoted British Israelism, which posited that the Anglo-Saxon race were the lineal descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and therefore God's chosen race."⁴⁴ Upon graduating with a newfound understanding of the power of glossolalia in salvation, Seymour became determined to escape the overwhelming racism of HBS.⁴⁵

Later that year, Seymour was presented with the opportunity to settle in a congregation in California. Neely Terry, a local Holiness preacher from Los Angeles was fascinated within Seymour's Pentecostal theology and subsequently offered him control of her small Nazarene congregation.⁴⁶ After establishing himself within the African American and immigrant communities⁴⁷ of Los Angeles, Seymour's congregation began to thrive. In fact, it was this proletariat and highly diverse congregation, reminiscent of the original Pentecostal communities of Wales and Midwestern America, which continued to drive the growth of this Pentecostal movement in Los Angeles. In appealing to these congregants, Seymour expanded upon the theologically accessible message of Parham, as Seymour assured that Parham's segregationist teachings remained unsurprisingly absent. As his popularity spread however, and as Seymour was forced to

⁴⁴ Ibid. Espinosa, 51.

⁴⁵ Stewart, Adam Scott. *Azusa Street Mission and Revival* In *Handbook of Pentecostal Christianity*, DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012, 43.

⁴⁶ Davenport, Keith. "William H. Durham" in *Azusa Revisited*. New York. Lulu Publishing Company. 2008, 180.

⁴⁷ For a period of time, Seymour lived with an immigrant family and the patriarch of this family was the first to experience the baptism by the Holy Spirit at the hands of Seymour.

relocate his congregation, it became apparent, through open condemnation of Pentecostal denominations by Holiness and mainline Protestant leaders such as Charles Parham,⁴⁸ that the massive displays of glossolalia taking place in Seymour's Nazarene church both frightened and intimidated Protest factions across the United States. Despite continuing to face this seemingly universal aversion to the Pentecostal experience, Seymour managed to secure his congregational home in a 40 by 60 foot building "[with] no stained glass windows, no carpet on the floor, no bulletins at the door, and no air-conditioning, but the Spirit of Yahweh was there."⁴⁹

The Spirit of Yahweh truly "fell" on Los Angeles following the devastating San Francisco earthquake in 1906, which displaced and killed thousands of Californians. In the wake of this natural disaster, William James noted that "[i]n California every one, to some degree, was suffering, and one's private miseries were merged in the vast general sum of privation and in the all-absorbing practical problem of general recuperation."⁵⁰ This need for "general recuperation" paired with the exodus of residents of San Francisco to Los Angeles thrust these earthquake survivors right into the arms of the burgeoning Pentecostal Revival at Azusa.⁵¹ By opening his arms to these displaced persons at his new, much larger church in 312 Azusa Street, Seymour paved the way for both theological and physical expansion, as men and women from both Los Angeles and

⁴⁸ Charles Parham worked tirelessly to assure that Seymour's movement would not succeed, including refusing to send him his parishioner's license and later travelling to Azusa to preach against Seymour's new religious movement.

⁴⁹ Davenport, Keith. "William H. Durham" in *Azusa Revisited*. New York. Lulu Publishing Company. 2008, 185.

⁵⁰ James, William. "On Some Mental Effects of the Earthquake," in *Memories and Studies*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1911, 5.

⁵¹ Barfoot, Chas H. and E. Blumhofer. "Aimee Semple McPherson and the Making of Modern Pentecostalism, 1890-1926." *Theology Today*, 2012, 239-40.

across the globe travelled to Azusa to experience the Holy Spirit first hand.⁵² Azusa Street therefore became "...known world-wide as a great centre of Holy Ghost power."⁵³ Seymour, in witnessing this mass influx of immigrant populations to Azusa, saw the potential for missionary activity within his Revival's message. Subsequently, within years of being instructed on the necessity of this "Holy Ghost power" at the Azusa Street Mission, Pentecostal missionaries from Azusa had established missions of their own on almost every continent and throughout the United States.

Despite his rooting, like Parham and Sandford, in the "Spiritualism" movement, Seymour's theology remained consciously defiant of the racial, economic, and gendered language contained within the Spiritualist ideology. In embracing the inclusivity of his impoverished Welsh predecessors, Seymour was able to consciously defy the assertion that his skin color made him inherently less.⁵⁴ In successfully engaging with the missionary activity espoused by his Pentecostal predecessors, Seymour's theology would therefore become not only solidified but popularized the world over. Carrying this message to Africa, Latin America, and various "Othered" communities around the globe would provide the logical push Parham, Sandford, and Dowie had searched for and failed to achieve. Seymour, however, in solidifying his theological message and establishing a clear acceptance of "Othered" populations provided impoverished and oppressed communities around the world with a voice with which to engage the oppressive colonial and later postcolonial systems that Seymour himself had faced.

⁵² Anderson, Allan. "The Azusa Street Revival and the Emergence of Pentecostal Mission in the Early Twentieth Century" in *Transformation* Vol. 23 No. 2 April 2006. 111.

⁵³ Lake, John. "Origin of the Apostolic Faith Movement", *Pentecostal Outlook*, September, 1952. 3. from Espinosa, Gastón. *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*. Durham, North Carolina. Duke University Press, 2008. 354

⁵⁴ Campbell, Marne L. "The Newest Religious Sect Has Started in Los Angeles': Race, Class, Ethnicity, and the Origins of the Pentecostal Movement, 1906-1913." *The Journal of African American History*. Association for the Study of African American Life and History Inc. 2010. 13.

Seymour's Pentecostal Theology

It was at Azusa that Seymour's theology was first established as independently "Pentecostal," although several splinter groups emerged as a result of this Revival.⁵⁵ At his core Seymour was a firm believer in Wesleyan and Trinitarian theology and believed that salvation was carried out in two separate stages, with the addition of a third experience of baptism in the Spirit, an experience that indicated the practitioner was sanctified. He deviated from Wesleyan Pentecostalism, Parham's primary theological subscription, in his belief that baptism in the Spirit did not ensure the salvation of the participant. Nevertheless, This baptism still remained a vital part of the sanctification of the individual as it provided an impetus for inspiring a greater degree of Christian service in the recipient.⁵⁶ He believed that

[a] sinner comes to the Lord all wrapped up in sin and darkness.... The life has to be put into us before we can present any life to the Lord. He must get justified by faith... [and] the Lord has mercy on him for Christ's sake and put (sic) eternal life in his soul... and he stands before God justified as if he had never sinned.⁵⁷

This implied not only that the believer was justified by the power of God alone,⁵⁸ but also that he or she must continue to persevere within the faith to achieve salvation, as the

⁵⁵ Oneness Theology is one example of the multitude of theological offsets of Pentecostal thought created during this period of Revival

⁵⁶ Stewart, Adam Scott. "'Azusa Mission and Revival'" In Handbook of Pentecostal Christianity, 44. DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012. Robeck, Cecil M. *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*. Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2006. 63.

⁵⁷ Seymour, William J. "The Way into the Holiest," *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (October 1906) p. 4. From Synan, Vinson, and Charles R. Fox. William J. Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival. Alachua, Fla.: Bridge Logos Foundation, 2012. 136.

⁵⁸ Seymour used this Pauline epistle to defend the notion that Abraham did not achieve salvation through his works but solely through the grace of God and St. James' use of the term "justification" to mean the

initial experience of justification was not synonymous with sanctification.⁵⁹ In order to reaffirm the legitimacy of this experience as a vital part of Pentecostal theology, Seymour drew on a series of biblical proof-texts.⁶⁰ Seymour eventually crafted an authoritative statement affirming his belief that the “Pentecostal Blessing’ [was] necessary to the believer’s sanctification, his knowledge of the fullness of God and his anointing for service.”⁶¹ Seymour’s belief in the necessity of baptism in the Holy Spirit was confirmed when, on April 12th, 1906, alongside black and white congregants in a living room in Los Angeles, Seymour received the baptism in the Spirit.⁶² For Seymour, this signaled his becoming a true Pentecostal adherent, as he continued to work towards achieving salvation.

Seymour also believed strongly in the highly Messianic “Latter Rain” theology, a clear reflection of the pessimistic premillennialism of Parham and Sandford. Seymour understood this “latter rain” to be “a new shower of blessings... on the whole church, cleansing it from its sinful divisions along racial and denominational lines.”⁶³ He believed, in the wake of the experiences with the Pentecost by his devotees, that “the

acts of the saved person, which proceed from the justified believer. (Doctrines and Discipline, Seymour and “William J. Seymour: A Critical Investigation of His Soteriology, Pneumatology, and Ecclesiology” by Charles R. Fox Jr. p. 86)

⁵⁹ Seymour, William J. *Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission of Los Angeles, Cal.* Los Angeles, Calif.: 1915. 27.

⁶⁰ Seymour cites “Isaiah 11:2; Luke 24:49, John 20:21-22; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:2; Galatians 5; 1 Cor. 2:9-12; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ephes. 1:17 to Ephes. 2:1-6 [and] 3:16-19; 2 Thess. 2:13, [and] 1 John 2:20-27” as the foundational verses for his belief in the power of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. from Robeck, Cecil M. *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*. Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2006. 59.

⁶¹ Robeck, Cecil M. *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*. Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2006. 59

⁶² Espinosa, Gastón. *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History*. Durham, North Carolina. Duke University Press, 2008. 56.

⁶³ Ibid. Espinosa, xiv.

final period of revelation [had] begun.”⁶⁴ The purpose of this “rain,” or experiences with the Pentecost, in Seymour’s mind, was to sanctify and cleanse the Christians of the earth in preparation for the end times. Taken from Joel 2:23, this “latter rain” marks the final age of revelation before the coming of the Lord to the land of Zion. This verse, which states “[b]e glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful.... [h]e sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before”⁶⁵ denotes for Seymour the coming of God in the wake of Christian unity through and adherence to the unifying Pentecostal message. Having personally been cleansed by the “abundant showers” of the Pentecost, Seymour felt that the Messiah was coming and the end was near. After the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake Seymour, inspired by Frank Ewart’s understanding that “God’s great moves nature sympathizes,” became thoroughly convinced this “final” act of devastation on earth marked the movement of Christianity into the “Latter Rain” period.⁶⁶ Another demarcation of the movement’s entrance into the “Latter Rain” era was the literal coming of the Holy Spirit as this “[miracle] marked the beginning and the end of dispensations... [and in these dispensations] God acts identically: His action, in a recurring crisis, cannot deviate from its original perfection.”⁶⁷

Seymour’s theology was also highly influenced by the African spiritualities he had been exposed to as a child. At the beginning of the 20th century, prior to the Azusa Street Revival, the dissatisfaction that pervaded African American communities

⁶⁴ MacRobert, Iain. *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988. 7.

⁶⁵ *The Holy Bible: New International Version, Containing the Old Testament and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1978. Joel 2:23.

⁶⁶ Wacker, Grant. “Frank Ewart” in *Heaven below Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003. 255

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 255

perceived lack of representation in Christian denominations came to a head. Feeling as though their religious beliefs mimicked those of their one-time oppressors, black Americans desired a racially inclusive understanding of Christianity within the religious spectrum of the United States, one of the primary tenets of Seymour's Pentecostal theology.⁶⁸ Pentecostalism, particularly as expressed in the Azusa Street Revival, seemed to answer the desires of these underrepresented African American Christians. Within this denomination, the "invisible institution" of black folk Christianity' with its themes of freedom, equality, and community" was highly visible, as racial diversity pervaded the theology and the congregations of Seymour's Revival at Azusa.⁶⁹

In addition to these African American influences, a plethora of Africanist ritual understandings also played a large role in the development of Seymour's Pentecostal theology. This was most noticeable in the expression of the Holy Spirit through speaking in tongues, a ritual that dates back to the ecstatic expressions of religion performed by slaves during the 18th and 19th centuries.⁷⁰ Other Africanist ritual understandings also pervaded this movement in the form of "magic" found in the healing power of God as well as the imminent eschatology found in the aforementioned Latter Rain eschatology.⁷¹ These Africanist ritual elements could also be seen in the music of these Pentecostal congregations at Azusa. Songs such as "Under the Blood" and "The Comforter is Come" highlighted the power of the Holy Spirit, one of the most prevalent Africanist elements

⁶⁸ MacRobert, Iain. *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1988. 34.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 35.

⁷⁰ Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. *Saints in Exile the Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 6.

⁷¹ James S. Tinney, *A Theoretical and Historical Comparison of Black Political and Religious Movements*. Ph.D. dissertation, Howard University, 1978, 221. from Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. *Saints in Exile the Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 6.

within the Pentecostal tradition.⁷² Thus, William Seymour's espousal of these Africanist Pentecostal ideals provided a legitimization of the African and African American religious experience not only by African Americans, but also by participants of all racial backgrounds, through their active adherence to Seymour's theology of inclusivity.⁷³

Ultimately, all facets of Seymour's theology contributed to his emphasis on the power of mission in church development. Most significantly, the Latter Rain movement and Seymour's assertion of the necessity of inclusivity in religious practice both allowed and encouraged underprivileged, impoverished men and women from a plethora of nations to take part in the experience of glossolalia. For Seymour, training missionaries for work abroad required a four-fold process,

“[attempting] to identify the language.... [determining] whether or not the orator believed that they had received a ‘missionary call’... [establishing] whether the call was legitimate, and whether the individual was actually prepared to go.... [and giving] the candidate the finances to reach their mission.”

Soon after this “training” these supposedly well-prepared missionaries left Los Angeles for their destination within sometimes hours of being given the funding to do so.⁷⁴ Men and women such as G.W. and Daisy Batman recall feeling “shaken like a locomotive steamed up and prepared for a long journey.”⁷⁵ Seymour's inspired message began to reach far and wide; from India to South America, people were reporting experiences with

⁷² Clark, Bishop Otis G. *Azusa Outpouring: Unleashing the Holy Spirit, Signs, Wonders, & Miracles*. S.I.: Authorhouse, 2011. 22.

⁷³ Sanders, Cheryl Jeanne. *Saints in Exile the Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 8.

⁷⁴ Synan, Vinson, and Charles R. Fox. *William J. Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival*. Alachua, Fla.: Bridge Logos Foundation, 2012, 69.

⁷⁵ Hyatt, Eddie L. *Fire on the Earth: Eyewitness Reports from the Azusa Street Revival*. Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2006. 62.

the Holy Spirit as a result of this missionary work. The center of the movement had been shifted as word of the power of the Holy Spirit spread, though it was far from a seamless process of missionization.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIAN PENTECOSTALISM: FROM MISSION TO
INDEPENDENT CHURCH MOVEMENT

In January of 1907, Seymour's publication *The Apostolic Faith* boasted a page long article with the headline "Beginning of World Wide Revival." "We are expecting wonderful things from the Lord in 1907," it read, "[t]he faith is still growing and we are still just in the beginning earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints."⁷⁶ For those who had experienced the Spirit at Azusa, that revival was simply the beginning of a greater movement. International mission, it seemed, had captured the attention of these revivalists' longing; as Myrtle Shideler stated, "I have never been comfortable when out of active service for God."⁷⁷ Turning her attention to the international implications of the Pentecostal movement, Shideler reported, "[a]bout one year ago, God began showing me Africa and the great need of her perishing millions, and my heart burned with a desire to go."⁷⁸ Shideler was not alone in her desire for an international experience of Spirit as multitudes of Azusa Pentecostals began to sow the seeds of Pentecostalism throughout the world.

Wonderful things, it seemed, were truly in order for Pentecostal missionaries in "dark Africa." As one report in a later version of the *Apostolic Faith* read, "[t]he house is filled with the natives every service and they are being saved and sanctified and filled

⁷⁶ *Apostolic Faith*. Vol. 1, No. 5. Jan. 1907. 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 3.

with the Holy Ghost and healed of all manner of diseases. The Lord surely is working with the native Africans at this land.”⁷⁹ The dedication of these missionaries was palpable, as they stated and restated, “I am not going to Africa for name or fame, but for the saving of precious souls...”⁸⁰ As missionaries descended on “dark Africa” however, their testimonies seem to disappear from the paper as the realization that it was not the Spirit but poverty, isolation, and illness that awaited them on the shores of this “dark” land. With a lack of preparation, both linguistically and medically, to engage with these “natives,” it seemed as though the Spirit was not meant for Africa.

Initial Experiences of Missionization: Successes and Failures

For followers of Seymour, participants in his missionization attempts were often “missionaries of a one way ticket.”⁸¹ Families that left Azusa with plans of xenoglossy and spiritual engagement were met instead with poverty, estrangement, and even death upon arriving at their final destinations.⁸² This experience of exclusion arose as a direct result of the lack of ability of Pentecostal missionaries to communicate with their subjects. Believing, as was the reported experience of M. Jennie Glassey, that “they had been given ‘missionary tongues’ through the baptism in the Spirit,” practitioners assumed that “when they reached their destinations they would be able to speak miraculously languages of national people without having to undergo the arduous task of language

⁷⁹ *Apostolic Faith*. Vol 1, No. 7. April, 1907. 1.

⁸⁰ *Apostolic Faith*. Vol 1, No. 9. June, 1907. 4.

⁸¹ Synan, Vinson, and Charles R. Fox. *William J. Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival*. Alachua, Fla.: Bridge Logos Foundation, 2012, 70.

⁸² Allan Anderson. “Revivals and the Global Expansion of Pentecostalism After Azusa Street” in *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*. Hunter, Harold D., and Cecil M. Robeck. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2006. 179-80.

learning.”⁸³ Unfortunately, for these undereducated and underfunded missionaries, disappointment appeared almost inevitable in regards to both learning new languages and the establishment of Pentecostal revivals. Illness also factored into the lack of initial success among missionaries. In Liberia, for example, almost immediately after arriving, “[t]he entire Batman family, Cook, and Lee died...from tropical fever.”⁸⁴ With the fate of Pentecostalism relying on families like the Batmans, it seemed as though the Pentecostal effort in West Africa was doomed to failure.

Especially disheartened by the failure of these Pentecostal missions to experience xenoglossy, mention of this method of engagement with the Spirit diminished greatly in *The Apostolic Faith*. Instead, “much more reference is made... to ‘unknown tongues’ and tongues that are interpreted.”⁸⁵ As early as 1917, American Pentecostal publications such as the *Bridegroom’s Messenger* were making mention of the power of glossolalia within the history of the church.⁸⁶ The xenoglossy of Holiness missionaries such as M. Jennie Glassey was abandoned by dejected, yet determined, Pentecostals in favor of a much more accessible form of Spiritual engagement, speaking in tongues or glossolalia. Believing that “all these worketh the same Spirit, dividing to each severally, even as He will...”⁸⁷ this experience of the Spirit emerged as legitimate within the same culture that had so easily denied its legitimacy during and prior to the Azusa Street Revival.

The Development of African American Missions

⁸³ Ibid. Anderson, 180.

⁸⁴ Yong, Amos, and Estrela Alexander. *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2011, 218.

⁸⁵ “The Azusa Street Revival and the Emergence of Pentecostal Missions” *Transformation*. 23, 2. April 2006. 113.

⁸⁶ *The Bridegroom’s Messenger*. Vol. 10. Atlanta, GA, USA. April 1, 1917. 1.

⁸⁷ 1 Cor. 12:11 from *The Bridegroom’s Messenger*. Vol. 10. Atlanta, GA, USA. April 1, 1917. 1.

In the same country where the Batmans had perished, the message of black missionaries such as Frank Cumming and Edward and Mollie McCauley triumphed.⁸⁸ Though initially African American practitioners of Pentecostalism were scarce in the mission field, their impact was immediate and profound.⁸⁹ Having been exposed to missionization as early as 1822, Liberians especially offered little resistance to black Pentecostal missionaries. The development of Liberia as a haven for African American men and women fleeing oppression and enslavement in the United States meant that there was an already considerable African American population there, explaining, in part, their lack of resistance to African American missionaries.⁹⁰ In the wake of an increase in black Church missionary activity in the late 19th century driven by figures like Henry MacNeal Turner and later Marcus Garvey, what had existed solely as immigration evolved into attempted missionization in the eyes of Liberian natives.⁹¹ When Pentecostal missionaries arrived in Liberia preaching a message of faith, their presence caused very little disruption as a system of missionization brought by African American missionaries representing both mainline and African American churches was already prevalent in the area. Facing a variety of circumstances and populations, these African American missionaries carried with them Seymour's message of equality and prosperity.

Black women, especially, played a large role in the development of Pentecostal churches in West Africa. The demand for unmarried women in the mission field contributed to the massive number of black female missionaries arriving in West Africa.

⁸⁸ Yong, Amos, and Estrela Alexander. *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2011, 218.

⁸⁹ Kalu, Ogbu. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 48.

⁹⁰ Park, Eunjin. *"White" Americans in "Black" Africa: Black and White American Methodist Missionaries in Liberia, 1820-1875*. New York: Routledge, 2001, xv.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* xvi.

For women living in the United States in the mid to late 1870s, “antebellum culture [had] sanctified the home as the sphere of married women.”⁹² For unmarried women however, “the supposed natural female quality of nurturing turned teaching to a legitimate vocation for women in the nineteenth century.”⁹³ What made this vocation desirable for women, especially African American women, was not only the opportunity to spread a message of devotion but also to escape, initially, slavery, and, later, segregation-based policies in America. By focusing their attention on relieving the poverty and oppression experienced by the African population, Pentecostals had chosen to serve by recruiting missionaries and providing spaces of worship and relief for African men and women in the hinterland. Attention shifted away from the overarching and highly oppressive meta-narrative of black inferiority to a focus on the healing power of God. Subsequently, these missions into previously untapped realms of Liberia began to thrive.⁹⁴ In these hinterland missions, cultural and sociological understanding constituted something to which women, in the late 19th century, were seldom attributed, “knowledge.”⁹⁵ This knowledge, in the case of female Pentecostal missionaries, of the power contained within experiences of the Holy Spirit, consequently justified not only their actions but also their voices.⁹⁶

The diverse collection of missionaries emerging from the American Pentecostal tradition further marked this denomination as an anti-establishment enterprise, as women,

⁹² Ibid. Park, 56.

⁹³ Ibid. 56.

⁹⁴ Yong, Amos, and Estrela Alexander. *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2011, 218.

⁹⁵ V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*. Bloomington, 1988, 44. Knowledge, in the field of women’s studies, is an acknowledgement of the ability of women, specifically black women, to have an understanding of not only “natural” or “internal” processes, which are often affiliated with othered populations and thus retain a connotation of being insignificant, but also a traditional Western or higher education, and subsequently to exist on the same level as men.

⁹⁶ The majority of African missionary experiences retold in Seymour’s *Apostolic Faith* periodical are written by female missionaries. Their contributions, at least in written form, far outweigh those of their male counterparts.

African Americans, and later impoverished Africans represented a dominant part of the Pentecostal missionary effort. This stood in contrast to the almost entirely white missionary body that represented mainline European and American Christianization efforts in West Africa. Within this increasingly popular denomination, the engrained desire for change among African American missionaries, and later among missionized Africans, seemed to echo the poem on the Statue of Liberty, “[g]ive me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me....”⁹⁷ By simply acknowledging the success contained within these African and African American missionary populations, these “tired, poor, and huddled masses” were subsequently recognized as pivotal contributors to the Pentecostal missionary enterprise. As a result of the inclusive quality of Pentecostal missions, figures like Samuel Ajayi Crowther, an African Pentecostal missionary to Nigeria, were able to not only facilitate mass conversion to Pentecostalism, but also empower black people,⁹⁸ reaffirming the recognition of equality denied to them by Christian and colonial forces across West Africa. As a result of this “inclusivity,” it became abundantly clear that the anti-establishment rhetoric contained within Pentecostal theology continued to permeate both missionary and missionized populations consisting of “[n]ot surprisingly... the same class of people who accepted the message in the United States—workers, peasants, and generally those at the low end of the socioeconomic scale....”⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Inscription on the Statue of Liberty, from Emma Lazarus’ poem “The New Colossus,” and arguably incredibly relevant title for the coming wave of Pentecostal conversion throughout West Africa.

⁹⁸ Chigere, Nkem Hyginus M.V., *Foreign Missionary Background and Indigenous Evangelization in Igboland*. Münster: Lit, 2001, 124.

⁹⁹ Synan, Vinson. *The Century of the Holy Spirit: Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001, 101.

Contributing to the success of African American populations in the mission field was, what Walter Hollenweger refers to as Pentecostalism's "black oral root." This lineage, a testament to the African American postbellum ethos that constituted part of the Pentecostal message, laid the foundation for this surge in African Pentecostal conversion. Characteristics such as

orality of liturgy, narrativity of theology and witness, maximum participation..., inclusion of dream and visions in personal and public forms of worship..., [and] an understanding of the body/mind relationship that is information by experiences of correspondence between body and mind¹⁰⁰

all provided the foundation for what Hollenweger identifies as "an irruption of black African spirituality on to the wider Christian scene."¹⁰¹ This reliance on spirituality, a trait shared by both African American charismatic and Pentecostal leadership and their African traditional religious counterparts greatly contributed to a shared understanding of spirituality as a rejection of the oppressive forces of both colonialism, on the part of Africans, and segregation, on the part of African Americans. Positive reception of the Pentecostal message therefore, was contingent on the ability of African American, and other, missionaries' ability to appeal to African devotees to communicate Pentecostal theology through a shared sense of discontent with the system at large.

The Shift in British Colonial Participation

¹⁰⁰ Hocken, Peter. *The Challenges of the Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Messianic Jewish Movements: The Tensions of the Spirit*. Farnham, England: Ashgate Pub, 2009, 9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 9.

In order to understand the general dissatisfaction on the part of African people to continued Westernization, it is important to first contextualize the experiences of these African people. After the 1885 Berlin Conference granted official control of the colony of Nigeria, the British colonial enterprise reached its apogee. Therefore, at the beginning of the 20th century in Nigeria, as African American men and women were flocking there with hopes of converting Africans, the Nigerian population was enmeshed in a highly regimented and authoritarian British colonial regime. As colonial control strengthened for the majority of countries in the Niger Delta, the turn of the century marked “a time of transition, from predominately traditional society (in spite of earlier European contact which so far had made no remarkable impression) to a more westernised type.”¹⁰² The implementation of policies related specifically to language and education were designed to assure not only political but also cultural control as,

[l]anguage as communication and as culture are... products of each other.... Language carries culture, and culture carries... the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world... Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world.¹⁰³

Through this carefully structured policymaking on the part of the British, the conception of personhood via their language by African men and women had come under attack.

As early as 1891, in order to affirm the power and necessity of the English language, the British colonial government passed an ordinance detailing specific

¹⁰² Tasie, Godwin Onyemaechi Mgbechi. *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta: 1864-1918*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978. 166.

¹⁰³ Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1967, 16.

pedagogical objectives for Nigerian students as “[a]n adequate knowledge of English [was] an indispensable requirement for anyone to rise above or to live in any wider context than the village.”¹⁰⁴ This ordinance, which decreed that every Nigerian student should be required to take “English language, arithmetic... and English grammar, English history and geography,” for which the required textbooks were in English, simply reaffirmed the superiority of British culture and language.¹⁰⁵ Even foreign languages were to be directly translated into English, further positioning the English culture and language as superior held within the secular colonial structure.¹⁰⁶ Subsequently, English became the mandatory language of instruction in the public school system, totally doing away with not only African languages and dialects but also their association with “education.”

Within the religious sphere, Protestant and Catholic churches that had previously encouraged the translation of the Bible in Yoruba fell victim to colonial control. These iterations of Christianity, whose strength was previously equated with the might of the British forces on the battlefield, became pawns in the development of British control in Nigeria.¹⁰⁷ Missionary teachers were held to the same strict language standards as secular teachers, and the body of work they had compiled in Yoruba, including a Yoruba Bible, was deemed “neither very extensive nor of a high quality.”¹⁰⁸ Monetary support for these

¹⁰⁴ Brosnahan, L.F. “Some Historical Cases of Language Imposition.” in *Language in Africa* Cambridge, 1963. 23-24.

¹⁰⁵ Stallard, George and Edward Harrinson Richards, “Ordinances, and Order, and Rules Thereunder, In Force in the Colony of Lagos.” London: *Taiv Publishers and Booksellers*. Stevens and Sons, Limited. 1894. 477.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 477.

¹⁰⁷ Adetugbo, Abiodun. “The development of English in Nigeria up to 1914: A Socio-Historical Appraisal.” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Historical Society of Nigeria. Vol. 9, No. 2. June 1978. 100.

¹⁰⁸ Awoniyi, Timothy A., “The Yoruba Language and the Formal School System: A Study of Colonial Language Policy in Nigeria, 1882-1952” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* Vol. 8, No. 1. 1975, 67.

missionary schools also came under attack, as the government was, after 1891, legally entitled to “withhold, either altogether, or for a time, the whole, or any part, of any grant already made, to any school.... [when] the managers have failed to comply with any of the requirements of the Board Rules...”¹⁰⁹ Therefore, in order to receive the funding needed to continue educating children in these Christian schools, teachers had to abide by the linguistic dictates of the law. Consequently, due to its affiliation with the colonial government through funding and instruction, British missionary education soon became synonymous with power, as “the mark of the educated was proficiency in English.”¹¹⁰ Though these missionary schools seemed to fold easily under the power of the British colonial enterprise, African practitioners of Christianity refused to do the same.

The Influence of Revivalism in the Spread of Pentecostalism

At the turn of the century, following the implementation of harsh religious and political policy at the hands of mainline Protestant and Catholic missionaries, the missionary force in Nigeria consisted primarily of freed slaves from Sierra Leone and Liberia.¹¹¹ Despite their own experiences with discrimination at the hands of their white missionary counterparts, these African missionaries arrived in Nigeria “burdened with inherited prejudices... manifested in the strict intolerance they exhibited toward the indigenous culture.”¹¹² Driven by religious rather than nationalist interests, African missionaries were oftentimes more thorough in dispelling African Traditional Religious

¹⁰⁹ Stallard, George and Edward Harrinson Richards, “Ordinances, and Order, and Rules Thereunder, In Force in the Colony of Lagos.” London: *Taiv Publishers and Booksellers*. Stevens and Sons, Limited. 1894. 477.

¹¹⁰ Adetugbo, Abiodun. “The development of English in Nigeria up to 1914: A Socio-Historical Appraisal.” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Historical Society of Nigeria. Vol. 9, No. 2. June 1978. 100.

¹¹¹ Kalu, Ogbu, Chima J. Korieh, G. Ugo Nwokejim and Obioma Nnaemeka, *Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu U. Kalu*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005, 20.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 20.

influences than their British colonial counterparts. By virtue of their acknowledgement of African Traditional Religion as a legitimate manifestation of religious practice, African missionaries became more determined to replace one religious tradition with another whereas “Europeans [were inclined] to treat the whole thing as not worth serious attention, as if it was just what might be expected of heathenism...”¹¹³ Thus, the African Traditional Religious expressions that British and American counterparts had dismissed as simply “heathenism” became the target of these African missionaries, whose cultural context allowed them to recognize the legitimacy of these religious manifestations. In the wake of British ignorance, men like Samuel Ajayi Crowther were pivotal in assuring a structured, Europeanized manifestation in place of African Traditional religion within the burgeoning missionary movement in West Africa.¹¹⁴

Having faced constant discrimination as colonized subjects within the British colonial framework, Africans were openly opposed to continued segregation at the hands of missionary forces. Anti-African sentiment on the part of even African missionaries, therefore, was met with rebellion and dissent by leading African nationalists in the region. Opposed to the “colonialism, racial superiority, and white leadership of the Churches,” these Africanists were determined to regain control over the missionizing force in Nigeria.¹¹⁵ In breaking from the oppressive structure and authority contained within the European missionary churches, these African-derived churches were able to integrate traditional cultural elements such as polygamy, healing, and spiritualism into

¹¹³ Peel, J.D.Y. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000. 21.

¹¹⁴ Samuel Crowther was one of the first African missionaries in the Niger region. Though he was born in Nigeria, he identified with the Sierra Leonean population and eventually moved to Sierra Leone where he converted to Anglicanism and began to engage in missionary activity, primarily in the Niger Delta.

¹¹⁵ Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, xviii.

the Christian framework.¹¹⁶ One of the most exemplary figures in this struggle to overcome American and European missionary control was Garrick Sokari Braide, arguably the first African revivalist in Nigeria.¹¹⁷ Braide, who had no formal education outside of Christian missionary churches, “recommended a liturgy in which natives should praise God in their local songs, prayers, and worship... [and in turn] castigated missionaries for not taking the world-view of the Africans into consideration when presenting the Gospel.”¹¹⁸ He felt empowered by his ability to engage with the Spirit on an “African” level believing that “Mission Churches made Christianity too remote and intellectual” for poorly educated and impoverished African people, like himself. By introducing African elements to Christian life, Braide was able to simultaneously empower and instruct African peoples to revive the spirit on their own terms.

When African American Pentecostal missionaries arrived in West Africa, preaching a message of equality in political and religious involvement, the response by black Africans was overwhelmingly positive. Less than a decade after its establishment in America, Pentecostalism had not only taken root in Africa but was growing at an astonishing pace. “In 1913 and 1914... [for example] Grebo Liberian William Wade Harris began preaching on the Ivory Coast and Gold Coast...” marking “one of the greatest influxes of Africans to Christianity ever seen.”¹¹⁹ Seemingly mimicking the explosive growth of “classical” Pentecostalism in the American context, African Pentecostalism, inspired mainly through revivals, began to dominate the religious scene,

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Ologinjana, xviii.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 1.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 5.

¹¹⁹ Anderson, Allan. *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 127.

simultaneously dissolving denominational and national boundaries.¹²⁰ By allowing black Africans to retain certain traditional beliefs and practices within the framework of Christianity, revivals stood as a means not only to achieve personal salvation but also to save the African people from the oppressive system of colonization that had swept the continent as "many revivals appeared amid African efforts to cope with the encroaching powers of colonial officers, white settlers, and missionaries."¹²¹ The act of revival in itself, therefore, became a means of opposing an increasingly oppressive colonial power structure. In turn, by incorporating African elements into these revivals, these increasingly popular anti-colonial revivals "laid the groundwork for those who would later leave the Anglican Church to found 'Native African Churches.'"¹²²

For the impoverished and underrepresented black majority in countries like Nigeria, these revivals also presented a solution for the stratification of black Africans within colonized African society. This was exemplified in the relationship between "Native Churches" and Ethiopianism, one of the first Christian religious sects espousing a belief in pan-Africanism and a shared anti-colonial sentiment founded entirely by and for African people, as, "while Ethiopianism appealed to the African elite, the new prophetic movement created mass conversion and broadened the enlarging Christian frontier into rural areas where missionary churches did not exist." For impoverished, underrepresented African men and women, like Garrick Sokari Braide, revivalism provided an outlet that was not reliant on monetary or missionary support. Subsequently, as missionary influences became mitigated by an increasing sense of pride held by

¹²⁰ Kalu, Ogbu. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 28.

¹²¹ Ibid. 28.

¹²² Yong, Amos, and Estrela Alexander. *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2011, 212.

African communities, new manifestations of the Christian message began to take root in Southwestern Nigeria. In engaging with the experience of the Holy Spirit in their own localities and through their own religious lenses, African practitioners of Pentecostalism were inspired, whether divinely or politically, to embrace an Africanized manifestation of the religion that empowered them.

Out of this fluid moment in Nigerian history, a new manifestation of the Pentecostal message emerged in Yorubaland, “founded by Christians who sought to reflect African cultures and their concomitant way of life, within the context of their faith.”¹²³ Adopting the title “praying people” or “Aladura” churches, this novel Christian movement sought to give institutional legitimacy to the agency African practitioners of Pentecostalism felt during this period of increasing African nationalism. In engaging with African traditional elements, these Aladura Christians were able, simultaneously, to “establish the inevitability of the [indigenous]¹²⁴ culture as a vehicle of meaningful transmission of the gospel” and, in turn, to affirm the legitimacy of African Traditional religious expression in a highly oppressive and missionary-driven cultural context.¹²⁵ Furthermore, in determining the proper amalgamation of Christian and African Traditional Religious elements for the foundation of a new religious movement in Nigeria, these previously silent members of colonial society were able to establish their faith, and in turn their perceived salvation through their belief in a power much greater than the oppressive British government, their God.

¹²³ Dada, Adekunle Oyinloye. “Old Wine in New Bottle: Elements of Yoruba Culture in Aladura Christianity.” *Black Theology* 12, no. 1, 2014, 21. The word “primal” in this quotation has been replaced by the word “indigenous” out of respect for this cultural context and religious expression.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 21.

CHAPTER 3
 PENTECOSTALISM IN NIGERIA: SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE AND THE
 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The Influenza Epidemic and the Institutionalization of Aladura

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, English colonialism continued to ensure that Yoruba people were systematically excluded from “every decision contributing to [their] destiny and that of the world, and all cultural and social responsibility....”¹²⁶ Desperate for complete control and believing that “it was the responsibility of the ‘civilized nations’ to uplift Africa...,” continually compromising the rights and cultural validity of the Yoruba people became paramount to maintaining a viable structure in which power rested solely in the hands of a legitimated British government.¹²⁷ Despite the movement towards African nationalism and revivalism that characterized the African Inspired churches of the early 20th century, the success of ordinances like that of 1891 made it seem as though the British government was interminably implanted within the Nigerian context. But, as the 20th century entered into its second decade, illness struck the Westernized world and, in turn, its colonies in the

¹²⁶ Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. New York: Orion Press, 1965. 135.

¹²⁷ Falola, Toyin. *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, 174. One of the best expressions of this sentiment can be found in the often cited “White Man’s Burden” poem written by Rudyard Kipling, a noted promoter of the colonial agenda and author of pro-colonial literature such as “Kim.” These works by Kipling reveal that the plausibility structure, or the legitimated, functioning structure of power within the colonial enterprise was designed to “save” the Nigerian people from their own destitution, which developed as a result of the barbarism inherent in their current and past nature.

form of the “the devil’s flu.”¹²⁸ Contracted first by army men such as Private Albert Gitchell, the first recorded case, the Spanish flu grew to pandemic levels by the end of the year as more men and women were sent around the globe for the sake of stability during World War 1.¹²⁹ This influenza destroyed any hope of stability as it brought a shock-wave of panic that spanned the globe.

The influenza pandemic continued to spread throughout Europe and the United States, seemed an almost unstoppable force. Therefore, in August of 1918, when a ship arrived in Sierra Leone with infected passengers on board, the British government immediately took action to delay the spread of this devastating disease.¹³⁰ Upon receiving word, via cablegram, of the dangers posed by this encroaching disease, the Nigerian colonial government immediately sprang into action, declaring the influenza pandemic “highly contagious.”¹³¹ Unfortunately, this decree did little to stop the spread of this highly contagious and ruinous outbreak. Southwestern Nigeria faced especially heavy casualties as “[o]fficial attempts to regulate and control ‘flu were largely ineffective... [as] the medical means to deal with the infection were limited and slight.”¹³² To make matter worse, especially for the colonized Yoruba population, “the poor and those living in overcrowded conditions... were more vulnerable and suffered higher mortality rates.”¹³³ The lack of effective British response, combined with the massive death toll

¹²⁸ Davies, Pete. *The Devil's Flu: The World's Deadliest Influenza Epidemic and the Scientific Hunt for the Virus That Caused It*. New York: Henry Holt &, 2000.

¹²⁹ O'Neal, Claire. *The Influenza Pandemic of 1918*. Hockessin, DE: Mitchell Lane Publishing, 2008. 28.

¹³⁰ Falola, Toyin, and Emily Brownell. “The Price of ‘Modernity’ in *Landscape, Environment and Technology in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. New York: Routledge, 2012, 151.

¹³¹ Ibid. 151.

¹³² Killingray, David. “A New 'imperial Disease': The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-9 and Its Impact on the British Empire”. *Caribbean Quarterly* 49, no. 4. University of the West Indies, 2003, 32.

¹³³ Ibid. 32.

within impoverished, typically colonized, populations, caused a massive disruption in colonial policy.

The deaths of almost 18 million Nigerian people shook the plausibility structure of the seemingly impenetrable British colonial government.¹³⁴ As the impoverished and underrepresented Nigerian population began to internalize the failure of the British to protect their cultural and physical interests, quickly escalating and sometimes violent rebellion began to take root in Yorubaland.¹³⁵ In Southwestern Nigeria, the Egba Uprising in 1918 epitomized this immediate, and dynamic, rejection of colonial policy.¹³⁶ This revolt, a result of increasing colonial pressures placed on formerly sovereign Yoruba populations,¹³⁷ combined with the failure of the British to effectively contain the Spanish flu, marked the beginning of the period of dissent against the faltering British plausibility structure in Nigeria. Though the uprising did little to damage the colonial infrastructure, it provided the basis for a mounting anti-colonial sentiment among Nigerian populations in Yorubaland. As Pentecostal leadership began to embrace this movement of anti-colonial dissent, mirroring the African nationalist sentiment of the revival period just decades prior, new manifestations of “Aladura” churches, a manifestation of Pentecostalism that paired Yoruba beliefs and rituals with those espoused at Azusa, began to appear in the region. In the midst of global pandemic destruction, these institutionalized manifestations of African nationalist religiosity subsequently provided a space where the limitations of Westernization could be discussed.

¹³⁴ Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy; Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967.

¹³⁵ Falola, Toyin. *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, 89.

¹³⁶ Coleman, James Smoot. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958, 173.

¹³⁷ Within the British colonial system, Yorubaland was considered to be a “sovereign” territory until about 1914, when the colonial government took control of the region.

The Faith Tabernacle Movement

Though the influenza pandemic was interpreted by the British colonial enterprise as primarily a secular issue, “[m]ost African Christians were convinced that the crisis had an important spiritual dimension.”¹³⁸ Disenchanted with the structure of missionary Christianity, seen as an extension of the failures of the British government, “a group of Christians [gathered] together to pray to remedy the situation” at St. Savior’s Anglican Church in Ijebu Ode.¹³⁹ Stemming from the intensity of this prayer meeting, Daddy Ali, the parish gardener, reported experiencing visions of the “darkness” of his local Anglican congregation.¹⁴⁰ After being reminded by church leadership that “he was a gardener, not a dreamer” Ali turned to the church elders,¹⁴¹ who were entranced by his vision of religion.¹⁴² Subsequently, these lay church elders broke from the missionary Anglican Church to form their own prayer society known as the Egbe Okuta Iyebiye or the “Diamond Society.”¹⁴³ This clear break with the oppressive, and in Ali’s case dismissive, colonial missionary enterprise marked the beginning of a determined Nigerian Christian development and, in turn, the institutionalization of the Aladura movement.

¹³⁸ “Faith Tabernacle,” in *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*. Clarke, Peter B. London: Routledge, 2006. 201.

¹³⁹ Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, 20. and Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 29.

¹⁴⁰ Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 29.

¹⁴¹ It is important to note here that the lay leadership within St. Savior’s was comprised of primarily Nigerian men and women whereas the ecumenical leadership was comprised of Sierra Leonean missionaries.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 29.

¹⁴³ Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, 20.

Ali's Diamond Society assumed new leadership in 1919 when D. O. Odubanjo joined the congregation.¹⁴⁴ Odubanjo, "a young African who had been seriously impressed by reading a publication published by the American faith-healing group called the Faith Tabernacle"¹⁴⁵ immediately worked to establish ties with the American Holiness organization.¹⁴⁶ Missionary leadership became deeply troubled by the burgeoning relationship between these two groups, openly challenging the movement on issues of praxis and theology. In 1922, facing dissent from Anglican leadership, the Faith Tabernacle movement formally disassociated itself from the Christian Missionary Society, marking the establishment of the first Aladura-inspired African Independent Church in Nigeria.¹⁴⁷ Though the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle would later split from its American counterpart,¹⁴⁸ this foundation's monetary and spiritual support provided an unassailable stimulus for growth within the Nigerian context.¹⁴⁹

As the popularity of this church movement began to expand throughout Nigeria, the theology of its practitioners became solidified. Within its maturing belief system, the Nigerian manifestation of the Faith Tabernacle movement grew both to oppose its American complement, primarily through their engagement with the practice of faith

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Olojinjana, 20.

¹⁴⁵ "Revolution/Integration in African Religious Movements." In *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution: An Interdisciplinary and Cross-cultural Collection of Essays*. Ed. Lincoln, Bruce. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 137.

¹⁴⁶ Interestingly enough, the American Faith Tabernacle movement was rooted in the teachings of John Dowie, the same proto-Pentecostal leader who influenced both Frank Sandford and Charles Parham in the development of their Holiness and Pentecostal theologies, respectively. With the Pentecostal revivals taking place just decades prior, it would make sense that relationships with American Pentecostal churches, undergoing the same period of revival, would be established easily.

¹⁴⁷ There were already "Ethiopian" churches being established in Nigeria, though they were in no way affiliated and, in fact, were often dismissive of the growth of Aladura churches because of the relative poverty of practicing Aladura Christians. "Faith Tabernacle Congregation and the Emergence of Pentecostalism in Colonial Nigeria..." Mohr, Adam. 200. (*Journal of Religion in Africa*, May 1, 2013).

¹⁴⁸ Scholars disagree about the exact date of the split between American and Nigerian Faith Tabernacle churches.

¹⁴⁹ Ositelu, Rufus Okikiolaolu Olubiyi. *African Instituted Churches: Diversities, Growth, Gifts, Spirituality, and Ecumenical Understanding of African Initiated Churches*. Münster: Lit, 2002, 89.

healing and glossolalia. A clear reflection of the dissatisfaction on the part of Aladura practitioners who had experienced a distinct lack of success with Westernized medicine, the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle “prohibited any use of medicine except blessed water... [prescribing] prayer-healing practices and separation from non-Christians” when congregants fell ill.¹⁵⁰ In the wake of the devastating losses suffered during the influenza outbreak, the theological insistence of prayer in lieu of medication expressed practitioners’ feelings that Western medicine had outlived its usefulness in Nigeria, with God replacing British colonial forces as the primary authority. Their American counterparts, having not experienced the losses on the same scale during the pandemic, subsequently continued to advocate for and consistently use Westernized medicine. On the issue of glossolalia as well, American faith-healing Christians dissented greatly from the practices of their Nigerian Pentecostal brothers and sisters. This created an air of dissent between the two church bodies for “while the FTC stressed glossolalia, the American FT denounced it and taught that it was a Satanic delusion.”¹⁵¹ This theological disagreement marked the beginning of the end for the close involvement between the American and Nigerian Faith Tabernacle organizations, and, in 1926, the two bodies officially split from one another.

In the wake of this division, adherents of the Faith Tabernacle movement in Nigeria sought new, established new, international ecumenical connections to enhance their minute religious presence in Yorubaland. Determined in their desire for self-preservation and growth, the Faith Tabernacle – Nigeria began to appeal to the

¹⁵⁰ “Revolution/Integration in African Religious Movements.” In *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution: An Interdisciplinary and Cross-cultural Collection of Essays*. Ed. Lincoln, Bruce. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 137.

¹⁵¹ “Faith Tabernacle,” in *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*. Clarke, Peter B. London: Routledge, 2006. 201.

missionary sensibility of non-colonially affiliated Protestant churches, namely Holiness and Pentecostal churches, to secure monetary and theological support. Assuring this international cooperation proved difficult for the movements' African leadership as, in 1928, "[t]he members of the *Aladura* group tried... to affiliate with Faith and True Temple Church in Toronto, Canada, but this did not succeed due to doctrinal differences."¹⁵² Devastated by the failure of their congregation to attract the attention of Westernized Pentecostal churches, members of the congregation began to pray for a revival.¹⁵³ This "revival" appeared, as it had decade's prior, in the grass-roots spirituality contained within the Welsh Pentecostal movement.

The Great Revival of 1930

In the midst of this divisive period in Pentecostal history, practitioners within the Aladura movement were desperate for direction and, in turn, salvation through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. While Pentecostal leadership continued to rely on the guidance of the British Apostolic Church, laymen and women within the Faith Tabernacle movement looked to God for assistance in developing their spirituality. When Joseph Babolala began to report his experiences with the Holy Spirit, therefore, Pentecostal audiences were quickly captivated by his message. Within Nigerian colonial society, Babalola, whose father had been a patron of the Anglican Church in Yorubaland, was simply an impoverished man with a primary school education.¹⁵⁴ Within the Aladura

¹⁵² Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, 21.

¹⁵³ Ibid. 21.

¹⁵⁴ Fatokun, S.A. "The 'Great Move of God' in an African Community: A Retrospect of the 1930s Indigenous Pentecostal Revival in Nigeria and Its Impact on Nigerian Pentecostalism" *Exchange* Vol. 38 (2009). 38.

movement however, he quickly established himself as a leader as, in the latter part of 1928, “Babalola reportedly received a divine call as a prophet and evangelist after a series of spiritual experiences....”¹⁵⁵ As a result of this reputed outpouring of the Spirit, Babalola turned to former Diamond Society leader David Odubanjo for guidance¹⁵⁶ and was subsequently baptized into the church.¹⁵⁷ Immediately following Babalola’s alleged glossolalic experience, laypersons within the church began reporting their own experiences with the Spirit. This increase in reports of glossolalia were a signal element of the Great Revival of 1930.

Babalola’s initial visions were not his only contribution to this period in Nigeria’s Pentecostal history, however, as he became, for Nigerians, “the Lord’s lead-tool for diverse miracles, signs and wonders.”¹⁵⁸ Despite his relative youth within the Aladura movements, his self-reported visions of the Holy Spirit “attracted some two million people in a matter of just weeks,”¹⁵⁹ echoing the same popularity that Seymour experienced at Azusa. This overwhelming popularity was due not only to the charisma of Pentecostal leaders such as Babalola, but also relied greatly on the experiential component of Babalola’s Pentecostal understanding.¹⁶⁰ As Babalola and others continued to report experiencing visions of the Holy Spirit, the theological message of the Great

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Fatokun, 38.

¹⁵⁶ Shaw, Mark. “Local Revival and Global Expansion.” In *Religion on the Move!: New Dynamics of Religious Expansion in a Globalizing World*. Ed. Adogame, Afeosemime U. and Shobana Shankar. Leiden: Brill, 2013, 303.

¹⁵⁷ “Revolution/Integration in African Religious Movements.” In *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution: An Interdisciplinary and Cross-cultural Collection of Essays*. Ed. Lincoln, Bruce. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 137.

¹⁵⁸ Adelegan, Femi. *Nigeria’s Leading Lights of the Gospel: Revolutionaries in Worldwide Christianity*. Westbow Press, 2013, 18.

¹⁵⁹ Stark, Rodney. *The Triumph of Faith: Why the World is More Religious than Ever*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2015. 118.

¹⁶⁰ Babalola performed a series of miracles, which he attributed to his direct encounter with the Holy Spirit, evidenced by his speaking in tongues and in dreams. This drove Babalola to emphasize Pentecostal understandings of faith over the Anglican theology he had been raised with.

Revival began to shift. In accentuating beliefs such as “the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual manifestation of seeing visions, prophesying, speaking in tongues and dreaming,”¹⁶¹ which had been a part of the previously established Faith Tabernacle belief system, *physical* experiences of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues became a prime means of religious expression. Despite a colonial context that continued to support them men and women of all socioeconomic backgrounds, such as Joesph Babalola, were able to thrive in this revival movement.

Though reactions to the Great Revival within impoverished Nigerian communities were overwhelmingly positive, the British colonial government saw this incursion of charismatic religious influence as a direct threat to governmental stability.¹⁶² As congregants of British sanctioned churches flocked to this new movement in droves, favoring the Aladura Pentecostal alternative, the colonial subversion of the Pentecostal theological message became apparent to British colonial officials.¹⁶³ As early as 1930, this formerly meager religious domination began to elicit a reaction from top government officials, as one officer within the Nigerian government remarked, “I always set my face against these new conceptions of religion and the establishment of mission, which are not fully recognized and not under the control of responsible authority.”¹⁶⁴ As a result of this opposition on the part of colonial officials, harsh punishments were meted out against Pentecostal populations across the country, as even Joseph Babalola was “imprisoned...

¹⁶¹ Adelegan, Femi. *Nigeria's Leading Lights of the Gospel: Revolutionaries in Worldwide Christianity*. Westbow Press, 2013, 18.

¹⁶² Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 34.

¹⁶³ Fatokun, S.A. “The ‘Great Move of God’ in an African Community: A Retrospect of the 1930s Indigenous Pentecostal Revival in Nigeria and Its Impact on Nigerian Pentecostalism” *Exchange* Vol. 38 (2009). 50.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 45.

on the charge of witch-hunting, as a pretext to detain a man they deemed subversive.”¹⁶⁵ Despite the arrest of Babalola in 1932,¹⁶⁶ colonial efforts to arrest Pentecostal growth did little to curb the explosive popularity of Aladura churches in Yorubaland. For the Faith Tabernacle church, the arrest of Babalola simply marked a period in which new, international leadership became imperative.

The Emergence of the Apostolic Church in Nigeria: The Development of African Independent Churches

Facing increasingly devastating persecution at the hands of the British colonial government, such as the arrest of the Apostle Babalola, the Faith Tabernacle of Nigeria amplified its appeal to Pentecostal and Holiness denominations in Western nations in the hopes of gaining monetary and theological support. Assuring this international cooperation had proven historically exigent for the movement’s African leadership as the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle continually failed to garner international awareness and instead saw its leaders incarcerated by oppressive British colonial and missionary leadership.¹⁶⁷ With this upsurge in Pentecostal persecution facing congregations throughout the country, international intervention seemed the only answer to the troubling interference of governmental and missionary forces in the religious expression of Aladura practitioners. As a result of this maltreatment, Faith Tabernacle leadership was forced to search for comprehensive, theological solutions to this institutionalized

¹⁶⁵ This was a completely unsubstantiated charge, as his arrest coincided clearly with British attempts to delegitimize and destroy Pentecostal manifestations across Nigeria. Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 34.

¹⁶⁶ Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, 21.

¹⁶⁷ Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 34.

oppression outside of the institution itself.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, when Odubanjo exposed congregants to the grass-roots belief system of the British Apostolic Church through their monetary, ecumenical, and educational support, it seemed as though the resolution to the Faith Tabernacle's experiences of colonial suppression appeared, as it had decade's prior, in the institutionalized result of the 1905 Welsh Revival, the British Apostolic Church. When word came to the Faith Tabernacle that missionaries from Wales would soon be arriving, it seemed as though this Pentecostal congregations' prayers had been answered. Finding in their Welsh predecessors a shared sense of freedom within the Pentecostal message, these similarly oppressed and primarily underprivileged populations established a profound connection that practitioners of Aladura Christianity had been praying for since their split with the American Faith Tabernacle.¹⁶⁹

Despite this seemingly perfect opportunity for cooperation, some Aladura Christians, within the then independent Faith Tabernacle movement, were hesitant to engage with British authority as, throughout Nigeria, British "[missionaries] generally viewed the Aladura as reprobate Christians following a deviant form of the faith."¹⁷⁰ As a result of their organization being labeled by their British colonial masters as "deviant," an increase in British influence in the development of Aladura Pentecostalism seemed, for a number of congregants, to contradict the anti-colonial, black nationalistic, and revival-based Christianity, they had worked tirelessly to establish. Following the proposal of

¹⁶⁸ Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, 21.

¹⁶⁹ Ositelu, Rufus Okikiolaolu Olubiyi. *African Instituted Churches: Diversities, Growth, Gifts, Spirituality, and Ecumenical Understanding of African Initiated Churches*. Münster: Lit, 2002, 89

¹⁷⁰ Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 34.

unification with the British Apostolic Church, one woman's dream called the viability of this relationship into question.¹⁷¹

Exemplary of this dissention, Sophie Odunlami, a foundational figure in the Diamond Society, recalled seeing, “‘an African holding a European baby,’ which she understood to mean that Europeans were babes in [their] understanding compared with Africans.”¹⁷² Echoing the sentiment of Faith Tabernacle laymen and women, this implied, that the African Inspired Faith Tabernacle church should continue to remain independent of British influence. When she reported her vision to Odubanjo however, who was “‘predisposed to inviting the British church,” she received a very different interpretation, one that reflected the international aspirations of the Faith Tabernacle leadership.¹⁷³ Odubanjo “‘interpreted her vision to mean that the European Apostolic Church was innocent as a baby and would not harm the African Church.”¹⁷⁴ Because of the power held by Odubanjo within the Faith Tabernacle church, this declaration of the “‘innocence” of British Apostolic church leadership seemed to cement the decision to unite the Nigerian and Welsh church bodies. Soon after this decision was made British Apostolic Bishops George Perfect and Idris Vaughan began their voyage to Yorubaland.¹⁷⁵

When Bishops Perfect and Vaughan arrived in Nigeria in 1931, they were immediately greeted by a society struggling with social and economic deterioration. Prior to and throughout their time in Nigeria, Aladura children's access to missionary schools became increasingly diminished as teachers “‘drove’ Aladura children away from

¹⁷¹ Ibid. Crumbley, 34.

¹⁷² Ibid. 34-35.

¹⁷³ Ibid. 35.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. 35.

¹⁷⁵ Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, 21.

mission schools, reserving the valued seats for loyal Anglicans...”¹⁷⁶ Realizing the ramifications of not receiving a “colonial” education, Pentecostal congregations relied on the new pedagogical structure provided by the Apostolic Bishops, a system that relied on the same religiously-based educational system to which they had once belonged. For Aladura Pentecostals, with the assistance of their Welsh counterparts, this meant establishing and subsequently solidifying a theological message of instruction, one which reflected the “the intermingling of the classical and the traditional... rooted in the ‘power question’ in African cosmology... [and] the thirst for deeper spirituality and re-awakening which was lacking in mission Christianity.”¹⁷⁷ Having faced this hardship previously, both Welsh Pentecostals worked tirelessly with their Nigerian counterparts to establish a focused and pertinent theological message reliant on “[a]cknowledging the power of evil, as well as recognizing value of prophecy, Biblical literalism, and their spirit-filled Pentecostal worship style with glossolalia.”¹⁷⁸ This message provided these children as well as their parents with the potential growth, something consistently denied to this impoverished Nigerian men and women by their colonial government.

Through their continued intervention in the emergent Faith Tabernacle church, these Welsh missionaries simultaneously assured the successful growth of Pentecostal churches within the Faith Tabernacle movement and negated the assertion that British incursion was entirely negative. Through this tireless and localized support of their Pentecostal counterpart, part of the continued assertion of the universality of the

¹⁷⁶ Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 34.

¹⁷⁷ Onuoha, Godwin. “Exit’ and ‘Inclusion’ in the Nigerian Public Space.” In *Topographies of Faith: Religion in Urban Spaces*. eds. Becci, Irene, Marian Burchardt, and José Casanova. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 2013, 212.

¹⁷⁸ Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 35.

Pentecostal message, these Welsh missionaries worked tirelessly to distance themselves from an oppressive system of government such as the one they had worked to subvert in their own nation. “Vaughan’s acceptance of the reality of witchcraft... and his proclamation of Christ’s power, [for example,] appealed to local demands and resulted in the formation of new churches,” subsequently solidified the bond between African and British Apostolic bodies.¹⁷⁹

As this newfound sense of unity was established, it drove Faith Tabernacle members to embrace the incursion of British influence,¹⁸⁰ even assuming the name “Apostolic” to describe their international ecumenical organization.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, the added support of British Apostolic leadership lent a new stability to the growing Apostolic Church of Nigeria that provided its congregants with a space¹⁸² free of oppressive British colonial influences in which they could establish a new theological message. Relying on the experiences of both missionary and African leadership, this new theological message reflected both the continued Western Pentecostal influence that had pervaded African Instituted churches since their inception *and* the previously developed independent African Traditional religiosity. Subsequently, within this novel, syncretic system of belief, glossolalia developed as perhaps the most significant theological manifestation of anti-colonial sentiment.

¹⁷⁹ Burgess, Richard. *Nigeria’s Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)*. Carlisle, Cumbria, England: Paternoster, 2008, 69.

¹⁸⁰ This does not mean that all practitioners of Faith Tabernacle Christianity agreed with the unification between their Faith Tabernacle congregation and the British Apostolic Church. At this point in Nigerian history, though the majority of Pentecostal practitioners within the Faith Tabernacle movement made the shift, the Faith Tabernacle still retained a degree of autonomy from its Pentecostal successor.

¹⁸¹ Ositelu, Rufus Okikiolaolu Olubiyi. *African Instituted Churches: Diversities, Growth, Gifts, Spirituality, and Ecumenical Understanding of African Initiated Churches*. Münster: Lit, 2002, 90.

¹⁸² This “space” refers to both a temporal and corporeal space, a time and a place in which people could discuss their beliefs freely without facing the harsh push back by Anglican churches or the British colonial government.

The Importance of Glossolalia in the Development of African Independent Churches

Though Aladura Pentecostal practitioners across the country continued their drive towards spiritual unity both with the British Apostolic Church and the Holy Spirit, colonial Nigeria remained within the temporal realm, namely, in the political, educational, and physical “bodies” that exemplified the colonial system.¹⁸³ Nigerian Pentecostals, with the aid of British Apostolic leadership, began to project their discontent through the only realm not under the control of the British colonial government, the spiritual. Theologically, “Pentecostal subjectivity is partly constituted by *refusing* the body that is perceived (experienced) as slimy [and] sinful... The body is always threatening the boundaries of the ethical subject. The body must be repressed to affirm the cleanliness of the spirit.”¹⁸⁴ In rejecting the constraints of the body, both in regards to the “Othered” self and those “bodies” associated with the power and control of the British, Pentecostal practitioners were and are able to transcend their corporeal existence and enter into a world defined by the authority of the divine, manifested in a direct experience of the Holy Spirit. Exemplified theologically by glossolalia, these Aladura churches subsequently developed as a rejection of British colonial authority in the wake of the continued suppression of Pentecostal practitioners in Nigeria.

In addition to this denial of colonial authority, the act of speaking in tongues emerged as a sacred and supernatural mode of control for the colonially oppressed population of Southwestern Nigeria. Pentecostal theology identifies the experience of speaking in tongues as a means of both guiding and controlling members of the church as

¹⁸³ The notion of the “body,” legislative, physical, and educational, is characteristic of the colonial system of control in Nigeria

¹⁸⁴ Wariboko, Nimi. *Nigerian Pentecostalism*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014, 115.

well as the church itself.¹⁸⁵ Relying on a sense of control imparted by the divine, a figure whose status even the British acknowledged as superior, the ability to establish an individual relationship with the divine that extended beyond the limitations placed on Pentecostal practitioners by the British government became a pivotal means of “controlling” the self within this Pentecostal means of asserting agency. Furthermore, the affirmation of the importance of divination as part of the practice of glossolalia, a holdover from African Traditional religious beliefs, allowed members of these Aladura churches to “interpret their brand of Christianity from their own traditional milieu.”¹⁸⁶ In drawing upon this tenet of African Traditional religious belief, commonly practiced “as a means of explaining, predicting, and controlling peoples’ world,”¹⁸⁷ a theological message highlighting the importance of both African nationalism and individual empowerment was reinforced by this engagement with the Holy Spirit.

As a result of the continuing efforts by British Apostolic leadership to promote the inclusion of African Traditional religiosity within the developing Pentecostal denomination in Nigeria, practitioners were able to draw upon previous understandings of religion to engage with a God whose salvation previously relied on a white missionary figure. This, in turn, gave power to those impoverished, emotional, and underrepresented Nigerians expelled from the colonially controlled missionary religious structure. In empowering African men and women, the British Apostolic church was able to unite the African nationalist theological message promoted by sporadic revivalism under the

¹⁸⁵ Simon, Benjamin. *From Migrants to Missionaries: Christians of African Origin in Germany*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010, 123.

¹⁸⁶ Olayiwola, David O. “Traditional Religions in Nigeria.” In *Theology of Religions: Christianity and Other Religions*. Ed. Cox. Dermont. Rome, Italy: Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1993, 366.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 366.

umbrella of “Apostolic” Pentecostal theology. This affirmation by British Apostolic leaders of the necessity of speaking in tongues further served to solidify the relationship between the Welsh and Nigerian Pentecostal churches, as well as their mutual opposition to the British colonial government.

The Emergence of the Christ Apostolic Church

Despite seemingly unwavering British Pentecostal support of the introduction of African influence through the practice of speaking in tongues, British Apostolic missionaries’ active opposition to the practice of polygamy within the church sparked massive anti-missionary sentiment among Nigerian Apostolic congregants.¹⁸⁸ Despite efforts on the part of Nigerian Pentecostals to embrace monogamy, the issue continued to escalate when, “one of the British Apostolic missionaries raised the issue of polygamy, [wherein] an African colleague seized the occasion to announce that he had seen anti-malarial drugs among the missionary’s personal effects.”¹⁸⁹ By accusing their Welsh missionary counterparts of not only condemning the traditional African practice of polygamy but also the Aladura belief in faith healing, the African colleague illustrated how the relationship between the British and Nigerian Apostolic churches became strained. Unable to effectively address this Welsh critique of African Traditional religious elements, the two Apostolic bodies split permanently in 1939, providing the foundation for the first truly independent manifestation of this Apostolic church in Nigeria.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Fatokun, S.A. “The ‘Great Move of God’ in an African Community: A Retrospect of the 1930s Indigenous Pentecostal Revival in Nigeria and Its Impact on Nigerian Pentecostalism” *Exchange* Vol. 38 (2009). 38. And Crumbley, Deidre Helen. *Spirit, Structure, and Flesh: Gendered Experiences in African Instituted Churches among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, 34.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. Crumbley, 34.

¹⁹⁰ Ologinjana, Israel O. *20 Pentecostal Pioneers in Nigeria: Their Lives, Their Legacies, Volume 1*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Publishing, 2011, 22.

In permanently divorcing themselves from their British Apostolic counterparts, leaders within the newly established Nigerian Apostolic Church¹⁹¹ quickly acknowledged the potential for growth within their now independent organization. Having experienced theological and cultural suppression at the hands of their missionary counterparts, Aladura church leadership recognized “that if they must succeed among the people, they must respect the rich legacies of the religion of the people, their culture, language, and social organization.”¹⁹² Therefore, in 1940, a constant and extensive period of “Africanization” was undertaken within this Nigerian Pentecostal denomination under the leadership of noted African nationalists such as David Odubanjo and Joseph Babalola. During this period of restructuring, a new theological message was crafted, one that prioritized the needs of struggling, colonized Africans over their European missionary counterparts, at the hands of whom Nigerian Pentecostal practitioners continued to experience fierce theological and cultural suppression and dismissal. After undergoing a series of modifications, including a shift in the nomenclature from the Nigerian Apostolic to the Christ Apostolic Church, a new proudly African and unsurprisingly reactionary Pentecostal manifestation emerged in 1941. This is not to say that the theological message of this Pentecostal organization was developed as a direct reaction to the oppressive nature of the colonial structure, simply that the prioritization of certain beliefs, such as glossolalia and faith healing, took precedence as a means to displace the authority of the British colonial structure in favor of a system controlled by God.

¹⁹¹ Those members of the former Apostolic Church in Nigeria that split from the Apostolic Church in England renamed their organization the Nigerian Apostolic Church in honor of their newly established independence.

¹⁹² Ogunrinade, Adewale O. and Friday Abu Ogbale. “Precursors of the 1930 Great Indigenous Revival among the Yoruba People of Southwestern Nigeria.” *Journal of Educational and Social Research*. Vol. 3 (2) May 2013, 151.

In developing this wholly African theological message, practitioners within the Christ Apostolic Church were able to redefine the inherent value of their Pentecostal theology. Members who “wanted an atmosphere free enough to demonstrate the relevance of Christianity to the African way of life without undermining the tenets of the religion, or discarding their own African background, tradition and culture...” found solace in the church’s ability to utilize colonial and missionary theology while, simultaneously, undermining the system of oppression contained fostered by the British system of governance.¹⁹³ By asserting the inherent anti-colonial power in the act of speaking in tongues, a clear rejection of the attempts by colonial forces to control the language of their colonized constituents, and the practice of faith healing, an adherence to which resulted in the eschewing of missionary support, African practitioners held firm to a practical theology that not only identified them as “other” but that, consequently, redefined the conception of the “other” as a powerful, divine entity driven by capable and devoted African practitioners. Thus, the Christ Apostolic Church had arrived, and it was destined to grow far beyond the constraints that W.T. Stead, Charles Parham, and even William Seymour envisioned for the ever-expanding global Pentecostal movement.

¹⁹³ Olayiwola, David O. “Traditional Religions in Nigeria.” In *Theology of Religions: Christianity and Other Religions*. Ed. Cox. Dermont. Rome, Italy: Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1993, 365.

CHAPTER 4
THE ROLE OF PENTECOSTALISM IN THE MODERN PERIOD: A HISTORICAL
OVERVIEW

The Establishment of an Independent Nigerian State

Following the establishment of the Christ Apostolic Church as an independent institution in 1943,¹⁹⁴ new manifestations of the anti-establishment power of the church's doctrine continued to emerge. Despite governmental recognition, this newly sovereign body of believers faced continual cultural, political, and ideological oppression at the hands of both the colonial and postcolonial administrations in Nigeria. Contributing to this reactionary theological and ecumenical growth was a series of massive political successes and failures at the hands of the Nigerian people, the first of which was the movement for Nigerian independence during the mid-20th century. Inspired by the imminent failure of their colonial government as well as the "realization that Africans were determined to assert control over the pace and direction of their political development," England began to direct both political power and instruction to the growing nationalist faction in Nigeria.¹⁹⁵ This increasingly influential "governing" faction proved problematic for the largely impoverished practitioners of Aladura Pentecostalism, however, as this increasing sense of "nationalism" was rooted in a

¹⁹⁴ Ositelu, Rufus Okikiolaolu Olubiyi. *African Instituted Churches: Diversities, Growth, Gifts, Spirituality, and Ecumenical Understanding of African Initiated Churches*. Münster: Lit, 2002, 91.

¹⁹⁵ Coleman, James Smoot. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1958, 3.

primarily urban and, in some cases, wealthy Nigerian mentality as, for “some people, the principle of national self-determination was not applicable to the cultural realities of non-Western areas.”¹⁹⁶ Thus, for destitute populations living in the Nigerian hinterland, it seemed as though “the quest for self-government... in Nigeria [was] as much a fulfillment as a failure of British policy”¹⁹⁷ as those same oppressive measures exacted by the British government to devalue lower class populations were being implemented by their Nigerian successors in the postcolonial period.

Partially as a result of the harsh anti-African sentiment espoused by the Nigerian government, the developing Christ Apostolic Church faced overwhelming odds in attempting to disseminate their theological message. As a result of this increasingly Westernized conception of “nationalism,” Yoruba missionaries travelling to Eastern Nigeria met with tremendous opposition from conservative political factions who were “quick to disavow any similarity with Aladura churches, demonizing them as too rooted in African traditional religion and, in short, casting them as the ‘Pentecostal other.’”¹⁹⁸ Rural communities in the East, as well, resented the incursion of these missionary forces, seeing their theological message as a clear contradiction of both previously existing missionary Christianity as well as their own traditional values. Despite this refusal by established populations in Eastern Nigeria to convert, within the immigrant population in this region, Christ Apostolic Church members discovered an unsettled population that eschewed the national and religious allegiances that previously hindered conversion

¹⁹⁶ Coleman, James Smoot. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1958, 2.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 6.

¹⁹⁸ Wariboko, Nimi. *Nigerian Pentecostalism*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014, 26.

efforts.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, Pentecostal missionary efforts thrived within these densely populated cities such as Aba and Owerri, where large immigrant populations had previously been established.²⁰⁰ These largely overlooked immigrant populations, with little monetary or familial support to rely on, found solace in the ever-expanding Pentecostal churches policy of both empowerment and exclusivity.

When Nigeria finally gained independence from its British colonial masters in January of 1960, it appeared to impoverished and underrepresented Nigerians that little had changed in both the political and religious spheres within the country. The neo-colonial sense of “nationalism” that had pervaded political sentiment preceding the disbanding of the British colonial government still dominated affairs of both state and, consequently, church as missionary organizations throughout Nigeria continued their pervasive support for the oppressive sense of “nationalism” that dominated the country’s political structure. In the years following Nigerian independence, for still marginalized Nigerian laymen and women, these government-sanctioned missionary churches, “generally failed to provide leadership facilities...” while simultaneously failing to instruct “the membership of these movements... on how to criticize the government constructively.”²⁰¹ When, therefore, government officials diminished funding for missionary endeavors,²⁰² already disenchanted Nigerian Christians looked to the prophetic methodology of Pentecostal churches for salvation, sensing within Pentecostal theology, the potential for “the construction of new identities for its adherents with the

¹⁹⁹Peel, J. D. Y. *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*. London: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford U.P., 1968, 221.

²⁰⁰ Burgess, Richard. *Nigeria’s Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)*. Carlisle, Cumbria, England: Paternoster, 2008, 76.

²⁰¹ Beckford, James A. *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change*. London, UK: Sage Publications, 1986, 180.

²⁰² Kalu, Ogbu, Chima J. Korieh, G. Ugo Nwokeji, and Obioma Nnaemeka. *Religion, History, and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu J. Kalu*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005, 103.

idiom of new birth and narrative that enable ‘individual and collective memory to be reworked and a new account given of the way things might go in the future.’”²⁰³ For practitioners of formerly dominant missionary Christianity, Pentecostalism presented a means by which they could escape both their “othered” bodies as well as the body of oppression that condemned them by assuring that they could not only participate in the church, but that they could be reborn within it as arbiters of their own personhood and destiny.

Just as immigrants bore witness to the same ability to respond “to consumer demands in a situation of rapid social change and an atmosphere of heightened spiritual and evangelistic fervor” that American and Welsh Pentecostals had experienced decades before, newly converted men and women from across Nigeria began to invest in the anti-colonial policies of the growing Christ Apostolic Church. In continuing the tradition established by men and women like M. Jennie Glassey and William Seymour of rejecting those constraints that characterized their harshly structured missionary and political counterparts, the Christ Apostolic Church retained their reputation as an anti-establishment organization.²⁰⁴ Members of this Aladura movement were not alone in their dissent against the increasingly oppressive Nigerian government, however, as, in 1967, “national optimism soon gave way to disillusionment due to pervasive corruption, the

²⁰³ Wariboko, Nimi. *Nigerian Pentecostalism*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014, 26. And Marshall-Fratani, Ruth. 1998. “Mediating the Global and Local in Nigerian Pentecostalism”. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 no. 3. Brill, 289.

²⁰⁴ Burgess, Richard. *Nigeria's Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)*. Carlisle, Cumbria, England: Paternoster, 2008, 77.

collapse of the democratic parliamentary system, and the growth of ethnic and regional antagonisms, culminating in the Nigerian civil war.”²⁰⁵

Effect of the Nigerian Civil War: The Rise in Young, Educated and Igbo Manifestations of Pentecostalism (1967-1970)

Unlike the immigrant communities in the East that rushed to join Pentecostal denominations, for the majority of Igbo societies, the answer to the problem of failed governance on the part of colonially “sympathetic” Nigerian leadership necessitated political involvement. A clear result of the increasing secularity in Eastern Nigeria was “the charismatic impulses of early Igbo revival movements had waned and the churches they generated had declined in Pentecostal vigour.”²⁰⁶ This “freedom” movement reflected an inherently militarized conception of independence and authority within Igbo society. Relying on the “preview of the type of institutionalized violence that had... been tangible in the wings since the earliest iterations of modern Nigeria,”²⁰⁷ Igbo leadership, determined to maintain their status in colonial society, unwittingly continued the cycle of aggression that had pervaded Nigerian colonial history. Subsequently, for Igbo men like Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, “joining the army was not a choice, but the only choice.”²⁰⁸ Therefore, when the Igbo army, lead by Nzeogwu, successfully overthrew the

²⁰⁵ Burgess, Richard. “Pentecostals and Politics in Nigeria and Zambia.” In *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*. Ed. Lindhart, Martin. Leiden: Brill, 2014, 296.

²⁰⁶ Burgess, Richard. *Nigeria's Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)*. Carlisle, Cumbria, England: Paternoster, 2008, 77.

²⁰⁷ Baxter, Peter. *Biafra: The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970*. Soluhill, West Midlands, UK: Helion and Company Limited, 2014, 14.

²⁰⁸ Tilawan. *Laws of the Bosses: The Roadmap to the Realm of Power*. Milton Keynes: AuthorHouse, 2010, 87.

Nigerian government in 1966, it seemed as though the country's future was determinedly anti-Aladura.²⁰⁹

As Igbo involvement in the increasingly militaristic government swelled, a period of Pentecostal revival emerged among both refugees and members of the military. Mirroring the “pessimistic” premillennialism that characterized the emergence of Pentecostalism in Wales and America, the Igbo people saw this movement as a determined marker of the end of a flawed era of humanity, with their success ushering in a golden age of existence in Nigeria. As the “the Biafran crisis exposed the frailties of mission church spirituality and the inflexibility of their organisational structures... an increasing number of [primarily refugee] Igbos began to patronize prayer houses, often located near refugee and army camps.”²¹⁰ Both the proximity and sense of security provided by these formerly unpopular Pentecostal organizations supplied practitioners with a space in which warring Igbo factions, as well as the victims of this violent outbreak, could come to experience a structured and often protective experience of the divine absent from crumbling mission churches.²¹¹ By attending these religious meetings, soldiers whose daily engagements with violent conflict provided little stability turned to these Pentecostal churches as a means of assuring a physically present and individually attainable salvation, something not found in the context of the Nigerian army. As Igbo attendance within these “prayer houses” continued to increase as a result of this massively popular revival, Igbo congregations succeeded in reforming the theological

²⁰⁹ For more on the extensive list of grievances held by Igbo as well as Hausa leadership in the developing Nigerian state, as well as the causes of the ensuing Nigerian Civil War, both of which are interesting excerpts from Nigeria's complicated political history yet remain outside the scope of this paper see: Siollun, Max. *Oil, Politics, and Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture (1966-1976)*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2009.

²¹⁰ Burgess, Richard. *Nigeria's Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)*. Carlisle, Cumbria, England: Paternoster, 2008, 86.

²¹¹ Ibid. 86.

message of neo-Pentecostalism to reflect their own traditional beliefs and desires, instead of those represented by the Yoruba missionaries they rejected in previous decades.²¹² Mirroring its Aladura predecessor, the embrace of an independent conception of Pentecostal thought only furthered the determination of both military and civilian Igbo practitioners to determine their own fate in a country continually devastated by instability and armed engagement. Thus, Pentecostalism had, after almost two decades of unsuccessful missionary work on the part of Yoruba practitioners in Igboland, succeeded in normalizing Pentecostal sensibility within the country, laying the foundation for the continued growth of independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria.²¹³

In addition to the increasing Igbo presence in neo-Pentecostal denominations throughout the East, university students across Nigeria also looked to Pentecostal organizations for security during and immediately following this highly volatile period in the country's history. For Nigerian students, continuing to pursue an education proved near impossible as, “[b]y the middle of 1968, all formal schools in Biafra... had been closed and buildings converted...” into accommodations for the growing military presence in the region.²¹⁴ University towns were no exception to this devastation, as escalating ethnic tensions across Nigeria ravaged university towns like Nsukka and Ibadan, driving scholars out of their classrooms and, often, into the army where they were exposed to the Pentecostal doctrine pervading the Nigerian armed forces during this

²¹² Ibid. Burgess, 77, 81. We can see this shift in Igbo sensibility as practitioners of Pentecostalism in the East become more reliant on ritual and mysticism rather than the traditional, overly strict structure of traditional Pentecostalism, revealing a reliance on traditionally learned behaviors and individual experiences with God, clearly a reflection of traditional Igbo conceptions of the divine.

²¹³ Droogers, André. “The Normalisation of Religious Experience: Healing, Prophecy, Dreams, and Visions.” in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*. Ed. Karla Poewe. Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1994. 33. From Ibid. Burgess, 77.

²¹⁴ Nkwocha, Onyema. *The Republic of Biafra: Once Upon a Time in Nigeria: My Story of the Biafra-Nigerian Civil War – A Struggle for Survival (1967-1970)*. Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2010, 186.

period.²¹⁵ In this movement, these former students were exposed to a pervasive Pentecostalism that they would retain throughout the war, relying, like their military counterparts, on the theological and physical security these churches offered during this period of armed chaos. Unlike their postcolonial counterparts within the Nigerian and Biafran governments, whose closing of schools reflected a lack of investment in the education of their citizens, Pentecostal churches managed to develop and sustain both educational and leadership opportunities.

In 1970, as the war came to a close, Nigeria entered into a period of rebuilding. During this era of recovery in the country's history, reconstruction of Nigeria's society, economy, and infrastructure was slow. Soldiers and displaced persons attempting to establish normalcy in their former homelands soon realized this, as "[e]ducational institutions in the East did not resume immediately and jobs were scarce...."²¹⁶ Former educators and students of these promptly nonexistent colleges and universities turned to their religious aspirations to drive their recovery, as "young people reactivated [Pentecostal] groups in all the major urban areas."²¹⁷ For Pentecostal proselytizers, this engagement with a sorrowful and overwhelmingly impoverished population, specifically among residents of rural townships, facilitated the spread of their message, as a physical development of both self and community provided hope to a society whose future looked bleak.²¹⁸ Subsequently, as missionary organizations reintroduced a stable and highly regimented system of education within Nigeria, rural population's identification with

²¹⁵ Stremmlau, John J. *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977, 111.

²¹⁶ Burgess, Richard. *Nigeria's Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)*. Carlisle, Cumbria, England: Paternoster, 2008, 92.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.* 92.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* 95.

Pentecostal practice became solidified as the educated elite slowly began to return to their jobs and universities, leaving these impoverished Nigerians without access to education or, therefore, the ability to advance in postcolonial society.²¹⁹ Despite this indifference on the part of wealthy, educated Igbo communities, it seemed, as rural populations emerged from the Civil War with access to Pentecostal schools, churches, and communities, that their destiny had been intertwined with that of men like Joseph Babalola and William Seymour. Pentecostalism in the hinterland thrived with continued support from the already established and highly successful Aladura churches, whose policy of education and inclusion appealed greatly to this continually oppressed Igbo population and would continue to support and inspire generations to come to determine their own identities, free from governmental engagement.

The Role of Pentecostalism in Education in Western Nigeria: The Christ Apostolic Church Counterexample

As well-educated, wealthy Nigerian men and women returned to their jobs, schools, and homes following the war, little opportunity for recovery existed in impoverished, often rural parts of Nigeria. In the wake of this immense loss of life and property neither the missionary churches of Nigeria nor its government worked to alleviate the problem of diminished education opportunities in these communities. For previously established Pentecostal denominations however, specifically the Christ Apostolic Church, the right of all men and women to inclusive education was rooted in

²¹⁹ For more information on the development of an “educated elite” in Nigeria both, primarily, preceding and following the outbreak of the Civil War throughout Nigeria, as Western education has been discussed in this thesis previously and will continue to be discussed within the context of Pentecostal development, please consult Coleman, James Smoot. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1958.

their very theology. The utilization of glossolalia as a means of communicating with the divine acknowledged the immense dissatisfaction on the part of practicing and often undereducated Pentecostal leadership with the overarching oppression at the hands of British intellectual leadership. Arriving with the incursion of British colonialism, this initially mission-based school system in Nigeria, since its foundation, “never set out to relate to its curriculum to the social and economic needs of the Africans: its chief aim was to save the souls of the Africans through higher education, and all other goals were incidental to this.”²²⁰ These newly instated public institutions of “higher learning” consisted, from their inception, of almost entirely industry-based and primary schools, as Nigerian colonial officials did not initially think “that secondary schools or universities would be necessary or practical in Nigeria.”²²¹ Though this educational opportunity during “the expansion of the colonial economy... [in] the 1890s, [provided Nigerians] the ability to read and write in English became the stepping stone to a middle-class career,” the basic idea that Nigerian men, and even more profoundly women, were not worth educating beyond a primary school level simply reaffirmed their colonially “othered” status.²²²

For men and women living in Southern Nigeria, education became synonymous with the colonial enterprise as they became molded “over the decades into what has been called an African middle class—African in heritage, but with many European tastes and values.”²²³ Subsequently, as colonial and missionary schools developed, they only served

²²⁰ Fafunwa, A. Babs. “A History of Nigerian Higher Education” *Macmillan*, 1971. 15.

²²¹ Falola, Toyin and Matt Heaton. *The History of Nigeria*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999, 127.

²²² *Ibid.* 127.

²²³ *Ibid.* 128.

to reaffirm what the British had declared in the Ordinances of 1882 and 1885,²²⁴ that British culture was and would always be superior to traditional Nigerian culture, and by extension, religion. Furthermore, within the Nigerian educational system, funding remained scarce while the economically prosperous colonial government retained its position on the lack of viability of educating the Nigerian people. Adding to this tension between undereducated Nigerians and their colonial masters was the establishment of Yaba Higher College²²⁵ in 1932,²²⁶ an institution founded solely for the purpose of educating the children of British missionaries and colonial officers. For impoverished and socially immobile Nigerians, this institution only served to reaffirm the British colonial authorities' dismissal of the Nigerian people within their system of education. This discrimination against the Nigerian school system was so pervasive, one Nigerian official recalled that a citizen of this colonial state did "not need a gift of prophetic wisdom to surmise that unless this [suppression of Nigerian people within the educational sphere] is addressed positively and aggressively there can be no turnaround in the status of Nigerian universities."²²⁷

For Pentecostal practitioners within the Christ Apostolic, both prophetic wisdom and governmental oppression contributed to their growing disenchantment with government-sponsored education. Bearing witness to the pervasive oppression wrought by the British colonial government, members of The Christ Apostolic Church that

²²⁴ Stallard, George and Edward Harrinson Richards, "Ordinances, and Order, and Rules Thereunder, In Force in the Colony of Lagos." London: *Taiv Publishers and Booksellers*. Stevens and Sons, Limited. 1894. 477.

²²⁵ This would later become the University of Ibadan, a highly reputable Nigerian institution.

²²⁶ Obasi, Isaac Nnamdi. *Private Higher Education and Public Policy in Africa: A Contrasting Case of Nigeria and Botswana*. Göttingen: Cullivier, 2008, 57.

²²⁷ Akinkugbe, O.O. "The Piper, the Tune and University Autonomy." *The Nigerian Social Scientist*, 4 no. 1, 2001, 3. From Kenny, Joseph. *The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience*. Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007, 35.

continually “sought to re-connect the common folks to the original sense of communalism that was shattered by colonialism and the slave trade,” began to establish independent educational opportunities for its practitioners, as well as the entirety of Nigerian society.²²⁸ Beginning with the founding of the Christ Apostolic Church Pastoral Training College in Ilesa in 1948 and culminating with the establishment of Joseph Ayo Babalola University, practitioners within the Christ Apostolic Church worked tirelessly to assure that privatized education would be available to all men and women regardless of their affiliation with the colonial enterprise in both the colonial and postcolonial period in Nigeria.²²⁹

In recounting a torrid history of religious and socioeconomic discrimination wrought by their colonial and postcolonial government firsthand, Pentecostal practitioners found no difficulty in translating their glossolalic and psychological dissent against the growing colonial presence into a series of tangible anti-colonial establishments, namely missionary and secular schools. Even in the wake of the colonial period, the supposedly “representative” Nigerian military government continued to seize power from growing university populations. Most notably, this usurpation of former colonial control occurred in 1972 when the Nigerian government assumed control over all private universities and closed them, the Christ Apostolic Church remained far more interested in filling “in the gaps left by the failures of the state to provide much needed services and support to its citizens,” by providing them with housing, food, and an

²²⁸ Ukpong, Donatus Pius, “The Presence and Impact of Pentecostalism in Nigeria,” 2006, 4. See also Fape, Michael O.. “National Anglican Identity Formation: An African Perspective.” *Journal of Anglican Studies*, 6, 2008, 19.

²²⁹ “CAC Schools | Christ Apostolic Church (Worldwide).” CAC Schools | Christ Apostolic Church (Worldwide). Accessed April 10, 2016. http://www.cacworldwideonline.org/cac_schools.html.

education regardless of their social status.²³⁰ With the culmination of this effort to educate all of Nigeria's population with the foundation of the private college Joseph Ayo Babalola University in 2006 – it became apparent to the Nigerian people the potential held within this Aladura organization had established a clear counter-narrative to the increasingly colonially sympathetic Nigerian government that had closed all private schools less than 30 years prior.²³¹ Gender, especially, played an immense role in the development of the educational system under the control of the Christ Apostolic Church, as special attention was paid by leaders to encourage women's participation in education and, subsequently, their own futures.

The Evolving Role of Women in the Christ Apostolic Church

Throughout the history of the Christ Apostolic Church, women have played a complicated role in the proliferation of both the theological and sociological message of the Aladura movement. Playing a foundational yet marginalized role in the history of the Pentecostal church, women like Sophie Odunlami continually struggled to reconcile the profound role of women in the church with the selectively inclusive theology that pervades the movement.²³² For Odunlami, whose prophetic visions “informed key organisational policies, such as the decision to affiliate with other Nigerian and foreign churches,” namely the British Apostolic Church, establishing a significant presence in the institutionalized Aladura church proved significantly more difficult than for her male

²³⁰ “2014 Country Profile – Nigeria” Religious Literacy Project, Harvard Divinity School, 2004, 10.

²³¹ “Joseph Babalola University: Official Website.” Joseph A. Babalola University. Accessed April 10, 2016. <http://www.jabu.edu.ng/index.php>.

²³² Crumbley, Diedre Helen. “Patriarchies, Prophets, and Procreation: Sources of Gender Practices in Three African Churches.” *Africa*. Vol 73, 4. 2003. 584.

counterparts.²³³ Despite this consistent attempt to rectify the persistent sexism within society, and also within the church, the Christ Apostolic Church relies entirely on male leadership for both ecumenical and political leadership. Reliant on the same policy of biblical literalism that pervaded previous sects of Pentecostal thought, including Seymour and Parham's Pentecostal and proto-Pentecostal movements, a guiding principle of male superiority remains firmly engrained in the psyche of the church itself, a policy that both naturally extends into and results from an inherently patriarchal society. Any understanding of the role of women in the Christ Apostolic Church must take into account both the traditional and colonial environments in which this institution emerged.

The Aladura Pentecostal commitment to inclusion is not entirely reliant on its Christian heritage, however, as self-determination and gender equity remain vital parts of Yoruba and therefore African Independent religious manifestations. For practitioners of Yoruba traditional religion, a complex sense of gender equality pervaded, and continues to pervade, the discourse surrounding the roles of men and women in society. Unlike its colonial foil, it is arguably this Yoruba influence within Aladura movements, which provides women with “the chance to rise to power in African churches without them holding official leadership status.”²³⁴ Within Yoruba traditional religion, gender remains a highly fluid concept, for “just as the Yoruba construct gender, they also deconstruct it through ritual.”²³⁵ Subsequently, for male and female practitioners who undergo this process of ritual identity creation, the assumption of “gendered” roles is rooted in an

²³³ Ibid. Crumbley, 586.

²³⁴ Olajubu, Oyeronke. *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003, 55. From Rushing, Andrea Benton. *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora, A Reader*. 2nd Ed. Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1996.

²³⁵ Drewal, Margaret Thompson. *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*. Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1992, 188. From Ibid. Olajubu, 8.

ever-evolving conception of gods and goddesses that all perform necessary and complementary roles in society.²³⁶ Just as the gods and goddesses within Yoruba religion survive by virtue of their cooperation and evolution, assuring the survival of humanity, Yoruba practitioners of traditional religion retain an engrained sense of changeability in their own conception of their own ever-evolving society, a society reliant on development and survival and not construction or delineation of gendered roles.²³⁷ This manifestation of traditional values therefore works to undercut the pervasive nationalist and postcolonial ideology that continue to permeate modern Christian discourse in the region.

As Yoruba society became exposed to European conceptions of gender through the period of the Atlantic Slave Trade and subsequently colonialism, a novel and highly despotic system of control, reliant on the sexism inherent in British leadership, was formed in this previously tolerant society. For British colonial officials arriving in Nigeria, conceptions of gender were firmly rooted in the understanding that²³⁸ “biology is destiny—or better still, destiny is biology... [which had] been a staple of Western thought for centuries...”²³⁹ The majority of missionary populations in Nigeria also

²³⁶ Two important points about the nature of Yoruba gods and goddesses should be included here. First, that this pantheon of gods and goddesses is highly reflective of humanity and therefore remains, for the most part, prone to error and is therefore in a constant development which is therefore reflected in society. Secondly, that these gods and goddesses reflect a separate set of values than those preeminent in British society at this time. Therefore, when assessing the “true” and “gendered” power of the gods and goddesses presented by Yoruba religion, it is important to remember that there is a different sense of “power” attributed to various localities or deities eg. the idea that Yemaya’s association with water could benefit this agrarian society than Xango’s control of iron, which was scarce prior to the incursion of colonialism, would be a natural assumption of power for, specifically, women in Yoruba society.

²³⁷ This is reminiscent of Jung’s conception of male and female, where the entirety of the gendered spectrum is necessary in order to understand the entirety of society and therefore women and men are presented as differing but complementary figures.

²³⁸ Several British, French, and Portuguese outposts existed in this region prior to British incursion, through their establishment during the Atlantic Slave Trade. Therefore, primarily before, but also after, the Berlin Conference in 1885, Nigeria and Benin or the “Bight of Biafra” played host to a variety of different colonial influences included French and Portuguese traders and officials.

²³⁹ Oyèwùmí, Oyèrónkẹ́. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, 1.

ascribed to a diminished status for women in society. This understanding was so natural that one British missionary recounted²⁴⁰ excitedly that, as a result of the pervasive missionary effort and the ensuing “instruction” Christian women received following their conversion, “[t]he position of women is no longer that of ‘a mere machine for cultivating, cooking and child-rearing’ ... Home life is beginning to be understood and valued... [and the] dignity of labour is now recognized by a people who once left almost all work to women.”²⁴¹ With this sexist rhetoric emerging as a natural and pervasive extension of the colonial effort, as European influence spread into the hinterland of Southwestern Nigeria, the gender fluidity once inherent in Yoruba society was abandoned in favor of colonialism and the sexism it espoused.

In the early 20th century, as Pentecostal revivals carried the message of traditionalism throughout the Nigerian hinterland, a direct challenge was raised against a social structure that dissenters felt reflected an entirely British perspective. As a result of this period of revival, once abandoned tenets of Yoruba traditional religion reemerged, most notably in the theology of the Christ Apostolic Church. Within the modern period, this Aladura institution has been identified as one of “the most institutionally self-aware, illustrated by its self-commissioned critique of institutional stress points.”²⁴² Despite this self-awareness and existence as a progressive entity within the struggle for equality among poor, colonized Africans, gender remains notably absent from its egalitarian theological message as the “Christ Apostolic [Church] prohibits female ordination...

²⁴⁰ This missionaries name was “Mr. Blackledge” and, though he worked predominately in Uganda with the Christ Missionary Society, the work he and his female missionary counterparts were doing remained highly relevant to the missionary effort, as it was highlighted in the “history” of the Christ Missionary Society written by Eugene Stock, once the Editorial Secretary of the CMS.

²⁴¹ Stock, Eugene. *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work*. London: Church Missionary Society, 1899. 97.

²⁴² Crumbley, Diedre Helen. “Patriarchies, Prophets, and Procreation: Sources of Gender Practices in Three African Churches.” *Africa*. Vol 73, 4. 2003. 584.

[which thereby] effectively excludes women from explicit executive-level policy formation.”²⁴³ For women like Abiodun Akinsowon and Madame Olatunri, both women who were granted provisional and “charismatic” titles that held no authority within the church despite their immense contribution to the church’s development, it was made abundantly clear that the line had been “drawn at women heading whole organizations and dominating the men as a group.”²⁴⁴ The role of women, therefore, grows increasingly complicated as women vie for positions of power within Nigerian society and within the context of the Christ Apostolic Church. What separates this religious entity from its postcolonial foils however, is the determination of its female congregants. Inspired by the inclusivity of both Yoruba and Pentecostal faiths, women within the Christ Apostolic Church have become determined to assert their own sense of empowerment.

Though the church does not allow for women to attain leadership positions within its own ranks, through the promotion of women’s education in Nigeria at large, female members of the Christ Apostolic Church have begun to openly promote women’s equality within the social sphere. Throughout the period of colonialism, while “Western schools were very appropriate for educating boys for their future roles ... the training of girls for the adult life mapped out by the European missionaries and colonial officials did not require that kind of education.”²⁴⁵ Women, therefore, were not deemed worthy of receiving an education, something that colonial officials and missionaries alike agreed would do little to benefit their roles as caretaker within their households. As a result of this ascription to missionary values by the majority of the Nigerian population--with the

²⁴³ Ibid. Crumbey, 586.

²⁴⁴ Peel, J. D. Y. *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*. London: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford U.P., 1968, 183.

²⁴⁵ Oyěwùmí, Oyèrónkẹ́. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, 134.

exception of Nigerian participants in the colonial system, who often only educated their female children to make them more desirable for marriage--the impoverished, “othered” population of Yorubaland systematically refused education to their female children.²⁴⁶ By denying their female children the ability to attend school and thus adhering to the oppressive, patriarchal norms within Nigerian society, these families assured that their daughters self-hood and sovereignty would continue to be determined based on their contribution to society, but based on their husbands, fathers, and sons.

Because of this, the empowerment of women has become the concern of, almost exclusively, the female population of the church. Forced to contend with the fact that within their society, “15% of the female population is illiterate, and only 38% of those students who finish High School are female” the female Pentecostal population has been left with little to no resources or opportunities to construct a powerful female identity within the greater Aladura church.²⁴⁷ Despite the devastating cards that women in Nigeria have been dealt, the female population within the Christ Apostolic Church has remained determined to exercise their leadership potential in the face of overwhelming oppression. An example of this exercise in defiance is the development of the Babalola Girls’ Grammar School by the Good Woman Association,²⁴⁸ an organization within the greater Christ Apostolic Church, in Ilesa in 1962.²⁴⁹ For these female congregants, the education

²⁴⁶ Ibid. Oyèrónké, 134.

²⁴⁷ Nussbaum, Martha Craven, and Jonathan Glover. *Women, Culture, and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 427.

²⁴⁸ The Good Woman Association is named for the passage in Ruth 3:11 where Boaz tells Ruth, “And now my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character...” which, arguably, could be taken to mean either men should be supportive of women within the church or that women are still reliant on men for care and support, both of which present problematic schema for a developing sense of feminism within the church.

²⁴⁹ "CAC Good Women | Christ Apostolic Church (Worldwide)." CAC Good Women | Christ Apostolic Church (Worldwide). Accessed April 10, 2016.
http://www.cacworldwideonline.org/cac_good_women.html.

of what they term the “girl-child” in a context other than missionary or homemaking presents a plethora of possibilities for the vastly undereducated population of women in Nigeria. This explicitly targeted engagement of women, therefore, serves to counteract the centuries of oppression enacted by, first, white, then, African males against the growing presence of educated women in Nigeria. Thus, just as Seymour empowered himself through the inclusionary theology implemented at Azusa, and as missionaries travelling to Africa were empowered by virtue of their message and not simply their gender or the color of their skin, the women of the Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria continue to fulfill what appears to be the “Pentecostal destiny” of self-empowerment as they continue to assure their role in the future of the still developing and increasingly universal Pentecostal church.

CONCLUSION

Many scholars, such as Vincent Synan, Allan Anderson, and Benjamin Ray, have contributed to the field of Pentecostal studies, and in turn to this body of work. Their analyses of the role of both indigenous religious influence and colonial oppression have provided an indispensable foundation for the growth of study into Pentecostal history of Nigeria. And, while their primarily ethnographical and historical perspectives have served to recreate the history of this movement with astonishing clarity and vigor, their analyses nevertheless remain insufficient for a complete understanding of the impact of Pentecostalism around the world, including in the Nigerian context. In addressing primarily governmental and military histories, their publications have continually failed to address the ever-present offer of self-empowerment contained within Pentecostal theology and church structures. In providing a comprehensive history of this movement, tracing its origins from the 1905 Welsh Revival into the contemporary period, this thesis works to correct this misplaced focus on the status of ruling colonial and postcolonial bodies, ruling colonial and postcolonial bodies, placing the impetus for growth within this movement squarely in the hands of its Nigerian practitioners.

In addition to this historical oversight, the emergence of and reliance on the act of glossolalia also remains a relatively new concept within the field of Pentecostal research. Though scholars like Nimi Wariboko have worked to determine its theological significance within the greater Pentecostal movement, little work has been done on the role of glossolalia in the development of “self-empowerment” within impoverished and

underrepresented Pentecostal congregations. In addressing the role of glossolalia as it developed at the hands of, primarily female, missionaries, it becomes readily apparent that the role of speaking in tongues as a manifestation of the divine arises as a clear contradiction to continued colonial legislation, such as the Act of 1885, which condemned the use of Yoruba in any facet of Nigerian society, namely within the public and missionary school system. This failure by scholars such as Wariboko to address the value of this vital spiritual experience in contributing to Pentecostal growth only serves to reinforce the necessity for a greater body of work concerning the Pentecostal message itself. With these shortcomings in mind, this paper has attempted to right the wrongs of historical scholarship and establish a history that acknowledges that the entirety of Pentecostal history has been characterized by its concern for the ability of individual practitioners to achieve salvation through a personal experience with the divine.

Through engagement with both religious and sociological revival, Nigerian colonial subjects living in Yorubaland experienced the apparent coming of the Spirit in the early 20th century in the form of Pentecostal missionaries from Liberia and across West Africa. Coinciding almost seamlessly with the outbreak of Spanish Influenza across West Africa, this Pentecostal message was seen as a message of hope. Nigerian practitioners, through their incorporation of African Traditional religious understandings of healing, began to make this religion their own and, thus embraced their own power to challenge pre-existent colonial structures. Through their rejection of the English language as dominant, choosing instead to engage the divine through glossolalia, these practitioners of Aladura or “praying people” Pentecostalism subsequently came into their

own in an age characterized by devastating poverty and the suppression of African voices.

Despite gaining official independence from England in 1960, these Pentecostal practitioners continue to pervasively and openly oppose the oppression implemented by the postcolonial government in Nigeria, finding their place in the immigrant and impoverished populations the Nigerian government has continually ignored. As this body of believers continued to grow in the context of religious organizations such as the Christ Apostolic Church, this message of dissent has only grown stronger and more omnipresent as the CAC continues to support both education and women's rights, both issues continually ignored by the colonial government. At an almost unprecedented rate, Pentecostalism continues to spread across the globe, defying political and sociological boundaries. For the approximately 279 million practitioners of Pentecostalism today,²⁵⁰ this means not only a religious presence in the world but a voice, denied to them in their colonial past, to determine their own independent future.

In spite of the unprecedented growth of Pentecostal churches in the course of Nigerian history, the contemporary period has seen these initial iterations of Charismatic and Pentecostal churches fade from the forefront of Yoruba and Igbo society in recent years. Despite massive internal development undertaken by institutions like the Christ Apostolic Church, the once pervasive status of Pentecostal churches has diminished in favor of newly developed "Third Wave" or "Neo-Charismatic" denominations.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ "Christian Movements and Denominations." Pew Research Centers Religion Public Life Project RSS. 2011. Accessed April 10, 2016. <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-movements-and-denominations/>.

²⁵¹ Synan, Vinson. *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the Twenty-First Century*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2011. 65.

Gaining almost 25 million adherents²⁵² since their inception in the late 20th century, these novel institutions are a testament to the divisions that remain within Nigerian society, a clear result of the damage inflicted by colonialism, the Civil War, and the devaluation of rural and female populations.²⁵³ Nevertheless, these newly created churches retain some commonality with those they are replacing, such as the reliance on the Prosperity Gospel as their primary manifestation of the “empowered self.” In a 2006 Pew Research survey “95 per cent of Nigerian Pentecostals agreed that God would ‘grant material prosperity to all believers who have enough faith...’²⁵⁴ thus making it abundantly clear that the notion of empowerment has shifted from a reliance on “Africanization” to a reliance on materialism and wealth as impoverished and underrepresented Nigerians, faced with a culture of neo-colonialism and materialism presented by continued Western incursion into the country, have begun to associate power with monetary success.²⁵⁵

This reliance on the “Prosperity Gospel” does not mean that the theological appeal to impoverished men and women contained within Aladura and other early Pentecostal institutions has completely disappeared from the Pentecostal discourse. In continuing their appeal to the lower class and displaced factions of society, neo-Pentecostal churches have subsequently upheld the Pentecostal “network... built around a high-intensity, time-consuming ritual life, a collective, well-defined or simplistic worldview and moral code, and the promises of millennial redress... [and promises] of a

²⁵² Ibid. 66.

²⁵³ For more information on the different manifestations of Neo-Charismatic Churches see: Clarke, Matthew. “Prosperity Gospel and the Global Pentecostal Reformation.” Clarke, Matthew. *Handbook of Research on Development and Religion*. Gloucester, UK: Edwin Elger Publishing Limited, 2013.

²⁵⁴ Ibid. Clarke, 171.

²⁵⁵ Noted Pentecostal scholars continue to disagree on the true rationalization for this growth in churches promoting the Prosperity gospel. Some scholars believe it is due to neo-colonial pressure by American companies and individuals whereas others believe it reflects a desire on the part of impoverished Nigerians to succeed in a materially driven society. I believe that these rationales are not mutually exclusive, as Nigeria’s history boasts a variety of factors that have determined Pentecostal growth.

miraculous, this-worldly liberation.”²⁵⁶ Thus, despite their eschewing of traditional practice and nationalism in favor of materialism and the Prosperity Gospel, these churches have continued to fortify their relationship with the “othered” and often displaced populations within Nigeria. The growth of Pentecostalism therefore continues to rely on its practitioners achievement of selfhood and subsequent escape from postcolonial oppression, instead remaining deeply rooted in this highly ritualized and glossolalic means of achieving salvation for all. As Pentecostalism moves into the future, its continued defiance of the classism, postcolonial oppression, or gender inequity still contained within Nigeria today reveals the appeal of its message of universality, inclusivity and the rejection of classism.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. Clarke, 173.

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