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Modelling the Genealogy and Character of Global Pentecostalism: An African Perspective (Part 2)

ABSTRACT

This article uses Africa to illustrate that Pentecostalism in Africa did not originate from Azusa Street but churches that emerged from the Azusa phenomenon have participated in mission in Africa and influenced the character of contemporary expressions of the diffused movement. But local actors are constantly reshaping the movement. With reference to Pentecostalism in Africa, this article intends to argue that Pentecostal historiography differs from missionary historiography with regard to issues like geography, time, indigenous roots, the different forms of the movement and its theology.

THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY

The intention here is to use the African context to illustrate the claims made so far and to probe into the character of the movement from a world-wide or global perspective. We could use four models to explain the genealogy and character of the movement. This modelling could be applied to any region and globally: the historical roots of revivals, the cultural fit into indigenous cosmologies, the instrumentalist model that explores the mutual impact between religion and the socio-economic and political terrains, and the many ways that this new religious movement reshapes individuals and communities at the psychological and material levels. Pentecostalism seeks to transform the mental and material cultures of communities and challenges extant religious structures as it seeks to transform the religious landscape. In every context, it critiques accepted doctrine, polity, liturgy, and ethics of other religions. It does so through its message, colourful hermeneutics, creative organisation, and intensified evangelisation.

BAKUZUFU IN AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL GENEALOGY: THE HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

Bakuzufu is a Luganda word for being re-awakened, renewed, or even resurrected. It is an apt description of the various dimensions of the English word, revival. Revivals are an endemic aspect of Christianity. In Africa, the identity and historical origins of Pentecostalism are linked to the trail of ferments or revival movements that constitute African responses to the gospel message. Africans were intensely interested in the charismatic power in the Biblical narratives because these resonated with their indigenous worldviews. Beyond the early manifestations such as recounted by J.K. Thornton on the career of the Vita Kimpa (1684-1706), a number of revival movements

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occurred in the 19th century and intensified significantly at the turn of the 20th century. Six types could be detected:

i) A priestly figure such as Beatriz in Angola, Nxele and Ntsikana among the Xhosa (South Africa), would emerge from traditional religious or *nguza* cultus after experiencing a Christian vision, and would urge a religious transformation of allegiance on the indigenous community. These occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries.

ii) A prophetic figure would emerge from within the Christian band endowed with healing powers and evangelistic ardour to quicken the pace of Christianisation. Wade Harris (1910-1914) and Garrick Braide (1914-1918) are examples from West Africa at the turn of the 20th century. Adrian Hastings concludes that "mass conversion movements were not set off by missionaries but by a concatenation of circumstances within African societies, at once buffeted by the new pressures of colonialism and enlightened by African 'evangelists' of one sort or another who were able to mediate just sufficient of Christian wisdom to be understood and effective for the masses."²

iii) Zionists, Abaroho and Aladura exploded under the colonial canopy during the inter-war years and creatively appropriated the pneumatic resources of the gospel and transformed the cultural content of Christian expression. With time, they ceased to be separatist or independent movements and became indigenous as schism broadened the typology. Some lost touch with the central core of the gospel.³

iv) Classical Holiness and Pentecostal groups from various parts of the Western hemisphere worked with indigenous groups to create some early Pentecostal movements. Many went to southern Africa, western Kenya, and Liberia. The most enduring among the early Pentecostal missions was the Apostolic Faith Mission from Zion City, Illinois that came to South Africa in 1908. J.G Lake had some connection with Seymour and paraded a picture with the doyen of Azusa Street. Before he returned to the US in 1913, he established a vibrant organisation that was soon split by racism. The Africans took hold of both *Zion* and *Apostolic* as symbols to create their own religious spirituality. Even during the apartheid period, AFM was notable for its support of the racist regime. Corten and Marshall Fratani trace the journey of a number of transnational Pentecostal missions to Africa, for instance, the Assemblies of God in Burkina Faso and Republic of Benin. But it was an indigene who took the Assemblies of God from Sierra Leone to Burkina Faso. These remained inconspicuous in the religious terrains dominated by the mission churches till the outbreak of youthful charismatic in the 1970s. The Classical Pentecostals benefited so tremendously that the mainline churches were compelled to enlarge the space for charismatic movements.

Studies show that many Classical Pentecostals were invited by indigenes; the British Apostolic Church and Assemblies of God into Ghana and Nigeria serve as examples. For instance, five young men had the Spirit baptism while praying and studying the Word in Afara near Umuahia in

2 J.K. Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Adrian Hasting, *The Church in Africa, 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 531; D. Shank, "The Prophet Harris: A historiographical and bibliographical survey" *JRA*, 14, 2 (1983), 147.

3 Allan Anderson, *African Reformation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Publishers, 2000).

1934. The church kicked them out. They formed the Church of Jesus Christ. Later, one of them saw a magazine produced by the Assemblies of God. They wrote the organisation that sent W.L. Shirer and the wife to interview the young men. The Shirers approved that they spoke genuine tongues, and the Assemblies of God took over the CJC in 1939. Similarly, The British Apostolics were invited by those indigenous West Africans who operated the Faith Tabernacle for years but needed a measure of white protection in the colonial environment. Since the Faith Tabernacle (from Philadelphia) did mission only through the Post Office, the indigenes looked for an organisation that sent missionaries. But the indigenes held strongly to the faith healing doctrine and parted ways with the Apostolic ministers who took medicine for malaria! Some classical Pentecostal missionaries went solo. The story of Clyde Miller in Nyago'ri mission in western Kenya (1902-1920) has a rich human angle to it.⁴ Others were sponsored by a group, and as said before, the efforts to mobilise a number of Pentecostals into a joint missionary organisation in 1909 failed in the United States and had only modest success in Britain. The leadership roles of indigenous people in some of the classical Pentecostal groups could be illustrated with the case of Nigerians in the Foursquare Gospel Church. Indigenous Nigerians invited Harold Curtis and his wife, and organised the enterprise. Curtis was a solo entrepreneur. When he left in 1964, only one other missionary family came to the mission field between the years 1964-1985. Joseph and Donna Babcock served for short periods in three visits that that totalled 73 months during the period.⁵

v) At other times, revivals broke out among mission-founded churches and among Holiness groups. From the inter-war years this phenomenon grew in intensity. Just to name a few: the Ibibio Revival in south-eastern Nigeria occurred among the Welsh Qua Iboe Mission in 1927. The same year in Western Kenya, a revival flared up among the Quakers. In 1930, the *Balokole* movement known by its clarion call, *tuketenderezza*, started among the Anglicans and swept from Rwanda through Uganda to Kenya and Tanzania by the late 1940s. In 1947, a revival occurred within the Swedish Free Church in Congo Brazzaville, and like a molten lava flowed into the rest of the Congo.⁶

vi) From the late 1960s into the 1970s youthful charismaticism sprouted all over Africa. Labeled as *aliliki* in Malawi, *guerrillas for Christ* in Kenya, or *born again* or *bible carriers* in Nigeria, these

4 Ogbu U Kalu, "Doing Mission Through The Post Office: The Naked Faith People of Igboland, 1920-75" *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 56,4 (2000):263-280. On Clyde Miller's career in Kenya, see Ezekiel M. Kasiera, "Development of Pentecostal Christianity in Western Kenya, 1909-1942," PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1981: chapt.3

5 A.Corten and R. Marshall-Fratani, eds., *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Pierre -Joseph Laurent, "L'église des Assemblées de Dieu du Burkina Faso" *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions* 44(1999):31-98; Ogbu U. Kalu, *Embattled Gods: Christianization of Igboland, 1841-1991* (Lagos: Minaaj, 1996; Trenton, NJ: AWP, 2003); E.Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: the eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: APSC, 2001); E.O .Adeogun, *A Transplant of the Vine :Forty Years of Foursquare History in Nigeria*. (Lagos: Foursquare Gospel Church, 1999)

6 Carl Sundberg, *Conversion and Contextual Conceptions of Christ: A Missiological Study Among Young Converts in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo* (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, 2000); R.van Dijk, "Young Born-again Preachers in Post-independence Malawi: the significance of an extraneous identity," In *New Dimensions African Christianity* Paul Gifford, ed (Nairobi: AACC, 1992): 55-79. For a counter perspective on extraversion, see Harri Englund, "Christian Independency and Global Membership: Pentecostal Extraversion in Malawi," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 33,1 (2003):83-111

puritan young preachers from secondary schools and universities catalysed the modern Pentecostal movement, thus giving it a different stamp from previous genres. From a certain perspective, the phenomenon complemented other forces that catalysed the decolonisation of the African church in the period 1970-1975 and stamped the character of the future.⁷ Since this phenomenon occurred in most parts of the continent, a Kenyan example could suffice.

In September 2005, I worshipped in Hope Restoration Church, Nairobi. The young man who preached in the eight o'clock English service (before the massive Swahili service at eleven o'clock) was named Oral Roberts. I was introduced to his young wife, Evelyn! He gave an edifying biblical teaching. There was no imitation of American evangelists except in his well-tailored suit. On closer inquiry, I found that his father had been a member of Kenya Students Christian Fellowship (KSCF) that became radicalised in the late 1960s. At that time, the *balokole* revival bred Christian Union types who became legalistic. Some students belonging to The Scripture Union sought an alternative to the legalism. Inexplicably they had become baptised in the Spirit while attending a camp meeting in 1959. Some formed the *Trinity Fellowship*, others started the *Ambassadors*. Soon a campaign started to unite the CU organisations in various schools scattered all over Kenya and to transform them. Camp meetings constituted the main avenue for the prayer retreats. These soon turned into revival centres by the next decade. Thus, when Billy Graham evangelised in 1960 in Nairobi and Kisumu, the tradition of public preaching and outreach invigorated the young secondary school students who came from many types of mainline churches. Some teachers opposed their activities with futile restrictions. Holiday periods were consumed by charismatic camp meetings. Miracles of healing and even cases of raising the dead followed these meetings. One of their leaders, Watson Omolukoli is now a professor and chaplain in Kenyatta University. When he was leaving for postgraduate training in 1973, he gave the leadership of the Guerrillas for Christ to Henry Mulandi. Some of the students formed "neo-Pentecostal" ministries after their school days. For instance, Margaret Wangari, was one of the active members of the revival in this period. She later studied in Benson Idahosa's Christ for All Nations seminary in Benin, and founded *Church of the Lord*, a predominantly rural evangelistic church in Kiamba District of central Kenya. In 1974, she had returned from a prayer camp held at Njoro High School, west of Nakuru to find that the grand mother was dying. She placed a blanket on her that was anointed during the camp meeting. She was immediately healed. The Banana Hill community broke loose as sick people gathered for healing.

When the American evangelist, Oral Roberts visited Kenya in 1968, one of the former KSCF founders, now itinerating from Kenya to Uganda and Tanzania as a missionary under the aegis of the *Regions Beyond Ministry*, named his son who was born that year after Oral Roberts. Such outreaches by Western evangelists benefited from the indigenous charismatic movements and equally encouraged or inspired the young people.⁸ The emphasis is that the charismatic movement

7 Ogbu U. Kalu, "Passive Revolution and Its Saboteurs: African Christian Initiative in the Era of Decolonization, 1955-1975", In *Mission, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*. Brian Stanley ed (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003): 250-277, esp., 268ff

8 Richard Showalter served for one year among the *Region Beyond Ministry*, a ministry that grew out of the revival that broke among the KSCF in the 1970s has told the story of *The Spiritual Awakenings in Kenya, 1970-1980: Sketches of some radical believers* (Thika, Kenya: RBM, 1983). On Nigeria, see Frances Bolton, *And We Beheld His Glory* (London, 1992); Mathew Ojo, *End-Time Army: The Charismatic Revival in Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2006); Richard Burgess, "The Civil War Revival and Its Neo-Pentecostal Progeny: A Religious Movement Among the Igbo People of Eastern Nigeria (1967-2002) PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2004.

in eastern Africa was built on the achievements of the *balokole* movement. The story in Tanzania as told by Josiah Mlahagwa underscores this.⁹ The astonishing aspect is that the Kenya story resembles the story of young charismatic students in Eastern Nigeria as recounted by a participant and supported by a diary that one of the young people kept. They were on fire for the Lord, experienced miracles, shared their puritan ethics, and had a strong missionary zeal. The Kenyan students evangelised other eastern African countries and forayed into Muslim communities in the coastal seaboard of the Indian ocean. The Nigerian students evangelised the Muslims in northern Nigeria and forayed into other West African countries. A few ministries grew up as the secondary school students matured, some as independent ministries, others as the evangelical wings of mainline churches. This is the origin of Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES), and Evangelical Fellowship of Anglican Communion (EFAC). The scale was larger in Nigeria. Later, the Fellowship of Christian Union Students (FOCUS) brought together the students from the eastern and western regions of the continent. These constitute the founders of contemporary indigenous Pentecostal churches in Africa.

One more point is that space constrains the tracing of the origins of Catholic Charismatic movement because it had no connection with what happened at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh in 1966. Reverend Father Hilary Achunike has reconstructed the Nigerian part of the story. Aylward Shorter and Joseph Njiru mention some of the activities of CCRM in Nairobi but do not specify how Kenya and Pittsburgh are connected. In Nigeria, Archbishop Arinze had already initiated special prayer events under Father Ikeobi so as to wean Catholics away from African Instituted Churches (AICs). When the young people started their charismatic movement, the RCM fought them and only gradually set up the renewal movement after driving out the early charismatic Watchman Charismatic movement for questioning key doctrines. The visit by Father McNutt in 1971 to Nigeria was barely tolerated and restricted to priestly participants.¹⁰ Achunike, Shorter, and Njiru draw attention to the increased level of apparitions of the Virgin Mary as an aspect of the renewal spirituality. Philip Jenkins put it baldly:

“Except for indulgences, the list of horrors that Reformation critics charged against the medieval church are all much in favour in Third World Catholicism, including the worship of the Virgin Mary, the invocation of saints, the working of miracles, and supernatural cures of the sick.”¹¹

The contention here is that the indigenous roots of Pentecostalism in Africa must be underscored as manifestations of indigenous appropriation of the translated gospel and response to missionary message. Thus, two strands converged as Classical Pentecostal missionaries came to fully functional indigenous Pentecostal groups embattled in a hostile colonial environment.

9 J.R. Mlahagwa, “Contending for the Faith: Spiritual Revival and Fellowship Church in Tanzania” *East African Expressions of Christianity*, Thomas Spear and I.N. Kimambo, eds. (Oxford: James Currey, 1999): 296-306.

10 Hilary Achunike, “Catholic Charismatic and Renewal Movement in Igboland,” (Nsukka: University of Nigeria, Department of Religion, PhD thesis, 2001); Aylward Shorter and Joseph Njiru, *New Religious Movements in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication, 2001): 65-67. For a decent account of Catholic Charismatic Renewal see Thomas J. Csordas, *Language, Charisma and Creativity: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan/St Martin’s Press, 2001). He discusses the structural growth and expansion, transformation of time and space in daily life, gender discipline, blurring of boundaries with ritual and everyday life, sense of community forged through shared ritual participation, and creativity of language and metaphor in prophetic utterance.

11 Philip Jenkins, “After the Next Christendom” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 28, 1 (Jan 2004): 20-23, esp., 21

Even in the Southern African setting, racial segregation soon ruined the ecumenicity within the Apostolic Faith Mission and the spread of the movement through mine workers into contiguous areas such as Zimbabwe and Malawi was achieved through African agency. The development in the post-colonial era further indicated that Christianity grew in Africa more rapidly under indigenous agency and after the missionary era. The patterns of Pentecostalism changed in every decade thereafter: the puritan and evangelistic tradition of the 1970s gave way to faith and claim, prosperity ministry of the 1980s. By the 1990s, the movement was recalled to the holiness tradition, intercession, and engagement with the public space.¹²

THE ESTRANGED BEDFELLOWS: AFRICAN PENTECOSTALS AND AFRICAN INSTITUTED CHURCHES

One key aspect of the historical discourse is the relationship between Pentecostals and African Initiated Churches (AICs). Some have portrayed the AICs as the original Pentecostal movement in Africa. Harvey Cox's *Fire from Heaven* consolidates the view that could be traced back to H.W Turner, J.W Hollenweger, and Allan Anderson. Two positions have, therefore, emerged in African Church historiography: those who lay emphasis on the shared worldview tend to emphasise the elements of continuity resembling the colours of the butterflies. They portray the AICs as the roots of modern Pentecostalism in Africa, or indeed, an earlier form of it. The implication is to posture the roots of Pentecostalism in Africa within the religious genius of the indigenous people. Within this camp, however, some arrive at the same conclusion through the prism of comparative religions. Employing the phenomenological approach, they emphasise common elements in all religions. Stepping outside the compounds of those who see all religious forms as the different roads to Rome or the colours of the rainbow, one engages about six advocacies linking the AICs and the Pentecostals, based on

- the shared pneumatic emphasis (Turner, 1965; Hollenweger 1972; Hackett, 1987,1989; Anderson, 1990,1996),
- new religiosity (Hollenweger, 1986),
- linked roots in the historical discourse of origins(eg J.G Lake in South Africa) (Poewe, 1988; Oosthuizen, 1997; Hollenweger, 1997),
- kindred atmosphere or shared worldview (Bediako, 1995; Walls, 1996),
- shared racial ideology (Hollenweger, 1974; Tinney, 1980; Poewe, 1988) and
- the re-integrative response to social predicament (Daneel, 1990; Oosthuizen, 1997).

These are representative nodes in the historiography and selected to balance the data from southern and western Africa.¹³ The predominance of western sociologists, coming from cultural contexts that emphasise inclusivism and religious pluralism, has befuddled the study of both the AICs and the character of Pentecostalism. They ride rough -shod over distinctions that matter to the practitioners. Insider perspectives clash with outsider interpretations. The possibility of creating order out of chaos with a typology is ignored.

Pentecostals demonise the AICs by deploying theological weapons derived from Covenantal Theology. They argue that the AICs covenant with spiritual forces in indigenous religions. Their

12 Ogbu U Kalu, "Pentecostal/Charismatic Reshaping of African Religious Landscape,1970-2000", *Mission Studies*,20-1,39(2003):84-111.

13 See details of the arguments and the cited bibliography in Ogbu U.Kalu, "Estranged Bedfellows: the demonization of the Aladura in African Pentecostal Rhetoric," *Missionalia*,28,(2000):121-142

rituals betray this. These covenants are opposed to covenant with Jesus Christ. Christian life is imaged as a power-encounter, a spiritual battle, requiring a certain attitude towards the spirits at the gates of communities; they caution members to be wary and to test the spirits, *for not all are of God*. This perception tends to emphasise the elements of discontinuity with the past as Birgit Meyer has concluded from her study of the Ewe Christians of Ghana. The complexity in Pentecostal attitude to the past is that while it affirms the reality of the spiritual world in the African map of the universe, there is a parallel tearing of the of the local fabric which undermines the structure of ancestral power, witchcraft, and familial coercion.¹⁴ In general, Pentecostals perceive themselves differently from the AICs even though historically some AICs started from mainline churches and others emerged from Pentecostal roots before splintering into groups that knew little about their origins.

The contested areas are, therefore, (a) modes of receiving and transmitting spiritual power-dreams, visions, laying of hands, anointing with oil, prophetic speaking and intuition or the still small voice; (b) crisis control-discernment, diagnosis, cleansing, deliverance and healing; (c) rituals of rejuvenation, re-covenanting and re-enchanted the world-ancestral cults, festivals (especially agricultural); (d) empowerment rituals- for life force, tangible material things such as goods and wealth and intangibles such as status and power. Space constrains a detailed discussion of these weighty matters. In South Africa the connection between Zionists and Azusa Street through J.G Lake is unique.¹⁵ In West Africa, some of the mega Pentecostal churches (eg. True Redeemed Evangelical Mission, Lagos, and The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Lagos) started life within the AIC. In recent times, many AICs are shunning instruments in their rituals to qualify fully as Pentecostal. In the US there are clearer boundaries between Pentecostals and Spiritualist churches.

PENTECOSTALISM IN THE AFRICAN MAP OF THE UNIVERSE: A CULTURAL DISCOURSE

The cultural discourse helps us to understand the character of African Pentecostalism and provides one of the explanations for its growth. It argues that African Pentecostalism must be understood from the indigenous worldviews; that it is a religiosity that answers questions raised from within the interior of the worldviews. For instance, the concerns about witchcraft, deliverance, healing, and prosperity (money and children) emanate from the worldviews and the goals of indigenous religions.¹⁶ The globalisation discourse utilises the Western enlightenment worldview and misses many of the nuances. The millions who throng to stadia are not necessarily the upper mobile class seeking the resources of global cultural flow; they may be millions who have heard about a form of Christianity that takes seriously the fears and hopes emanating from the interior of their primal worldview; a religion that better serves the goals of traditional African religion. The historian must perforce construct the Pentecostal discourse by first reconstructing the indigenous worldview and

14 Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1993);

David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 148.

15 see H.W. Turner's typology for African Religious Movements *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 1, 1 (1967): 1-32; K.P. Burpeau, *God's Showman: A Historical Study of John G. Lake and South African/American Pentecostalism* (Oslo: Refleks Publishing, 2004)

16 Allan Anderson, "Pentecostal Approaches to Faith and Healing" *International Review of Mission*, 91, 363 (October 2002): 523-534; The entire volume of *International Review of Mission*, 94, 372 (January, 2005) is devoted to the theme of "Divine Healing, Pentecostalism and Mission." Some scholars Africans contributed.

then pursue the lines of resonance or the inculturating pathways between the biblical world and the African maps of the universe. The major contribution of the movement is how it responds to the continued reality or the resilient forces in African cultures and religions. Contrary to the early missionary attitude that urged rejection, Pentecostals take the African maps of the universe seriously, acknowledging that culture is both a redemptive gift as well as capable of being high-jacked. They perceive a kindred atmosphere and resonance with the worldview of the Bible. They appreciate the tensile strength of the spiritual ecology in Africa and the clash of covenants in the effort to displace the spirits at the gates of individuals and communities with a legitimate spiritual authority. Salvation is posed in a conflict scenario. The Garrick Braide missionaries reflected this in a simple chorus that declared that “Jesus has come and Satan has run away!” Pentecostals, therefore, explore the lines of congruence that go beyond deconstruction to a new construction of reality. It is the “fit” that has shaped its character. To stress the “break with the past” is to ignore the nuances in African Pentecostal response.

First, at the structural level, the perception of a three-dimensional space is shared by both biblical and African worldviews in spite of a cyclical concept of time. But there is a declaration that at the name of Jesus, “every knee shall bow” whether it exists in the heavenlies, earth (land and water) or in the earth-beneath (ancestral world). Second, both affirm that “things which are seen are made of things which are not seen” (Heb. 11:3b) and that conflicts in the manifest world are first decided in the spirit world, therefore, “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal”. Third, the biblical worldview is that life is just as precarious as the traditional African imagines; the enemy is ranged in a military formation as principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and wickedness in high places. The Pentecostal goes through life as keenly aware of the presence of evil forces as the African does. Fourth, there are human beings who are given false powers by evil forces to exercise control over individuals, families and communities. Satan even promised Jesus some of these if he complied. Thus, Pentecostals perceive dictatorial and corrupt rulers as being “possessed.” Fifth, the Pentecostal perceives witchcraft and sorcery as real, soul-to-soul attack. The born again Christian responds to deliverance ministries because witchcraft and demonic oppression are taken seriously by Pentecostal preachers and to prosperity preaching because these are the reasons for visiting the native doctor or the *Aladura* prophet. Thus, the elements of African Pentecostalism that are strange to the westerner could be explained from the cultural discourse.¹⁷

PENTECOSTALISM AND THE DILEMMA OF GLOBALISATION: THE INSTRUMENTALIST DISCOURSE

The instrumentalist genre of discourse has been promoted mostly by social scientists. The key question is the function of this religious form on various aspects of social structures. It argues that Africans patronise Pentecostalism as an instrument to respond to the challenges of their social and political environments riddled with poverty, failed economies, and legitimacy crises. Pentecostalism is growing in the poorer regions of the world where every one wants to imitate the West, read Western books, wear western clothes and mimic American pronunciation of English language. It is in this discourse that the full weight of globalism discourse is deployed sometimes in contradictory manners. It has been utilised to buttress the argument for externality; that

17 Ogbu U Kalu, “Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Map of the Universe,” *Pneuma*, 24.2,(2002):110-137; Allan Anderson, “Pentecostal Pneumatology and African Power Concepts: Continuity or Change?” *Missionalia*, 19 (April 1990):65-74.

Pentecostalism is predominantly an urban phenomenon that serves as a vehicle of cultural flows; a religion that appeals to the urban, highly mobile middle class questing for the resources of modernity, and as a coping mechanism for the urban dweller confronted with anomie and harsh realities of unemployment. It combines class analysis with the social, economic and political; that it provides a safe haven for single women; provides social security and social network that has immense economic import; empowers the urban poor; serves as a tool of hope.

One key assumption is that most people in the African world live in urban areas, that the pace of urbanisation is increasing as megapoles emerge creating a magnetic pull from the dwindling rural areas; that these urban dwellers whether in rich or poor slum sectors constitute the target of Pentecostal evangelisation, the consumers of its core message, the determinant of the strategies that have become increasingly market-oriented. Urban contexts are the veritable fields where global economic and cultural forces are replicated. They are the communities wired with fibre-optic technology, and exposed to an ideology of free market technocracy that seeks to denationalise the state sovereignty. From this perspective, globalism is imaged as an ineluctable force that no African could avoid. Thus, Paul Gifford's book on *Ghana's New Christianity*, has the sub-title, *Pentecostalism in a globalising African economy*.¹⁸ It is as if globalisation is the most urgent dimension to this African nation, and that it is essential to understand a religious phenomenon prominently from the perspective of its function in promoting this ideology.

This trend has produced studies that focus on mega churches that serve as 'McDonaldisation' of the gospel. The organisation and strategies of mega churches are portrayed as replications of western corporate models and, therefore, reductionist of the essential gospel and betrayal of national identities. From 1998, research grants turned attention to the use of the media among African Pentecostals. They did not pay much attention to print media or literary production by indigenous African pastors. Rather, they focused on radio and television to show how global cultural flows have permeated into the cultural expression of African Pentecostalism.¹⁹

From here, some scholars essentialise Pentecostalism to indicate the innate ethics that enable it to play this role. This replays the old connections between capitalism and Protestantism: voluntarism, individuality, frugal morality, hard work, adaptability, discontinuity with the burdens of the past (ancestral, extended family, indigenous community, wasteful rituals of indigenous religions, taboos/prohibitions and such-like). The argument links social, economic, political, and psychological dimensions of Pentecostal thought and practices. David Martin has been quite articulate in bringing these dimensions together. He perceives the same conditions paralleled all over the globe. On Latin America, he compares the new moment brought by Pentecostalism to what Methodism did in 19th century Britain.²⁰

On the social front, it points to the fact that Pentecostal movements provide social security, social network, reinvent communality in urban anomies by recovering the notion of brethren as a community

18 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); see, an African response, Ogbu U Kalu, "Yabbing the Pentecostals: Paul Gifford's Image of Ghana's New Christianity," *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, 15, 1 (January 2005): 3-16

19 Rosalind I.J. Hackett, "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana" *JRA*, 28, (1998): 258-277; Marken DeWitte, "Altar Media's Living Word: Televised Charismatic Christianity in Ghana," *JRA*, 32, 2, (2003): 172-202; Dorothea E. Schulz, "Charisma and Brotherhood Revisited: Mass-mediated Forms of Spirituality in Urban Mali" *JRA*, 33, 2 (2004): 146-171.

20 David Martin, *Tongues of Fire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); idem., *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); Jean and John Comaroff, "Privatizing the Millennium: New Protestant Ethics and Spirits of Capitalism in Africa and Elsewhere," *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 15, 2 (2002): 15-37.

that resonates with Biblical concepts of *koinonia* and *soma*. This leads to the psychological impact that argues that Pentecostal communities serve as safe havens that empower people to cope, and to provide emotional security because religion can function as a psycho-affective response to socio-economic forces; their liturgies (prayer, retreats, tarrying, music, dance, homiletics, and testimonies), provide healing catharsis, and their hermeneutics perfumed with Biblical certitudes transform the inner person. The literature argues the salience of the movement in reshaping the cultures and religious landscapes: re-invention of self and life journey, daily life in the domestic domain, and religious life in the public space. On the gender front, women enjoy an enlarged space for exercising ritual power, engage in safe quest for spouses in a religious atmosphere that privileges family values.

These dimensions flow into the economic gains because the people are empowered to engage the modern economic space and technologies, to operate with optimism that God is with them in the market place, to reject defeat from economic failures of the nation or the domestic impact of the World Bank/IMF's Structural Adjustment Programs. Here commentators differ: some argue that prosperity and word of faith theologies breed dependency and weakness as people expect miracles and do not work hard. Others image a band of energetic businessmen using the gospel as a weapon in their struggles to be head and not tails, and to tithe because of the law of sowing and reaping. Still others argue that prosperity gospel resonates with the goals of traditional religion.²¹

The old suspicion that this is an apolitical religion survives even when Pentecostals are praying people into state houses, when Nevers Mumba left his television ministry in Zambia to run for the office of Vice President and won, when Pastor Chris Okotie ran for presidency in 2003 in Nigeria and lost. The argument is still that by over-emphasising the salvation of the individual, inadequate attention is paid to a political theology that engages structural evil that causes poverty, denies human rights, and diminishes the power to be truly human. It is argued that African Pentecostals lack a consciousness of political activism and have colluded with dictatorial governments in Kenya, Ghana, and Togo. Insiders insist that it is a worthy endeavour to attract a dictator to an evangelical crusade so that the power of the Word could touch the person, and it is dangerous to ignore a dictator and thereby cause the gospel to be hindered.

Analyses diverge: some distinguish between covert and overt political engagements and thereby broaden the field of the political beyond engaging in the electoral processes. Others observe that generally Pentecostals have engaged the public space with greater intentionality within the last three decades than ever before; still others distinguish between anti-political, apolitical (that does not lack political consciousness but demarcates levels of participation), and overt political postures. But the data differ from region to region and from country to country. In Nigeria, the political salience and engagement in social issues may be more extensive than in Ghana. The relationship between Pentecostals and dictatorial governments is determined by the dynamics of the political terrain. David Martin argues against the notion of a dualistic withdrawal from political life. Rather there is

21 R.I.J Hackett, "The prosperity gospel in West Africa" In *Religion and the Transformation of Capitalism*. R. Roberts ed., (London: Routledge, 1995): 199-214; Jordan D. Smith, "The Arrow of God: Pentecostalism, Inequality, and the Supernatural in Southeastern Nigeria" *Africa*, 71, 4 (2001): 587-613; Akoko R. Mbe, "New Pentecostalism in the wake of the economic crisis in the Cameroon," *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 11, 3 (2002): 359-376; A.F. K. Ukah, "Those Who Trade With God Never Lose: The Economies of Pentecostal Activism in Nigeria" In *Christianity and Social Change in Africa*. Toyin Falola ed., (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2005): 253-274; Glen Thompson, "Transported Away: The Spirituality and Piety of Charismatic Christianity in South Africa, 1976-1994" *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 118 (2004): 128-145.

“a newly confident entry looking for social validation... The new style charismatics tend to refer to models in the Hebrew Scriptures, sometimes with a theocratic element, and they entertain a tincture of Christian Zionism such as also exists in Latin America.”²²

Pentecostal political theology moves firstly from rebuilding the bruised self-perception of the individual to secondly, empowering him/her with new hope and confidence to thirdly assisting the born-again to garner the rich promises of the Gospel and fourthly, enabling the reclamation, redemption, and liberation of the land. In recent times, the brethren have mobilised their resources to gain access into formal political offices because “where the righteous rule, the people rejoice.” In Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Malawi, and Zambia, the Intercessors for Africa have been engaged in the recent changes in the political processes. The intervention of the Intercessors in the human tragedy following the wars in Liberia and Sierra-Leone is notable and a further sign of a new trend in politics of engagement. It is the declared responsibility of the born again to liberate their nations and continent through prayers. Intercession becomes a form of political praxis reshaping the religious and political landscapes and enabling communities to imagine a counter political culture that fights against the debilitating force of ethnicity, seeks the welfare of the nation, of the continent, and of the entire black race. At this infra-political level, a criticism of the government is reflected in the liturgy and social programs. However, many Pentecostals tend to demonise Islam, promote Zionism and, therefore, do not theologise adequately on the pluralistic character of the modern public space.²³ This contrasts sharply against the inclusive post-conciliar Catholic openness. Amos Yong has grappled with the urgency for re-engaging other faiths.

But here is the irony: globalisation has caused the socio-economic challenges that concern Pentecostals. Dual economies, the lack of equity in distribution of wealth means that Pentecostalism faces the backdrop of poverty and inequality. The economic prescriptions of the IMF have created oases of wealth in the desert of scorching poverty, class conflicts, legitimacy crises, and thereby stunned populations. Some commentators image its appeal to the poor, others argue that it attracts the vanishing middle class; some accuse Pentecostalism for purveying globalisation, others accuse them for not fighting the trend, while still others allege that they do not perform adequately in assisting their nations to globalise. It is a Catch-22 wrench. Indeed, the globalisation discourse could be caricatured to say that the African goes to hot gospel places because of a desire to access modern resources instead of visiting multinational corporate sites. This begs the question why the same gospel thrives in the rich countries such as the United States.

PENTECOSTALISM AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE: THE RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

The key question is the character of African Pentecostalism poised between the rock or the power of globalisation and the hard place of challenges from primal religions and cultures. Without

22 Martin, *The World Their Parish*, 2002,149

23 Ogbu U Kalu, “The Practice of Victorious Life: Pentecostal Political Theology and Practice in Nigeria,1970-1996,” *Mission (University of Ottawa)*5,2,(1998):229-255 ;idem, “ Sharia and Islam in Nigerian Pentecostal Rhetoric,1970-2003” *Pneuma*,26,2 (Fall,2004):242-261; Kristina Helgesson, “Pentecostalism as a moral order:action for Israel among Pentecostals in Durban, South Africa” *Swedish Missiological Themes*,92,2 (2004):261-280; Veli-Matti Kakkainen, “Identity and Plurality: A Pentecostal-Charismatic Perspective” *International Review of Missions*91,363 (October,2002):500-503; Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*(Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,2000).

statistical accuracy the enormous growth is palpable. Pentecostals elicit counter attacks by attempting to charismatise the mainline churches and by challenging other religious forms. It must be understood that the growth curve is still on the rise because there is much spiritual hunger and that all religious forms are growing. In my village, the increase in the number of Christian groups is matched by the revival of ancient rituals by the guardians of the *ogirisi* tree. Commentators have pointed to the increased appeal of charismatic spirituality to politicians who declare themselves to be born again, hold prayer meetings in their public offices, and patronise the outreaches of powerful “men of God.” One may question their motives but the core factor is that the Pentecostal culture contests the alleged cultural flow from the West.

A key aspect of the growth pattern is the unregulated laissez-faire religious environment in many non-Islamic states. Constitutions tend to declare such states as secular with provisions for religious freedom. Zambia proclaimed itself as a Christian state during Chiluba’s regime.²⁴ Unregulated religious markets have encouraged competition and expansion without accountability. Competition puts pressure on infrastructure: building projects, funding, re-tooling, re-packaging products, and training the personnel. These may explain the need to network with international groups so as to enhance a ministry’s competitive potentials. A new leadership cadre with much power and personalised style has emerged alleging that God is not a democrat, and that competition requires marketing techniques and rational administrative structures. Critics allege the merchandising of the gospel. Therefore, the growth or enlargement of scale has its trauma. Critics claim that the new spirituality is like a broad river that is shallow in depth, fed by a strong current of externality. The character of African Pentecostalism is so complex that any statement could be disputed because of the variety within the movement. The crunch is how it has used the resources of externality in confronting the challenges created by globalisation, indigenous religions and cultures, the failed state policies in soft states, and the competitions in a dense market. This touches on a crucial dimension namely, the revival of mother tongue or vernacularisation in Pentecostal strategy- doctrine/theology, polity, liturgy, and ethics; for instance, in the dominant concerns of theology, the familial structure of polity (where the leader is called “daddy”), the use of praise names of indigenous gods for God, the borrowing of musical lyrics from traditional sources, and the ethical dilemma of serving God in the midst of an alluring resilient traditional culture. Equally crucial are the modes of representation. One evidence is the growth of vernacular videos as a means of evangelisation as Asonzeh Ukah has demonstrated.²⁵

The contention is that religion needs to be examined as a central category of cultural practice in which lived lives embody an evolving religious understanding of the ultimate meaning of life. Sociologists of religion may miss the driving force of the power in religious movements by paying too much attention to functions of such movements in social structures. In all these, culture is the contested space. The weal and woe of any religious phenomenon depends on how it meets the challenges embedded in the ecosystem because cultures are hewn from the rock of a community’s efforts towards sustainability. The explosion of Pentecostalism has provoked an enormous upheaval in the African religious field and has acquired a great visibility within a short period, both in urban and rural areas. The evangelistic drive in the movement has increased its presence in the

24 See two accounts: Paul Gifford, “Chiluba’s Christian Nation: Christianity as a Factor in Zambian Politics, 1991-1996” *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 13,3 (1998):363-381; Isabel A. Phiri, “President Frederick J.T Chiluba of Zambia: Christian Nation and Democracy” *JRA*, 33,4 (2003):401-428.

25 Asonzeh Ukah “Advertising God: Nigerian Christian video-films and the power of consumer culture” *JRA*, 33,2 (2003):203-231.

rural areas. The ordinary Pentecostal in Africa may be less concerned with modernity and globalisation and more about a renewed relationship with God, intimacy with the transcendental, empowerment by the Holy Spirit, and protection by the power in the blood of Jesus as the person struggles to eke out a viable life in a hostile environment. It could be that they enjoy a certain “moral innocence of the global economy.” As Harri Englund concludes in his study of Malawi,

“most Christians in Chisanpo are too poor and too unfamiliar with English to detach themselves from their immediate relationships in the township and country;...the stuff of their Pentecostal lives is their personal relationships.”

He warns fellow sociologists to “keep their abstractions in close dialogue with ethnography.”²⁶ He explores the streak expressed through the idiom of independency that critiques allegiance to external forces.

This explains the eclectic theology though the Bible is central. Like indigenous religion, experience is privileged. Religion is not about words but about power, experienced in daily life and that could be demonstrated in healing and changing of life circumstances. It has been branded as conservative or even fundamentalist because it avoids the theological liberalism of the West. Scholarship must pay attention to the prolific literary production by indigenous leaders. These are designed to be manuals that assist individuals in their battles with the demons in their lives and communities. There is a heightened awareness of evil because the indigenous worldview is a precarious vision in which the human world is invested by evil forces. The alleged literalism in the use of the Bible ignores the power of orality and narrative in indigenous hermeneutics and idiomatic homiletics. As Philip Jenkins argued, this “conservative,” restorationist tendency runs across the southern Christian spectrum. It may appear simplistically charismatic, visionary, powerfully supernaturalist, and apocalyptic to western liberals but “in this thought world, prophecy is an everyday reality, while faith healing, exorcism, and dream-vision are all fundamental parts of religious sensibility.”²⁷ This tendency has influenced Pentecostal aesthetics that prefers images of the natural world to images of the human being and certain animals considered as capable of being used by witchcraft forces. Pentecostals privilege the aniconic passages in the Bible. These iconoclastic diatribes in the biblical narrative are transferred from text to life.

Commentators observe that the theological scene in contemporary Africa resembles the environment of the first century.²⁸ Pentecostalism in Africa is a force engaged in the religionisation of cultures at institutional and personal domains, and in the process has been reshaped by cultures. Similarly, the liturgy shows the strength of translation that is the strong suit of African Christianity. Even when electronic musical instruments are used, there is a constant process of translating of the gospel into vernacular idioms. Similarly, the dominant ethics of the new life involve a moral rigor in maintaining Godly covenants while keeping a safe distance from covenants with the gods of the fathers.

The class content of the membership has increased in the rural areas though the urban presence remains crucial. An African proverb asserts that one does not grow taller than the umbilical cord;

26 Harri Englund, “The Quest for Missionaries: Transnationalism and Township Pentecostalism in Malawi” In *Between Babel and Pentecost*. Corten and Marshall-Fratani, eds (2001):235-255.esp.,254.

27 Philip Jenkins, “After *The Next Christendom*”, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*(hereafter *IBMR*),28,1 (January 2004):20-23,esp.,21.

28 See, Andrew F. Walls, “Converts or Proselytes?: The crisis over conversion in the early church”, *IBMR*,28,1 (January 2004):2-7.

so, one does not abandon the roots in the family, village and clan. These must be evangelised and cleansed to ensure ability to perform in the spiritual warfare. A house cannot be constructed on a poor soil or risk collapse under testing winds. One should preach to one's parents, siblings, extended family and village. Innumerable outreaches are conducted in the villages of believers. The vertical growth of the movement in rural areas has been greatly assisted by the urban believers who take the message home. Ruthane Garlock in *Fire in His Bones* emphasises how Benson Idahosa wept when his father, a native doctor, died unconverted during the Biafra-Nigeria Civil War (1967-1970) in spite of Idahosa's pleas. His mother converted. The individual's contentious relationship with the community does not mean a rejection of community but perceives certain communal rituals as hindrances to the individual's success in the economic sphere. The ethic of hard work is emphasised and when one's obedience is complete, prosperity is God's obligation to fulfil. All hindrances from one's roots especially idolatry must be avoided.

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CONNECTION AND SHIFT IN ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

One area that deserves attention is the changing pattern of Pentecostal ecclesiastical polity. In the 1970s, the youth challenged the hierarchy of the mainline churches by accenting the priesthood of all believers. Posturing the congregational model, they argued that there was only one church in Africa with many local assemblies. The Holy Spirit rather than tactile ordination called and conferred individuals with the power to interpret the Scriptures. Contact with African Americans in the 1980s brought the idea of a new age that recovered the five-fold ministry. Apostolic and prophetic ministries became very popular by the 1990s. This was tinted with the need to acquire the appropriate titles that included the doctorate. Before that decade ended, leaders sought ordination as bishops. Houses of bishops linked to Black American bishops have proliferated. The ecclesiology has gone full circle! This suggests a research project on the impact of African Americans in contemporary African Pentecostalism.

Ironically, the bureaucratisation process is buttressed with an increased level of ministerial formation. Enlargement of scale has put pressure on manpower. Usually, Pentecostal pastors formed their own in-house Bible Schools, a form of apprenticeship. Recently, many of the leaders who did not possess formal theological education are now going back to school. After years of anti-intellectualism that brandished the epigram that the "letter killeth and the Spirit giveth life," Pentecostals are big players in the resurgence of Christian Universities in Africa. Certain reasons canvassed include population changes, youth bulge, breakdown of secular education-funding and moral level, and the enhanced salience of Pentecostals in the public space.²⁹

CONCLUSION

The Pentecostal movement in Africa emerged historically from the revivals that indicate indigenous appropriation and the "setting to work" of the translated gospel, and missionary message. From a cultural perspective, just as the primal societies wove covenants and encapsulating strategies to maintain cosmic order, Pentecostals essay to reshape the covenants, worldview, social control model and individual life journeys and goals so that individuals and communities will have a better life. They reshape the community's sense of order. The linkages

29 Ogbu U Kalu, *The Scourge of the Vandals: the nature and control of secret cults in Nigerian Universities* (Enugu: University of Nigeria Press, 2001)

with Asia and the West enable the acquisition of external cultural resources to create an emergent culture. The genius of the movement lies in the degree of cultural creativity in appropriating, gestating, and reconstructing the extraneous with fresh imagination and energy. From the instrumentalist perspective, Pentecostalism is important for understanding how Africans have responded to the rapid and untoward changes in their socio-political and economic environment. It has reproduced a political theology of engagement through intercession for Africa. With vibrant evangelistic strategies, they re-evangelise the continent. Criticisms of their methods abound but the matter of false prophets has always bedevilled the Christian enterprise. The wheat and the tares must perforce grow together. The achievement of Pentecostals lies in their innovative responses to the challenges embedded in the African map of the universe. This local story could be woven into the stories from other parts of the world to show the convergences and divergent dimensions in the character of a complex movement.

TREFWOORDE

Pentekostalisme
Wêreldwye Pentekostalisme
Wortels van Pentekostalisme
Historiografie van Pentekostalisme
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