

Political Economy,
New Media, and
Nigerian Popular
Cultures

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Political Economy, New Media, and Nigerian Popular Cultures

Edited by

Benjamin Olumuyiwa Popoola
and Israel Ayinla Fadipe

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CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPLORING THE EMERGENCE AND IMPACT OF PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

From time immemorial, Christianity has played a pivotal role in the spiritual rejuvenation of its adherents. The spiritual renewal has positively impacted the country in all ramifications, especially the mainline churches that laid the foundation of Christianity on Nigerian soil. Existing studies on the contributions of Christianity to society have focused mainly on the spiritual and psychological effort of the mainline churches, with little attention paid to the emergence and the impact of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. The advent of Pentecostal movements in Nigeria, which began in the early 20th century as a reform movement in the prominent churches of Africa, was a significant historical event. This paper adopts a historical method to elicit information on Pentecostal movements in Nigeria, bringing to the fore their historical context and interventions in the growth of African Christianity and their general influence on society. Our findings revealed that Pentecostal movements in Nigeria have, over the years, advanced the course of Christianity with their creative liturgical ideas. Recommendations were made on how some excesses of Pentecostal churches would be put under check to ensure sanity in the movement.

Keywords: Distinctiveness, Pentecostal movement, Nigeria, Christianity.

Introduction

Undoubtedly, Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, with their unique features, are a distinct offshoot of the mainline churches. Their impact on the

development of society has led to the emergence of a new strand of Christianity in Nigeria today.³⁴ The fact is that mainline churches laid the foundation of Christianity in Nigeria and have played and still play a significant role in educating the minds of members and the society at large through their intervention in education, health, and so on to better the lives of Nigerians. All and sundry noticed their influence, giving the mainline churches general acceptability at their inception after little hiccups from the traditional worshippers who felt that Christianity had come to alter their traditional belief system. The first generation of Pentecostal churches was founded independent of foreign control, support, and dominance. Some of these Pentecostal churches emerged due to the leadership tussle and dissatisfaction with the structure of the mainline churches. Some other foreign Pentecostal churches came after the first generation of Pentecostal churches emerged. Churches like The Apostolic Church from Great Britain, Assemblies of God Church, The Apostolic Faith Four Square Gospel Church, and so on. They are known for demonstrating the gifts of speaking in tongues, healing, miracles, exorcism, etc. These Pentecostal churches have also stepped up to address societal needs, further solidifying their role in the development of the country.

Giving a generally acceptable definition of Pentecostal may be difficult due to the different perspectives from which stakeholders have considered the subject matter.³⁵ Pentecostalism is a term used to describe a church or a group of adherents who share a common belief in the possibility of receiving the same experience and gifts as the first Christians on the day of Pentecost. It emphasized the cooperative element in worship, often marked by great spontaneity and placed particular stress on speaking in tongues, prophesy, healing, and exorcism.³⁶ Pentecostalism is a form of Christianity that emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit and believers' direct experience of God's presence. Pentecostals believe faith must be powerfully experiential, not something found merely through ritual or thinking.

³⁴ N.Ngozi et. al. (2016). The Rising Paradigm of Pentecostalpreneurship in Nigeria: Impacts on National Development. Open journal of Philosophy. Vol.6 No.3. Retrieved on 12/8/2023.

³⁵ E.K.Akano (2022) A Kehindegbebon: Interrogating the Impacts of Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements on Mainline Protestant Churches. A Public Lecture delivered on the 17th February, 2022 at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo.Pg.9.

³⁶ D.I. Ayegboyin and S.A.Ishola (2013). African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective. African Christian Textbooks.Pg.7.

Emergence of Pentecostal Movements in Nigeria

Pentecostalism emerged from the term Pentecost, derived from the ancient Jewish Feast of Weeks mentioned in the Bible. However, it quickly became crucial in developing Christianity in Nigeria. The Pentecostal movements in Nigeria began to see the metaphorical mustard seed Jesus described as the tiniest of all grains. However, as it matures, it transforms into a substantial tree that sustains travellers and serves as a nesting place for birds in the sky. Pentecostalism emerged around 1890 as a renewal movement focused on a direct personal spiritual encounter described in the New Testament. This encounter involves speaking in tongues, which is believed to be relevant in the present time.³⁷ Pentecostalism is commonly believed to have emerged as a result of a desire to depart from the conventional practices of the established church, accompanied by a rise in poverty, hunger, and deprivation. There was a notable disparity between the established church and its members, highlighting the necessity for an alternative that could better address the people's needs and aspirations. The Pentecostal Church emerged in response to the demand for a platform where energetic and engaged young individuals could freely articulate their concerns and experiences.

The collection of Pentecostal movements in question is called Classical Pentecostal movements. The Charismatic movement originated in 1960 and is a distinct branch of the Pentecostal movement. It incorporates the doctrines and rituals of the mainline churches while maintaining its own unique identity. The third strand emerged within the evangelical community during the 1970s. This branch of the Pentecostal movement rejects the belief systems of Pentecostalism's first and second strands. They strongly adhere to the idea that miracles, such as deliverance from demons, healings, and the gift of prophecy, are the essential components of God's plan for the church. The final category, the religious movements, encompass all the beliefs and practices of the preceding three categories. It asserts that physical well-being and financial success are God's critical objectives for Christians.³⁸ Pentecostal movements emerged as Nigerians and Africans sought solutions to the prevailing economic slump, unemployment, and

³⁷ A.A.Ayuk, (2002) *The Pentecostal Transformation of Nigeria Church Life*. Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies.

³⁸ E.K.Akano (2022) *A Kehindegbegbon: Interrogating the Impacts of Nigerian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements on Mainline Protestant Churches*. A Public Lecture delivered on the 17th February, 2022 at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo.Pg.12.

corruption that have become prominent issues in our society. Pentecostalism thrived in Nigeria due to the genuine evangelistic passion of numerous Nigerians who desired transformation.

The survival and flourishing of Pentecostalism in Nigeria can be attributed to the genuine evangelistic enthusiasm of several Nigerians who sought transformative change.³⁹ Thus, the emergence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria can be ascribed to the movement's fundamental message. The movement's spiritual and religious perspectives and worldview greatly impacted this matter. Their message revolves around spiritual empowerment and the ability to tap into heavenly force to fulfil human needs in the ongoing battle for power and survival.⁴⁰ Pentecostalism in Nigeria is driven by studying, comprehending, and implementing the scriptures to ensure their pertinence within the cultural, political, and social milieu. Nigeria's religious landscape is characterised by many denominations with diverse doctrines, leading to a complicated and perplexing strand of religion. Additionally, the evangelical tendency of these denominations further contributes to the intricacy of the religious scene. They attempted to address the apparent void the mainstream churches did not address.⁴¹ Pentecostal organizations appeal to many followers, including persons with advanced education, professionals, wealthy individuals, military personnel, government officials, politicians, business people, and well-travelled ladies. Their rapid expansion can be attributed to their effective strategy, focus on women and young, dedication to using social media for evangelism and revival, and lack of a complex administrative structure for recruiting new members.

For example, the movement employed various captivating strategies to enlist members from established churches, such as overwhelming potential recruits with excessive praise and affection, providing housing, food, financial assistance, medical services in rural areas, scholarships for disadvantaged individuals, and programmes to enhance their capabilities.

³⁹ J.O.Paul. Evangelism and the Rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. National Open University. <https://foa.nou.edu.ng>. Retrieved on 11/8/2023.

⁴⁰ A.A.Koevoerts. (2018). The Changing Faces of African Pentecostalism. In (Ed.) B.A.Adedibu and B.O.Igboin. The Changing Faces of African Pentecostalism. Ondo. Adekunle Ajasin University Press.Pg.34.

⁴¹ A.A.Koevoerts. (2018). The Changing Faces of African Pentecostalism. In (Ed.) B.A.Adedibu and B.O.Igboin. The Changing Faces of African Pentecostalism. Ondo. Adekunle Ajasin University Press.Pg.34.

Pentecostalism is a broad phrase that refers to several religious groups and factions that have historically emphasised speaking in tongues, prophesying, and healing, considering these as manifestations of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They consistently reject paedobaptism and instead, practice adult baptism by immersion as a public declaration of faith upon conversion.⁴²

Literature Review

According to Olufunke, Pentecostal movements in Nigeria have gained prominence due to their departure from traditional church settings and their choice to gather in venues such as hotels, nightclubs, film houses, and other locations previously considered morally wrong. This exemplifies the innovative nature of Pentecostal growth⁴³. Adeboye thinks that internal and external influences shaped the progression of Pentecostalism and the advancement of church and ecclesiastical architecture in Nigeria. He clarified that the internal elements referred to the theological and liturgical importance and the creation of new activities under the church's jurisdiction and control⁴⁴. Magbadelo asserts that Pentecostalism has progressively emerged as a defining attribute of Christian Evangelistic campaigns in Africa, specifically Nigeria. The main focus of these crusades is centred around the concepts of healing, miracles, wealth, and a life filled with abundance. He provided a thorough overview and analysis of the various factors that contribute to the rapid spread of the gospel, using multiple communication channels available to them. Ultimately, he questions whether the church has started to manipulate its followers and reflects on the future of these movements concerning the socio-economic difficulties that the world is presently facing⁴⁵. Upong emphasizes the significance of tracing the origins of Pentecostalism to the religious era in Nigeria before the development of modern Christianity to comprehend Pentecostalism and its current impact on society fully. He found it difficult to differentiate and

⁴² D.I. Ayegboyin and S.A.Ishola (2013). African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective. African Christian Textbooks.Pg.8.

⁴³O.Adeboye (2012). A Church in a Cinema Hall? Pentecostal Appropriation of Public Space in Nigeria. Journal of Religion in Africa.

⁴⁴ A.A.Babajide (2012) Effects of Pentecostalism on Ecclesiastical Architecture in Nigeria. International Journal of Science and Research. (IJSR).

⁴⁵ J.O.Magbadelo (2004) Pentecostalism in Nigeria: Exploiting or Edifying the Masses. Journal of International and Global Studies. Vol.1 (10).

classify Pentecostal groupings from African Independent movements.⁴⁶ Bolarinwa examined African Pentecostalism through an analysis that considered African traditional beliefs and recognized the significant impact of spirituality on Africa's political past. He additionally claimed that Pentecostalism in Africa aims to satisfy the needs of the African populace.⁴⁷ Gaiya et al. conducted a study on the substantial role played by Pentecostal church members in the Northern portion of the country in resolving ethnoreligious violence, particularly the 'Kafanchan Riot' in Kaduna state. Additionally, the violence impacted neighbouring regions, including Bauchi, Plateau, Kano, and Katsina. He expressed his concern about the government's inability to manage the internal conflicts in the country adequately. Adebisi conducted a study on the impact of African Pentecostalism in spreading the gospel across the continent, specifically its role in politics. This led to the election of a president and the current Vice President. Due to their political participation, Pentecostal groups in Nigeria have been inspired to increase their involvement in different facets of human life.⁴⁸

African Coloration of Pentecostal Movements

The Pentecostal movements in Nigeria have distinct characteristics that set them apart from the predominant religious traditions. Some notable characteristics encompass advancements in the customs of the prominent religious faiths. Pentecostalism has reshaped and remodelled Christianity to have an African face and colour. Christians believe that if Christianity imbibes African worldviews, it will bring about tremendous growth.⁴⁹ It is accurate to state that Pentecostal movements separated from the mission churches. Nevertheless, achieving a complete separation is intricate since

⁴⁶ D.P.Upong . Presence and Impact of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Presence+and+impact+of+Pentecostalism+in+Nigeria+byD.P.Upong.pdf&rlz=1C1RLNS_enNG1096NG1096&oq=Presence+and+impact+of+Pentecostalism+in+Nigeria+byD.P.Upong.pdf&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBCTUwMzUyajBqNKgCALACAQ&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

⁴⁷ J.A. Bolarinwa (2018) African Pentecostalism and Political Development. (Eds.) B.A. Adedibu and B.O.Igboin The Changing Faces of African Pentecostalism.

⁴⁸ M.A.B.Gaiya (2002). The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266498809_The_Pentecostal_revolution_in_Nigeria

⁴⁹P.O.Awojobi (2020). The Impacts of Pentecostal Churches on the Growth of Christianity in Nigeria. Sapia Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.3 No.3. Pg.3.

they uphold their mother churches' liturgy and worship practices, albeit with minor adaptations and adjustments. In Nigeria, Pentecostal movements emphasise the Holy Spirit's role in guiding the church's activities.⁵⁰ Following the conversion process, a renewed believer should experience the divine favour of Holy Spirit baptism, which confirms their redemption. Living a triumphant life is contingent upon fulfilling this requirement, which is essential for all Christians.

Therefore, Pentecostal movements provide reasons for disorder, misery, and injustice and methods of exerting control over these issues through various rituals and belief systems. They emphasise the requirement that members undergo a spiritual rebirth by the scriptural directive.⁵¹ In addition to this concept, they focus on glossolalia, which refers to the practice of speaking in tongues. As a customary practice, they anticipate that members can converse in a language, which is a distinct indication of being reborn. Pentecostal leaders train their members on speaking in tongues, and many have established prophetic schools to educate interested individuals within their denominations on the art of communicating in this manner. Here, ethical concerns arise regarding the biblical validation of this. Is it scripturally permissible for Pentecostal movements to train their members on speaking in tongues, or does the Holy Spirit solely bestow this gift?⁵²

Pentecostal movements are renowned for their significant emphasis on prosperity. There is a belief that economically disadvantaged individuals need the opportunity to experience the benefits bestowed upon them by a higher power. However, it is believed that any individual who identifies as a Christian should not encounter ailments, financial hardship, joblessness, scarcity, infertility, or any other ordinary human challenges. They frequently stress that their God is not associated with poverty, encouraging their followers to pray ardently for wealth and worldly belongings. Currently, poverty is regarded as the most distressing characteristic of our culture. While most people are experiencing poverty, a small number of

⁵⁰ Y.Fer. (2010) The Holy Spirit and the Pentecostal Habitus: Elements for a Sociology of Institution in Classical Pentecostalism. *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*. Vol.23. No 2. Pg. 159.

⁵¹ M.U.Ononiwu (2020) Gospel and Culture: Nigerian Pentecostalism as a Case Study for African Contributions to Intercultural Theology. A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Theology and the Graduate Centre for Theology, University of Toronto.

⁵² M.O.Oyetade (2019) A study of speaking in Tongues in Acts and 1 Corinthians and its use and abuse in some selected contemporary Churches in Nigeria.

individuals enjoy great wealth.⁵³ Pentecostal movements offer specialised programmes to their followers to promote prosperity and a life of abundance. They dress splendidly and publicly flaunt their affluence to demonstrate the blessings they have received from God. Christianity is an external religion that integrates and blends with the culture it is introduced to while maintaining its distinctiveness and positive influence. Pentecostalism in Africa is an emerging Christian movement encouraging and instructing its followers to sever ties with their previous experiences and beliefs entirely.⁵⁴ They adopt the most recent iteration of Christianity, which allows for adaptability.⁵⁵ Africans practice their religious beliefs diligently, consume food with spiritual significance, and religiously imbibe beverages.⁵⁶ African Christians should adhere to the principles of Christianity without diluting them with foreign cultural influences. Pentecostal organisations assert that Christianity in Nigeria must align with the African framework to comprehend better the substance and circumstances of Christian observance and devotion⁵⁷. Undeniably, experienced scholars such as Bolaji Idowu, Dopamu, and Awolalu have rectified numerous misconceptions regarding African worship and liturgy. These scholars have emphasised the significance of Africanising Christianity in a manner that enhances the appeal, adaptability, and acceptance of prayer among the people.⁵⁸

At one time, Europeans and their introduced religion had yet to arrive on African land to instruct us on how to consume food and beverages, give birth, rest, cultivate, and other similar activities. Before they arrived in

⁵³ P.S Aku, M.J.Ibrahim and Y.D Bulus (1997) Perspectives on Poverty and Poverty Alleviating Strategies for Nigeria. In (Eds.) Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria. 1997 Annual Conference of The Nigerian Economic Society.

⁵⁴ A. Ukah (2007). African Christianities: Features, Promises and Problems. Arbeitspapiere/Working Paper. Department of Anthropology and African Studies.

⁵⁵ B.B. Igboin (2018). Local Theologies, African Pentecostalism and African Culture. In (Ed.) B.A.Adedibu and B.O.Igboin. The Changing Faces of African Pentecostalism. Ondo. Adekunle Ajasin University Press. Pg. 209.

⁵⁶ A.A.Akindolie (2018). Influence of Yoruba Culture on African Pentecostal Worship in Yorubaland. In (Ed.) B.A.Adedibu and B.O.Igboin. The Changing Faces of African Pentecostalism. Ondo. Adekunle Ajasin University Press. Pg. 239.

⁵⁷ P.O.Awojobi (2020). The Impacts of Pentecostal Churches on the Growth of Christianity in Nigeria. Sapiaientia Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.3 No.3. Pg.7.

⁵⁸ O.O.Epenyong and I.O.Okoi (2021). Africanization of Christianity: Henry Venn's indigenization of Christianity. International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI). Vol.4. Issue 2.

Africa, Africans had a highly established religious system. Europeans arrived in Africa with the intention of not only spreading Christianity but also imposing European cultural values and customs on the African population. That is, to emulate their dress style and adopt their manner of speech. Thus, to capture the interest of Africans towards the new religions, any mention of Africa is regarded as uncivilised, evil, savage, and archaic. To be considered a devout born-again Christian, you must adopt the attire commonly worn by Europeans. Pentecostal movements have re-established practices that were once seen as evil. They have transcended ethnic, racial, and social preconceptions and conventional boundaries in their approach to worship.

The Pentecostal movements in Nigeria serve as a medium for conveying biblical teachings and cultural detritus. The poem explores the depths of Indigenous spiritual forces and human righteousness, skilfully intertwining them within a fresh spiritual and social framework. The Nigerian branch of Pentecostal movements can be regarded as an ecumenical influence that combines traditional elements in a complex and innovative way while maintaining the integrity of the original framework. Pentecostal pastors have disrupted traditional worship practices by reintroducing a more adaptable approach. Another crucial phenomenon observed throughout Pentecostal organisations linked to prayer is the practice of fasting.

The duration of fasting might range from 7, 14, 21, to 48 days.⁵⁹ Several individuals advocate for a fasting program lasting 100 days. Typically, members are permitted to have water during a specific time of day while maintaining their fast. In addition, they conduct prayer sessions tailored explicitly for artisans, traders, farmers, contractors, infertile women, unemployed individuals, and those facing various life challenges. Pentecostal movements have been frequently reported to dedicate significant time to praying against individuals or forces that hinder their advancement. The act of ejaculatory prayers achieves this. Research has uncovered that numerous Pentecostal pastors have implemented tactics to combat poverty by instructing their congregants to bring all the Nigerian currency denominations they use in the country to church for prayers against poverty. Additionally, they encourage the use of anointing water, handkerchiefs or mantles, baby clothes for barren women, and the submission of travel passports and documents for those intending to travel. The Pentecostal movement is committed to eliminating gender disparity in

⁵⁹ E.Bartos (2015) The Three waves of Spiritual Renewal of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement. In Sciendo. <https://sciendo.com>. Retrieved on 21/8/2023

religious settings. *Ibi ko ju Ibi, bi a se bi eru ni abi omo*. Both genders are considered equal; just as a son is born, so is an enslaved person. Pentecostal movements prioritise the acknowledgment and focus on women within the church. When the pastor is ordained into the ministry, his wife assumes the role of the mama G.O. by default. Both individuals are responsible for conducting church services, with the possibility of the pastor's wife delivering the sermon while the husband assumes a listening role. The occurrence of the first lady, a prevalent practice among politicians, has now extended to church settings. We have established an office specifically for the pastor's spouse and an organisation for the wives of ministers who serve in religious roles.

The distinguishing characteristics of Pentecostal movements in Nigeria are their generosity and adaptability.⁶⁰ The contemporary disregard for the Biblical mandate for women to consistently wear head coverings in worship and maintain silence is evident. Women can now openly express their thoughts and actively participate in the church. They are not passive participants in social events but influential individuals to be considered in any religious and social context. Through this, they have established a novel cultural way of life that is advantageous to individuals who do not belong to their cultural heritage.⁶¹ These routes, among others, are often regarded as the most efficient methods for promoting gender equality. Administratively, Pentecostal movements typically have a decentralised structure and are not heavily reliant on bureaucratic procedures. Their main goal is proactively seeking out skilled persons and discovering their abilities, specifically focusing on youth. They accomplish this by extensive proselytising and careful follow-up endeavours. The leaders of these movements exert influence over their members through advanced training and indoctrination techniques. In addition, they permit different units, parishes, and branches to utilise their initiatives to conduct religious services. Therefore, leaders within Pentecostal branches can introduce new and dynamic ways of worship⁶². Culture is characterised by its dynamic nature and its relativity. Pentecostal movements in Nigeria are renowned for

⁶⁰M.Nel (2017) Pentecostal Hermeneutical Considerations about Women in Ministry. In *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*. Vol.43. No.1.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2412-4265/2016/2126>

⁶¹ M . Deininger (2013) *Global Pentecostalism: An inquiry into the Cultural Dimension of Globalisation*. anchor-pulishing.com. Retrieved on 5/9/2023.

⁶² B.A.Adedibu (2023) *Nigerian Pentecostal Mega churches and Development: A Diaconal Analysis of the Redeemed Christian Church of God*. Vol.14. Issue 1.<https://doi.org/10.3390/re114010070>. Retrieved on 8/9/2023.

incorporating Indigenous artifacts into their worship practices. For example, in numerous Pentecostal churches around the country, the use of native musical instruments has grown commonplace. Africans value their cultural heritage and will go to great lengths to express themselves. Traditional musical instruments such as *Gangan*, *Omole*, *sekere*, *Sakara*, *Dundun*, *Agbamole*, and others, which were formerly labelled as satanic, have now been reintroduced into the church.

African culture encompasses its people's entire way of life, and they make every effort to safeguard their cultural practices, regardless of the extent to which foreign religions may have influenced them. The populace holds their culture in high regard, and the Pentecostal movement has provided a conducive environment for its advancement and manifestation. Singing is deeply ingrained in every facet of an African man's culture. It permeates their beliefs in rituals such as worship, naming ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, funerals, going to war, worshipping their rulers, soothing babies to sleep, and various other activities⁶³. The Pentecostal groups in Nigeria revolutionised the worship practices by introducing local instruments, enabling worshippers to express themselves via singing in their native tongue. Consequently, individuals were motivated to participate in Pentecostal movements, resulting in more people converting than missionary churches. The desire to emancipate the church from racial prejudice and external control resulted in the development of an African form of Christianity that is orientated towards the promotion of African customs and traditions. Pentecostalism gained significant popularity in Nigeria and Africa due to the belief that Christianity can achieve remarkable expansion if the gospel is presented and integrated with African culture. This is because the Christianity initially delivered to Africans lacked any African influence or identity⁶⁴. Pentecostal leaders purposefully adapted the scripture to fit the specific political, social, and economic contexts, providing biblical explanations for these problems. Pentecostal movements have brought vitality to Christianity since their beginning, resulting in sound effects on the lives of their members and society⁶⁵.

The influence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria has resulted in a close and significant interaction between politics and religion, shaping the country's

⁶³ R.Finnegan (2012) *Oral Literature in Africa*. Open Book Publishers. Vol.1.

⁶⁴ G. Asadu (2021) *Christianity and National Development: The Nigerian Experience*. HTS Theological Studies. Vol77, No.1.

⁶⁵ J.O.Paul . *Evangelism and the Rise of Pentecostalism in Nigeria*.

<https://foa.nou.edu.ng>. Retrieved on 4/8/2023.

political environment and breadth. Many Pentecostal leaders openly endorse and actively promote candidates during election cycles. They also encourage and urge members to actively pursue the opportunity to run for political positions.⁶⁶ This differs from the mission churches, which covertly resisted Christian political engagement. Several prominent leaders of the Pentecostal movement, including Professor Yemi Oshibajo, Pastor Tunde Bakare, Pastor Femi Emmanuel, Chris Okotie, and others, are currently active members of several political parties.

Pentecostal movements prioritise divine health and deliverance, advocating for an African approach to addressing African issues. Their endeavours transformed the mindset and outlook of Africans, shifting them away from the stereotypical and apathetic style of worship that manifests African culture and customs. Pentecostal groups were embraced due to their perception as an Indigenous African religion created and practised by Africans on the African continent. Incorporating African cultural practices into religious worship led to the rapid and widespread growth of the movements, extending beyond the country's borders.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

The evidence unequivocally demonstrates that Pentecostal groups in Africa have exerted a beneficial influence and have sparked transformations in contemporary Christianity and the overall approach to worship. Their practice, content, and context, style of worship, flexibility, adaptation, music, African worldview, dress code, language, and international operation have gained them popularity among several Africans, particularly Nigerian youth and women who make up the majority. This has verified that the experience and expression of God can occur through African cultural practices. Pentecostalism has also connected the gospel message to the everyday concerns of Africans, persistently seeking enduring solutions to their diverse issues. The subsequent suggestions are proposed for Pentecostal church leaders in consideration of the above information.

1. Pentecostal movements ought to establish a clear boundary regarding spiritual affairs. Because of their inherent flexibility and adaptability, numerous Pentecostal pastors engage in actions without considering the fundamental spiritual nature of their vocation.

⁶⁶ R. Burgess (2015). Pentecostalism and Democracy in Nigeria: Electoral Politics, Prophetic Practices and Cultural Reformation. JSTOR .Org/stable.

2. To display the gifts bestowed upon them by God, these individuals lead opulent lifestyles, often at the expense of impoverished members of their congregations who believe that God has treated them fairly. Many individuals have resorted to extreme, morally questionable measures to achieve financial stability.
3. Given that young people are the primary attendees of these churches, it is imperative for the church to actively participate in meaningful activities instead of allowing them to become mere pawns in the hands of politicians who exploit them for personal gain.
4. Pentecostal pastors need to establish a platform where members who have made mistakes can be reprimanded to discourage such behaviour. This is significant because the church kids view these individuals as their exemplars, and when any of them exhibit inappropriate behaviour, it conveys an incorrect message to the young members. They may mistakenly believe such actions are okay since they originate from their respected pastors.

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